

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

Date: February 21, 2024

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular board meeting at 7:00 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 February 16, 2024.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Rabasa
Vice Chair Jenny Jonak
Morgan Munro
Tom Di Liberto
Rick Hamilton
Judy Newman
Ericka Thessen

STAFF:

Andy Dey, Superintendent
Jenna McCulley, Chief of Staff
Matt Brown, Finance Director
Arthur Hart, Director of Transportation
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology
Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities Management
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer
Brooke Wagner, Director of Human Resources
Kat Lange, Executive Director Youth and Family Support
Tana Shepard, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) (online)
Sarah Ruggiero Kirby, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)
Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board
Sherry Moore, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff

OTHER GUESTS:

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Carmen Gonzalez Valle, Sheldon High School (online)
Parker Anderson, North Eugene High School
Nellie Schmitke-Rosiek, South Eugene High School
Gabriel Aros, ECCO High School

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Counselor Association (OSCA)
Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)

MEDIA:

KRVM

KEZI

Eugene Weekly

I. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

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

Chair Maya Rabasa called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. She said the names of the board members who were present. Superintendent Dey led the flag salute, and Chair Rabasa read the land acknowledgement statement.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dey introduced the Eugene School District 4J Student Climate Justice Team, including four Eugene School District 4J student representatives and two teachers, Sarah Ruggiero Kirby and Tana Shepard.

1. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

The Eugene School District 4J Student Climate Justice Team provided a PowerPoint presentation.

The goal of the Climate Justice Team is to promote climate change education, climate justice, green careers, and ways to apply a sustainable lifestyle; and to empower, educate, and prepare students to adapt for their inherited future on the planet.

The Climate Justice Team highlighted some of their work to date: a student-led 2019 Climate Education Summit, a 2021 presentation to the Council of State Science Supervisors, a 2022 presentation to the City Club of Eugene, collaboration on an annual clothing swap, work on a climate education bill, an alternative transportation lesson, Earth Day activities, partnering with local organizations, and providing support for green clubs across the district.

Student representatives provided insight about climate justice activities at their respective high schools. They expressed appreciation for steps the district has taken: an idle free policy, K-12 composting, and free bus passes as part of the safe routes to school program. They identified Climate Justice Team future goals, including, but not limited to: engaging more students in climate issues and action, meeting with the school board four times per year, forming a collaborative Climate Action Plan, and forming a Climate Youth Advisory Council. The Climate Action Plan includes the following subgoals: honor City of Eugene's Climate Action Plan 2.0 Agreement, promote idle free policy widely, integration of climate change into all subject areas K-12, robust education to support waste stations in K-12 cafeterias, work towards reusables in secondary school cafeterias, coordination across the departments toward sustainable practices for operation.

The Climate Justice Team responded to questions and received comments from the board of directors (BOD).

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Sheridan Schilling provided a report from Churchill High School. She reported that it is Black Excellence Week and many activities, organized by the Black Student Union, have been taking place. The Churchill “Fire and Ice” Winter Formal is on Saturday, February 24. Auditions for the play “Mean Girls” have begun. There is a volleyball tournament happening on March 2 to raise money for the Children’s Miracle Network. Spring athletics are starting up. Ms. Schilling reported concerns about restrooms at Churchill High School. She said vaping and smoking occurring in the bathrooms during all times is creating a hostile environment. She said many students feel as though they cannot enter to use the restrooms. She reported that students are hoping for a strategy. Ms. Schilling expressed her desire for serious action to be taken by the board.

Representative Parker Anderson provided a report from North Eugene High School. February 22 is the Gathering of Champions, a ceremony to honor 250 North students presented with awards for having a GPA of 4.0 or higher, perfect attendance, and other notable accomplishments. The first unified basketball game was held on February 20. Five wrestlers are going to state. Mr. Anderson mentioned the upcoming Future Build program. He said the spring musical “Into the Woods” is opening in May and that the Performing Arts Center reopened after construction was completed from damage from the ice storm. The project was completed weeks before the predicted date, which, Mr. Parker reported, was hugely appreciated.

