

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

Date: March 9, 2022

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. an executive session, and a regular board meeting at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on Friday, March 4, 2022 and published in *The Register-Guard* on Monday, March 7, 2022

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

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

STUDENT ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS:

None

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

None

MEDIA:

KRVM

OTHER:

Monica Santana-Rosen and Sylvia Flowers from Alma Advisory Group

I. BOARD WORK SESSION

Review Superintendent Selection Timeline and Next Steps with Alma Advisory Group
Chair Newman called the work session to order at 5:32 p.m. She reported that all Board members were present via video conference. Monica Santana-Rosen and Sylvia Flowers from Alma Advisory Group were also present. The purpose of the meeting was to incorporate the community feedback into the position description and to discuss the search timeline.

Ms. Hays wished Chair Newman a happy birthday and thanked her for spending her birthday evening at the meeting.

Ms. Rosen said that the job posting that was created earlier was based on discussions with the board and community members. After compiling information from the surveys and meetings, Alma wanted to spend time with the board revising the job description. She wanted to get clear on the competencies of the position.

Ms. Rosen said that the document she was presenting should be all-inclusive of the criteria that Alma had compiled to date. She said that if there had been suggestions for items that were relevant to the job profile and seemed to be missing, board members were asked to bring them up that night. She continued that Alma had one-on-one conversations with each board member to determine their most desired characteristics in a superintendent, and were asked to speak up if they did not see those reflected in the document.

In response to Mr. Lafer's question, Ms. Rosen said that the rubrics for evaluation would be created after the criteria they were discussing that evening were finalized. They would have a conversation about screening processes and next steps and would discuss the rubrics at that time.

The first section in the job description was *Who We Are*. The board reviewed the section and gave the following comments. Mr. Lafer suggested adding a sentence regarding the district's long tradition of school-based decision-making.

Ms. O'Rourke asked to include information about Career Technical Education in the same area of the description as the mention of International Baccalaureate, school choice and language immersion programs.

Ms. Rabasa asked to move the sentence about charter schools to include it in the sentence about the list of other schools.

The group moved on to the next section entitled *What You'll Do*. Ms. Rosen asked for input especially areas that seemed missing or misrepresented. Ms. O'Rourke asked to see language regarding emotional intelligence and maturity beyond "works well with others." In response to Ms. Rosen, Ms. O'Rourke said it should be a characteristic of a candidate that should be woven throughout the job description. Ms. Hays suggested the words "connect effectively."

Ms. Rosen said that the job description was divided between responsibilities and characteristics. She pointed out the section under *Key Responsibilities*, and the section under *The Skills You'll Need to be Successful* which she felt most accurately represented the characteristics Ms. O'Rourke was discussing. She said that the document had been created in order to make an accurate assessment of the skills of a candidate.

Ms. Flowers said that one could look at the document as a list of the "what": what the candidate would do in the district; and the "how": the skills the candidate would need to be successful. The list of "how" would include the soft skills that Ms. O'Rourke was describing. In order to establish a vision, or promote innovation, the candidate needed to be able to build authentic relationships, be an advocate for equity and inclusion.

Chair Newman shared her thoughts about the area called *What You'll Do*, which elevated the relational abilities of the candidate.

Ms. O'Rourke reiterated that she considered the paragraph entitled *What You'll Do* to be a top-level paragraph which included a summary of the skills of a candidate, and she did not see the characteristics of emotional intelligence listed in that area. Ms. Rosen agreed and said she would add a descriptor.

Ms. Rabasa said that she preferred the concept of emotional literacy because it included an understanding of all the different ways that people connected emotionally. She added that it would be important to her to have the concept elevated to the top of the document. It was a cornerstone of the rest of the document.

Mr. Lafer asked to add wording that would emphasize a positive and collaborative relationship with staff. He suggested a sentence that could be included. He also wanted to see a sentence that addressed the mental health of students and staff as a priority. Ms. O'Rourke and Ms. Rabasa agreed. The group worked on adding a phrase to the document.

In response to Ms. O'Rourke's concerns about how the innate qualities of students were sometimes not recognized, the group worked on adding a phrase about improving the learning environment and culture.

Ms. Hays shared her thoughts that she wanted to see the words "acceptance, support, caring." Ms. Shabram said that there were a lot of ways to talk about what they wanted to see in the district, but her impulse was to say fewer things so that she could hear from the candidate what their thoughts were instead of hearing them repeat back what they had read in the job application. Ms. Rosen said that the screening process was rigorous. She wanted to make sure that all board members were supportive of the description so that Alma would be looking for the appropriate candidates for the position. Mr. Lafer asked to add a phrase about supporting teaching that sparks curiosity, strengthens confidence and conveys a joy in learning.

