MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING
OF THE 4J BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

April 21, 2021

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held an executive session at 5:30 p.m., a regular session at 7 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on April 16, 2021, and published in The Register-Guard on April 21, 2021.

NOTICE: In light of current public health concerns related to coronavirus COVID-19, (pursuant to ORS 192.670), the meeting was open to the public via zoom webinar live stream via the Internet at www.4j.lane.edu/

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:
Mary Walston, Chair
Judy Newman, Vice Chair
Alicia Hays
Martina Shabram
Jim Torrey
Gordon Lafer
Anne Marie Levis - Absent

STAFF:
Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Brooke Wagner, Director of K-8 Education
Jeff Johnson, Director of K-8 Education
Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Karen Hardin, Director of Human Resources
Eric Anderson, Director of Curriculum
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary

STUDENT ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS:
Dusty Temple, ECCO
Joel Sadofsky, IHS
Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School
Noa Ablow Measelle, South Eugene High School

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:
Sabrina Gordon, EEA
Tina Leaton, EEA Secretary
Tom Horn, MAPS

MEDIA: KRVM

OTHER: Julian White, Roscoe Caron, Rico Perez, Illiana Barnes Diaz, Larry Llewen, Deanna Chappell, Amanda Hvass

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. At 5:30 p.m. the Board convened in executive session to evaluate the employment related performance of the chief executive officer, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(i).

   Executive Session are closed to the public.

II. REGULAR BOARD MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Walston called the regular Board meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Anne Marie Levis was excused for the night.

III. ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Walston called out roll, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance, and read out the land acknowledgement.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

Mr. Lafer wanted to add an item under the consideration for items at a future meeting to talk about not doing in-person standardized testing while some form of virtual learning was still taking place.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Vandercar stated she was glad to see kids back to school; however, the movement of Lane County to high risk COVID-19 status would cause some changes.

The Board would stay steady and retain their plan to hold classes 5 days a week in the fall while following health authority guidelines. State testing would be discussed later in the meeting. She added that the District will be partnering with others in the community to provide vaccine clinics and the use of more trials, which have been approved.

Superintendent Vandercar lamented the incidents that recently took place in the country (the impact of George Floyd jury verdict) and the automobile accident that took the life of a local high school student. She continued by stating the District will continue its stance on anti-racistism.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Walston declared that she, too, was saddened by the murder and attacks within the AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islanders) community and indicated the Board would stand with them. She confirmed that the community was scared, and they would stand together to stop hate crimes.

VII. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Noa Ablow Measelle, South Eugene High School, shared that at South Eugene High School students were building a time capsule, and planning an Earth Day celebration. She reported they have resumed intramural sports and the hybrid classes were working well. She added her devastation at the loss of the aforementioned high school student.

Joel Sadofsky, IHS, shared that the hybrid class system was a different experience for those in classes versus those online with limited outdoor time for in-school students. He acknowledged that teachers were teaching two different formats. He hopes to see an expansion in the vaccination process. He was currently involved in planning a Student Art Festival.

Harmony Simmons, Churchill High School, shared that at Churchill High School the students were working on solidifying senior events (painting the rock) and relying on word of mouth to get information of those events to students. They continue to have trivia night each week, by grade and discussions were held regarding a virtual prom.

Paige Dunnavant, North Eugene High School, shared that the students at North Eugene High School were thrilled to be back in the classroom; they had experienced glitches, but the process has been mostly good. They were working on end of year projects including graduation and yearbook.

Ms. Shabram read out a statement from Mazie McNamara, Sheldon High School. She said that Sheldon believed in BLM (Black Lives Matter) and would like teachers to incorporate Black history into all classes. They were considering a virtual prom but there was a lack of participation last year.

VIII. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Julian White, 7th grade student, said that he is concerned about the lack of availability to access the office and teachers as there was no aide available till 3:10 p.m. causing him to wait for three hours following his classes. He felt that the teachers were working harder but students were getting less. He would like to see a better plan or a return to online schooling.

Roscoe Caron, a retired 4J middle school teacher, stated that COVID-19 uncertainty was a changing reality; testing, etc. will drive the message for more data to rescue their children and the nation. He added that teachers were trusted in the past and the future was in their hands.

Rico Perez, mentioned that six other districts had opted out of standardized testing which was racist and partnering with racism and urged the 4J District to opt out of standardized testing.

Illiana Barnes Diaz, senior at South Eugene High School, summed up her experiences with standardized testing by expressing the anxiety she experienced each time she was subjected to participate. She believed that testing was a waste of time and was not accurate as all students do not perform at the same level.

Larry Lewen, a retired 4J teacher asked why the website still did not have a one-button access to the opt-out form for standardized testing and why it was such a difficult procedure, comparing it to voter suppression.

Deanna Chappell, bemoaned the fact that there was a meeting in 2015 to talk about standardized testing and what to do locally. At that time, the School Board pushed back and claimed they did not have the power to decide. She stated that now 4J was no longer a trailblazer as other cities were.

Amanda Hvass, a mother of three school age boys, proposed that there be autonomy given to each school to provide equity for all students. COVID-19 has forced families, as well as schools, to make changes in the way they would address teaching those with disabilities and she would like to see this continue.

