

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

Date: January 15, 2025

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Oregon, held a regular meeting 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 January 10, 2025.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jenny Jonak, Chair

Tom Di Liberto, Vice Chair

Maya Rabasa

Ericka Thessen

Judy Newman

Morgan Munro

Rick Hamilton

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

None.

STAFF:

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent

Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff (online)

Cynthia Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff and Board

Jennifer Scurlock, EmpowerED Educator

Mindy Rimbey, EmpowerED Educator

Matt Brown, Director of Finance

Kelly McIver, Communications Director

Seth Pfaefflin, Director of Student Services

Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office

Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Interim Superintendent and Board

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Katheryn Hehman, International High School

Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School

Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School

Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School

Jazmin Berry, North Eugene High School

Olivia Dodge, Churchill High School
Autumn Thessen, Early College and Career Options (ECCO) (online)
Max Pike, Early College and Career Options (ECCO) (online)
Lane Lowd, Eugene Online Academy (EOA) (online)

EMPLOYEE GROUPS:

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)
Allan Chinn, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS)

OTHER GUESTS:

None.

MEDIA:

KRVM
KEZI
Register Guard

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Jonak called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. She said the names of the board members who were present and read the land acknowledgement statement.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Jonak requested holding Item for Information: Item 3. The agenda was approved as amended.

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Due to the length of the agenda, Interim Superintendent Colt Gill elected to not provide comments.

IV. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS

Eugene International High School (IHS) Representative Katheryn Hehman provided background information about IHS and IB programs. She explained that IHS – an International Studies alternative school – is a school within a school. For example, the IHS that she attends is in a separate hall within South Eugene High School. The school also follows a different curriculum and has differing graduation requirements than other high schools. IHS refers mainly to humanities courses, while IB is more rigorous and includes science and mathematics. Ms. Hehman reported that IB students have been advocating for a “skinny period” which would result in two 45-minute classes for math and physics. She mentioned that there is still a culture of nonacceptance at her school, specifically towards students who are disabled.

South Eugene High School Representatives Cora Ludwig and Deeya Patel reported that students and teachers are working to finish the term strong to ensure that students are on-track to graduate. They reported that school administration is continuing the use of an

electronic hall pass known as Smart Pass. Students will provide more feedback about the use of Smart Pass during a Principal Advisory Group meeting on January 23, 2025. A pep assembly will also be taking place on January 23, 2025. Planning is underway for a winter formal on February 8, 2025 at the Ford Alumni Center.

North Eugene High School Representative Jazmin Berry highlighted the following upcoming events: an Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) scholarship meeting on January 16, a production of Romeo and Juliet beginning on January 18, and a Speech and Debate Club competition on January 19, 2025.

Churchill High School Representative Olivia Dodge reported that their Holiday Cheer Drive was a tremendous success – providing food boxes, holiday gifts, and support to Churchill families in need. She noted that a Principal Advisory Group has been formed to enhance communication and collaboration between students and school administration and a Churchill Site Council has been established to foster collaborative decision making. An event celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy and promoting themes of unity, justice, and activism is scheduled for January 17, 2025. Ms. Dodge added that there is improved staff and administration visibility along with a concerted effort to increase their presence and engagement with students.

Early College and Career Options (ECCO) Representative Autumn Thessen shared that a counselor’s office has been built at their site. However, they still are without a school nurse, a health room, and an educator to operate the library system full-time. She cited community uncertainty regarding the feasibility of further construction at ECCO. She reiterated a repeated request for mental health support and acknowledged a donation of gifts for their Winter Fest giveaway.

Eugene Online Academy (EOA) Representative Lane Lowd noted a change in their school interface and curriculum from Fuel Education to StrongMind. The change was a challenge at first, but now students and teachers are reportedly going strong. They cited a need for enhanced student government representation.

