

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

Date: October 20, 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, October 15, 2021, and published in *The Register-Guard* on Monday, October 18, 2021.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Judy Newman, Chair
Martina Shabram, Vice Chair
Alicia Hays
Gordon Lafer
Laural O'Rourke
Maya Rabasa
Mary Walston

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary

MEDIA: KRVM

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Sabrina Gordon, EEA

I. WORK SESSION

1. Interview Budget Committee Applicants
Presenter: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

The purpose of the work session was to hear from candidates to fill three open positions on the Budget Committee. The Board received an initial application from seventeen candidates, then asked for answers to supplemental questions. After hearing from the applicants at the work session, the Board would vote at the November 3 meeting.

The board heard statements from eleven candidates:

Tom DiLiberto shared his extensive experience in the district and in communicating with community members on a variety of topics.

Jacy Berg believed that how the district spent its money was the ultimate reflection of the values and priorities it supported. She hoped to promote inclusivity and reset the balance of equity.

Jensina Hawkins stated her goal was to serve families that were challenged because of minority status and economic impact. She wanted to bring her experiences in the public health field to the budget committee.

Morgan Munro worked with budgets as a leader, business owner, non-profit board member, and family member. She stated that budgets were stories organizations used to tell stake holders what mattered to them. Students and families lived with the decisions made by budget committee members.

Stephen Parac worked in the technology industry. He volunteered on boards that supported education. His work with Eugene Education Foundation had allowed him to learn about the positive impacts that using an equity tool could provide when making decisions about how to allocate funds.

Shawn Romine was an accountant who had broad experience with students in different schools around the district. He was hoping to offer his skills to the community.

Jacob Trewe was a parent of school-aged children and worked as an accountant. He believed that budgets showed the values and priorities of an organization.

Dakota Boulette hoped to help the Board to connect better with students. He added that he had struggled with food and housing insecurity. He would bring a youth perspective to the budget committee.

Harry Sanger asked what he could do to assist 4J school district by ensuring funds were used to their maximum benefit. He was involved in many organizations that supported underserved communities. He believed that diversity, equity and inclusion should be used to prevent future injustices, and good communication necessitated hearing from diverse viewpoints.

Haydn Zhang Julio worked in corporate initiatives in financial management and budget planning. She volunteered across the district based on her interests.

Ericka Thessen was committed to service. She knew that she had the heart to be a valuable asset on the budget committee. She could bring broad community connections. She worked with the unhoused and persons with food insecurity.

Derik Hendricks, Titinia Howell, Bonnie Middleton, and Courtney Salic were unavailable to present.

Mirella Jimenez and Daniel Lombardi had withdrawn their applications.

The Board could consider applicants who had not presented but had not withdrawn their applications and had provided answers to the supplemental questions. The Board would receive answers to supplemental questions on or before October 22, and would vote at the November 3 Board meeting.

Chair Newman adjourned the work session at 6:30 p.m.

II. REGULAR MEETING – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Newman called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

III. ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Newman noted that all board members were present in-person. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chair Newman read the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes to the agenda.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent thanked the Board for approving October 18 as a workday to provide staff the across the district time to get caught up on COVID-19 related changes to schedules and staffing. She continued that she had attended a gathering of women superintendents and the Governor. There were plans to create legislation to stabilize leadership in school districts across the state.

October 18 had been the deadline to be vaccinated or provide an approved exemption. She reported that 96.4% of the district's regular staff were fully vaccinated. They received 89 requests for an exception. Superintendent Vandercar gave details on how exceptions were being processed. She added that the district was working on how to apply vaccination rules for contractors and community partners.

Ms. Vandercar reported that senior staff would return to Board meetings in mid-November. In the meantime, she asked the Board to send questions ahead of each Board meeting in order to receive a timely response to their questions. She added that questions and answers would be posted on the district's Facebook page.

The district's transportation staffing shortage was severe. Some routes were shortened or paused and as a result more than 200 families would receive reimbursement for transporting their children to school.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that the district would provide vaccines to students under twelve as soon as they were available. The district would not require vaccines for students at any grade level in the 2021-22 school year. She added that accommodations for outdoor mealtime areas were being developed.

The district's COVID-19 dashboard had been updated and included up-to-date quarantine and vaccination information.

The district was accepting applications for all open positions. A virtual job fair had been held on October 7 and applications increased as a result of the event. She thanked volunteers for their work.

Food for Lane County was offering shopping events to support families in need.