IX. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Tom Horn, President of Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs), expressed his thanks to the transportation department, the community, and the school district. He further stated that MAPS

was exploring leadership to shape children. He said there was a need to reaffirm and support safe anti-racial schools and identify the Board's role as systems change.

Sabrina Gordon, President of Eugene Education Association (EEA), thanked the student participants for their insight into hybrid learning at different levels and reassured them that the Board was listening. She followed with a challenge to know teachers', and students', needs and learn from each other.

Tina Leaton, Edgewood Elementary School Teacher & EEA Secretary, provided a slide presentation showing the results of the Seminar Series. She relayed that the use of the districtwide professional development of staff did not compare to the seminar. Her presentation noted the increase in participation and the rewards as the group was able to obtain monies to cover all twenty-three participants.

Ms. Newman commented that the results were impressive and questioned if additional series would be offered in the future on non-school days. Ms. Leaton responded the seminars would be Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Torrey congratulated them on a job well-done and asked if there would be value in providing the series online. Ms. Leaton answered that she hoped so as it would allow more freedom in scheduling.

Mr. Lafer commented the amazing dedication to the above series, which equals .2 FTE, a legal requirement and stated they could also adopt from other school programs.

X. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Lafer welcomed the guilty verdict by the jury in the Derek Chauvin case but added that racial fear still existed. He welcomed the news that students were back to athletics but mourned the fact that art related activities were lagging. He acknowledged that he opposed HB 240 and HB 2001 as they weakened the effort to protect retention of teachers of color.

Ms. Hays thanked them for the retreat and affirmed her support of HB 2001 across the State, not just for 4J.

Ms. Shabram found herself asking what her role was. She suggested exploring policies, acknowledging race differences, and investing in social and mental health.

Mr. Torrey complimented the superintendent and staff for achieving access to vaccines for those students 16 and over. He expressed support for funding to stay close to students, the ability to focus on each child and meet each child's needs. Additionally, he saw a need to provide transparency to the public as they did not have access to all the information the Board had access to.

Chair Walston reported that she had attended the retreat as well as the executive session earlier in the day.

Ms. Newman expressed her many feelings regarding the recent death of the 4J student and injuries to three others; a sadness for hate crimes, the murder of both 13 and 16-year old students killed in their own neighborhood. She concluded that they needed to create a better future.

Additionally, she conveyed her concern regarding the Legislative HB 2001 and its pros and cons. She commented that the bill was still in the Rules Committee and encouraged everyone to read and review the testimony which broke down the percentages of pros and cons and their backgrounds. She confirmed that years ago a law was passed expressing the need to have racial diversity among students and teachers. She then asked, what they would do going forward to help.

Ms. Hays asked if today's discussion was discussion only. Ms. Newman replied that it was. Ms. Shabram affirmed there would be no group recommendation at this time.

Mr. Torrey pointed out that the Board needs to reach out to teachers after the court decided.

Mr. Lafer thanked the Legislature Committee and asked how change could be influenced as they currently had no exit survey for teachers and no proposed funding. Ms. Newman urged him to read OEA testimony as they had the same goal, and something could be worked out together.

Ms. Newman voiced that social change is not easy but doing nothing is not an option.

Mr. Torrey affirmed that it is time to think outside the box to obtain more Oregon money for more experienced teachers – attach money for race retention.

XI. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

None.

XII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. UPDATE ON COVID-19 AND RETURN TO ON-SITE LEARNING

Superintendent Vandercar stated that they would be discussing hybrid learning, vaccines, summer programs, graduation, athletics, and making next year a full schedule.

Brooke Wagner, Director of K-8 Education, voiced that the elementary hybrid program was ahead of secondary. The students were happy and have expressed their pleasure of participating in small groups with no screen engagement and the opportunity to spend lunchtime, in the classroom, with the teacher.

Jeffry Johnson, Director of K-8 Education, indicated they had spent months planning an approved model for hybrid classrooms; they had toured schools and found them to be well-marked and safe. He added that a full-time substitute teacher was hired before COVID-19 and had helped provide coverage. He would continue to check in on schools.

Mr. Torrey asked if the mom who spoke earlier regarding her special needs child had a contact she can work with for a specialized program for her child and his needs. Kat Lange answered that concerns can be taken to the teacher, the student's team, or the school counselor.

Andy Dey, Director of Secondary Education, reported that he was pleased the students were happy with their new reality especially since the changes in COVID-19 regulations had caused three transitions so far. They would continue to strive to keep schedules the same, schools safe, teachers flexible, and home and school teaching available. He confirmed that they now had athletics as well as art indoors and outdoors (depending on the weather) and were working to make improvements.

Mr. Lafer asked where those programs would be at the end of the year and would there be after school programs, clubs, etc.

Ms. Shabram questioned if there would be additional hybrid available online and who would it be for (i.e. SSI students).

