

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

Date: June 5, 2024

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, 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 May 31, 2024.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent
Gail Fizman, Music Director of Sheldon String Ensemble
Shira Fadeley, Music Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)
Matt Brown, Director of Finance
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Finance
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services
Brooke Wagner, Director of Human Services
Greg Borgerding, Director of Secondary Education
Sherry Moore, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff
Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Interim Superintendent and Board

EMPLOYEE GROUPS:

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)
Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

OTHER:

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Parker Anderson, North Eugene High School
Carmen Gonzalez Valle, Sheldon High School
Nellie Schmitke-Rosiek, South Eugene High School

MEDIA:

KRVM

I. REGULAR BOARD MEETING

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

Chair Maya Rabasa called the regular board meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. She said the names of the board members who were present. Interim Superintendent Colt Gill led the flag salute and Chair Rabasa read the land acknowledgement statement.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Interim Superintendent Gill expressed appreciation for student representatives for their contributions to board discussions over the school year. He congratulated Eugene School District 4J seniors preparing to graduate. He closed his report by introducing Music Director Gail Fizman, Music Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) Shira Fadeley, and the Sheldon High School String Ensemble.

1. SHELDON STRING ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

The Sheldon String Ensemble performed for the audience.

2. RECOGNITION OF MUSIC STUDENTS

Ms. Fadeley recognized recent achievements of 4J music students, highlighting state competitions and awards.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Rabasa congratulated student representatives Parker Anderson and Nellie Schmitke-Rosiek for graduating high school this school year. She recognized Parker Anderson and Carmen Gonzalez Valle for their two-year service on the school board. She thanked all student representatives for their contributions to the school board.

Sheridan Schilling provided a report from Churchill High School. The last day of school for seniors is Friday, June 7; celebrations include senior sunset, senior breakfast, senior assembly, and a graduation party. This year's graduating seniors faced many challenges during their high school career, including a global pandemic. Students reported wanting more information about the college application process and scholarships. On May 22, the first honor roll assembly was held. Students are hoping to make it an annual tradition. The AP English, Language and Composition class is presenting their end of the year research projects on June 6 and 7. Ms. Schilling stated how valuable her experience as a student representative has been.

Carmen Gonzalez Valle provided a report from Sheldon High School. The softball team won the state championship title for the second year in a row. She asserted that more effort needs to be done regarding mental health, including more counselors. She highlighted another concern about students driving long distances for SAT exams, citing an accessibility issue. She urged the district to address the problem. Sheldon's drama class premiered their play, Hamlet. Other activities included a girls' flag football and unified dodgeball game. Ms. Gonzalez Valle highlighted June as Pride and Men's Mental Health Awareness Month.

Nellie Schmitke-Rosiek provided a report from South Eugene High School. Yearbook distribution and graduation are both coming up. Recent activities included senior sunrise and sunset. She offered a summary of her observations serving as a student representative on the school board, stating that every year comes with its own challenges and this year was no exception. There was a leadership transition, bargaining with the teachers' union, controversy about a Palestinian flag in a classroom, and more. She acknowledged the hard work of the school board, stating that we are uniquely lucky to have a board with a membership of thoughtful people whose hearts are in the work. She urged the board to not prioritize efficiency, but care. She said she has had a good experience and would recommend the service to other students.

Parker Anderson provided a report from North Eugene High School. He emphasized that North retained roughly 85% regular attendance, which is 30% higher than it was at the end of last school year. He said that shows a "massive increase" in the number of students attending classes regularly. He also cited an increase in families interested in North as their first-choice school. Theatre wrapped up their production of Into the Woods. North's Pride Fest took place on Wednesday, May 29. Senior Awards Night is happening on Wednesday, June 5. He reported that seniors have collectively amassed 2 million dollars in academic scholarships. Arts Night is happening on Thursday, June 6. Mr. Parker explained that the new bell schedule for next year appears complex. He stated that the shifting advisory date and the amount of different schedules week to week has raised concern among students. He reported that teachers have raised concerns, too. Mr. Parker said, of his experience as a student representative on the school board, that there were large differences in how it went last year versus this year. He observed a lot of positive progress and has faith that the school board can handle the things that still need to be considered, worked on, and changed.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Valerie Blood, 4J parent and volunteer, shared her continued support for students, staff, and teachers. She said that on May 21 voters passed Measure 20-357 renewing the local option levy. On May 22 the district and the Eugene Education Association held a virtual special education parent listening session. There was agreement among parents that to have inclusion the district needs more trained Educational Assistants (EAs) to support