Sheldon High School Student Representative Kaleia Davis highlighted the following upcoming events: a swim team meet on January 15, a swim team district meet on February 14, a winter formal on January 18, and an Asian American Youth Leadership Conference on April 11, 2025. Ms. Davis mentioned that GSA leadership will be surveying members and queer students to evaluate how safe they feel on campus. She noted that a Women of Color Advocacy group has formed as well as a hate speech campaign known as SHUSH (Sheldon Help Us Silence Hate).

V. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Sarah McKinley, North Eugene High School Parent Group Lead, expressed support for Principal Nain Muñoz, stating that the past two years there has been stability and growth,

test scores and graduation rates have increased, and parents and volunteers are engaged. She mentioned that Principal Muñoz demonstrated compassion throughout challenging events faced during the school year. Ms. McKinley stated that Principal Muñoz's resignation and how it was communicated came as a shock to North families and that parents are expressing mistrust and frustration at the school district. She urged an investigation into the processes and personnel policies, specifically the actions leading up to Principal Muñoz's resignation.

Brenda Kameenui, 4J grandparent, raised the topic of quality reading instruction. She said data indicates that over half of American fourth graders are not competent in reading. Oregon test scores reveal the same trend. She urged against leaving reading instruction to goodwill and recommended the Science of Reading curriculum. Ms. Kameenui reported that roughly 200 4J educators have engaged on their own time in rigorous study of the Letters program. She added that teacher training is a big source of the problem. She urged that the Board of Directors (BOD) select a new superintendent who is solid in the Science of Reading, who will train principals, and endorse systematic instruction.

Catherine Moran, classified employee at North Eugene High School; and Will Larson certified employee at North Eugene High School, spoke on the topic of Principal Muñoz's resignation. Ms. Muran reported that 4J has lost four high school administrators this year and believes that the rapid turnover is indicative of a systemic issue that needs to be addressed. They recommend the following changes: amend the complaint process to include restorative practices between aggrieved parties and staff to ensure open communication and continued collaboration; more robust mentorship for those serving in administrative roles and assume best intentions until the results of an investigation reveal any wrongdoing has occurred; ensure that leadership-related decisions are made transparently and reflect the voices of the school community and that all concerns are heard and solutions are reached collaboratively; and that the BOD initiates a dialogue, potentially with the district Ombuds, as a neutral facilitator between district leadership and North staff to address concerns and find a path forward that prioritizes stability.

Larry Lewin, Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE) Founder, brought attention to the topic of school district enrollment. He reported on data from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), revealing that 4J's enrollment has decreased 6.5% since the 2017-18 school year. By Lewin's estimate, that is about 1,000 students. He expressed concern given that state funding is tied to district student enrollment and urged an internal analysis of possible causes for families leaving 4J. Furthermore, Mr. Lewin recommended district leaders ask themselves the following questions: What is our local education system doing well that meets our students' needs? What is our system doing that must be changed? Why are kids leaving? Are we no longer a student-centered district? Are we over-testing our kids and therefore damaging their school experience?

VI. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Eugene Education Association (EEA) President Sabrina Gordon addressed recent sentiments expressed by North Eugene High School staff. She explained that while listening to educators at North, she realized their needs reveal what the whole system requires for staff and students. Despite differences in opinions, she urged more practice taking care of one another. Ms. Gordon recommended that district leaders, building staff, teachers, students, and union leaders ask rather than assume and practice curiosity more often than judgement. She advised actively supporting social and emotional health before expecting academic or professional performance.

MAPS member Allan Chinn acknowledged Interim Superintendent Gill. On behalf of MAPS Mr. Chinn thanked him for, among other things, his steady leadership, support, guidance, and holding space for staff to heal. Mr. Chinn spoke about the qualities desired in the next superintendent: unwavering commitment and advocacy for equity, anti-racism, and inclusion; represent all students and maintain the focus of their wellbeing; lead and support staff in their responsibility to create a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and loving culture; foster working conditions for staff to collaborate and feel supported; hold themselves accountable for high standards of performance, communication, collaboration, and transparency; create trusting relationships with community partners, advocacy organizations, state/county leaders, and higher educational institutions; and will become a truly invested member of the community.

