

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

Date: November 17, 2021

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. and a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on Friday, November 12, 2021, and published in *The Register-Guard* on Monday, November 17, 2021.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Judy Newman, Chair
Martina Shabram, Vice Chair (via zoom)
Alicia Hays
Gordon Lafer (absent for work session)
Laural O'Rourke
Maya Rabasa
Mary Walston

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Misael Flores Gutierrez, Director – Equity, Inclusion & Instruction
Larry Williams, Director - Equity, Inclusion & Instruction
Joel Lavin, Student Services Administrator
Eric Anderson, Director of Curriculum

MEDIA: KRVM

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Sabrina Gordon, EEA

I. WORK SESSION

Student Voice and Student Board Representation

Presenters: Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent; Misael Flores Gutierrez, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Instruction; Larry Williams, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Instruction.

Chair Newman welcomed the board members and noted that Vice Chair Shabram was attending via zoom and Mr. Lafer was absent. Chair Newman said that the board would hear about the current work being done to ensure that students were actively participating in optimal learning opportunities, including sharing their voice with the school board and greater community. The discussion that evening would include envisioning plans that provided equitable opportunities for all students to participate and have their voice heard, enhance student learning, create space for students to advocate and engage in decisions impacting their

education and enrich the student experience in the district. She added that the district had adopted an equity stance as a means to target areas for action, intervention and investment. She then asked Superintendent Vandercar to introduce the speakers.

Ms. Vandercar welcomed Misael Flores Gutierrez and Larry Williams, Directors of Equity, Inclusion and Instruction, and congratulated Mr. Gutierrez on completing his doctorate. Ms. Vandercar said they wanted to get the board's feedback on their plan to choose student board representatives. Misael distributed the draft material and indicated that there was a table that contained two options: the first indicated how students were currently selected to be Board representatives and the second was a proposal to choose board representatives from amongst the campus affinity groups. He also stated that they had used the equity lens in creating the document and indicated where on the document the lens was referenced. He stressed the importance in promoting opportunities for student voice and asked the board what they hoped to gain from hearing from students and how they would use the information shared.

He briefly described that in the past a student representative from each high school attended meetings and gave a presentation at the beginning, sometimes using a prompt. He then provided an option in which students from each affinity group would present in a work session via zoom for a total of 10-12 minutes. The students would be given a prompt to help them form their presentation. There would be dialog amongst them and the board. Mr. Gutierrez gave additional information about how the process would work. He provided supporting reasons for choosing this new option, and offered that the choice the Board made would be based on the reasons they wanted student representation on the Board.

Ms. O'Rourke asked the presenters to provide the equity lens that they had used. She hoped that it would become a habit for the district. Mr. Williams added that the board would also use the equity tool when they made a decision on how they preferred students to participate. He detailed that one region would be highlighted at a time through the presentations by their affinity groups.

Ms. Walston shared that she considered the purpose of having student representatives at board meetings was to hear their perspective on items on which the Board would be voting. She also appreciated having had relationships with past student representatives, some of which lasted beyond their high school years.

Ms. Rabasa appreciated the innovative approach to the second option and wondered whether they couldn't have both. She wanted to have student board representatives so that they could gain leadership experience and that their voice in regular meetings could be normalized. She also wanted to acknowledge that some students might not be able to attend regular meetings because of the time commitment. Ms. Rabasa continued that she hoped the board and Mr. Gutierrez and Mr. Williams could discuss how to change their student board representative selection process in order to get the most diverse representation.

Ms. Shabram expressed her excitement that the board was discussing student representation. In response to her question, Mr. Williams said that the second option had been created from feedback and suggestions given by affinity groups. They wanted a chance to share their perspective in order to provide more student voice to the Board. He continued that the groups agreed that having a board-provided prompt around which to form their response was key.

Ms. O'Rourke asked how 4J defined affinity groups. Mr. Williams responded that there were four federally identified groups: Black Student Union (BSU); Latino Student Union (LASU), Native American Student Union (NASU); Asian and Pacific-Islander Student Union (APASU), and the district also had a Gay Straight Alliance (GSU) group. Ms. O'Rourke wondered whether there was also a group that represented those who might not be collegebound. Mr. Williams said that students were from diverse backgrounds within the group that culturally defined them. Mr. Gutierrez said that they could identify students within the groups that were part of a CTE pathway.