students in the classroom. On May 24, she said a district position was posted for the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. She cited the salary range for that position as \$138,080-\$175,830 annually. She said as a parent and taxpayer, that infuriated her, and she believes that the position is not going to help students. She asserted that what the district needs is more individuals in the classrooms on a day-to-day basis. Ms. Blood urged the district to support EAs and retain valuable teachers and staff instead of hiring for the aforementioned position.

Kristina Shaughnessy, 4J bus driver and classified transportation area representative, said there are currently 80 bus drivers in the district, down from 150 bus drivers seven years ago. She cited a public records request which revealed that as of March 2024 classified transportation employees have worked 7,202 hours of overtime. During the 2023-24 school year, there were reportedly more than 9,000 hours of overtime. Ms. Shaughnessy went on to describe ways that the transportation department is currently in crisis mode. District mechanics are being required to drive school bus routes, affecting their ability to keep up with repairs and other work. Attempts to get the administration to address the issue have been ignored. She urged the board to find solutions and direct administration to respond.

Jasper Shifflet, Special Education (SPED) Educational Assistant (EA), spoke about the benefits of Senate Bill 756. He explained that classified educators have been encouraged to contribute their knowledge in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, giving teams a more holistic snapshot of their student's progress and goals. He said that often students connect with their EAs before reaching out to their teachers. EAs can act as a bridge between a teacher and student. He asserted that excluding EA voices from IEP meetings costs students. It is his hope that the ability to fully support students through equal access to IEPs and IEP meetings will be expanded to all classified staff and all educators as directed by SB 756.

Roscoe Caron (online), retired 4J educator and member of the Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE), shared his perspective on the current state of education. He told a story about when he was a teacher and another educator approached him and stated that if all seventh-grade teachers used the same text, test scores will go up. He responded in opposition to that notion, stating that it was a recipe for mediocrity and for sucking the creativity and joy out of teaching and learning. Mr. Caron said he recently spoke with two primary grade teachers, noting how ground down and dispirited they were. For example, they had no time in their prescribed schedule to teach about Martin Luther King Jr. during the month of January. Despite what the current data indicates about national test scores not budging, educators remain faithful to the system for testing and collecting data. He added that educators continue to be micromanaged and many are leaving their profession.

Jen King, local taxpayer, urged the board to reconsider the use of the recently acquired Wells Fargo Building. She understands the desire for an additional administrative building; but suggested the board consider the broader impact that a community center could have on future generations. She said the building offers a unique opportunity to create a vibrant, permanent center for education and support. She envisions a space where diversity will thrive, individuals will grow, and newcomers will find the support they need. She said that Eugene Online Academy, ECCO, the Connections Program, and more could find a permanent home in the building.

Tina Williams, longtime SPED educator, highlighted the need to respect EAs and engage them in IEPs. She described the difficult work that EAs do and expressed passion for her career.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Eugene Education Association (EEA) President Sabrina Gordon, said that EEA supports Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) efforts to recognize and include the expertise and experience of classified staff in supporting district students who receive SPED services. She said that EEA members respect and value classified colleagues as an integral part of 4J. She explained that at a recent school board meeting, teams of classified colleagues shared stories about the realities of staff and student experiences and the need for improved systems of support. One of the ways employee groups are working to improve systems is through bargaining. While OSEA brings proposals to the district for implementation of new legislation; EEA has proposals on the table to increase inclusion of classified staff in systems that support student behavior. EEA wants to include classified colleagues in trainings, streamlined reporting systems, and more. EEA is offering to use collective bargaining agreements as tools to improve student learning conditions. Disappointingly, Ms. Gordon explained, the district has not shown much interest in proposals from either employee group. She encouraged the district to engage with employee groups and commit to clear and adequate systems of support.