VII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE PERSONNEL ACTIONS

There was no discussion.

2. UNTIED FRONT TRAVEL APPROVAL

There was no discussion.

3. APPROVE CONFIRMATION OF 4J SCHOOL BOARD VOTES ON THE 2024 OSBA RESOLUTIONS

There was no discussion.

4. ALIGN THE BOARD WORKING AGREEMENTS WITH BOARD POLICY BDDC

There was no discussion.

5. APPROVE UPDATED EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J'S NEXT SUPERINTENDENT CRITERIA

There was no discussion.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the consent group. Ms. Munro 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 INFORMATION

1. CENTER FOR APPLIED LEARNING AND COMMUNITY IMPACT'S (CALCI) EMPOWERED CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PATHWAY STUDENTS SHARE ABOUT THE ETGAR 36 CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY TRIP TO GEORGIA AND ALABAMA

EmpowerED educators Jennifer Scurlock and Mindy Rimbey, and six students CTE pathway students, presented information about the Etgar 36 Civil Rights Journey trip to Georgia and Alabama via PowerPoint presentation.

EmpowerED is a career and technical (CTE) program designed to help students explore the field of education as empowered leaders. Their goals include opening perspectives to other cultures so that they can deliver an equitable education to all students and preparing students from 4J to stay and teach in the district. Students receive four high school credits and seven college credits.

This school year's annual Etgar 36 Civil Rights Journey trip to Georgia and Alabama began on November 7, 2024, when the students arrived in Atlanta, Georgia. During their travels through Georgia and Alabama, the students learned about the history of lynching, visited the Rosa Parks Museum, Equal Justice Initiatives Legacy Museum, Edmund Pettus Bridge, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s neighborhood, among other places. They also met with key figures in the Civil Rights Movement and witnessed their personal stories. Students described the experience as emotional, powerful, moving, inspiring, motivating, and eye opening.

Students briefly responded to questions from the Board.

2. RECEIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Thessen reminded the audience that the Community Engagement Subcommittee is committed to community engagement. To date, every Board member has conducted at least one community chat. She explained that the feedback received is directed to the superintendent and district leadership. Due to the current superintendent search process – involving surveys and focus groups – the subcommittee has paused community engagement. They will resume meeting with student focus groups in March, and other groups thereafter.

3. AD HOC WORK GROUP ON CLASSROOM DISPLAYS: UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced a PowerPoint presentation regarding work group recommendations for classroom displays.

He provided background information about what lead to the formation of an Ad Hoc Work Group to address the topic of classroom displays, stating that it stemmed from a real situation in the district that regardless of intent impacted students, families, staff, and the community. The aim in seeking the set of recommendations from the work group is to reduce future harm. The Board has read the set of recommendations, which are available for public review in the Board Book located on the district website. He said the contents of the recommendations could be misunderstood or misinterpreted if not presented in as whole a manner as possible. He noted that they remain as recommendations to the superintendent and are awaiting further action.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that throughout the process the Ad Hoc Work Group strived to understand the current law and policy and center the impacts on the students which the district serves. He outlined the process timeline:

- March 2024: Incident report
- March-June 2024: Implementation of Policy ACB: Hate Symbols and Bias Incidents
- May 2024: Tasking a work group to gather relevant policy and law
- June 2024: Board received and discussed relevant policy and law
- June-December 2024: Ad Hoc Work Group formed and engaged community input to develop recommendations

The Ad Hoc Work Group met numerous times to review relevant laws, policies, practices, and stances by various organizations. They developed a set of draft recommendations and sought input from a variety of community, equity, and labor leaders. They updated the recommendations based on input received.