Superintendent Vandercar gave information on improvements to the CTE programs at high schools and expressed her excitement that United Way of Lane County would be hosting a program on October 28 for which Ruby Bridges would be the keynote speaker. Middle and high school staff were invited to a private virtual event. The event would begin at 10:30 a.m.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that the district was providing extensive support to staff and students to assist with mental health needs. She concluded by thanking the Board for their support.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Newman expressed gratitude that schools were open and the majority of students were attending every day. She thanked all district staff for their extra efforts to provide a safe learning environment, and parents for supporting their children's learning and health.

She reflected on the Superintendent's decision to not have senior staff attend Board meetings. She clarified that the decision was made in response to and in support of the extensive time needed to attend meeting. Staff were still preparing information for Board meetings and responding to questions. The decision was based on a cumulative effect over time.

She shared her desire to work together to move forward on shared goals.

VII. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Chair Newman read the requirements for giving comment at a School Board meeting.

Larry Lewin reflected on the differences of approach to their work by veteran and newer members of the Board. He urged that the Board find ways to come together to solve problems. He gave examples of the principles of bipartisanship he recognized in the Board's recent actions on different issues and encouraged them to remember that it was not disrespectful to disagree.

Stefan Ostrach was concerned about the lack of transparency regarding Superintendent Vandercar's decision to dismiss senior staff from attending Board meetings. He was still asking for specifics on the actions that led to the Superintendent's decision.

Ericka Thessen referred to the district's upcoming decision on choosing new social studies curriculum. She hoped that the curricula chosen would show the experiences and express the voices of a multicultural society and would not sanitize or gloss over the history of the country. She hoped that central staff would return to Board meetings and thanked the district for providing support for students with mental health issues.

Jerri Rosiek also gave comment on the Superintendent's decision to excuse senior staff from Board meetings.

Justin McCall expressed his upset over an event that had occurred at school during which his daughter was injured.

Brenda Kameenui thanked the district for their hard work in past years addressing extraordinary issues. She commented on the upcoming curriculum decision and expressed the importance of early reading skills, which when not mastered, led to poor graduation and high dropout rates. She would be sending more information to the Board.

Lisa Krenk thanked the district for their efforts to minimize the spread of COVID and for providing testing opportunities to families who desired additional assurance. She thanked school secretaries who had taken on a multitude of additional jobs with graciousness. She hoped that the district would increase their attention to CTE classes which gave the training needed to get a good job with a living wage. She mentioned the Future Build project.

Roscoe Caron shared a history of the increased attention paid to testing and tracking which had led to the current model of education. He claimed that teachers were not allowed to question increases in testing, and related it to the Board's interactions with staff members at recent meetings.

Derek Ross expressed his concern to upcoming vaccinations for children under eighteen and the long-term risks of wearing masks and vaccinations. He suggested that more attention be given to better health and well-being, better diet and regular exercise for children.

VIII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Sabrina Gordon, President of the Eugene Education Association, shared that everyone was experiencing the most stressful time ever in their education careers. Critical thinking, perseverance and problem solving and self-advocacy were all necessary to create a thriving community. She asked the district to consider these skills in light of the ongoing stress. She said that questions led to better understanding. She expressed that the Board was demonstrating the hard work needed to make good decisions. She shared that senior staff needed to be present at meetings even if it was uncomfortable, and wondered whether the community understood the impact of staffing shortages, which had increased the burden on everyone.

IX. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Martina Shabram claimed that it was International Pronouns Day. She added that the Board had heard from candidates for open positions on the Budget Committee, and thanked the applicants for their willingness to serve. She was hopeful that the Board would continue to improve in their ability to work together and to communicate with each other and the staff.

Alicia Hays had attended football games at two high schools and was happy to see students participating in extracurricular activities. She shared her past experiences as a new Board member and also a recent encounter at a pickle ball court. She acknowledged that her position as a Board member came with power that required careful consideration in her interactions with the community.

Maya Rabasa thanked special education teachers for meeting with her and other Board members. She also thanked the district for updating the COVID-19 dashboard. She appreciated the district affirming their stance on anti-racism and supporting equity through the passing of Resolution 2020-07. She echoed the urgency expressed by the community for the Board to adopt a policy regarding racial harassment. She approached the recent decisions by the Superintendent as an opportunity to research the district's work on conflict resolution as a way

to better educate herself. As a result she extended an invitation for personal open dialog as a first step towards resolving issues. She shared that if she did not know she had caused harm, she could not remedy it. She added that removing key personnel from meetings delayed the information gathering process, and gave some suggestions for reducing the impact of meetings for senior staff while still providing access to the information necessary to make decisions.