Ms. Hays did not agree about adding site-based decision making. She was concerned that it might conflict with future direction of the district. Ms. O'Rourke did not agree. She said that removing it might limit the candidates that applied. After further discussion, Ms. Rosen suggested coming to an agreement of what site-based decision making meant to everyone. Ms. Rosen summarized that she was attempting to describe what the whole board could agree upon, not her opinion. She did caution that the term school-based decision making could be interpreted in extreme ways by a candidate. She wanted to ensure that all members of the board agreed on the description and on the specific definition of the phrase. Mr. Lafer suggested using words in the application to describe what it meant to the board. Ms. Rabasa felt that school-based decision making had been an important part of the district culture, but she did not want to mention it in the application at the expense of other systems. Ms. Hays shared that the discussion they were having was indicative of her concerns of whether the board agreed on the term.

Ms. Walston said that she supported the document as a whole, and was concerned that the board was getting bogged down in the discussion of site-based decision making. She shared that her interpretation of the board policy Mr. Lafer had mentioned was that the Superintendent was to have a commitment to site-based decision making, not that the Superintendent would do the work themselves. She said that there were very positive changes that had occurred as a result of more centralized decision making.

After prompting from Ms. Rosen to move on because they were running out of time, Chair Newman responded to Ms. Rabasa's suggestion that input from any stakeholder should not be done without considering the impact it might have on equity through the district. She said it was important to recognize that schools served unique regions of Eugene, and that equity should not be confused with equality. Mr. Lafer asked to add a phrase that expressed the concept that the Superintendent would respect educators and school leadership in crafting ways to reach district goals. Ms. Rosen crafted a phrase to fit Mr. Lafer's suggestion.

Ms. Rabasa asked about the sentence referring to experience in the superintendency being preferred. She asked whether the phrase would preclude those who did not have experience. Ms. Hays said that she had asked to have the phrase included, but was comfortable with how it was written. Mr. Lafer asked to add language regarding a track record of reducing time spent on standardized testing and also working collaboratively with teachers, classified staff and school administrators. Ms. Rosen asked for input. Ms. Walston said that she was concerned that the conversation had moved from creating a job description to having a discussion about district policies. She added that she wanted to include the concept of heteronormativity in the list of systemic inequities that the Superintendent would work to reduce.

Chair Newman was concerned about the time. The executive session might need to occur at a later time.

Ms. Rosen asked the board to send their feedback to her directly and she would work to incorporate it before the board meeting later that evening.

After discussion, Chair Newman confirmed that the board would start the special board meeting, explain to the public that the board would go immediately into an executive session, and then return to the public meeting following the executive session.

Chair Newman adjourned the work session.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION – IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE WORK SESSION

The board convened in executive session to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(f).

Executive Sessions are closed 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.

III. SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Chair Newman called the special board meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

IV. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Newman noted that all board members were present via video conference. Joselin Godinez, student representative, was also present.

Chair Newman said that the board would recess into executive session and return to the public meeting immediately afterwards. Ms. Fjordbeck said that the public would be informed that the board would return to the public meeting after their executive session.

Chair Newman reconvened the public board meeting at 9:05 p.m.

V. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

There were no public present to give public comment.

VI. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were no representatives of employee groups present.

VII. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Approve Superintendent Selection Standards, Competencies and Skills

Presenter: Judy Newman, Board Chair

Chair Newman reported that the final version of the superintendent profile had been sent to the board by email. The board took ten minutes to read through the final version.

Vice Chair Shabram moved that the board approve the job profile for the superintendent as presented. Ms. Hays seconded the motion. Ms. Walston asked to include the words Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to clarify the acronym DEI on page 4 under *Skills*.