Ms. Hays shared how much the idea of student voice on the Board has changed over the years. She appreciated that they were working to hear more authentic voices. She wondered how and when they would decide to move forward with options, and Chair Newman said they would put it on the agenda at the next meeting. Ms. Newman asked how long affinity groups had been in existence. She also asked about how to include the voice of students with disabilities. Mr. Williams said that the groups were not new, but the district had increased their support for them by adding five staff members who worked with each group across the different campuses. He clarified that each high school had an advisor that ran the group, and the affinity coordinators worked with all high school campuses to provide additional support for each campus and for district-wide events. Superintendent Vandercar said that the additional staff provided opportunity for every school to have a group.

Mr. Gutierrez reiterated that the Board could decide how they wanted to organize student representation. In response to a concern expressed by Ms. Walston that the board might be overly directive in their selection of board representatives, Mr. Williams said that the affinity groups would choose who came to represent them, and that it might not be the same students at every meeting.

There was a brief discussion about including middle school representatives. Mr. Williams reiterated the hope that different students would attend based on the nature of the questions posed by the board. Mr. Gutierrez gave suggestions on some questions that students might answer: report on what is going well, what is not, and what solutions do you have?

Ms. Shabram shared that although she enjoyed having board representatives, oftentimes students were not able to be as involved as they would like. She asked whether there was a purpose or function for the students who participated and how they would know when they had met the goal and felt satisfied. She wanted to make sure there was a process to ensure that being a representative served the needs of the student. Mr. Williams agreed that in the past, students were not sure how they were supposed to participate in board meetings and said that it was one of the reasons they were looking for other opportunities for participation.

Ms. Newman felt that the purpose was both to get student input on issues before the board, as well as to hear from students about topics of concern that the board might not know about. She hoped to hear from a broader group from time to time.

Ms. O'Rourke asked where the recently adopted equity tool was located on the board website. Ms. Delf said that she would follow-up to make sure the link was working and that the equity tool was available to everyone.

Ms. Hays and Ms. Rabasa asked when the board would have further discussion to determine how to move forward, and what their role would be in determining the format of student representation. Superintendent Vandercar saw the options to be to 1) continue to have student board representatives as in the past, but provide them with prompts, or 2) have regular work sessions during which affinity groups shared their thoughts. She continued that if the board were to provide their feedback on the options, she and Mr. Gutierrez and Mr. Williams could finalize a plan.

Ms. O'Rourke said that she would want to hear from the affinity groups because they would provide a broader and more diverse perspective of what was happening in schools.

Ms. Hays suggested that the board continue with the traditional board representatives, but provide a better orientation for what was expected of them. She also wanted to have affinity groups present on a regular basis. She suggested that the board might need to determine whether their meeting time was also the best for students.

Chair Newman asked for clarification on Ms. Hays' suggestion that the board proceed with finding representatives from every high school to sit on the board, and also to have regular rotating presentations from affinity groups. Ms. Rabasa gave her support and added the importance of offering prompts. Ms. Shabram was also in support of the both/and version of the proposal. She asked that consideration be given to where the students would sit. She did not want to give the perception that the students were not important. She added that regular evaluation would be helpful to learn what worked well and what could be changed. Ms. Rabasa asked Mr. Gutierrez and Mr. Williams to consider whether middle school students could be included in some way. She referenced her own son's positive experience when he spoke to the board.

Mr. Williams asked for a report or proposal from the board that gave the steps and details needed so that staff could move forward.

Ms. Hays asked at what point the equity tool would be used to guide the board's decision. Ms. O'Rourke suggested that using the equity tool would help them decide what action to take. There was further discussion about at which point in the planning process the equity tool should be used. It was agreed that each board member would apply the equity tool to the different proposals and return to the next board meeting to determine what would be the purpose of the student's voice to a board and what plan would best support that purpose.

Chair Newman adjourned the work session at 6:45 p.m.

II. REGULAR MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Because of disruption to the in-person board meeting caused by anti-mask/anti-vaccine protesters, the meeting was postponed and then moved to Zoom webinar. Chair Newman called the meeting to order at 8:08 p.m.

III. ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Newman noted that all board members were present via video conference. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chair Newman read the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

The board agreed to postpone discussion on the working agreements for a future meeting.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Vandercar reported that she had met with the Equity Team to create a process by which the equity tool would be used systematically when creating proposals for the district and when bringing forward information to the board.

She continued that it was important to remember that the holidays were challenging for many, and the mental health and well-being of staff and students was being supported by initiatives across the district.