Laural O'Rourke had also attended the meeting with special education teachers and learned the decision-making process for students with IEPs. She was asking for honest discourse and change and determined that removing staff from Board meetings was a way to limit access to information. She spoke of her personal values and her experience as a Black woman. She looked forward to the future work and believed that it was hard work that would be done well.

Gordon Lafer referred to a group that would be giving a presentation to the community in the week to come. Their message had been designed to incite negative attitudes towards many of the issues that the Board had been working to resolve such as racial and social equity. He cautioned the community to recognize that this organization was being funded by wealthy out of state activists. Mr. Lafer continued by emphasizing the importance of respect towards staff in all actions of the Board. He claimed that his concern was that only the expertise of senior staff was being considered in the decision-making process. He said that the Board room was the place for questioning.

Mary Walston agreed wholeheartedly that district staff were experiencing heavy workloads. She shared the example of an elementary school classroom day and all the extra efforts needed because of COVID-19. She added the additional workload necessitated by mandatory state reporting and increased communications. She asked everyone to step back and relax.

X. CONSENT GROUP - ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Approve Personnel Action
Prepared by: Karen Harden, Director of Human Resources
2. Approve Meeting Minutes: August 25, 2021 Board Retreat; August 28, 2021 Board Retreat; September 1, 2021 Board Work Session and Regular Meeting; September 22 Board Work Session and Regular Meeting and September 29, Board Work Session.

Martina Shabram moved and Mary Walston seconded to approve the items in the Consent Group. **The motion passed 7:0.**

XI. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Receive Enrollment Update
Prepared by: Oscar Louriero, Director of Research and Planning

Superintendent Vandercar reported that the district was 121 students below projection: overenrolled at kindergarten and lower in other areas. Lane ESD had recently reported that there were 126 students from the 4J district who had enrolled in homeschooling. Ms. Vandercar reported that the district was not atypical. She believed that as the year progressed, more students would return to in-person school.

Ms. Rabasa asked how much the district received per student. Ms. Vandercar responded that the district received compensation for students enrolled in the year prior, and would report the exact number from Financial Services in the Friday Memo.

2. Receive a Report on the Division 22 Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 2020–21 Assurances

Prepared by: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff; Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services; and Christine Nesbit, General Counsel

Annually, the Board was required to hear the report on Division 22 Standards. Superintendent Vandercar shared the standards in which the district was not compliant for 2021-22:

- Drug and Alcohol education at the K–8 level
- Human Sexuality education at the K–4 level. A corrective action was planned which would require Board approval.
- The district continued to struggle with physical education requirements. Students in high school often chose a different elective and the district did not require PE for every students. Many buildings could not accommodate all students in PE for the time mandated by the state.
- Teacher training related to dyslexia. The district would determine which schools did not have an identified specialist, and provide training.

Superintendent Vandercar concluded by saying that reporting on Division 22 standards required a lot of staff time, but was valuable in keeping the district and Board up-to-date on areas of concern.

Ms. Walston commented that the PE requirement had been a concern for a long time, and many districts struggled to be in compliance. She asked whether it could be added to the legislative agenda to review the requirements at the state level.

3. Bond and Facilities Work Update

Prepared by: Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities and Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer

Superintendent Vandercar gave an update on the district renovations supported by bond funding. She shared that Edison Elementary school would be ready in the summer of 2022 and would vacate the Willard site. She encouraged the Board to visit the Edison site and see the progress.

Construction was continuing at North Eugene High School, but was overbudget due to materials supply shortages. The new building would be ready in the fall of 2023.

The addition at Gilham Elementary School was underway to provide space for increased enrollment, which stood at 585 students. The build was also slightly overbudget due to materials supply shortages. Students would move into new spaces as they became available for use, but the total renovations would be done in fall 2022.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that the classrooms at Camas Ridge Elementary Schools would be 980 sq. ft. which compared positively to the current size. There were gender neutral

single occupancy bathrooms in each cluster. She responded to Ms. Hays' question that there was an ADA path available on the fields. Ms. Hays hoped that no one would feel excluded from the playing fields because of mobility issues. There was further discussion regarding access to all sides of the field. Ms. Vandercar said that she would discuss it further with the build team.

In response to questions from the Board, Superintendent Vandercar reviewed the changes that had been made to Camas Ridge as a result of requests from the community. Mr. Lafer asked that single use bathrooms be designated for students who are transexual, non-binary and gender fluid. He also asked again how many classrooms were smaller than they had been. He added that at the recent community meeting with PiVOT, it had been made to appear that there was still time to give input into additional changes. He was concerned that asking for input when none would be considered created mistrust in the community and could be considered bait and switch. Chair Newman and Ms. O'Rourke agreed that to give the appearance of welcoming input when plans had already been finalized created confusion amongst community members.

