

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

Date: November 3, 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 29, 2021, and published in *The Register-Guard* on Monday, November 2, 2021.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

Cydney Vandercar, Superintendent
Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff
Lisa Fjordbeck, Executive Assistant / Board Secretary

MEDIA: KRVM

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Sabrina Gordon, EEA

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board convened in executive session to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection pursuant to ORS 192.660(f).

Executive Sessions are not open to the public. All matters discussed during executive sessions are confidential and shall not be disclosed by any representative of the news media without authorization by the school board. Executive sessions involving deliberations with persons to carry on labor negotiations, or to consider the expulsion of a student or matters pertaining to a student's confidential medical records, are not open to the news media.

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 or via video conference. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chair Newman read the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW

The Board approved the following changes to the agenda, requested by Chair Newman: add ten minutes to the Item for Information, a Discussion of 4J's Plan to Implement the Use of an Equity Tool; remove the Item for Action at a Future Meeting, Approve Board Working Agreements.

Chair Newman asked the Board to honor their three-minute limit when giving their reports and to raise their hand to be called on.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Vandercar reported that COVID-19 vaccinations had been approved for children 5-11. She shared that the best way to have one's child vaccinated was for parents to consult with their pediatrician. 4J would be offering vaccination clinics at various locations in the district and more information was available on the district website at <https://4j.lane.edu>. She added that the district was not mandating vaccinations for students.

Superintendent Vandercar recognized fall sports teams across the district that would be competing in state playoffs over the weekend. She added her congratulations to teams that had been recognized by Oregon School Athletics Association for their academic achievements.

She continued with sadness that more than half of the lunch tents that had been constructed to allow outdoor mealtimes had been vandalized and were not usable. The district would continue to seek options to provide outdoor meal areas. The COVID-19 dashboard had been well received by parents and community members. It was also available on the 4J website. There would be a parent webinar in the upcoming week to share more information.

Families of secondary school students could request to change their learning options for the upcoming new term until November 15. The deadline for elementary students was January 10, 2022.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that staff were working extra hours to cover shortages. She shared details of new hiring in all areas of the district. She would be asking to add two non-instructional days on November 24 and January 14. This would give staff time to plan and prepare. She recognized that no school days were a burden to families and was asking for the decision to be made early in order to allow families to make alternative arrangements for their children.

She recognized that the upcoming season was a time of added strains on the mental health of many community members and urged everyone to do their best to reduce the stress.

VI. COMMENTS BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Newman shared the excitement that she felt when her granddaughter enthusiastically reported that she had attended the Ruby Bridges event, for which Chair Newman was also present. Ms. Newman gave a brief history of how Ruby Bridges was the first African American child to attend school at William Frantz Elementary School at age six. She

continued that Ms. Bridges later committed her life to the advancement of civil rights. Ms. Newman shared several quotes from the event and added that November 14 would be a Ruby Bridges day of dialog. She thanked United Way of Lane County and many community businesses for sponsoring the event, and to the district for making the event accessible to all students.

VII. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

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

Justin McCall expressed his anger over the stress his child was enduring as a result of incidents that occurred at school.

Janet Ayres reported that the additional personal protective equipment required for those who were not vaccinated due to religious exemptions were discriminatory and meant to ostracize. She added that CRT was being added to the curriculum under the guise of social justice reform. She asked that the district move their in-house labor law attorney to a location outside the district grounds. She continued with her demand that the 4J School Board stop all communications with Oregon School Boards Association.

Larry Lewin commended the district for their COVID-19 response to keep everyone safe. He urged the district to begin using the new equity lens immediately. He gave examples of decisions that the Board had recently made where the lens was used or not used properly.

John Simpson considered the recent action taken to move the approval of the equity tool from an item for action as a future meeting to an item for action as inappropriate. He continued that it did not provide adequate time for public comment and review and was an example of bad governance. He added that he was dismayed at the behavior of the board at the recent meeting.

Betsy Boyd congratulated Alicia Hays for being recognized as School Board member of the Year in 2020. Ms. Boyd asked the Board to continue their focus on equity and data and recognize the gains the district had already made. She referred to the inequity that had been created by the school choice system in past years. She planned to send additional examples of inequities across the district.

Harry Sanger expressed his concern that the district was not following the science in terms of their approach to COVID-19 especially as it pertained to children.

