

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

Date: March 6, 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 March 2, 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
Jeff Johnson, Director of Elementary Education
Steve Menachemson, Director of Technology
Brooke Wagner, Director of Human Resources
Chris Mitchell, Cal Young Middle School Principal
Chris Dobson, South Eugene High School Music Teacher
Hobie Blackhorn, Camas Ridge Elementary School Principal
Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Secretary
Sherry Moore, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff

OTHER GUESTS:

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Carmen Gonzalez Valle, Sheldon High School
Parker Anderson, North Eugene High School
Melanie Mack, Eugene International High School
Gabriel Aros, ECCO High School (online)

Katie Carroll, Housing Analyst, City of Springfield
Nancy Buffum, Eugene Education Foundation (EEF)

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

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

MEDIA:

KRVM

KVAL

Register Guard

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 7:03 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

Ms. Newman requested to add an Item for Action to vote to approve the cost of the Eugene voter's pamphlet for the levy.

Chair Rabasa proposed to move the Item for Action at a Future Meeting to follow the Consent Agenda.

Chair Rabasa proposed to add an Item for Action to authorize two board members to be liaisons with an attorney for the investigation processing a complaint received on February 24, 2024.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dey shared a message of appreciation for classified employees during Classified Employee Week, the first week in March. He said the school district could not function without the dedication, care, and professionalism of classified employees, stating that they serve as educators, as mentors, and sometimes as miracle workers. He added that classified staff are a vital part of the organization and thanked them for their commitment to the mission of public education.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Sheridan Schilling provided a report from Churchill High School. She reported that more than sixty students visited the state capital in Salem to observe the house and senate during their session. During their visit, students toured the capital, witnessed bills being passed, and met Senator James Manning JR. She gave an update about winter athletics, stating that five of their winter sports teams ranked in the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) 5A academic all-state teams for grades. Boys' and girls' swimming ranked number two in the entire state with a GPA average of 3.93 and 3.73, respectively. Three boy wrestlers did well at state. Both choir and drama will be sending students to state. She mentioned that Mr. Hamilton attended Courageous Conversations at Churchill. Ms. Schilling thanked classified employees, stating "students at Churchill recognize all that you do."

Representative Carmen Gonzales Valle provided a report from Sheldon High School. Last week was the end of Black History Month and they held Spirit Week to honor it. They are currently recognizing staff during Classified Employee Week. There is a unified basketball game on March 8, a Run for the Shamrock Fundraiser on March 9, a Choir Concert on March 13, and a Neurodivergent Festival on March 15. She reported that

Sheldon has been providing grab and go snacks between first and second periods. Ms. Gonzales Valle said she visited Monroe Middle School. She reported connecting with students. She learned about their activity night, held in February. Students reported that because it was not a dance, they felt less pressure. She noted that middle school affinity clubs happen on Wednesday's in-between different periods, and that the school is taking measures and providing more education to stop racial slurs. Students reported feeling that there should be more school sponsored sports for students in need.

Representative Parker Anderson provided a report from North Eugene High School. The boys' basketball team is headed to playoffs and hopefully to state. Students are being given the opportunity to ride on rooter bus to support the teams. The corridor program theatre production has shows March 14-16. North seniors are finalizing their college plans. Mr. Anderson thanked the college and career center and counselors.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY AUDIENCE

Shira Fadely, a teacher on special assignment for K-12 music, highlighted March as Music in our Schools Month. She described the impact that music, and music instructors, have in the district. She noted that historically, every middle school had a band, choir, and orchestra. Due to resource problems that changed, but they are trying to get back. Music now happens twice per week at the elementary school level, and they have a partnership with Eugene Symphony.

Valerie Blood is a 4J parent volunteer of two children in a special education program. She thanked Superintendent Dey and Director of Student Services Seth Pfaefflin for meeting with her earlier in the week. She reiterated her concern that the district is not currently meeting the needs of neurodivergent children due to lack of staffing and space. She stated that it violates the rights of students and does not meet the requirements of section 504. She provided examples of recent interactions that resulted in disrupted instruction time. Ms. Blood urged the district to listen to the requests of special education teachers and put supports in place for our students.

Katie Jacobson is a 4J parent of one child at Edgewood Elementary. She cited safety and leadership concerns at Edgewood. She thanked the board for prioritizing their safety. She urged the board to take careful consideration when looking at next year's budget, specifically around school support staff and their training. She said the struggles to get funding for support staff training is a serious problem throughout the district. She suggested an incentive program for Educational Assistants (EAs). She urged significantly increasing the allotment for more training and trained support staff in elementary schools.