Superintendent Vandercar referred to an FAQ on the district website. She added that buildings were being standardized to ensure that bond funds were spent equitably.

She continued that there was a schedule for maintaining the turf fields and shared information about additional projects that would be occurring all over the district, such as upgrading internet and air flow.

Superintendent Vandercar finished her report by reminding the Board and the community that offers of funding made to teams for the purpose of providing upgrades that only served one gender, such as locker rooms for the baseball team, would be turned down. This would not be the case in instances where offers were made that would provide support to teams of both genders, such as upgrading a field, or a basketball court. She recognized that this caused upset in the community, but the district was required to follow the protocols of Title IX.

Ms. Rabasa asked for additional information regarding all projects that were overbudget. Ms. Walston hoped that the district would upgrade the bike and pedestrian paths that provided access around North Eugene High School. She also clarified that the main source of energy for Camas Ridge was electricity, but there was a backup system that ran on natural gas to provide power to necessary systems in the case of an electrical outage.

4. Receive an Update on ESSER III Plan

Prepared by: Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administration Services
and Andrea Belz, Director of Financial Services

Superintendent Vandercar referred to the information in the Board packet. She reported that the district's extensive community engagement process had resulted in an exemplary Student Investment Account (SIA) plan which would be the basis for how ESSER III funds were spent. She outlined how the funds would be spent in areas for summer school programs, afterschool programs, reduced class size, and wraparound support teams. Additional funds would be used to enhance school facilities, technology, instructional support, and transportation, and other district needs.

The district had met with EEA to determine how to support additional staffing needs. Superintendent Vandercar continued that as per the requirement of the ESSER grant, the district reached out to families of migrant workers and incarcerated minors. She said that the Board would not need to take any action on funding allocations or future changes because the district was allocating funding based on the approved SIA.

Superintendent Vandercar responded to questions regarding how the funding was being used based on Board input. She would provide information if the future process for determining allocations for spending turned out to be different. She added that the district had spent considerably more than the 20% required for instruction, which included summer school, afterschool and wraparound programs. Funds had also been allocated to providing meals and classroom supplies and incentives to hire additional transportation staff. Superintendent Vandercar listed additional use of the funds, including professional development.

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Select Executive Search Firm Finalists for Interviews

Prepared by: Christine Nesbit, General Counsel; Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff; Holly Langan, Director of Support Services

Board members Alicia Hays, Gordon Lafer and Maya Rabasa gave their findings and recommendations. Ms. Rabasa said that they sent the information request for proposal to over thirty search firms and received three in return. The subcommittee then reviewed the applications and scored each firm.

It was at this point that the subcommittee realized that they had not honored the request by four search firms to be contacted. The Board, at the meeting on October 6 approved reopening the search which resulted in one additional proposal.

The subcommittee recommended interviewing three out of the four firms: McPherson and Jacobson; Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates; and Alma Advisory Group, on the basis that they were all in the position to find a highly-qualified candidate for a district the size of 4J.

Chair Newman entertained a motion to approve the subcommittee's recommendation. Ms. Hays moved, and Ms. Shabram seconded to affirm the subcommittee's recommendation for firms to interview. Ms. Shabram thanked the subcommittee for their work in bringing forward candidates. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Rabasa referred to the confidential list of questions that the subcommittee recommended using for interviews and asked that the Board approve them with a vote. Ms. Hays moved and Ms. Shabram seconded approval of the seven questions listed. Ms. Hays said that they developed their questions to gather more information on areas that were still of concern after reading the original proposals. Ms. Rabasa shared that they would expect that the members of any search firm that was interviewed in person be vaccinated.

Chair Newman commended the committee on their work. **The motion to approve the seven interview questions listed passed 7:0.**

Chair Newman suggested, and the rest of the Board agreed, to meet virtually for the work session to interview the search firm candidates on October 27. Each Board member would be assigned one question to ask. Ms. O'Rourke asked whether the work session would be video recorded. Superintendent Vandercar said she would find out whether it would be possible and report back.

XIII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Using the Equity Lens

Prepared by: Maya Rabasa, Board Member, and Cydney Vandercar, Interim Superintendent

Superintendent Vandercar introduced the topic of using the current equity lens. She and Board member Rabasa had met to determine which of the different lenses that had been created through the years would be the most effective.

Ms. Rabasa read aloud the statement provided in the Board packet:

The district has adopted an equity stance as a means to target areas for action, intervention and investment. In particular, we believe: Everyone has the ability and right to learn. We have an ethical, professional and legal responsibility to ensure an education system that provides active participation and optimal learning to prepare students for their desired individual futures and to create a thriving community.

