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

Date: October 25, 2023

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 4:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website on October 20, 2023.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Maya Rabasa, Chair
Jenny Jonak, Vice Chair
Tom Di Liberto
Rick Hamilton
Morgan Munro
Judy Newman
Ericka Thessen

STAFF:
Andy Dey, Superintendent
Collina Beard, Chief Administrative Services Officer
Jenna McCulley, Chief of Staff
Sherry Moore, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff
Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Secretary

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:
None.

MEDIA:
KRVM

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

II. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. Work on Development of Board Goals and Superintendent Goals

Chair Maya Rabasa opened the meeting at 4:38 p.m. She led the group in a gathering activity.

Ms. Newman arrived at the meeting at 4:44 p.m.

Vice Chair Jonak shared a PowerPoint presentation. She emphasized that there is a difference between board goals, district goals, and superintendent goals. She highlighted an Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) pyramid graphic that was provided in a handout to other board members. She noted the difference between a goal and a strategy. For example, if the goal is to transfer each child to school safely, the strategy is to provide adequate training for drivers.

Vice Chair Jonak informed the board that the superintendent goals will align with district goals but there may be some additional pieces, like professional development or mentorship, that go beyond district goals. Board goals are what board members want to achieve for themselves, such as professional development, reconsidering board processes, and other practices.

Chair Rabasa addressed the group, sharing her report on 4J values, vision, and mission. She noted the importance of the identified values (equity, excellence, and innovation) aligning with the board goals, especially when conducting work around strategic planning. She highlighted the vision: that every student is connected to the community and empowered to succeed. She highlighted the mission: that every student is known by name, strength, and need. She stated that something the board should do is assess the values, vision, and mission language, and determine if the language still feels appropriate as the overarching concept. She underscored the importance of every board member coming to an agreement about what language should be included in the values, vision, and mission.

Ms. Munro stated that what's missing to her is "providing a great education and being a great place to work."

Ms. Newman added that what's missing to her is "safety and belonging."

There was general agreement that the board approves of the values, vision, and mission as stated, but they may benefit from revisiting the language, and potentially implementing a strategic planning process in the future.

Superintendent Dey added that he thinks it's important that the values, vision, and mission are revisited annually as they historically have changed given the context of what's happening in the district.

Chair Rabasa introduced the topic of reviewing past and current goals. She handed out 2021-2022 board goals, proposed 2022-2023 board goals, and the proposed Superintendent goals. She requested that the group first focus on the board goals.

There was agreement about how the high number of goals previously made it challenging for the BOD to accomplish all of them and the importance of selecting an optimal range.

Ms. Newman stated that it is good to make measurable goals.

Ms. Munro noted that some of the previous goals appear more like ongoing operations for the board, which is helpful, but is perhaps not a goal. She talked about board goals being achievable by board members.

Chair Rabasa agreed with Ms. Munro's comment. She added that although the board may be interested in what the district is doing, the question is how to frame support for that work as a board goal.

Superintendent Dey shared his opinion that the board will work on a set of goals, and they will always be invested in and informed about what the district does on a day-to-day basis, but the board goals are not necessarily as likely to impact the experience of the student today as they are to deliver on promises five years from now. He offered passing the operating levy as an example.

Mr. Di Liberto stated that the board consider identifying two kinds of goals: those that are continuous (2+ years) and those that are immediate (1 year).

Referencing a handout, Chair Rabasa asked board members to view Superintendent Dey's district goals for 2022-23. A short discussion ensued about board members' reflections on Superintendent Dey's previously proposed goals.

Referencing a handout, Chair Rabasa asked board members to view Superintendent Dey's current district goals for 2023-24.

Superintendent Dey oriented board members to the 2023-24 district goals handout. He identified 3 goals, each with 3 or more strategies listed to assist in achieving those goals.

As an example, Superintendent Dey pointed out the strategy to "cultivate stronger communication channels" of supporting the goal of "meaningful engagement and timely communication." He said that the district, for the first time, hired an organizational Ombuds to support this strategy and goal.

Superintendent Dey stated that he intends to hear what the board's goals are, because he wants as much alignment and synergy as possible between Superintendent and board goals. One of the Superintendent goals is to measure quantitatively how to set up meaningful conversations to start a strategic plan. He said the use of a strategic plan is foreign to many people who have been in the district for a while. Superintendent Dey suggested that in order for staff/board members to better understand the superintendent/district's decision-making process, they should ideally engage in a conversation and/or training with the Decision Education Foundation.

Superintendent Dey emphasized that he wants to "level up" on the equity stance. He said that the public comments that were made at the last regular board meeting were indicative of the need to have a broader conversation about what we mean when we say equity, and what system we have in place to continually get feedback from the community about whether we are hitting the mark. He also noted his desire for developing a more systematic approach to faculty retention.