That morning, Ms. Vandercar had joined the Black Student Union in the Ruby Bridges march to school. She saw students, community, staff, EEA members and a board member. She thanked everyone for their ongoing attention to the district.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Newman had attended the Ruby Bridges event that morning in a different region of the district. She referred to a quote by Barbara Henry, Ruby Bridges' teacher in New Orleans. She had also attended the webinar on November 9 that addressed topics related to COVID-19 and the restart of school. She encouraged those who had not been able to attend to listen to the recording, which was posted on the district website at <https://www.4j.lane.edu/2021/11/watch-parent-info-session-on-covid-cases-and-quarantines/>

She added her acknowledgement of the work of the Equity Instruction and Partnerships Team, which was growing rapidly.

VII. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Chair Newman read the requirements for giving public comment at a board meeting.

Linda Hamilton asked for the board's support so that she could continue to serve on the board of the Oregon School Boards Association.

Michelle Hsu said that she felt the most important issues facing the community were unity and equity. A district that reflected those values provided equitable opportunities for all students. She expressed that the candidate for the superintendent search firm that represented an understanding of those values was the Alma Advisory Group. They would be best suited to find candidates for superintendent who were committed to equity and created a comprehensive and sustainable plan that was inclusive.

Rico Perez spoke as a representative of many community groups. He expressed the opportunity before the board in choosing the Alma Advisory Group, a search firm that was all women, most of whom were women of color.

Ari Gold expressed his opinion that the design of Camas Ridge could be improved. He referred to a recent email in which some additional information had been provided. He hoped that the board and 4J declined the proposed design and worked to improve it.

Priscilla Gould expressed her concern that the board of directors was not working well together. She hoped that they could agree to a common vision and unified approach at the same time that they respected each other's voices and opinions. She said that school boards across the nation were being distracted by politics and not attending to the needs of their students. She referred to the district's purpose statement and asked the board to keep it in mind.

Colin Johnson gave his support to hiring the Alma Advisory Group. He was impressed by the group's commitment to providing anti-bias training as part of the search process and its desire to include student voice. He was concerned when he heard a member of the McPherson & Jacobsen team refer to those with disabilities as "the handicapped." He referred to many examples of bias demonstrated in the community.

Alex Elkin had been at the meeting earlier in the evening and was dismayed that the board had not allowed parents to express their concerns in-person. He considered it an act of cowardice and disregard for parents' concerns and rights. He called out certain behaviors demonstrated by the board.

VIII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Sabrina Gordon, President of Eugene Education Association, had witnessed the disruption earlier in the evening and expressed her gratitude for staff members who had responded calmly and with care to ensure that the work of the meeting could proceed. She reminded the board of the data she had presented at a prior board meeting regarding teacher burnout, and hoped that the proposal for future non-instructional days would be adopted.

Peter Tromba, President of MAPS, added his thanks for the rapid and careful response, especially by staff and the Eugene Police Department, to the disruption earlier in the evening. He reflected on his recent attendance to professional development on the use of Universal Design for Learning to overcome racism and create inclusivity. He shared that he had not been enthusiastic about attending because he was overwhelmed with other work, but attended anyway and found it to be very important and inspiring. He summarized that good professional development was important when it was implemented with respect to workload.

IX. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. O'Rourke said that she did not feel endangered earlier in the meetings. She did recognize that everyone had a right to express themselves, but the board had a right to impose their rules. She referred to her military service, and regarded what had occurred as the American process. She appreciated the leadership of the board and the staff for keeping their cool.

Ms. Hays reported that she had been part of the group that wrote the questions for the second round of interviews with the search firm and also had met with the Equity Team to review their plan. She had spoken with parents at a recent vaccination clinic for which she volunteered her time. She hoped that future clinics would go as smoothly.

Ms. Rabasa had attended many events which provided opportunity for learning. She reflected on the insight they allowed her. She was inspired by the scope of the work of the Equity and Inclusion Team. She reported that the Equity Committee would be finalized soon and she was

excited about the group that had been formed. She expressed her thanks to all staff members in 4J and for the extra work they were doing to provide for the mental-health needs of students. She hoped that the board and the district would start to make systemic changes that would reduce the need for band-aid solutions and shared the concept of the challenge, approach, results process. She said that the contract proposal the unions put forward are a blueprints for the new approach. She suggests that this year we go back to the bargaining table and say we accept their proposal. She said we are on the precipice of losing more and more teachers. She asked that we bring an end to this season of bargaining and her suggestion is that we direct our bargaining representative to accept the proposal of our union leaders as laid forward.