Krista Parent added her consternation over the quick approval of the equity tool at the last meeting. She added that leaders in the district needed to provide hope and inspiration, work with collaboration and integrity and make their decisions with children in mind, not create more drama. She shared data regarding turnover in the Superintendent level and asked the Board to recognize that their behavior might impact their ability to find good candidates.

VIII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Sabrina Gordon, President of the Eugene Education Association presented the results of a member survey that gauged educator exhaustion and stress. 90% rated workload as difficult or extremely unmanageable. 80% reported that workload and stress were higher and more than

half shared that the stress was effecting their emotional health. Additionally, more than half were considering leaving the profession. Heightened student needs, lack of time to plan or prepare and additional workload were given as additional stressors.

Ms. Gordon asked for additional time to plan and prepare and offer relief from overwork. She asked the Board to agree to additional non-instructional days.

Mr. Tromba, representative of Managers, Administrators and Professional Supervisors highlighted the work of MAPS members across the district, beginning with those who worked in Human Resources, Financial Services, and the Superintendent's Office. He detailed the additional work that each department had provided during the recent year, and especially highlighted the work of the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent in creating spaces that are safe and friendly and she is the definition of someone who is trauma informed.

IX. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Alicia Hays thanked all the community speakers and recognized that the behavior of the Board had a direct effect on student achievement, which she hoped to improve. She did not have any committee reports.

Gordon Lafer also commended the courage of those who spoke. He commented on the report given regarding teacher workload increase and urged the district to partner with EEA and OSEA to find more opportunities to hear staff concerns and learn the reasons why some were choosing to leave the profession. He gave suggestions of actions that could be taken immediately, such as providing time for preparation and reporting, and offering mentor teachers.

Laural O'Rourke appreciated public discourse. She expressed her frustration that the original equity tool had not been used even though it had been approved years ago. She urged that it was paramount and foundational to all the work of the district. She added that although she recognized that staff needed additional non-instruction days, she was asking that they begin in December to give working families time to make arrangements for the care of their younger students.

Martina Shabram had attended the Ruby Bridges event and was glad that many students did as well. Ms. Shabram reflected how Ms. Bridges had been encouraged by teachers who valued her personhood. She hoped that the Board would support the upcoming resolution encouraging solidarity and support for student identities. She referred to the work of Newberg School District.

Mary Walston thanked Superintendent Vandercar for raising the importance of student mental health. She commended staff for introducing the Source of Strength curriculum and for adding additional training in suicide prevention. She called attention to a report called *the State of Mental Health in America* in which Oregon ranked at the very bottom.

She had attended the Eugene Education Foundation meeting in which they determined which grants would be awarded, and a meeting with the City Manager to discuss partnership regarding the Climate Action Plan. She had attended the North Eugene region planning meeting and the Ruby Bridges event. She added that November was Native American Heritage month.

Maya Rabasa referred to the designation of November as Native American Heritage month, and expressed her concern that designating a specific month to a specific heritage group allowed

people to isolate the promotion of better treatment of those groups and not make it a component of ongoing learning. She added that the best antidote to racism was knowledge. She shared that Tik-Tok had become a powerful tool for youth expression and shifting mindsets and urged the audience to explore it.

X. CONSENT GROUP - ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Bond Project–Edison Elementary School: Furniture Purchase
Prepared by Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities
2. Approve Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2021 and October 13, 2021

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

XI. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

1. Discussion of 4J's Plan to Implement the Use of an Equity Tool
Discussion led by Judy Newman, Board Chair

Chair Newman commended the Board, Superintendent and staff to commit to using the adopted equity tool. She hoped to create a plan for its use. She summarized that at the prior meeting the Board had voted to use the two-page version of the Lane County tool with the addition of LGBTQIA+ and Religion in the text. She referred to a draft at each Board Member's place.

Mr. Rikhoff, Lane County Director of Operations and Chair of the Equity Subcommittee had sent information regarding how the tool had been developed and how it was being used. The two-page form was augmented by a 42-page document that provided additional information and examples.

Chair Newman asked the Board to consider two topics: first, to share questions and requests for clarification on the provided material; and second, to discuss how the tool would be used.

In response to a question from Ms. O'Rourke, Chair Newman said that the Board had voted to approve the short version on page one of the Equity tool, and the expanded version on page two. There was additional information available in the toolkit online, however, the board did . Superintendent Vandercar reported that she, Mr. Williams and Mr. Flores Gutierrez had used the tool at a recent meeting.

