

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

Date: August 21, 2024

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Oregon, held a work session at 6:00 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 August 16, 2024.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jenny Jonak, Chair

Tom Di Liberto, Vice Chair

Maya Rabasa

Ericka Thessen

Judy Newman

Morgan Munro

Rick Hamilton

STAFF:

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent

Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff

Matt Brown, Director of Finance

Sherry Moore, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff

Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Interim Superintendent and Board

EMPLOYEE GROUPS:

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

OTHER:

None.

MEDIA:

KRVM

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Chair Jenny Jonak called the work session to order at 6:01 p.m. She said the names of the board members who were present. She provided an update, explaining that on July 3, 2024, the Eugene School District 4J Board of Directors voted to alternate work sessions and regular board meetings on months where two board meetings are scheduled. The BOD also revised policy BD/BDA allowing for decisions to be made during work sessions. This is the first work session conducted given the new format.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were none.

IV. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE RAPIDIDENTITY SUBSCRIPTION FOR USER PROFILE AND USER SECURITY MANAGEMENT

2. APPROVE THE REVISED 2024-25 BOARD MEETING CALENDAR OCTOBER 02, 2024, BOARD MEETING CHANGED TO OCTOBER 9, 2024 OCTOBER 16, 2024, BOARD WORK SESSION CHANGED TO OCTOBER 23, 2024 NOVEMBER 8, 2024, COMMUNITY CHAT CHANGED TO NOVEMBER 15, 2024

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

V. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE BEING ADDED TO THE BOARD COMMITTEE LIST

Chair Jenny Jonak initiated a discussion about approving a superintendent search board subcommittee for hiring a permanent superintendent.

Chair Jonak explained that a subcommittee might conduct the logistical work, while decisions like selecting a search firm and hiring a candidate would be left to the BOD.

Ms. Rabasa responded that, in her experience, taking care of logistics is ideal.

Ms. Newman agreed, adding that search firms are helpful during the initial screening process.

Vice Chair Di Liberto voiced that while he supports a superintendent search committee, he feels that it should be largely administrative. He emphasized starting the process soon.

Ms. Newman suggested that if working with a search firm, they consider forming a smaller, nimbler committee.

Interim Superintendent Gill urged making the decision tonight. The BOD is on the same timeline as they were during the previous [interim] superintendent search, and it is important to get the Request for Proposals (RFP) out before the end of the month.

Chair Jonak stated for the public record that Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Vice Chair Di Liberto are assigned to serve on the superintendent search committee, pending approval.

MOTION: Ms. Rabasa moved to approve a Request for Proposals (RFP) to locate and identify a search firm to initiate the process of a superintendent search. Ms. Newman seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Newman Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved to establish an ad hoc superintendent search committee to locate a search firm and establish an initial timeline. Vice Chair Di Liberto seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Newman, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

VI. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. 4J ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP MODEL

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced the 4J organizational chart and distributed leadership model via PowerPoint presentation.

He emphasized the importance of the district not relying on any single leader to make decisions for the entire system. He described a model where decision making is distributed.

Interim Superintendent Gill highlighted the aims of the shared/distributed leadership model:

- Create a collaborative, coordinated, and transparent space to bring voice from across the district into decision-making
- Better incorporate data analysis and the use of an equity decision tool across the groups represented in this process

He said the purpose of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is to create equitable access to high quality, relevant teaching and learning. The purpose of the Superintendent's Leadership Council (SLC) is to collaboratively guide and influence the district by testing ideas, clarifying impacts, gathering information, providing a feedback loop, and making recommendations to the ELT and superintendent. The three decision making bodies are the BOD, ELT, and SLC.

Interim Superintendent Gill presented the district's Organizational Chart, reflecting the district's leadership model. A version of the chart is expected to be posted on the district website soon.

Ms. Rabasa raised a question about who supervises the ombuds position, as the position is intended to be supervised independent of the superintendent.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that Ms. Rabasa's question is likely to be addressed soon in the board policy workgroup.

Ms. Newman asked for more clarification around the ELT setting the district's strategic direction. Her understanding was that that is the BOD's responsibility. She asked if it is collaborative.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that when the BOD sets goals, or a strategic plan or vision, the ELT can assist by providing strategies to accomplish the goals. Their focus is on how to implement.