Ms. Walston had attended the Ruby Bridges event in the North Eugene region. She thanked the Eugene Education Foundation and its generous donors. She had been enjoying her volunteer work at Adams Elementary. She reflected on the recent Kindness Day. She added that the school board had expressed their support that the cities of Eugene and Springfield be “cities of kindness” in a letter which it stated that they were “committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, staff and families.” She expressed her concern that a school board member had attacked a staff member for wearing a shirt that said “Be Kind” and considered the action and the additional comments on social media to be a violation of multiple board policies that dealt with bias and this action was a form of bullying.

Mr. Lafer thanked the board leadership and staff for their response to the incident earlier in the evening. He thanked Ms. O’Rourke for her comments and Ms. Hays for her continued efforts to make things better for students. He hoped that the board would take seriously the issue of staff burnout and attrition. He added that he was concerned with the process that had been taken on the Camas Ridge Elementary School design, and that poor communication had created mistrust.

Ms. Shabram expressed her pain about the discourse across the country and her gratefulness to the staff for responding to negative behavior with calm and equanimity. She was concerned with the level of burnout. She said that it was she, not Ms. Hays who chose not to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Her choice was based on personal and sacred reasons and that are 100% supported by the constitution. She referred to a quote by James Baldwin.

X. CONSENT GROUP - ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Approve Personnel Action
Prepared by Karen Hardin, Director of Human Resources
2. Approve Meeting Minutes: October 20, 2021 and November 3, 2021

After receiving clarification about the procedure for voting against one item on the consent agenda, Ms. O’Rourke asked that the item number 1: Approve Personnel Actions be removed from the consent agenda.

Ms. Shabram moved and Ms. Rabasa seconded to approve item number 2 of the consent group: Approve Meeting Minutes from October 20, 2021 and November 3, 2021. **The motion passed 7:0.**

Ms. Shabram moved and Ms. Walston seconded to approve item number 1: Approve Personnel Action.

Ms. Nesbit clarified that Ms. O'Rourke could make a statement as to why she wanted the item removed from the consent agenda, but cautioned that it could not pertain to an individual on the list of personnel actions. Ms. O'Rourke expressed her concern that staff members were being forced to resign instead of returning to their original job position when they were asked to take on additional job duties for which they were not suited. She referred to a practice at the City of Eugene in which staff were allowed to try a new job, but return to their prior position if it did not work out. Chair Newman suggested that Ms. O'Rourke request more discussion regarding the topic in the form of an item for information at a future board meeting.

Ms. Rabasa asked what would happen if the item for action was not approved. Ms. Nesbit said that it would create a problem for the district to hire someone whose employment was not ratified by the board, and that district employees had the right to quit.

Ms. O'Rourke said that hiring was different from resignations and asked why they were included in the same action item. Ms. Newman said that they would look into it further at a future meeting.

Chair Newman called the question on the motion to approve Personnel Actions. **The motion carried 6:1.**

XI. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

1. Receive Information about Board Policies Prohibiting Racial Harassment
Prepared by: Christine Nesbit, General Counsel; Misael Flores Gutierrez, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Instruction; Larry Williams, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Instruction; Joel Lavin, Student Services Administrator

Ms. Nesbit said that it was their hope to review board policies related to racial harassment. Ms. Nesbit began by connecting the laws and policies, starting with policy AC, for which the bases in law were Title VI and ORS 659-850. She stated that Title VI was violated by creating a hostile environment, including through harassment. She continued by referring to the Student Safety Reporting Form for students to report bullying, harassment, and other concerns. Ms. Nesbit also referred to policy JFCF which prohibited actions that interfered with education and included but were not limited to harassment based on race. She stated that policy JFCF and its corresponding complaint process were frequently used.

Ms. Nesbit then referred to policy ACB, which was a result of the State of Oregon "Every Student Belongs" legislation. She believed that the impetus for the legislation was to provide an educational approach to hate symbols and bias. She said the most essential reason for defining a bias incident was a person's hostile expression of animus towards another person. She said hate crimes also fell within the realm of the policy.

Mr. Lavin said that the most important aspects of response was immediate action taken by the administration at the school to ensure the safety and well-being of those impacted. Staff would act through an equity and trauma informed lens. All persons impacted by the investigation would be notified. He reviewed the steps that staff would take during and after the investigation, including how the safety and privacy of those involved would be ensured, how the findings would be reported, and how any communication to the district would occur.

Mr. Lavin referred to the educational components of ACB-AR, the administrative rules that accompanied policy ACB. The purpose was to ensure that students learned from their actions,

and how to avoid perpetuation of further harms. This would involve the administrator and staff to provide restorative processes. Mr. Lavin added it was the responsibility of the wider school community to ensure that racist actions were prevented through strong anti-bias programs.