OSEA President Lisa Jenkins-Easton spoke on behalf of classified staff, stating that staff receive mixed messages on how important they are to the system, yet not important enough to be included in conversations that impact their daily work and responsibilities to students. She cited families navigating a difficult system to support their student's education. She believed there would be a collaborative endeavor that centered the care and well-being of students and staff, instead there has been push back about SB 756 and 758. She said OSEA proposed detailed measures that could have led to transformative change for classified staff. She said classified staff have reported feeling unsafe, under trained, understaffed, and unheard. She reported that more than 80% of employees who work as significant needs EAs have stated that they know arriving at work each day that they will be injured or harmed. She stated that OSEA is insulted at the district's rejection of their proposal. She asserted that the policy the district chose reflects zero change from

the status quo; further creating an environment of distrust and uncertainty amongst educators. Ms. Jenkins-Easton went on to describe the untenable working conditions that classified staff have reported: no time for breaks or meal periods and many are working at home on things that cannot be accomplished during their workday. She said some educators are resigning because they can longer handle the mixed messages and expectations from the district. She mentioned the recently passed 25 million levy, and said it is presumptuous to think that the community will continue to give. She cited a surplus budget of tens of millions of dollars. She questioned why there is a lack of will to take action. She urged the board to be accountable.

VIII. COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Newman thanked Eugene voters for passing the renewal of the local option levy with 76% of the vote. On behalf of the board, she pledged to be good stewards of the funds. Ms. Newman attended a SPED listening session. She described a heartfelt and informative event with ideas generated about how to improve. She encouraged reinstating a Parent Advisory Group for SPED. She attended the Golden Apple Awards and the Pride Festival. Ms. Newman reported that the Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) is currently deliberating on the 100 submissions they received.

Ms. Thessen met with the district Climate Justice Team on June 4. She learned about composting, clothing swaps, and other sustainable practices. In the context of graduation, Ms. Thessen acknowledged that there are students who are not graduating with their classmates. She stated that a grade does not define a student and we need to raise those students up. She envisions a district that celebrates all students.

Mr. Di Liberto described meeting with the Climate Justice Team and visiting Edgewood Elementary School Kindergarten classrooms. He thanked staff, board members, and colleagues for supporting him through his first year as a board member.

Vice Chair Jonak attended a SPED listening session.

Mr. Hamilton validated the public commenters by stating that they are heard. He cited upheaval and confusion during the school year but said the board wants to see things get resolved.

Chair Rabasa expressed the value in witnessing the perspectives of EEA, OSEA, and district families. She spoke on the topic of SPED, stating that what is good for staff is good for students and vice versa. She added that there has been a tremendous amount of work done this school year. She described numerous tasks performed by district staff. She reminded the audience that for many students, school is their safe space and suggested acting with compassion and gentleness towards students who might not be as eager for the school year to end. Chair Rabasa said the year started with five new board

members. They did of growing together and were committed to humanizing one another. She expressed appreciation for her fellow board members.

IX. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE MINUTES FOR BOARD MEETINGS:

MAY 01, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MAY 08, 2024, BOARD SPRING RETREAT I MINUTES

MAY 15, 2024, BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

MAY 15, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

2. TAX RESOLUTION #2024-06051 CITY OF SPRINGFIELD HOUSING DIVERSITY TAX EXEMPTION (HDTW)

3. APPROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL SPANISH DUAL LANGUAGE AND IMMERSION (DLI) INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ADOPTION

4. APPROVE PROPOSED TUITION RATES FOR 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

5. APPROVE MEAL PRICES FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

6. APPROVE FIELD TRIP FOR NATIVES PROGRAM

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

X. ITEM FOR INFORMATION

1. HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Director of Secondary Education Greg Borgerding presented the high school schedule via PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Borgerding provided background information about the high school schedule, which went under review last year. An informed decision-making process led to the adoption of a 2 by 4 ABC flex schedule: two different days going back and forth between A and B with a flex option in the middle. Substantial feedback revealed varying perspectives on how the schedule supported students. There was concern that the Wednesday schedule “C day” was too compressed, and not a day suited for learning or productivity. Ideas for improvement included, but were not limited to, shorter grading periods, addressing C days, and supporting teachers with professional development about how to utilize a longer block of time.

Mr. Borgerding explained that after taking all the feedback into consideration, a revised schedule was proposed for next school year. Highlights of the revised schedule include a contiguous A/B pattern, flex opportunities, removing C days, placing advisory outside of

C days, and maintaining a 40-minute lunch break with a longer lunch break once per week. He presented a graphic detailing the revised high school schedule.