VII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE BOARD INPUT REGARDING INVITATION SYSTEM

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced the topic of an invitation system to establish a pathway for staff to invite board members to participate in classroom activities and school events. He explained that the new system includes notifying staff supervisors and the superintendent's office, and tracks board member attendance. He mentioned the BOD goal that every school and program be visited annually by at least one board member. He added that it democratizes the system, because all board members receive invites. He displayed an email draft detailing the new system, communication policy, and site visit form.

Ms. Newman expressed concern about the new system inhibiting people. She said the email feels formal. She suggested providing less information. She added that three weeks is a lot of lead time.

Ms. Rabasa said she does not want to eliminate other types of invitations, for example: if a medical pathway CTE program wants to invite Ms. Thessen or Preschool Promise wants to invite Ms. Newman. The way the email is worded implies that the new system is the only pathway for inviting board members.

Vice Chair Di Liberto agreed with Ms. Newman and Ms. Rabasa and mentioned that sometimes invites come the day before an event. He underscored the importance of conducting visits to every school and program annually.

Ms. Munro said the three weeks' lead time would likely be helpful for her.

Chair Jonak suggested that while helpful, she believes the lead time should not be mandatory. She suggested adding language upfront expressing BOD enthusiasm for invites.

Interim Superintendent Gill said he will make adjustments based on BOD feedback and bring the draft email back to board leadership for review and final approval.

2. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE AD HOC CLASSROOM DISPLAYS WORK GROUP

Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina provided an update on the work of the ad hoc classroom displays work group via PowerPoint presentation.

The 10-member work group was formed to review existing policies related to classroom displays, gather input from community members in a safe environment, and develop recommendations for potential policy, administrative rule, or practice changes.

Ms. Urbina outlined the work group goals and objectives:

- Review relevant policy and law
- Seek and consider input from community partners
- Provide recommendations for any needed changes to the superintendent

Ms. Urbina outlined the work group scope:

- Focus on understanding policies and gathering input
- Limitations: The group is advisory, not decision-making, and does not discuss personal matters

Ms. Urbina emphasized centering students and described prioritizing student learning and wellbeing by creating an environment where every student feels valued, seen, and supported, and feel that they can show up as their authentic selves. During their sessions, the work group reviewed the charter through the lens of centering students and worked to define best practices related to classroom displays. Interim Superintendent Gill reviewed existing policy. The work group also discussed comfort, risk, and danger, and explored different options for the inclusive feedback sessions.

Next steps include establishing processes for community engagement, refining the proposal, and ultimately making a recommendation to the superintendent.

Vice Chair Di Liberto asked how informed employees are about the work of the ad hoc committee, given that many educators are not engaged in the summertime.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that the ad hoc work group has not sent out general information to staff nor the community. They wanted to in July, but as Vice Chair Di Liberto pointed out, many educators are not working in the summertime. Interim Superintendent Gill did not initially think of the work group as reporting to the entire staff. He is open to incorporating that if such a recommendation comes forward.

Discussion ensued among members about creating a safe community input space and continuing the work of the ad hoc classroom displays work group.

Ms. Urbina closed her presentation by stating that it is their goal to set the conditions possible for all educators to be successful.

3. POLICY EXPLORATION AND LONG-TERM PLANNING

Chair Jonak initiated a discussion about policy exploration and long-term planning. She explained that during their recent summer retreat, the BOD prioritized their policy and long-term planning ideas. She referenced a document detailing the brain-storming session, which was provided in the board meeting packet.

The BOD reviewed the priorities list (below) and provided their collective input.

- Cell phone/social media
- Complaint process
- SPED evaluation/qualifications (policy for consistent standard, proactive, timely)
- Student support matrix/disciplinary process
- Equitable sharing of individual school fundraising
- Safety plan + safety (personal/emotional)
- Sustainability (climate change)
- Competency based grading/proficiency grading pilot in MS
- Next bond
- Pilot program - relationship based approach for students (e.g. CPS)
- Yujin Gakuen secondary paths

Chair Jonak added the topic of “board election districts” to the existing list.