Ms. Nesbit referred to a diagram that indicated the overlapping nature of the policies that dealt with bias, racism and hate symbols.

Mr. Lavin gave more information about the Student Safety Reporting Form. He reviewed its history, training and implementation. He also described the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) in which information about incidents was kept. Mr. Gutierrez shared some drawbacks of the form: if everyone who had observed the incident completed a form, there was duplication of information, which was sometimes problematic. He hoped to determine how to create one form for an incident.

Ms. Nesbit said that the Safety Reporting form was one of many ways that incidents could be reported.

Mr. Gutierrez considered that next steps would be to determine how to disaggregate the data in SWIS to create useful reports on incidents of bias and harassment.

Ms. Nesbit said that there would be changes to some of the policies and administrative rules that would be presented at a future meeting for the board's consideration. She acknowledged that there had been discussion about whether to have a policy exclusively for racial harassment, which would be an addition to the current policies.

Chair Newman called on Ms. O'Rourke who reported that she had heard that some schools were not allowing staff from Lane ESD to work on anti-bias incidents in their buildings. Ms. Nesbit responded that the issue had occurred over confusion of whether staff from Lane ESD were considered essential workers under COVID restrictions and that it had been resolved. Superintendent Vandercar added that the Lane ESD program African-American Black Student Success (AABSS) worked in partnership with all the districts in Lane County and she would look into the nature of the agreement.

Ms. Rabasa referred to her prior request to hear from Mica Contreras regarding the research she had done with other school districts on their approach to the issues. She was concerned that families and students were still feeling that their suggestions were not being received and processed, and that acts of bullying and hate speech were not being treated appropriately. She stated that more work needed to be done. She also wondered how the data that was gathered would remain connected to the stories, and whether there were efforts in place to mitigate the cultural resistance of some students and families from coming forward with their concerns.

Mr. Lafer also wanted to hear from Ms. Contreras. He shared his personal experience that not all school staff were adequately trained to respond to bias incidents in the classroom in real time.

Ms. O'Rourke referred to the step-by-step complaint process and said that the practice of raising concerns directly with the person was no longer best practice. **She wanted to work on changing the form to protect the person who had been harassed and not put them through the emotional work of confronting their harasser.**

Mr. Williams added that he understood there was a long way to work towards training district staff and to not rely on policy but on consistency of response. He added that they were looking at disciplinary practices.

Referring to a prior comment by Ms. Nesbit, Ms. Shabram asked what the negative would be to have a policy that addressed only racial harassment. Ms. Nesbit agreed that there were no drawbacks except the application of an additional policy. She said it would not replace existing policies. She appreciated that it addressed issues at the ground level. She agreed with the need to build out more clearly the reporting and response issues in the other policies. She offered to work with Ms. Contreras.

In response to Mr. Lafer's comment, Mr. Lavin reported that anti-racism training had begun for all district staff and he agreed that continuing that work was important so that staff were comfortable addressing issues as they arose.

Ms. O'Rourke asked for a report on what data was available. She also suggested to include the board in any district-wide training.

Chair Newman thanked the presenters and looked forward to hearing implementation plans and the data the group had gathered.

2. Receive the Student Investment Account (SIA) Annual Report
Prepared by: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff; Eric Anderson, Director of Curriculum

Mr. Anderson introduced the topic by saying that the annual report of the Student Investment Account (SIA) was a requirement of receiving funds through the Student Success Act (SSA) of the 2019 Oregon Legislature. Funds were given to increase academic achievement for all students, reduce academic disparities for historically underserved groups of students, and meet students' behavioral or mental health needs. While the district had expected to receive \$13.4 million for the 2020-21 school year, only \$4.35 million were received: about one-third of the amount originally planned for.

Mr. Anderson shared the Investment Plan which focused engagement with historically underserved students and families. He described to the board each of the seven initiatives funded by the SIA: Improving third grade reading; implementing the learning-for-all model; enhancing the NATIVES Program; developing an emergent bilingual students success plan; expanding the behavior framework and support services; creating regional wraparound support teams; and expanding BEST afterschool and summer programs.

Mr. Anderson then shared the four requirements of the annual report: to publish an annual report on the district website; to present the annual report to the board in an open meeting; to provide opportunity for public comment in a meeting; and to submit the report to the Oregon Department of Education. He then highlighted areas of the report which was on the website: the progress and positive impacts from implementing the SIA plan; the barriers, impediments and challenges to implementation; the successes and challenges of maintaining engagement; and the prioritization efforts in implementation of the SIA plan.