Interim Superintendent Gill read aloud statements related to outcomes, and then outlined the following set of recommendations (detailed recommendations are available in the Board Book):

1. Comprehensive Communication of Policy Implementation
2. Clear Guidance for All Educational Staff
3. Student-Centered Safety Practices
4. Building Capacity for Educators
5. Classroom Decoration to Create Inclusive, Personalized Classroom Environments

Interim Superintendent Gill concluded by recognizing the harm done. He stated that by implementing the recommendations, 4J has an opportunity to lead the way in creating equitable, inclusive, and safe classrooms; and that their commitment to transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement ensures that policies and practices reflect core values and foster a culture of belonging and excellence. He added that Chief of Staff

Carmen Xiomara Urbina captured additional points relating to proactive and restorative approaches, educator training, and community engagement. The next steps include a comprehensive review of the set of recommendations on behalf of the Executive Leadership Team and general counsel, establishing a work plan, and a timeline.

IX. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. AD HOC SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE: CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNITY INTERVIEW PANELS

Ms. Newman reported that three confidential community interview panels will support the interview process for the new superintendent finalists. There will be 13 members on each panel, resulting in a total of 39 individuals. The makeup of the panelists includes licensed staff, classified staff, parents, students, and community leaders. The hope is to get diverse representation across all regions.

Ms. Munro added that each of the panels will come up with their own interview questions for the finalists.

Ms. Newman listed the organizations that they are engaging, including but not limited to: Lane County United Way, Eugene Education Foundation (EEF), University of Oregon's College of Education, Lane Education Service District (ESD), Lane Community College, and Connected Lane County.

Ms. Rabasa suggested engaging The Lavender Network.

Chair Jonak suggested engaging Community Alliance for Lane County.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved to adopt the Community Engagement Interview Panel proposal as written with the addition of adding one invited seat for The Lavender Network and reducing the lottery to one position with the addition of the Community Alliance for Lane County; and if any of the invitees decline, to expand the list of lottery positions by the number who decline. Seconded by Ms. Munro. **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.**

2. APPROVE REVISIONS TO POLICY JGAB – USE OF RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION

Director of Student Services Seth Pfaefflin provided revisions to Policy JGAB – Use of Restraint or Seclusion to be consistent with SB 1024.

Mr. Pfaefflin outlined two changes:

1. The addition of immediate notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) of any existing record, including audio or video

2. Review of the audio or video at a debriefing meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve revisions to Policy JGAB. Mr. Hamilton 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.**

3. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO POLICY IGBAF – SPECIAL EDUCATION – INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

Mr. Pfaefflin introduced proposed minor revisions to Policy IGBAF – Special Education – Individualized Education Program (IEP) to be consistent with SB 756.

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to approve proposed revisions to Policy IGBAF. Seconded by Ms. Thessen. **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.**

4. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO POLICY IGBAG – SPECIAL EDUCATION – PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS (SECOND READ)

Mr. Pfaefflin introduced proposed revisions to Policy IGBAG – Special Education – Procedural Safeguards to be consistent with SB 758, relating to parental rights to examine their student’s record and setting a 10-day timeline to honor such requests.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve revisions to Policy IGBAG. Ms. Thessen 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.**

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2025-01 AFFIRMING GENDER IDENTITY, EXPRESSION, AND EQUITY FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE STUDENTS AND STAFF (FIRST READ)

Interim Superintendent Gill presented information regarding Resolution #2025-01 – Affirming Gender Identity, Expression, and Equity for Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students and Staff via PowerPoint presentation.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained, on behalf of Chief of Staff Ms. Urbina, that the resolution embodies their vision for a district where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to thrive. The resolution is more than a response to individual needs, it addresses systemic barriers that have persisted in the district for a long time.

He brought attention to both local and national data highlighting an unprecedented number of incidences of harassment and anti-LGBTQ2SIA+ bills. He said the challenges

require action at the district level to create a safer, more inclusive environment for students and staff.