Ms. Thessen commented that for neurodiverse students' transitions are difficult and being able to have a longer class period can be helpful. She described the natural adjustment period for students getting into a new schedule and asked how understanding the district will be about tardiness.

Mr. Borgerding responded that there are built-in breaks, and the goal is not to be punitive.

Ms. Newman asked, regarding instructional hours, how different the 2023-24 school year schedule is from the upcoming one.

Mr. Borgerding responded that the hours are exactly the same.

Student representative Ms. Schilling pointed out that during the 2023-24 school year, while advisory/affinity was in the schedule at Churchill High School, it was never an option. She said they would sit in an advisory presentation but there was no time to choose where to go. She asked if that was school specific or a district policy that students should be allowed to go to whatever affinity group they meet at?

Mr. Borgerding responded that as they begin the school year, all schools have been told that their affinity group times will land in advisory. The reason is that everyone will be in the same place so that affinity group leaders can work with the schools to create a schedule.

Ms. Schilling brought up zero periods, which were eliminated at Churchill High School. She said the Leadership group was unable to meet; however, band and choir were able to keep their zero periods. She asked if that was going to be the same this year.

Mr. Borgerding responded that certain classes were moved off zero period because they are offering an additional three periods per term. He said that in terms of equity, if a class is during the day, then more students have access and opportunity. He added that there has not been a decision to revisit band and choir during zero periods.

Ms. Gonzalez-Valle asked if students attending multiple affinity groups will have to stay in one class? How will they visit teachers during that time?

Mr. Borgerding responded that once affinity advisors create a schedule, students may attend more than one affinity group. He added that advisory time may be utilized for interventions and student support. Attendance is still being addressed.

Student representative Mr. Anderson commented that they are getting one more class per year and in exchange have significantly decreased the class time. He does not feel that is beneficial. Students have expressed struggling to keep up, because they are only in class

two days per week. He suggested collecting student feedback in addition to teacher feedback when considering high school schedules.

Mr. Borgerding responded that Mr. Parker is accurate in stating that there is less instructional time, but they are meeting for longer periods of time. Part of the logic was the use of semesters (instead of trimesters) so that staff have students in their classes for a longer tenure of time. He added that it is possible to involve students more in the feedback process.

Ms. Munro asked how the instructional hours differ from two years prior.

Mr. Borgerding explained that they are lower than they were two years prior. He said the district is still well within the standard.

Ms. Newman asked if it was the shift from trimesters to semesters that made that difference.

Mr. Borgerding responded affirmatively.

Ms. Thessen asked, given the new schedule, if they noticed any change in the number of students not passing classes.

Mr. Borgerding responded there is an implementation dip that occurs when trying something new and data does suggest there are an additional number of students failing after the first semester on the new schedule.

Chair Rabasa asked why they opted for a 50-minute lunch period one day per week instead of splitting the difference; was it because of the agreement to have a 15-minute break?

Mr. Borgerding responded affirmatively.

Chair Rabasa asked, regarding the lunch period, why not tack on 5 minutes at the end of the day and make lunch periods longer?

Mr. Borgerding responded that it would likely require going into negotiations around the length of a workday.

Ms. Schilling voiced that more time feels like an opportunity for more shenanigans. She said during passing periods is when vaping, leaving campus, etc. is at its worse. She said 15 minutes is an excessive amount of time. She urged taking that into consideration.

Mr. Borgerding said Ms. Schilling's point is well taken.

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. RESOLUTION #2025-01 TO ADOPT THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

Finance Director Matt Brown, Assistant Finance Director Bob Blyth, and Interim Superintendent Gill introduced Resolution #2025-1, adopting the FY 2024-25 budget.

The presentation covers long-term budget changes, responses to questions from the May 15 board meeting, review budget increases, and forecast recommendations. Interim Superintendent Gill highlighted three goals for the next three to six months:

1. Seek clarity from the board on budget spending priorities.
2. Initiate a board discussion and approval of an updated reserve policy.
3. Review and approve the budget process for the next budget cycle.

Mr. Brown responded to questions from the May 15, 2024, board meeting discussion.