He reported that staffing shortages had made it challenging to fill all open positions, and communication with families and community members had also been difficult. He shared that they had prioritized certain areas of learning and mental health supports to students.

Superintendent Vandercar suggested that because of the late hour, board members send their questions to Ms. Delf and Mr. Anderson via email, and she would respond in her Friday memo. Ms. Walston thanked the staff for all their work and was glad that the funds had finally been made available, even in a reduced amount.

3. Receive FY22 First Quarter Financial Report
Prepared by: Andrea Belz, Director of Financial Services

Tabled to the December 1 meeting.

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Select Executive Search Firm
Prepared by: Christine Nesbit, General Counsel; Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff; Holly Langan, Director of Support Services

Chair Newman asked each board member to share their thoughts about the two candidate search firms in one minute and offered to go first to model the process. She said that McPherson & Jacobsen had huge networks and contacts with diverse populations, their background check process was extensive, and their representatives were experienced. The Alma Advisory Group provided robust student engagement and anti-bias training, had extensive equity experience, and would offer a new look at the process.

Ms. Shabram said that the pluses of McPherson & Jacobsen were their experience, deep networks and institutional knowledge. The Alma Advisory Group would bring a fresh perspective and new approach.

Mr. Lafer offered that McPherson & Jacobsen had an extensive network of consultants, contacts and organizations and brought experience. The Alma Advisory Group had a deep understanding of equity and community engagement, and their thoughtfulness would build trust between the community and the board. He added that they would construct a search specific to the district's needs and not follow a known formula.

Ms. Walston said that McPherson & Jacobsen had a national network of competent superintendents, their price was considerably less, they had a large team located in the northwest, and they had a school board member and a superintendent on the team. She added that they had the capacity to do the job in a tight timeline and would provide service after the sale. The Alma Advisory Group brought fresh face and new ideas.

Ms. O'Rourke thought that McPherson & Jacobsen were deep in resources and had a plan that worked. The Alma Advisory Group was female led, flexible, ready to hear what was needed and change accordingly, and were deep in engagement and student process. They would construct the search process around district needs.

Ms. Rabasa said that McPherson & Jacobsen were experienced and had many sources from which to make contacts and do recruiting. The Alma Advisory Group were women run, owned

by an Afro-Latina and had a strong emphasis on equity. She referred to a quote from their interview in which they stated that their job was “not being a filter but being a microphone.”

Ms. Hays agreed with what had already been said and was thankful that the board had two good choices.

Ms. Shabram moved that the board enter into contract with the Alma Advisory Group for the superintendent search. Ms. O'Rourke seconded the motion. Ms. Walston expressed her concern about the difference in the price, adding that she could not justify paying the price for a firm that did not have the experience of the less expensive option. She was also concerned with their capacity and experience and that the conversation had been framed as if they were hiring a superintendent as opposed to hiring a search firm.

Ms. Rabasa referred to the CTE class she had attended and the impact it made on her. In the class, she had learned the concept that the larger the problem, the smaller the group should be formed to solve it. This process created cohesion. She compared the concept to the small size of the Alma Advisory Group.

Ms. Hays expressed her appreciation for the process and thanked her colleagues for their questions. She was also concerned about the expense and added that the Alma Advisory Group did not refer to superintendent caucuses when referring to which groups they would reach out to for candidates. She was concerned about their size and experience.

Ms. Shabram appreciated the concerns of Ms. Walston and Ms. Hays. She understood the risks of choosing the less experienced group, but saw risk in any choice. She was willing to take the risk in order to hope towards something new.

Chair Newman also said it was a hard decision. Although she was more comfortable being led by someone with experience, she was excited by the new ideas offered by Alma Advisory Group. Ms. Hays added that she wanted to get clarity on travel costs and what meetings the Alma Advisory Group would attend, if chosen.

Chair Newman called for the vote. **The motion passed 5:2.**

2. Approve Board Resolution #2022-09 Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities

Presenter: Judy Newman, Board Chair and Martina Shabram, Vice Chair

Ms. Shabram made a motion, which Ms. O'Rourke seconded, to approve Board Resolution #2022-09 Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities. **The motion passed 7:0.**

3. Consider Revisions to School Calendar

Prepared by: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

Superintendent Vanderkar recommended that the school calendar be revised to change Wednesday, November 24, and Friday, January 14 to non-instruction days.