Roscoe Caron is a retired 4J middle school teacher and a member of the Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE). He referenced two recent presentations in Eugene by researcher and author Rick Stiggins. He shared Mr. Stiggins perspective that 20 years of standardized testing has been damaging to students. He cited Mr. Stiggins latest book, "Give Our Students the Gift of Confidence." After ten years of working on the issue, Mr. Roscoe feels hopeful that 4J is turning a corner. He said he appreciates the open mindedness and support he's gotten regarding the possibility of a proficiency-based pilot school at Kelley Middle School, modeled on Ashland Middle School.

Carrie Copeland spoke on behalf of Superintendent Dey. She requested the board share information more transparently. She cited lack of trust in the process and decision-making. Ms. Copeland explained that twenty-five years ago Superintendent Dey was her supervisor. She found him to be a champion for her and other female staff. She noted many improvements within schools: scheduling, innovative content and programming, better communications, social and mental health services, and food assistance programming. She requested that the board release the contents of the investigation into Superintendent Dey and clarify their process to the community.

Megan Shultz referred to several letters she sent to the board in support of Superintendent Dey. Since 2017, she has witnessed positive changes in the district under Superintendent Dey's leadership, including, but not limited to, Fifteenth Night, a student resource room at South Eugene High School, enhancing mental health services, partnering with Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), partnering with Eugene Public Library, and his vision for the CTE program, Future Build. She thanked Superintendent Dey.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President Lisa Jenkins-Easton stated that their association will continue bringing forth the same issues. They held a recent listening session for employees who shared their struggles and hope for things to be better. She said that during Classified Employee Week, they will visit a record 27 district sites.

Eugene Education Association (EEA) President Sabrina Gordon gave a shout out to classified employees. She recognized the incredible work of OSEA elevating issues and appreciates the willingness to collaborate with them. She said they are talking about the tremendous need for better systems to support students' social and emotional health. She said together they can more effectively elevate the needs of students.

Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Executive Director Nancy Buffum stated their unanimous endorsement of the levy renewal, stating that investing in community support in 4J schools is EEF's mission. She clarified that the renewal is not a new tax, and it provides an estimated \$25 million per year to district schools. She urged everyone to vote in support of the levy. Ms. Buffum announced that applications to next year's educator project will open April 8. The grantees will be able to apply for funding for next year's programs in the spring and receive awards to begin their projects in the fall. She mentioned the EEF Gala on March 21.

VIII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Di Liberto recognized Classified Employee Week, acknowledging the efforts of classified employees. He expressed deep gratitude and admiration.

Ms. Newman echoed an enthusiastic message of appreciation and gratitude for classified staff: food workers, transportation, grounds, maintenance, technology, teaching, and reception. She recently attended many groups and PTOs, noticing a strong commitment and interest in public education. She thanked the community for their support of schools.

Ms. Thessen reflected on her visit to Creative Currents, a digital media and graphic design CTE program, where she engaged with students by asking questions. She said the students described the program as “lifechanging” for them. Ms. Thessen said she cannot speak highly enough of the district’s CTE programs.

Mr. Hamilton shared that he went to unified basketball game at South Eugene High School. He cited the importance of special needs students participating in athletic activities. Mr. Hamilton and Vice Chair Jonak met with KidSports. He visited Churchill High School and participated in Courageous Conversations.

Chair Rabasa acknowledged Classified Employee Week and encouraged everyone to celebrate classified employees not only during the designated time.

IX. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J AND EUGENE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

No discussion was held.

2. APPROVE CONTRACT FOR INSURANCE BROKER/AGENT OF RECORD

No discussion was held.

3. APPROVE ANNUAL PERSONNEL ACTIONS

No discussion was held.

4. APPROVE OUT OF STATE FIELD TRIP FOR 2 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ATTEND THE NATIONAL ORATORY RETREAT THROUGH FORD THEATRE EDUCATION PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON D.C.

No discussion was held.

5. APPROVE OUT OF STATE FIELD TRIP FOR THE SOUTH EUGENE CONCERT CHOIR AND DORIAN'S JAZZ CHOIR TO DISNEYLAND PARK IN ANAHEIM, CA FOR MUSICAL PERFORMANCES AND EDUCATION

No discussion was held.

6. APPROVE CHANGE TO THE CURRENT BOARD MEETING CALENDAR DATE OF MARCH 20, 2024 TO APRIL 03, 2024 AND REVISION OF THE JANUARY 17, 2024 BOARD MEETING DATE TO JANUARY 24, 2024, DUE TO ICE STORM

No discussion was held.