Interim Superintendent Gill provided the following resolution highlights:

1. Affirm and celebrate the dignity and humanity of LGBTQ2SIA+ students and staff
2. Reject efforts to politicize or marginalize LGBTQ2SIA+ identities
3. Commit to equity-driven professional development for staff
4. Promote inclusive practices, visible symbols of support, and affinity spaces
5. Establish accountability through data collection, public reporting, and community engagement

Board members expressed enthusiastic support for Resolution #2025-01 – Affirming Gender Identity, Expression, and Equity for Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students.

2. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL THE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO POLICY JBC – AFFIRMING GENDER IDENTITY, EXPRESSION, AND EQUITY FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE STUDENTS (FIRST READ)

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced proposed revisions to Policy JBC via PowerPoint presentation.

He explained that by his recollection, 4J was the first school district to develop a transgender and gender-expansive student policy in Oregon. He said there have been few changes to the policy since its introduction in 2015. Recommended next steps include Administrative Rules (ARs) outlining clear guidance for supporting LGBTQ2SIA+, transgender, and gender expansive students *and* staff; and reflecting a commitment to equity, dignity, and belonging.

3. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL THE PROPOSED NEW POLICY GBAA – AFFIRMING GENDER IDENTITY, EXPRESSION, AND EQUITY FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE STAFF (FIRST READ)

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced proposed revisions to Policy GBAA via PowerPoint presentation.

There have been few changes to the policy since its introduction in 2015. Recommended next steps include Administrative Rules (ARs) outlining clear guidance for supporting LGBTQ2SIA+, transgender, and gender expansive student *and* staff; and reflecting a commitment to equity, dignity, and belonging.

4. SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 2992 – THE “STUDENTS SEE CLEARLY ACT” CREATING A STATEWIDE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE OPTOMETRIC SERVICES AND PRESCRIPTION EYEGLASSES AT NO COST

TO THE STUDENTS OR THEIR FAMILIES

Interim Superintendent Gill and Ms. Newman introduced information pertaining to HB 2992 – the Students See Clearly Act.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that the district partnered with the organization Vision to Learn to develop a pathway to HB 2992 – the Students See Clearly Act – for the purpose of providing eyesight screening and subsequent prescription eyeglasses at no cost to students.

Ms. Newman added that because 4J was a pilot community, they are encouraged to write letters of support for the program and/or provide physical testimony. She said the program is a gamechanger and that students need to be able to see to be able to learn to read. She cited disproportionate impacts to low-income students and students of color.

5. FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 AUDIT REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Finance Director Matt Brown provide a FY24 audit review via PowerPoint presentation.

He began by referencing a chart outlining department staff, consisting of 28 full-time employees (FTE). He noted that 14 of the 28 are either relatively new to the district or new to their role. He described some of their responsibilities, including payroll and accounts payable.

Mr. Brown highlighted the following:

- 2024 audit completed on time
- Unmodified opinion with no reservations (i.e. clean audit)
- Findings:
 - Material weakness – deficiency in internal control that could create a misstatement in the financial statements
 - Significant deficiency – less severe than a material weakness, but warrants attention from management
 - Vast improvement from last year and all previous findings corrected

Mr. Brown noted that the FY25 interim audit is scheduled for April 2025 and the final FY25 audit is scheduled for September 2025.

Board action regarding the FY24 audit and corrective action plan will be sought at their work session on January 22, 2025.

XI. COMMENTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rabasa expressed how lucky we are to live in a community that cares about our schools and our district, and the huge number of people who put care, time, and energy into making sure that the pathway is clear, productive, and as welcoming as possible.

Ms. Newman expressed appreciation for all the input received from the community regarding the search for a new superintendent.

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

Ms. Thessen requested a Friday memorandum including relevant IB testing data from previous years.

XIII. ADJORN

Chair Jonak adjourned the regular meeting at 8:57 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Jenny Jonak
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 02/05/2025