Ms. Rabasa clarified that her understanding in making the original motion at the prior meeting was that the toolkit was integral when using the short or long form. She shared that the toolkit gave examples of how to use the equity tool in certain situations.

Mr. Lafer was confused about the need to have the discussion. He reiterated that the Board had voted to use the equity tool at the prior meeting. Ms. Shabram responded that she hoped the Board would discuss how to functionally use the tool. She wanted to make sure that there was a consistent practice.

Ms. Hays thanked Leadership for the opportunity to gain clarification and also for the provided draft. She looked forward to discussing how the Board would use the equity tool.

Ms. Walston hoped to refine the Lane County toolkit for use in situations that arose in the school district, and stressed that all groups should be defined instead of lumping them under the category of “etcetera”.

Ms. O'Rourke said that an equity tool was either used and was foundational to the district, or it was not. She remembered that the Board had agreed to use the tool presented until the district Equity Team created their own. She considered that it should be part of every presentation.

Ms. Rabasa said that the longer toolkit should be used as a resource because it was an equity lens that led with race. She shared her opinion of the word etcetera and hoped the Board would allow terms to grow and change. She considered the conversation of the prior meeting to be meaningful because it pointed out inequity. She asked to invite a team from Lane County to give a presentation on how they were using the equity tool.

Ms. Hays pondered and Mr. Lafer agreed that there should be further discussion about what would be the most effective way in which the equity tool would be used by the Board and the district. Mr. Lafer gave examples of upcoming Board actions to which the tool should be applied. He wanted clarification on the process.

Chair Newman gave her support to Ms. Rabasa's suggestion to Lane County to provide the district with further information about how they were using the equity tool. She clarified that the purpose of their time that evening was to have a discussion and no motions would be made for further action.

Ms. Hays clarified that in her review of the toolkit, some examples fit into an educational model and some might need to be changed.

Ms. Shabram wanted more specifics about how the equity tool would be used, situation by situation so that there were no misunderstandings. She suggested having a work session.

Chair Newman summarized the suggestions: staff would apply the two-page document and additional toolkit in their decisions; a work session to determine more specific actions would be planned; the district would invite Lane County to offer guidance.

Ms. O'Rourke wanted to make sure that it happened soon.

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Appoint Budget Committee Members
Prepared by Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

Ms. Delf reported that there were fifteen candidates for three open positions on the Budget Committee. Information was available to the Board Members in their packets. Ms. Delf asked each Board member to vote for three candidates.

Alicia Hays voted for Berg, Parac and Thessen.

Gordon Lafer voted for DiLiberto, Hawkins and Thessen.

Judy Newman voted for Hawkins, Munro and Parac.
Laural O'Rourke voted for Boulette, DiLiberto and Thessen.
Maya Rabasa voted for Roulette, DiLiberto and Thessen.
Martina Shabram voted for Berg, DiLiberto and Thessen.
Mary Walston voted for Munro, Parac and Thessen.

Mr. DiLiberto and Ms. Thessen received four and six votes respectively and were assigned the two open three-year positions.

Ms. Delf then asked the Board to vote for one candidate to fill the one-year position. Ms. Hays voted for Parac; Mr. Lafer for Hawkins; Ms. Newman for Parac; Ms. O'Rourke for Boulette; Ms. Rabasa for Boulette; Ms. Shabram for Berg and Ms. Walston for Munro. Mr. Boulette and Mr. Parac remained as possible candidates and the others were removed from the ballot.

In the third round of voting, Mr. Boulette received four votes to be assigned to the one-year open position that would expire in 2022. The votes were: Hays for Parac; Lafer for Boulette; Newman for Parac, O'Rourke for Boulette, Rabasa for Boulette, Shabram for Boulette; and Walston for Parac.