Nellie Schmitke-Rosiek provided a report from South Eugene High School. Saturday, February 24, is South’s Hall of Fame fundraiser. This semester, lunch was extended by five minutes. She thanked the board for making the change and said students are benefiting from it. Many seniors are currently in the process of applying for Financial Aid. She reported that there is concern about the lack of information about how and when to apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) and other scholarships. She reported that some seniors are feeling lost, not knowing the standard procedures and deadlines. She requested that information about workshops and tutorials be shared more broadly with students, and earlier, so that students can access them.

Carmen Gonzales Valle provided a report from Sheldon High School. She said their Winter Formal took place in early February. Juniors are currently completing state testing. She said most students who took the test felt discouraged about taking their time because they were missing out on valuable class time. There are concerns about the effectiveness of the new hall policy. The new schedule has not made a great difference; however, students are grateful for the extra five minutes of lunch.

Gabriel Aros provided a report from ECCO High School. He reported that students do not like the lunchroom. He added that ECCO has a different schedule than most, and that their Wednesday activities are completed online.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY AUDIENCE

Rebecca Gourgey is a Special Education teacher at South Eugene High School. She said this is the season of forecasting and that it is the first time in her fourteen years that she is thrilled to forecast. She works with students who represent the range of all students. She said historically the pathways set up at South have been exclusively for

those who are college bound and academically experienced. For those who do not want that pathway it has been very limiting. Ms. Gourgey said this year the options and opportunities available have validated and honored a wider range of students. She provided an example of two promising art students who are now “thrilled” to plan for the next year. She thanked Superintendent Dey for his vision regarding CTE programs. She thanked the BOD.

Valerie Blood is a parent volunteer in Special Education. She has two children in two different schools within the district. This is her third time presenting to the school board since November 2024. As a parent of two children on the spectrum, Ms. Blood asserted that the district is not meeting the communication needs of students, staff, and teachers. She said the district needs full-time educational assistants and support staff that can support the teachers. Without that, we are going to lose experienced teachers and staff. She stated that the recent approved purchase of a new administrative building baffles her. She said teachers and staff are at an absolute breaking point. Ms. Blood listed some issues currently facing schools: old buildings, inadequate restrooms, leaky roofs, lack of space, old technology, etc. She said that both of her children’s schools have to fundraise for things like field trips and school supplies. She questioned what the board is going to do to fix the many problems that exist right now. She questioned how the board is going to meet the communications needs of students, staff, and teachers. She urged that supports be put in place for teachers and support staff.

Kristina Shaughnessy is a school bus driver for the district. She said that 8 years ago, when she started, there were 150 bus drivers, and now there are just 80 bus drivers. She said the bus driver shortage is expected to be long term, and that staff in the transportation department are exhausted and stressed. She said that due to the shortage, mechanics drive routes. Two out of six mechanics quit as a result. All staff members in the department are in crisis and they are often required to drive. Ms. Shaughnessy reported that although staff want to help in an emergency, the situation is not manageable, as the emergency is not ending. She mentioned that many bus routes have combined and as a result, some students are on the bus for an hour or more. She added that behavior problems occur, and are increasing, which is affecting bus safety. She stated that the transportation department is in crisis with its staffing problems. She urged the board to help find a long-term solution.

Denise Velasco is a guidance counselor and teacher at Network Charter School. The school is celebrating 20 years and wishes to recognize Eugene School District 4J for their support. All school board members are invited to Network Charter School’s 20 Year Celebration on March 8, 2024, for an evening of “food, fun, and friendship” to kick off another 20 years.

Les Phillipo, instructor at Sheldon High School, joined by his wife, voiced concern over the state of mental health in the district and shared their personal experience. The Phillipo’s lost their daughter to suicide three years ago. Today, their daughter would have been a junior at Sheldon High School. This year alone, Mr. Phillipo has witnessed multiple students struggle to the point of attempting suicide. He said it is a stark reminder of the mental health concerns, stating that they’re not just statistics, they are real, and affecting our students. He reported that counselors are doing multiple suicide assessments nearly every day. The current resources for counseling are falling short of

meeting the needs of our students. He cited increasing needs coupled with the same, or less, resources. Students who are cutting and self-harming have been on a list to see counselors for seven weeks. He said there is a school psychologist on campus once per week, but they reportedly do not see students. He stated that Sheldon and South high schools do not have health clinics, as other high schools do. Mr. Phillipou urged securing a full-time mental health counselor, transparency about how to access mental health support in the district, and removal of barriers, such as offering virtual counseling.