Mr. Hamilton asked if the district does exit interviews.

Superintendent Dey responded that they have done exit interviews in the past, however, there have been no summary reports indicating why employees leave or stay. He said the Ombuds could potentially help fulfill this need.

Ms. Munro expressed that she would want more information about this before an Ombuds took on that role.

Chair Rabasa pointed out the possibility of employee groups doing the exit interviews.

Chair Rabasa led the group in a stimulating activity.

Ms. Munro outlined the methodology for board idea sharing. Each board member was asked to share their brainstormed goal ideas, while Ms. Munro wrote them on flip charts with three categories: board goals, superintendent goals, and district goals. The results were as follows:

Board goals: levy/bargaining, increase clarity and transparency to all stakeholder groups, lead by example, set board/district up for success, community engagement, transparency and trustworthiness, quality of communication, partner with community organizations to hear diverse voices, tell our story proactively and engagingly, cultivate a culture that doesn't inhibit the success of strategies, communication, build relationships and trust with stakeholders, build a nurturing culture, grow/develop into effective advocates as a board, balance support and accountability.

Superintendent goals: be more visible in the community, be known to and by our community, strong management and leadership, quality of communication.

District goals: cultivate wellness, safety, and belonging for students and staff, develop a system wide mental health model that prioritizes relationships, create a metric for teacher and staff retention, family participation in their child's education with a focus on the transition years, a safety plan for the district, an inclusion model (special ed in regular classrooms), expand career and technical education (CTE), improve reading scores for 3rd graders, establish an employee exit interview process, expand on the restorative and transformative justice model, improve outcomes and experiences for students with disabilities, define equity goals and address them effectively, a system of accountability for families preparing students for school, address behavioral issues in students, campus specific contingency/safety plan for emergencies, working relationship with law enforcement, gender inclusion plan and community engagement, school based mental health centers, literary follow through, staffing, quality of communication, tell our story in better ways, improve public comment process, positively and proactively support disabled students in special education (SPED) and students in individual education programs (IEPs), empower students to advocate for themselves, better staff training, professional development for staff, a stakeholder driven approach to diversity and equity including prioritizing lived experience, ensure a safe and supportive reporting structure, centralized library support and equal budgets, afterschool programs for kids/working parents, neighborhood schools feeling like community centers, and long term plan for/understanding purpose of affinity groups.

Unclassified goals: ensure budgeting practices align with values.

For future discussion: examine the overuse of standardized testing.

Ms. McCulley addressed the BOD, in the context of examining the overuse of standardized testing, stating that the BOD is the primary advocacy tool. She suggested what may be missing is an advocacy piece for standardized testing. For example, representation at the Oregon legislature. Ms. McCulley noted that advocacy is also a route to connecting meaningfully with the community.

Ms. Thessen requested the goals be listed, and then the BOD can rank the suggestions that were made.

Ms. Munro said she wanted to hear from the district about which of their suggestions are already in progress.

Mr. Di Liberto offered that some of the suggestions can be consolidated.

There was discussion among the group about the importance of identifying the difference between a goal and a strategy.

Superintendent Dey offered another example of the difference between a goal and a strategy. He said if “develop system wide mental health model that prioritizes relationships” is the strategy, then “cultivating wellness” is the goal.

Ms. Moore offered to prepare the goals and strategies list for the BOD to review.

Chair Rabasa mentioned the things that the BOD is required to do every year: approve working agreements, establish board goals, appoint budget committee members, approve budget, Superintendent evaluation, board self-evaluation, elect leadership, and individually assigned committee work.

Superintendent Dey responded to Ms. Munro’s previous question asking which of the suggested goals are already in progress. He said most of the Superintendent/district goals are already in progress.

Mr. Hamilton asked if there are ways to measure the progress of the Superintendent/district goals.

Superintendent Dey responded yes.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of programs that are developed or adopted to serve the strategies.

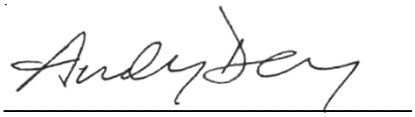
Vice Chair Jonak pointed out that the goals should be refined to reflect *how* they are approached, for example, building on equity and inclusion through the lens of engagement with stakeholders.

Chair Rabasa and Vice Chair Jonak offered to reach out to board members to schedule a time to revisit board goals at an upcoming BOD meeting.

The next BOD work session and regular session is scheduled for Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

III. ADJOURN

Chair Rabasa adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m.



Andy Dey
District Clerk

Maya Rabasa
Board Chair

(Recorded by Laura Campbell, LCOG Minutes Recorder)
Approved on 12/06/2023