Ms. Rabasa then distributed a possible tool for the Board to use. She and Superintendent Vandercar had agreed that the content of the current equity tool was not the issue, it was the format that made it difficult to implement. She referred to the Lane County tool as a model for use in a fast-paced setting. She shared that they felt it would be wonderful to use the same tool across different Lane County organizations.

Ms. Rabasa noted two things: the Lane County Equity Lens did not have a component regarding funding; and they hoped that if the district adopted the Lane County Equity tool, it would add a component regarding the use of time frames to ensure analysis was not overlooked or unfinished.

Both Superintendent Vandercar and Board Member Rabasa hoped that the Board would approve the use of the suggested equity tool at the next meeting. They felt a sense of urgency in renewing the district's commitment to approving and using an equity tool in decision-making.

Ms. Hays commented that the LGBTQ community did not seem to be represented.

Chair Newman expressed concern that the Lane County equity tool did not have a question regarding funding.

Superintendent Vandercar responded that she hoped the Board would approve using the provided equity tool, with revisions to include LGBTQ+ with the understanding that once the Equity Committee was active, they might consider changes.

Mr. Lafer asked whether Lane County had ever found an issue that could not be resolved using the Equity tool. Ms. Rabasa first acknowledged the names of the persons at Lane County who

had created it, and then said that the County was finding it to be successful. Ms. O'Rourke shared her frustration that people saw the use of an Equity tool as only needed when making decisions as opposed to living it as she did. She then shared that Equity tools were best used when addressing specific issues as opposed to large scale problems. She appreciated the questions raised when applying the tool. Ms. Rabasa hoped that it would become part of their way of thinking about decisions, just as using a financial lens did.

Ms. Shabram suggested spending time learning and practicing how to use an equity tool. She added that the Board needed to recognize the issue of institutional trauma created by making promises that are not kept. Ms. Rabasa shared that there were additional materials that would come with the equity tool that would assist the Board in learning to use it effectively.

Board members gave their supportive comments to approve using the Lane County Equity tool. The Board would vote on November 3.

Chair Newman suggested having a work session to learn to use the Equity Tool.

Ms. Rabasa then asked whether the Board might be willing to approve it immediately.

Ms. Hays asked to wait until November 3 to provide Superintendent Vandercar time to share it with staff before the Board approved it. Superintendent Vandercar shared that staff were already urging the Board to approve an equity tool. Mr. Lafer was willing to vote immediately. Ms. Walston asked to wait until November 3. Ms. Shabram also expressed a desire to wait until the next Board meeting, as did Chair Newman, who said that there were changes needed.

Maya Rabasa moved to immediately adopt the Lane County Equity Tool with changes made to add LGBTQ+ and religion to the lens. Ms. O'Rourke seconded the motion. There was continued discussion about whether to vote immediately or wait two weeks.

The Board voted in favor of calling the question. Ms. Rabasa read the motion again. **The motion passed 5:2.**

Ms. Rabasa moved to request the Superintendent to share the Equity Tool with her Administrative Team. There was discussion why the Board needed to tell the Superintendent to exercise her authority. Superintendent Vandercar shared that she wanted to have the Board's urgency behind her actions. Chair Newman offered an amendment to learn from Superintendent Vandercar how the tool would be used. Superintendent Vandercar then shared that she did not need a motion to move forward to start editing the tool and to start using it. Ms. Rabasa withdrew her motion and Ms. O'Rourke withdrew her second. Ms. O'Rourke asked Superintendent Vandercar to share her plan on the rollout and use of the Equity tool at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Walston moved and Ms. Hays seconded to adjourn. Ms. Rabasa moved to adjourn after attending only to item XIV. Ms. Shabram seconded the amendment. **The amendment passed 5:2.** The Board voted unanimously to call the question of the original amendment. **The original motion passed 6:1.**

2. Approve Board Resolution Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities
Presenters: Judy Newman, Board Chair and Martina Shabram, Vice Chair

Tabled until the meeting on November 3, 2021

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

Tabled until the meeting on November 3, 2021

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

Ms. Rabasa suggested adding an item for information to invite Ms. Mica Contreras from Community Alliance of Lane County to present her findings on racial harassment in 4J schools. There was support from the Board to have leadership review the calendar and add the item at a future meeting.

XV. ADJOURN

Chair Newman adjourned the meeting at 10:47 p.m.

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Judy Newman
Board Chair

(Recorded by Eliza Drummond)