Mr. Dey commented that parents and students were grateful for continued learning but questioned if they would have more access to teachers. Ms. Wagner replied that there were constant shifts being made to accommodate all student needs to include: same applications by teachers in the same building, shifting staff to accommodate students, blending teachers, offering a 2% stipend for float teachers, and allowing flexibility for families to learn from home or school. Mr. Johnson stressed that students at school are getting less educational time than their classmates who were learning from home.

Superintendent Vandercar thanked everyone for their feedback.

Mr. Sadofsky commented that teachers cannot handle both options. Mr. Dey added that they had done what they could but there was so much being thrust at them. There needed to be guidance and support without judgment.

Ms. Newman stated that a new way of handling support to teachers was to find what works.

Superintendent Vandercar said they were getting close to normal; most elementary students would be full time in the Fall and that work was being done on achieving that for middle and high schools. Mr. Lafer offered that a five-day week would allow more help to SSI students.

Joyce Smith-Johnson informed the Board that the First Student Program was going well; they had partnered with Cascade Health and Lane County to provide vaccine clinics and were working on determining how many clinics would be required.

Mr. Sadofsky asked what students did about getting vaccinated if their parents refuse to sign the permission form. Ms. Smith-Johnson replied that students over the age of sixteen did not need parental permission so they could go to the school nurse.

Ms. Wagner addressed the summer programs stating that 4J has been involved in them for many years. New money has now been allocated for these programs, from the State, and should be received by May 10, 2021. Early programs would be robust at the elementary level and enhanced for middle and high school. She added that they would be partnering with the community for money and with the State for guidelines.

Ms. Shabram questioned how parents would learn about summer programs. Ms. Wagner replied that the staff was working on informing parents, however more information was needed before moving on. Mr. Dey added that initial high school information would be going out the first week of May; registration would begin in early May. Superintendent Vandercar stated they were working quickly but waiting on ODE.

Mr. Dey reported that they were working on graduation plans and the ways that could be planned to prepare for any current and/or future changes in COVID-19 regulations. There will be no false promises, a live graduation ceremony would take place and virtual ceremonies as well. How many ceremonies and how many guests allowed may change by then. He added that

athletics were on hold again due to a COVID-19 case which was not related to athletics but rather brought into the program from home.

2. UPDATE ON IN-PERSON STANDARDIZED TESTING

Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff, presented a slide program and updated the Board by stating they had received a denial for a waiver of testing but had approved reduced testing.

Eric Anderson, Director of Curriculum, presented slides and reported that a proposal was in the works that would reduce testing by 70%, allow for opt-out, be offered on Wednesdays (non-hybrid school days), required no extra time for teachers, and maximized family choice.

Ms. Shabram asked what would be done when parents did not respond to information regarding testing and options. Ms. Delf replied that should parents not respond the student would be shown as an opt-out on reports.

Ms. Newman questioned if there would be any instructional time lost and if so how much. Mr. Anderson replied there would be minimal instructional loss.

Mr. Lafer commented that some parents want testing and there should be a sensible solution to that without penalty or no-show status for others that don't participate in the testing.

> **MOTION:** Mr. Lafer moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to have 4J School Board direct the District to ensure that 2021 annual Oregon state testing of math, language arts and science was conducted in a manner that took time away from in-person or synchronous online instructional hours.

Mr. Torrey who questioned if there would be any legal issues. Miss Nesbit responded that there were no legal issues. Mr. Anderson expressed no concerns with the motion either.

Ms. Newman asked if there would be additional testing in the fall. Superintendent Vandercar replied there would be collecting data but without testing. Ms. Newman said there was no good data this year.

Mr. Torrey responded that Salem and the State of Washington had said no to Spring testing and would do it in the Fall. Ms. Delf added that different areas received different waivers.

Mr. Lafer stated there would be no additional testing in the Fall per reference.

Ms. Shabram suggested that it would be necessary to have information regarding which families were in, or out, and why.

> **VOTE:** The motion passed – 6:0.

XIII. ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve 2021-2022 School Calendars

Ms. Nesbit provided a slide presentation and proposed the need to agree to change in-service to instruction plus one transition day, an addition of two proposed professional development days and one day earlier start next year.

Mr. Lafer repeated the request from a previous meeting to change the start date from August 31st as it is a Jewish holiday. He said it would not be such a big change that it could not be

applied to other religious holidays that conflict with the school calendar. Ms. Nesbit responded that there was no legal issue but rather that it is a labor benefit issue.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved, seconded by Mr. Lafer, to adopt the 2021-2022 Academic Calendars.

VOTE: The motion passed – 6:0.

XIV. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Consider for Approval Updates and Revisions to Board Policy GBN/JBA Sexual Harassment

Ms. Nesbit presented slides and commented that there were two new policies regarding sexual harassment due to law changes; and, since those changes were so extensive, she proposed that the current policies be deleted and replaced with new policies. She added that there was a breakdown in federal and state laws as the differences were also extensive.

XV. SUGGESTIONS BY THE BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Meeting Dates:

May 2021: Wednesday, May 5 & Wednesday, May 19
June 2021: Wednesday, June 2 & Wednesday, June 16

XVI. ADJOURN

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Marlene Hockema)

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Mary Walston
Board Chair