After voting concluded, Ms. Shabram moved to appoint Tom Diliberto and Ericka Thessen to the Budget Committee for terms beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2024, and appoint Dakota Boulette for a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2022. Ms. O'Rourke seconded the motion. **The motion passed 7:0.**

2. Select Executive Search Firm

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

Ms. Shabram moved that the Board initiate a second interview process with the two finalist search firms. In response to a question from Ms. O'Rourke, Ms. Shabram clarified that her second motion contained the parameters with which they would proceed. **The motion carried 7:0.**

Ms. Shabram then moved to refer the creation of question to the subcommittee based on the discussion from the executive session. The Board agreed that the subcommittee would still exist of Mr. Lafer, Ms. Rabasa and Ms. Hays. Ms. Walston seconded the motion. Ms. O'Rourke asked to modify the motion to include that both interviewees would be asked the same set of questions. Ms. Rabasa seconded the amendment. Ms. Shabram read the original motion with the amendment: to refer the creation of question to the subcommittee based on the discussion from the executive session with instructions that one set of questions be developed for both interviews. Ms. Shabram clarified that she was in agreement that her original motion now included the amended language. **The amended motion as read passed 7:0.**

Mr. Lafer agreed that he would reconvene the subcommittee.

XIII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

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

Chair Newman introduced the topic by saying that the State Board of Education had adopted a resolution encouraging solidarity and support for student identities and had asked local school districts to follow suit.

Ms. Newman and Ms. Shabram presented their draft of the resolution. Ms. Shabram clarified that the Board would vote on the resolution at a future meeting. Ms. Newman shared that they had added language specific to the school district. She then referred to the highlighted areas and other additions, as shown in the Board Packet.

Ms. Rabasa made suggestions to change the language of the Every Students Belong initiative at a future date to separate it from the State's initiative with a similar name.

Ms. Walston made changes to be incorporated into the draft prior to the second meeting.

2. Consider Revisions to School Calendar Prepared by: Kerry Delf, Chief of Staff

Superintendent Vandercar shared that she was asking the Board to consider making Wednesday, November 24 and Friday, January 14, 2022 non-instruction days. She expressed that the changes were being requested to assist staff in getting caught up with work that had been deferred as a result of staffing shortages due to the effects of COVID-19.

Ms. O'Rourke asked for information regarding attendance on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving for the purpose of determining the impact on certain socio-economic groups (SES).

Ms. Shabram asked how the equity lens had been used in making the decision. Superintendent Vandercar shared that the team making the decision considered who the change would effect the most. She reported that there was typically low enrollment and high teacher absence the day before Thanksgiving and agreed that the decision might effect low SES schools. She shared that all the different facets and groups to be considered made it challenging to apply the equity lens.

Ms. Rabasa gave her support to the idea of giving staff additional non-instructional time, but was concerned that the proposed November 24 did not give working families time to find childcare. She asked whether it was possible to find daycare for some families whose do not have the option to take the day off. Ms. O'Rourke also expressed her concern over children who would be left home alone.

Superintendent Vandercar reported that she would take the Board's concerns back to the team to see whether they could find a date in December. She added that she would provide the data requested.

Ms. Rabasa thanked Superintendent Vandercar for her understanding. Ms. O'Rourke asked whether looking at additional dates ahead of time would be prudent. Ms. Vandercar responded that if they added more, they would need to use instructional time credits. Ms. Rabasa also asked that staff take Hanukkah into consideration when choosing dates.

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

Chair Newman referred the Board to the information in their packet regarding candidates for the OSBA Board of Directors Position and Legislative Policy Committee. Superintendent Vandercar reminded the Board that they would vote as a group, resulting in one ballot cast, for each of the positions.

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

Tabled for a later date.

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

In response to a request by Ms. Walston to revisit the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) in a work session, Chair Newman reported that the CBA would be on the agenda at the next meeting and could be moved to a work session if there was time.

Ms. Walston continued by requesting work sessions on Board Goals and work on climate change. There was agreement amongst the Board to put those items on the agenda and clarification that Leadership would find time on the calendar.

Ms. Rabasa referred to a group of Community members that had begun work on expanding safety efforts in summer of 2020. They had compiled a comprehensive report. She asked whether the group could be invited to give an item for information. She considered it to be timely to the work that was done by SeeChange. Chair Newman suggested that Leadership ask SeeChange to include the community group's work in an upcoming presentation.

Superintendent Vandercar asked Ms. Rabasa to share the report with her. She also asked the Board to clarify who would be asked to make presentations at future meetings.

Ms. Rabasa reminded Leadership of her request to have Ms. Contreras from Community Alliance of Lane County give a report at a future Board meeting.

XV. ADJOURN

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

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Judy Newman
Board Chair

(Recorded by Eliza Drummond)