Ms. Walston thanked the superintendent for sharing the data regarding attendance on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, and also for the use of the equity tool in making her recommendation.

Mr. Lafer said that he had received a communication earlier in the day from the Eugene Education Association which brought new information to consider. He shared that EEA had expressed that the days that would be most useful to have as non-instructional days were during the change of term in December, not the day before Thanksgiving. Choosing the days in December would also give parents more time to prepare for childcare. He added his concern that classified staff not be penalized a day of work if schools were closed. Superintendent Vandercar said that the non-instruction days would be a work day for all staff.

Ms. Newman reflected that she was having difficulty adding more non-instructional days with looking at the issue through an equity lens and hearing more about absentee rates. She would be willing to look at alternative days that also had a high percentage of absenteeism, such as the day before Winter Break.

Ms. O'Rourke believed that more time should be taken to determine the best non-instructional days and that there should be more than currently suggested.

Ms. Rabasa said that she was troubled by the impact that taking days off would have on families. She thought it would benefit both teachers and students to have a day between trimesters and semesters.

Ms. Vandercar was concerned that changing November 24 to a day in December would be challenging given the time constraints. November 24 had already been noticed as a potential day off.

Ms. Walston asked to have a clear, concrete recommendation, using the equity tool, before deciding.

Ms. O'Rourke asked whether there was a possibility to provide childcare in schools on November 24. She was concerned that many parents would not be able to secure childcare on short notice.

Ms. Newman asked Ms. Shabram to make a motion before having further conversation. Ms. Shabram moved to approve a calendar change to provide non-instruction days on Wednesday, November 24, 2021 and Friday, January 14, 2022, as recommended. Ms. Walston seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Lafer asked that November 24 be changed to December 6 and/or 7, depending on the school level, as those days would fall between the change of trimesters.

Ms. Hays recognized that Superintendent Vandercar made her recommendation based on the conversation that had occurred prior and also thanked the superintendent for providing the data requested. She added that neighboring districts were having to close because of lack of staff and was concerned that would be the case the day prior to Thanksgiving. Superintendent Vandercar reported that there were twice as many absences the day before Thanksgiving than other days and agreed they might have to close schools.

Ms. Rabasa was aware that staff were strongly encouraged to not take the day before Thanksgiving as a personal day and was surprised it was on the table as a non-instructional

day. She said that in the long run, the days proposed should be those that best supported teachers so that they, in turn, could support their students.

Mr. Lafer asked to amend the motion to authorize November 24, December 6 or 7 (depending on level), January 28 or 31 (depending on level), and March 28. Ms. Rabasa seconded the amendment.

After unsuccessfully calling for the question on the amendment, discussion continued. Ms. Shabram said she understood the need for additional days as proposed, but did not think that the board had enough information to make a good decision. She proposed authorizing the days off that were clear, and asking the superintendent to return with an additional recommendation. She was concerned that there were unintended consequences.

Ms. O'Rourke said that it was hard on parents to be given the changes to calendar piecemeal. She wanted to approve all the days in advance so that parents had ample time to plan.

Ms. Hays expressed that she was concerned that if days were split by level, there would be many older students who would have to take both days off to care for their siblings. She was hesitant to make the decision before fully understanding the impact on both families and staff.

Chair Newman did not think she could support December 6 and 7 without considering the issues that might arise.

Ms. Rabasa gave supporting details to consider regarding the option of splitting days between levels in December.

Mr. Lafer asked to have Ms. Gordon, President of the Eugene Education Association, who was in the listening audience, weigh in on the issue.

Ms. Walston said that there had not been enough time to thoughtfully plan or to consider the December dates using the equity tool. Ms. Walston called the question on the amendment.

Chair Newman read the amendment. **The amendment did not pass 3:4.**

Chair Newman asked for a vote on the original motion. Ms. O'Rourke then moved, and Ms. Rabasa seconded to amend the original motion to remove November 24, and add December 6 or 7, and January 28.

Ms. Rabasa expressed she could not vote for November 24 as a non-instructional day because the students who attended the day before Thanksgiving were in the highest need. Mr. Lafer agreed he too, could not vote for November 24, because the nearness of the date did not give families ample time to plan. He again asked to hear from Ms. Gordon.

Ms. Walston asked that the board vote on the amendment and the original motion.

Chair Newman reminded the board that they had asked the superintendent at the prior meeting to do research into possible dates and provide data to back them up, which she had done. Ms. Newman was concerned that the board was now considering new dates without looking at them through the equity lens and without receiving additional information on the possible

consequences of their decision. She was dismayed that the board was moving in a new direction.