Thomas Daniel Goad is a mechanic for the district. He said the transportation department has been in emergency status since before the pandemic. He reported that bus drivers are working 60 to 80 hours per week, 6 days per week. Mr. Goad said he has witnessed several bus drivers leaving to take other transportation jobs due to scheduling and staffing issues within the district. He urged the board to take action before the problem worsens.

Barbara Holmes is a bus driver trainer for the district. She reported working 12-hour days due to lack of bus drivers. She said she and other district personnel, from mechanics to office staff, are currently covering up to 21 routes. She asserted that vehicle maintenance, grounds, and facilities are not getting completed; and that bus driver training is inadequate due to lack of time. She urged action and suggested providing incentives and better wages for district bus drivers.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Counselors Association (OSCA) President, addressed the board by stating that she is at a loss at how to support classified employees. She said not just in the transportation department, but with safety in general. She said there are issues with how things get reported when people get hurt. During a recent short legislative session there was a proposed law change for reporting. HB 4077 A establishes an updated, streamlined process for reporting. She said with the current system there is general confusion about the process, and the result is under reporting. In reference to the transportation department's staffing shortages, Ms. Jenkins-Easton urged incentives.

VIII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Di Liberto said he went to Churchill High School's Courageous Conversations class and was impressed with the number of skills the students have. He attended a Grow Your Own Ignite program and reported that it was a powerful experience. Mr. Di Liberto attended a Unified basketball game at North Eugene High School. He mentioned that Unified basketball games will be occurring throughout the district.

Ms. Thessen reflected on recent statistics from the New York Times, stating that hate crimes have nearly doubled in schools between 2018 and 2022, affecting Black, LGBTQ, Jewish students the most. The data revealed that schools are the third most common location for hate crimes. She underscored the importance of reporting biased crimes within the district. Ms. Thessen attended the Chinese Language Immersion School's Lunar New Year celebration. Ms. Thessen recently visited McCornack Elementary School.

Ms. Newman said she is committed to ensuring that all high schools in the district have school-based health centers. She acknowledged the transportation department issues,

stating that she recognizes the crisis they are having. Ms. Newman reported from the legislative committee that their focus has been on the summer funding bill and they are hoping the 50 million dollars will be funded this short session, with \$4.14 million for the district. Ms. Newman attended the Chinese Language Immersion School's Lunar New Year celebration. In honor of Black History Month, she shared a brief history about the influential Carter G. Woodson.

Mr. Hamilton attended the Chinese Language Immersion School's Lunar New Year celebration. In reference to Black History Month and the Martin Luther King Jr. march, he expressed that he would love to see his community strive to do more. He reminded the audience that historically, individuals were literally putting their lives on the line. He acknowledged that the district has had a history of having racial issues. He said he looks forward to better communication, respecting differences, and moving forward. In response to the evening's public comments, Mr. Hamilton said we hear you and we really do care.

Chair Rabasa acknowledged the transportation department issues. She reported that she attended the Courageous Conversations class, the Chinese Language Immersion School's Lunar New Year celebration, and the Grow Your Own Ignite program. She acknowledged the need to engage more with professionals given the current mental health crisis in the district.

IX. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING AND WORK SESSION MINUTES FOR 01.10.2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR 01.24.2024 AND BOARD WORK SESSION AND REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR 02.07.2024

No discussion was held.

2. SHELDON HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING/COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER

No discussion was held.

3. CONFIRMATION OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FROM THE 2023 SESSION (2ND READ)

No discussion was held.

4. APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) BETWEEN EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J AND OREGON SCHOOL EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION EUGENE CHAPTER 1 (OSEA)

No discussion was held.

5. POSTPONEMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGE ADOPTION

No discussion was held.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to approve the items on the consent agenda. Seconded by Mr. Di Liberto. **The motion passed unanimously with Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor, 7:0:0.**

X. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE MID-YEAR/QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Matt Brown presented the mid-year/quarterly finance report. He explained that overall, the district is on a good trajectory. They expect to see some savings by the end of the school year due to vacancy rates and underspending.

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. PROPOSED BOARD MEETING DATE CHANGE FROM MARCH 20, 2024 TO APRIL 03, 2024

Chief of Staff Jenna McCulley proposed a board meeting date change from March 20, 2024 to April 3, 2024.

Chair Rabasa explained that a vote for the proposed change will take place at their next board meeting.

2. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Chair Rabasa presented a complaint resolution.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved that for the complaint dated October 11, 2023, the board finds that there was insufficient evidence presented to prove a finding of racial or gender discrimination, but the allegations of retaliation following protected activity are sustained, and a letter of reprimand will be placed in the responding parties personnel file, and responding party will be required to attend training on retaliation. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **The motion passed unanimously with Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor, 7:0:0.**

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE 4J BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vice Chair Jonak introduced a discussion about community engagement with the 4J BOD, stating that they have wanted to find ways for the board to engage with the community. Some of the ideas exchanged are having a format for the board to meet with the community other than just at the regular board meeting. The location would rotate throughout the community. They are proposing having four opportunities in the month of April for the public to meet with board members at local coffee shops, restaurants, and 4J schools. The meetings would not have a designated topic, but rather be an opportunity to meet with board members and have casual conversations. She noted that there may be other formats they may want to consider for the Community Engagement Committee.

Ms. Newman asked if they are going to approve a Community Engagement Committee to do said work.

Chair Rabasa responded that they are hoping to approve a committee, and if not then they will appoint board members to take on the task.

Ms. Newman asked if the meetings are going to be publicly noticed.

Chair Rabasa responded that the meetings will not be publicly noticed, but they will be publicized. She added that the listening sessions will be publicly noticed.

Ms. Munro suggested offering two to four, instead of four, opportunities in the month of April. She shared her perspective that the turnaround time might be more realistic by picking fewer things and doing them well.

Chair Rabasa clarified that one reason they specified four is so that they'd have one opportunity per region.

Ms. Newman added that the topic is new to her, and voting on it feels like a lot, however she is in favor of forming a committee.

Chair Rabasa responded that what they are discussing is the concept, the details will be the responsibility of the committee. This would be voting on giving the committee permission to start the process.

2. BOARD COMMITTEES: ESTABLISH AND ASSIGN REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Rabasa introduced the topic of establishing and assigning representatives for board committees.

She said that at the February 7, 2024, work session, the board discussed various committees that they might want to add, including a Community Engagement Committee, Policy Committee or a district work group. Through that conversation, board members indicated which board, if any, they were interested in serving as a representative.

The following board members indicated their interest in the Community Engagement Committee: Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, and Chair Rabasa.

The following board members indicated their interest in the District Policy Work Group: Ms. Munro, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Newman.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved that the board designate Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Newman to serve as liaisons for a district work group on policy. Seconded by Ms. Thessen. **The motion passed unanimously with Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor, 7:0:0.**

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved that the board form a Community Engagement Committee that will be an ongoing committee, in the current year, comprised of members Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, and Chair Rabasa. Seconded by Mr. Hamilton. **The motion passed unanimously with Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor, 7:0:0.**

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved the Community Engagement Committee be charged with implementing the board goals previously approved. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **The motion passed unanimously with Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor, 7:0:0.**

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

Ms. Thessen suggested an update (i.e. item for information) about the state of mental health in the district.

Superintendent Dey suggested holding the mental health discussion in a work session.

Ms. Munro requested information about the inclement weather replacement days. She suggested a Friday memo.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Rabasa adjourned the regular meeting at 9:29 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Maya Rabasa
Board Chair

*(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 04/03/2024*