

**MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**March 31, 2021**

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular session at 7 p.m. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on March 19, 2021, and published in The Register-Guard on March 131, 2021.

**NOTICE:** In light of current public health concerns related to coronavirus COVID-19, the meeting of the Eugene School District Board of Directors the meeting was open to the public via zoom webinar, live radio broadcast on KRVM 1280-AM and via the Internet at [www.4j.lane.edu/](http://www.4j.lane.edu/)

**ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Mary Walston, Chair  
Judy Newman, Vice Chair  
Anne Marie Levis  
Alicia Hays  
Martina Shabram  
Jim Torrey  
Gordon Lafer

**STAFF:**

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

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**OTHER:** Pooja Bhatt, Aimee Craig, Monica Cox

## **I. Work Session with the SeeChange Sub-Committee on the All Students Belong Student Safety Review Process**

Chair Walston opened the work session at 6:02 p.m. and everyone present introduced themselves.

Ms. Levis announced that the board work group (Judy Newman, Anne Marie Levis, Martina Shabram) met with numerous consultants to discuss the 4J North Star goal of providing an atmosphere where all students thrived, and disparity is reversed. She further stated that the protocol they used was to: plan, collect data, and report.

Currently, only the three Sub-Committee members had been involved in the All Students Belong meetings.

Ms. Shabram said it was a good time for questions to be submitted to the presenters.

Chair Walston introduced Pooja Bhatt, Aimee Craig, and Monica Cox as the representatives from SeeChange who would be sharing with the Board about their plans for the All Students Belong program.

Ms. Bhatt thanked the Board for the important work they did and asked for a short background from each board member. Ms. Bhatt was the co-founder of SeeChange and worked in public policy design and diversity. Her background was in early childhood education, safety policies and student success.

Ms. Craig also thanked the Board. She too, has a background in educational policy and early learning and came alongside groups to help them identify their vision and implement it.

Ms. Cox added her thanks, to the Board, stating she had fifteen years' experience in educational research and evaluation, educational outcomes, and working with disabilities; she has worked in 100 districts across Oregon and the United States.

Ms. Craig stated the work group wanted school safety analysis and specifics.

Ms. Bhatt said that the framework led with race opportunity, race by design, and race equity. The analytical lens that they would be bringing to the board was to make sure to equip board members to be well rooted in what the research was telling them. SeeChange wanted to engage with students regarding their lived experiences to acquire data, promising solutions, and policies that helped or hindered.

Ms. Cox confirmed that issues needed to be understood (i.e. safety, health, marginality); no one experiences universal circumstances.

6:13 p.m. Gordon Lafer and Judy Newman joined the meeting.

Ms. Cox questioned what the drivers were for helping or hindering a safe climate for students and teachers and what was the association between discipline, behavior, and outcomes. Chair Walston inserted that administration staff often had an entirely different relationship with students than teachers did, as they often had to deal with discipline and angry individuals.

Ms. Levis queried how the administration should be involved and if they should be included in focus groups. MS. Craig confirmed the group would address the issue regarding administration staff.

Mr. Torrey informed the group that he had observed some of the board work group meetings with SeeChange and had some concerns regarding the lack of speed in getting a plan to the community. He asked if there is a timeline. Ms. Craig said they would do whatever was best for success and a good relationship with the community.

Ms. Bhatt urged that there must be a foundation laid before arriving at a solution. She was appreciative of the community support and thought when they started, probably March or April, they would provide a good starting point with specific dates. However, it was reasonable to presume that data would be available by June and a report by July.

Ms. Shabram agreed that questions should come from the community, to the Board not consultants, as the community looks to the Board for answers.

Ms. Newman reminded everyone that the community and Board wanted what was best, no matter how long it took.

Chair Walston added that she has received over 1,300 emails regarding student safety and the elimination of School Resource Officers (SRO's) at our school, with a close pro and con count, so the committee would have to figure out how to engage the community in a way that all sides could be represented and heard from.

Ms. Craig reiterated that there would be a work group for success which came after identifying the issues, prioritizing thoughts, and analyzing their effect.