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

X. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. CITY OF SPRINGFIELD HOUSING DIVERSITY TAX EXEMPTION (HDTE)

Housing Analyst for the City of Springfield Katie Carroll introduced a tax exemption via PowerPoint presentation. She said the tax exemption that the city council is considering adopting is to incentivize the development of multiple unit housing in Springfield. If adopted, there are implications for Eugene School District 4J. Known as the Housing

Diversity Tax Exemption, it is one of several property tax exemptions to incentivize development of housing. She reported that eight other cities in the state have adopted it, including Eugene, Cottage Grove, and Florence.

Program applicants must meet several minimum criteria. She explained that by exempting some property taxes for the first ten years of a project's operation, it allows more projects to become financially feasible. She cited the current high cost of land, construction costs, and high interest rates. Incentives are becoming more important to increase supply and diversity of housing and promote growth and revenue generation. She said the latest data revealed a 1.6% rental vacancy in Springfield. A healthy vacancy rate is around 5%.

She explained the tax exemption would only apply to the City's share of taxes, unless at least 51% of the levy signs on to support the program. She reminded the board that 4J supported their Low-income Rental Housing Property Tax Exemption (LIRHPTE) in 2018.

Ms. Carroll revealed a map of Springfield, including where the boundaries where the tax exemption would exist. She pointed out the Glenwood region, which overlaps with a 4J tax code; the reason for the school district being implicated, she explained. She pointed out that the impact on the school district is expected to be reduced compared to the impact on the city or other taxing districts.

Ms. Carroll responded to questions from the BOD.

2. CAMAS RIDGE SCHOOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SCIP) PRESENTATION

Camas Ridge Community Elementary School Principal Hobie Blackhorn presented their School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) via PowerPoint presentation.

He said their values are placed on project-based learning and community. He reported that they looked at various sources of data and discussed the unique opportunity to create growth and movement for Latinx students.

During year one of implementation, Mr. Blackhorn explained that they are focused on family engagement. Their Community Time offering is a half an hour once per week. Their goal is to get it back to four days per week, as it was pre-pandemic. Other goals include improving growth and literacy in reading and creating a safe and welcoming environment.

Mr. Blackhorn responded to questions from the BOD.

MOTION: Chair Rabasa moved to pause for Executive Session. Seconded by Vice Chair Jonak. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Munro all in favor.**

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. LEVY ON BALLOT FOR MAY – DIRECT DISTRICT TO APPROVE UP TO \$12,000 EXPENDITURE TO GO INTO VOTERS PAMPHLET

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved to direct the district to approve a payment of up to \$12,000 to include a local option levy statement in the voter's pamphlet for May 2024. Seconded by Ms. Thessen. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Munro all in favor.**

2. AUTHORIZATION OF TWO BOARD MEMBERS TO SERVE AS LIASONS TO THE ATTORNEY AND INVESTIGATION TEAM PROCESSING THE FEBRUARY 24, 2024 COMPLAINT.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to designate the Chair and Vice Chair as liaisons with outside counsel for the complaint dated February 24, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Munro all in favor.**

3. DECISION ON SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT

Chair Rabasa introduced the topic of the Superintendent contract, stating that the district and the Superintendent have discussed an agreement for the mutual separation of the Superintendent from his position with the district effective June 30, 2024.

Chair Rabasa shared a joint statement from the Superintendent and the board:

"[We] have carefully considered present circumstances and it is our mutual and considered decision to separate at this time. As the Superintendent and locally elected school board members, all of our number one priority is securing the interests of our more than 16,000 students. Our students and their families get up every weekday morning for school, and they have placed their trust in us to provide the very best educational experience we can. In navigating the complexities of this transition, we acknowledge the constraints imposed by personnel and legal matters. We appreciate the community's understanding and patience as we adhere to these necessary protocols, always striving for fairness and transparency. Meeting that responsibility often requires difficult and thoughtful decisions. We have many responsibilities as an administration and a board, including ensuring that leadership and staff can work together to better student's futures. We know that Eugene School District 4J is a large and very complex district that requires deep experience and proven skills as an executive. We appreciate the thought that the Superintendent and the board members have put into this difficult decision. As district leaders, we will continue to work towards accountability, effective leadership, and community engagement to live up to the expectations of our students, staff, and community. The board and staff will continue to work on next steps in the coming days and weeks."

Chair Rabasa, on behalf of the board, thanked Superintendent Dey for his long service as a teacher and administrator, stating that he has had a positive impact on many young lives.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to approve the agreement for mutual separation of the Superintendent from the district. Seconded by Mr. Hamilton. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak,**

Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Munro all in favor.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to approve the initiation of the search for a new Interim Superintendent. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Munro all in favor.**

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

There were none.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Rabasa adjourned the regular meeting at 10:01 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Maya Rabasa
Board Chair

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