1. Cellphone/social media policy

Interim Superintendent Gill said that the SLC and ELT are researching the topic of cellphone/social media use in school settings. He said that although 4J middle school leadership recently updated their cellphone/social media policies, there are no other districtwide changes pending this school year.

Ms. Newman added that other school boards have passed recent cellphone/social media policies and 4J can learn from them.

Ms. Munro suggested, in order to prepare the BOD, that they receive pertinent information collected during the research process.

Ms. Thessen brought up a concern about unintended consequences, citing cellphones as an accommodation tool for many students.

2. Complaint process

There was discussion about updating the district's complaint process. Interim Superintendent Gill explained that they are looking at other districts for different approaches to problem solving and resolving complaints before they go through a formal complaint process. He said one of the district's challenges is that their formal complaint process is being used to handle complaints that could have been resolved at a lower level. He added that it is not the best system for resolving concerns and building relationships.

Ms. Munro brought up the need to evaluate the complaint process for the BOD and the superintendent.

3. SPED evaluation/qualifications

Chair Jonak raised the need to further refine district standards for proactive and timely SPED supports.

Interim Superintendent Gill offered that he believes the standards exist, however consistency across the district remains a challenge.

4. Student support matrix/disciplinary process

Interim Superintendent Gill described a shift from the discipline matrix to a more proactive model with restorative practices (i.e. student support matrix). The new process has already been piloted. A presentation to the BOD is forthcoming.

5. Equitable sharing of individual school fundraising

Chair Jonak introduced equitable sharing of individual school fundraising, stating that the topic concerns when individual schools have the capacity to fundraise significantly more than other schools and to what extent some of that fundraising gets shared with other schools.

6. Safety plan and safety (personal/emotional)

Interim Superintendent Gill spoke of the need to create more guidance for staff to ensure that the district is creating welcoming spaces for students, responding to disruptions, and utilizing restorative practices.

7. Sustainability (climate change)

Chair Jonak mentioned connecting with the 4J Climate Action Team and relocating their student proposal to review sustainability goals.

8. Competency based grading/proficiency grading pilot in middle school

Interim Superintendent Gill said that some district teachers are using proficiency grading and Kelly Middle School has plans to pilot it. A presentation to the BOD is forthcoming.

9. Next bond

Chair Jonak introduced the topic of the next bond. Board members discussed the necessary steps, including a compression rate review, long-term facilities planning, and robust community engagement.

Interim Superintendent Gill mentioned that there is a webpage detailing how bond funds were spent. He said the challenge is successfully connecting the public with that information.

10. Pilot program – relationship-based approach for students (e.g. CPS)

Chair Jonak introduced the topic of a pilot program focused on collaborative problem solving.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that the district has trained expertise in CPS and other restorative practices. They are part of a toolbox of multiple models of student support. A presentation to the BOD is forthcoming.

11. Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion School secondary paths

Chair Jonak brought up the question of Yujin Gakuen secondary paths. She mentioned that discussion is pending, and the BOD would like to provide an update prior to the school choice deadline.

12. Board election districts

Chair Jonak explained that the topic relates to how board election districts are set up. Currently, all BOD members are at-large, and they do not come from a set region.

Ms. Newman said there is a need to explore if it would be best to go back to regions, mixed, or at-large.

Ms. Munro added that the BOD has the power to decide the process for board election districts. She added that any changes must be conducted six months prior to the election, therefore it is not a topic to address before the next May election.

Ms. Rabasa urged not initiating changes during a campaign year.

Ms. Thessen agreed that the topic should be revisited. She brought up the issue of accessibility and affordability.

There was consensus to receive information pertinent to board election districts in a Friday memorandum.

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to review the district's dress code policy. Ms. Rabasa seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Newman, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

VIII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Ms. Newman requested information about the district's fiscal stability and review of the reserve percentage.

Mr. Hamilton requested an evaluation of the district's response to trauma incidences involving educators.

Ms. Thessen requested an update on health centers via Friday memorandum.

IX. ADJORN

Chair Jonak adjourned the work session at 8:41 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Jenny Jonak
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 09/18/2024