Chair Walston noted that they were determined to engage the community; however, in the fall of 2020 Covid-19 created many other issues that needed to be dealt with and the Board was now getting back on track.

Ms. Hays commented that she appreciated that the issue of School Resource Officers (SRO) has been resolved but does not want to hear more yes/no answers. She was looking forward to being involved in the goal of openness.

Chair Walston reminded the group that there have been no SRO's in 4J since June 2020.

Ms. Newman mentioned that the Board had a long-term plan for the work around All Students Belong. She questioned whether the Superintendent would be able to deal with the gaps and if they were ready to start this project.

Superintendent Vandercar replied that they would be ready soon. She then posed the question as to whether future meeting would be either via Zoom or in-person, and if they would involve the community or staff.

Ms. Bhatt remarked that the Kick-Off will help to determine a plan that was new to avoid duplication of past formats; so, they would know later.

Ms. Craig added that the Kick-Off would determine if Zoom would work and if it were considered the preference.

Superintendent Vandercar expressed concern regarding having licensed and certified personnel meeting together as their interests were not the same. Ms. Bhatt acknowledged that the focus group was aware of this disparity.

Mr. Torrey inquired as to the chain of command between the consultants and the Board. He believed the consultants should report to the board work group and wanted to make sure that when the April board meeting took place everyone knew who was reporting. Mr. Torrey said he wanted the Board to get through the first step of the project by the end of June.

Ms. Newman explained that while not everyone would agree on whether to meet via Zoom or in-person, everyone would be heard.

Chair Walston indicated that conversations would be taking place with the most impacted students and asked if that would pose a legal problem if the Board was present.

Ms. Bhatt responded that Assent forms would be given to students and they would be protected in conversations with teachers and administrators.

Ms. Levis expressed further concern on the clarity regarding who the consultants would report to. Superintendent Vandercar stated it was determined that Charis McGaughy would be the district liaison.

Ms. Shabram conveyed her concern with reference to data gathering of students. She did not think it was appropriate for the Board to listen in on student attended meetings, as the meeting would no longer be a listening session and would eliminate safe sharing.

Ms. Nesbit stated a determination would have to be made whether the Board and/or work group meet quorum, and if so, meet within those limitations.

Ms. Hays asked if Ms. McGaughy was working as the point of contact between the Board and the consultants.

Ms. Newman agreed that Ms. McGaughy was the staff person to contact and she would be the board liaison.

Ms. Hays additionally questioned whether the consultants would report to the Board or the Superintendent.

Ms. Nesbit urged that there must be flexibility within the staff to allow for public meetings.

Ms. Hays submitted that consultation with the Board carried stricter rules than those pertaining to the Superintendent.

Ms. Nesbit reconfirmed that it did not matter whether a meeting was called by the Board, the board work group, or others; if a quorum was represented the rules of public meeting laws must be followed. Ms. Hays appreciated the clarification.

Mr. Torrey stated he felt there still needed to be clarity on the relationship between the Sub-Committee and Ms. McGaughy.

Ms. Bhatt agreed that Ms. McGaughy should continue as the district liaison, staying up to date with the Board and board work group. For example, the Kick-Off would have one representative from the Board and one from the work group. Consultant team was now clear as to their point of contact.

Ms. Shabram interjected that they have not held any meetings that had a quorum but rather one representative from each group.

Ms. Levis noted that the first step of the board work group was gathering data on consultants. The board work group looked for the right consultants and believed they chose accordingly.

Superintendent Vandercar asked if there were any questions or comments from the staff members.

Ms. Bhatt proposed that questions be presented to the team prior to the Kick-Off.

Chair Walston appreciated the work done by the board work group and it was understood that the process could not be rushed.

Ms. Hays reminded attendees that the Board retreat would be on April 16, 2021.

## **II. Adjournment**

Chair Walston adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

*(Minutes recorded by Marlene Hockema)*



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Cydney Vandercar  
District Clerk



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Mary Walston  
Board Chair