Superintendent Vandercar invited Ms. Delf to clarify some information. Ms. Delf reported that all schools experienced the same amount of absences regardless of need on the day before Thanksgiving.

Ms. Walston again called the question for the vote, which did not pass.

Ms. Rabasa shared that when using the equity lens, it should not be done as a weapon. She added that conflating the issue of absenteeism and providing a non-instructional day for staff put unnecessary burden on teachers to defend their professionalism.

Ms. O'Rourke was concerned that the equity tool was not being used appropriately.

Ms. Hays suggested that by slowing down and looking at more information, the board might be able to make a better decision. Mr. Lafer agreed, but was also aware that families needed enough time to plan. He thanked the superintendent for her willingness to be flexible.

Chair Newman asked Ms. O'Rourke to restate the amendment to approve Dec 6-7, Jan 28, and March 28 as non-instructional days. **The motion did not carry 3:4.**

Ms. Walston made an amendment to strike Friday, January 14 from the original motion and come back with another proposal on December 1, but to vote on November 24 at the current meeting. Ms Hays seconded the amendment.

Ms. Rabasa clarified that as a result of the proposed amendment, the board was considering approval of only November 24 as a non-instructional day. She pointed out that gave only a week of notice for families.

Ms. Hays asked whether the board was more comfortable striking the whole recommendation and returning on December 1 with a completely new plan. Ms. Rabasa responded that she would be more comfortable striking both original proposed dates and considering Dec 6-7. Mr Lafer agreed. Chair Newman hoped that any decision made would benefit all staff.

After voting on Ms. Walston's amendment, it did not pass. Ms. Hays wondered whether there was any interest in striking the original motion and returning at a later meeting with a new plan. In response to Ms. Hays suggestion, Ms. Shabram withdrew the original motion. Ms. Hays then made a motion for Superintendent Vandercar to return on December 1 with a new plan for non-instructional days for the rest of the year. Ms. Shabram seconded the new motion. Ms. Walston clarified that the Superintendent would return with new dates on December 1.

Ms. Rabasa amended the motion to approve December 6-7 and look additional new dates. Mr. Lafer seconded the amendment. Superintendent Vandercar said that if the board agreed to the new amended dates, mechanics would not have enough time to work on bus maintenance for not only district buses but also buses from other smaller districts.

Ms. Rabasa clarified that December 6 would be a non-instructional day for all students, and December 7 for only secondary students.

Superintendent Vandercar suggested taking December 3 off for everyone. She gave some information as to why it would be a good choice.

Ms. Hays asked again to take the time to ensure that any decision made would take all staff and student considerations into mind.

Chair Newman asked for a vote on the amendment, which did not pass 3:4. She then referred to the original new motion for Superintendent Vandercar to return on December 1 with a new plan. **The new motion passed 6:1.**

4. Vote on Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) Election
Prepared by: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

Tabled until December 1, 2021

5. Approve Resolution of Complaint
Prepared by: Christine Nesbit, General Counsel

Tabled until December 1, 2021

XIII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Consider Resolution #2022-10 Authorizing Community Benefits Contracts
Prepared by: Carole Knapel, Capital Improvement Program Manager; Christine Nesbit, General Counsel; Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities

Tabled until December 1, 2021

2. Approve Board Working Agreements:
Presenters: Judy Newman, Board Chair and Martina Shabram, Vice Chair

Tabled until December 1, 2021

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

Ms. Walston asked leadership to consider having a retreat with the assistance of an outside mediator. There was agreement amongst the board. Ms. O'Rourke asked that the board choose who the mediator would be. Chair Newman said that Leadership would collect suggestions for a mediator.

Ms. O'Rourke asked for a future discussion about possible human resource policies that would provide staff opportunity to try new jobs for a trial period without penalty. She referred to policies in place at the offices of the City of Eugene. Ms. Hays, Superintendent Vandercar and Ms. O'Rourke agreed to meet to determine how to move forward on the topic.

Mr. Lafer thanked Ms. Hays for making the suggestion during the discussion about non-instructional days that allowed them to move forward with a motion to return on December 1 to hear a new plan.

Ms. Rabasa asked again to invite Ms. Contreras to share her work with the board. Ms. Hays suggested that they discuss it during the Equity Team meeting on Monday, November 22.

XV. ADJOURN

Chair Newman adjourned the meeting at 1:00 a.m., November 18, 2021

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Judy Newman
Board Chair

(Recorded by Eliza Drummond)