Regarding Nutrition Services, he said the district has continued their free lunch program. He highlighted an increase from the general fund to nutritional services in the amount of 3.2 million, reflecting a \$900,000 increase. He noted that 94% is specifically related to staff cost increases. He cautioned against a decision to not continue the free lunch program, citing unintended consequences.

Mr. Brown said there is a \$10,000,000 transfer budgeted for this year and next year for deferred maintenance.

Regarding the Wells Fargo building, there are staff recommendations to potentially move in a different direction. He said a portion of maintenance transfers were intended to upkeep and improve the Wells Fargo building from its current state. Current staff recommendations include not doing those transfers.

Mr. Brown revealed a line chart or “glide path” depicting district expenses outpacing revenue significantly in the upcoming years. He explained that continuing with the status quo will deplete reserve funds.

He highlighted necessary general fund increases in the 2024-25 budget, including the nutrition services transfer, 57 new staffing positions, utility increases, unemployment increases, compensation increases, new curriculum, and more.

Mr. Blyth presented information about unknowns in future forecasting. The State School Fund allocation in the upcoming biennial is a big unknown. He cited continuing lobbying efforts to increase funding. He mentioned the pace of district and state enrollment declines and their impact on allocations. As district enrollment decreases more quickly than the state, the amount of State School Fund revenue decreases more quickly than other districts. He cited upcoming district compensation and benefit costs.

Mr. Brown presented a line chart or “future glide path” reflecting district revenue gradually catching up with expenses in FY 2027-28. He clarified that there are

assumptions built into that forecast. He offered the following recommendations:

2024 Budget

- \$5 million reduction in transfers
- Anticipate 3% vacancy savings
- Anticipate 1.5% materials and services savings
- Reconsider Wells Fargo building

2025 Budget

- \$5 million reduction in transfers
- Anticipate 3% vacancy savings
- Anticipate 1.5% materials and services savings
- Reconsider Wells Fargo building
- Review current expenses after board prioritization

2026-2028 Budget

- Dependent on unknown factors
- Personnel reductions of 4%

Mr. Brown asked the Board of Directors (BOD) to consider potentially not moving forward on the Wells Fargo building. He said because the district used federal dollars to purchase it, they would need to return those dollars to the federal government. He noted that they did not claim the expense on ESSER dollars; they held out on the claim until discussing it with the BOD. He said part of the process would involve moving the \$3 million expense from the ESSER account to the facilities, acquisition, and properties fund. He explained that there are funds available in that fund to account for the \$3 million expense, and in return they would charge the general fund for unfinished learning expenses, available to be used for ESSER expenses. By moving expenses from the general fund to ESSER it in turn reduces the expenditures in the general fund, increasing the ending fund balance to be used in later years.

Looking at future fiscal years, Mr. Brown said that if the BOD considers not moving forward with the Wells Fargo building, the district could potentially sell it, thereby providing the opportunity to increase the general fund balance.

Interim Superintendent Gill stated that staff will return in the fall and winter with progress reports for the BOD. He added that they will collaborate with partners to communicate with the Oregon legislature about increasing revenue.

Ms. Newman requested reviewing the reserve policy and receiving regular updates.

Mr. Brown responded affirmatively.

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to approve Resolution #2025-01 as presented in the board packet with the addition of two directives: 1. List the Wells Fargo building for sale. 2. Reduce the deferred maintenance transfers by \$5 million for the FY24 budget and \$5 million for the FY25 budget, for savings and transfers of \$10 million. Seconded by Ms. Thessen. **The motion carried unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

XII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. APPROVE THE BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S PRESENTATION IN TWO UPCOMING OREGON SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION (OSBA) CONFERENCES

MOTION: Vice Chair Jonak moved to approve the BODs ability to participate in two upcoming Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) conferences. Seconded by Mr. Hamilton. **The motion carried unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Rabasa, Vice Chair Jonak, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

2. DISCUSSION OF INTEREST IN BOARD LEADERSHIP AMONG BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Chair Rabasa briefly introduced a future discussion of interest in board leadership. She explained that two board members expressed enthusiasm in board positions. Jenny Jonak expressed enthusiasm for the position of Chair and Mr. Di Liberto for the position of Vice Chair. An election will take place at the upcoming July 3 BOD meeting.

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

There were none.

XIV. ADJORN

Chair Rabasa adjourned the regular board meeting at 10:11 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Maya Rabasa
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 07/03/2024