Ms. O'Rourke moved to amend the motion. Her first request was to change the emphasis on high academic achievement for all students. She said that the goal was not realistic and wanted to acknowledge the strain that placed on student's mental health. Mr. Lafer agreed. He said that the focus should be on providing high-quality education for all students. Ms. O'Rourke agreed that her motion would read as Mr. Lafer suggested. Ms. Hays seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the **amendment passed unanimously 7:0.**

Ms. O'Rourke continued by asking for clarification on the phrase "facilitate and secure buy-in for a clear and compelling vision of innovation and organizational excellence." Ms. Rosen suggested deleting the item because the sentiment was covered in other areas of the document. Ms. O'Rourke made a motion to strike the bullet item. Ms. Rabasa seconded the motion. **The amendment passed unanimously 7:0.**

Ms. O'Rourke then shared her final change request to the first bullet item under the section *Authentic Relationship Builder and Courageous Communicator*. After discussion and suggestions by Ms. Hays and Chair Newman, Ms. O'Rourke asked that the county be added to the list of collaborators, and the phrase community leaders be changed to community, so that the phrase read "Serve as ambassador.... relationships with city, county and community leaders...." **Ms. Hays seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 7:0.**

Mr. Lafer asked to add under the section *What You'll Bring* "a clear track record of working to reduce time spent on standardized tests." Ms. O'Rourke seconded the motion. He said that the concept had been one of the board goals for many years and hoped that it would be added. Ms. Hays said that she was hesitant to add something that had not been recently discussed and clarified. Mr. Lafer said that he wanted to add the item in the least restrictive way. He remembered that it had been discussed in a broad way. Ms. Rabasa said that she supported seeking a leader who was aligned with the intention. Chair Newman wondered whether there

was a different way to word the concept so that it did not restrict candidates from applying. Mr. Lafer suggested changing the wording.

Ms. Walston said that working to reduce time spent on standardized testing had been a goal prior to 2020. It was then put on the back burner so that the board could attend to other goals. She was hesitant to put policy questions in the job description.

Vice Chair Shabram suggested “shares the value of reducing time spent on standardized testing.”

Ms. Walston remembered that the conversation on testing occurred on March 11, 2020 and was then put in the parking lot. Ms. Rabasa reminded the board that the state had just taken a big step towards reducing standardized testing. She considered the topic to be a part of bold leadership. She also considered it to be an equity topic. Ms. Hays supported Ms. Shabram’s suggestion but cautioned that the board had not decided as a group what their policy would be.

The motion as amended by Ms. Shabram passed unanimously 7:0.

Mr. Lafer asked to change the phrase in the section *What You’ll Bring* “experience in the role of superintendent preferred” to add additional language welcoming those who did not have experienced. Ms. Hays and Ms. Rosen suggested “but not required.” Mr. Lafer accepted the friendly amendment. Ms. Hays seconded the motion as amended. **The motion passed unanimously 7:0.**

Mr. Lafer’s last motion was also in the section *What You’ll Bring*. He asked to take out the words “data-driven decision making” so that the phrase read “A clear track record of improving academic outcomes for all students with a keen focus on equity, access and inclusion for all students.” Ms. Hays seconded the motion. Mr. Lafer said that content regarding the subject of analyzing data was included in another area of the document called *Ability to Manage Complex Organizations and Systems*.

Ms. Rabasa supported the suggestion. She said that while she felt that the board was moving in the direction of using data to support equity decisions, historically it had not succeeded in aligning with equity and inclusion.

The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

Chair Newman called for a vote on the original motion to approve the job profile for the superintendent with the six amendments passed.

Ms. Rabasa thanked Ms. Flowers for her work to make all the changes to the document from the evening’s meeting. There was no further discussion. **The motion to approve passed unanimously 7:0.**

2. Approve Superintendent Selection Process Next Steps and Timeline
Presenter: Judy Newman, Board Chair
This item was tabled for March 16, 2022.

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

1. Consider Meeting Schedule and Discuss Dates for Discussion on Board Goals
 1. North Region Plan
 2. District Communication Strategy
- Presenter: Judy Newman

2021-22 Board Meeting Dates:

MARCH: Wednesday, March 16; Wednesday, March 20

APRIL: Wednesday, April 6; Wednesday, April 13; Wednesday, April 20;
Wednesday, April 27

MAY: Wednesday, May 4; Wednesday, May 11; Wednesday, May 18;
Wednesday, May 25

JUNE: Wednesday, June 1; Wednesday, June 8; Wednesday, June 22

2022–23 Board Meeting Dates:

JULY: Thursday, July 1, 2021 – Special Board Meeting

AUGUST: Wednesday, August 4 and Wednesday, August 18 – Regular Board Meetings;
August 25 and 28 – Board Retreat Dates

IX. ADJOURN

Chair Newman adjourned the meeting.

Cydney Vandercar
District Clerk

Judy Newman
Board Chair

(Recorded by Eliza Drummond)