

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

Date: February 5, 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 31, 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)

Matt Brown, Director of Finance

Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Finance

Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning

Jen Bills, Director of School Safety and Emergency Management

Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office

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

Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Interim Superintendent and Board

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Katheryn Hehman, International High School

Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School

Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School

Jazmin Berry, North Eugene High School

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School

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

EMPLOYEE GROUPS:

None.

OTHER GUESTS:

None.

MEDIA:

KRVM

Register Guard

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

Chair Jonak called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 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 to include an Item For Action regarding a complaint dated December 1, 2024. The agenda was approved as amended.

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Interim Superintendent Colt Gill addressed the student representatives about an opportunity to participate in a lottery relating to the hiring of the next Eugene School District 4J superintendent. He said the student representatives should have received an email from Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office. Interim Superintendent Gill read a personal statement honoring 4J school counselors during National School Counseling Week.

IV. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

South Eugene High School Representatives Cora Ludwig and Deeya Patel spoke about South's new phone policy, including "cell hotels" for Freshman. For grades 10 and up, students are expected to keep their phones/personal devices off and put away. Regarding food regulations and affinity groups, school administration has arranged for members of the nutrition department to attend a Student Advisory Group meeting to discuss. Winter Formal is Saturday, February 8, 2025 at the Ford Alumni Center.

Churchill High School Representative Sheridan Schilling said that students are reporting that rules are not being enforced, resulting in students being unclear about what violations equate to certain consequences. She mentioned the need for rules to be extremely clear and consistent throughout the district. She said food regulations and affinity groups continue to be a challenge and that student government, affinity groups, clubs, and the

general student body are seeking a change or more clarity. Ms. Schilling added that teacher morale is improving along with the new administration and attendance is up.

Sheldon High School Representative Carmen Gonzalez Valle brought attention to the issue of the cheer squad being refused physical education credits. She cited the oppression of women in predominantly female sports. Another growing concern among students are new U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies. Although the district has issued a statement that they will not allow ICE officers into school buildings, there is still growing concern among students of color. She urged that the district do more to quell the concerns of students. Ms. Gonzalez Valle recognized school counselors during National School Counseling Week.

Eugene International High School (IHS) Representative Katheryn Hehman reported that both the new phone policy is creating an air of discomfort at IHS. She cited four previous bomb threats and said that there remains a certain level of anxiety, specifically among upperclassmen. She reported that students feel they were not consulted on the decision. Additionally, students are reporting that the new Smart Pass policy feels like an invasion of privacy and is ineffective. Ms. Hehman added that IHS recently hosted Skate Night at The Rink Exchange.

Eugene Online Academy (EOA) Representative Lane Lowd (online) reported that they have no official school report this week due to a late introduction this year on the Board. EOA does not yet feel fully immersed and represented on the Board.

V. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Emily Gilkey-Palmer, Librarian at Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School, thanked the Board of Directors (BOD) for funding district libraries and librarians. She shared a personal story about the positive impacts of their support.

James Longoria, 4J educator and track and field coach, spoke about issues related to the track and field schedule. He encouraged a four-day schedule, Monday through Thursday. He said the schedule has already proven successful. He discouraged having an inconsistent practice schedule, and cited susceptibility to injuries, among other issues.

Jason Erickson, 4J educator and track and field coach, voiced concern about the track and field schedule not allowing for safety and injury prevention. He advocated for a four-day schedule, Monday through Thursday. He explained that a consistent schedule allows athletes to properly warm up and physically prepare for competition. Mr. Erickson said he represents his fellow coaches and more than one thousand middle school track and field athletes.

Jason Miller, 4J educator and track and field coach, spoke about issues related to the track and field schedule. He encouraged a four-day schedule, Monday through Thursday. He said the inconsistent schedule raises issues of equity and safety, citing a five-day

schedule at the high school level, and inequitable access to coaches. He discouraged from not holding a practice before a meet.

Scott Bush, 4J educational assistant and track and field coach, voiced concern about the track and field schedule. He encouraged a four-day schedule, Monday through Thursday. He said that the new schedule has resulted in lower attendance and inadequate time to prepare and warm up, among other issues.

Jaime Hock, 4J educator (online), acknowledged National School Board Month (in January) and National School Counseling Week. She said there are more than 50 school counselors within the district and expressed that no human can learn unless they are feeling safe and emotionally regulated. She thanked 4J school counselors.

Roscoe Caron, Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE) member (online), stated that within the district the school day has become largely a drudgery of reading and math and leaving little time for science, health, geography, art, history, and play-based learning. He cited overpriced curriculum based on collecting data and preparing for the next test. He discouraged an administration-centered over child-centered education.

VI. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were none.

VII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 4, 2024 BOARD WORK SESSION; JANUARY 15, 2025 REGULAR BOARD MEETING; AND JANUARY 22, 2025 BOARD WORK SESSION

There was no discussion.

2. APPROVE ED CENTER ROOFTOP MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

There was no discussion.

3. APPROVE SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDS FOR LOCAL PROJECTS BENEFITING STUDENTS

There was no discussion.

4. APPROVE SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR ADJUSTMENTS TO THIS SPRING ON THE 2024-25 CALENDAR

There was no discussion.

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

VIII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE REPORTS ON 4J GRADUATION RATES FOR 2023-24

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Access Larry Williams and Director of Research and Planning Oscar Loureiro presented information about 4J graduation rates for the 2023-24 school year via PowerPoint presentation.

The data was released by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) on January 29, 2025. The graduation rates count students who received regular or modified diplomas. The dropout rate is the percentage of high school students who dropped out of formal education.

Mr. Loureiro explained that although there was a drop (1 point) in 2023-24, there has otherwise been long term growth (15 points from 2015-2024) as it relates to graduation rates. The decrease in graduation rates was consistent throughout all district high schools. Students involved in Career and Technical Education (CTE) have significantly higher graduation rates than other students.

Mr. Loureiro highlighted four possible contributing factors:

1. Change in how graduation rates were allocated
2. The effects of the pandemic
3. Graduation readiness at the end of 9th grade
4. The new (2x4 ABC schedule)

Mr. Loureiro presented a table revealing how 4J graduation rates compare with Oregon's 10 largest districts. 4J ranked between eighth and ninth throughout the 2018-2024 school years.

Mr. Loureiro presented a table revealing how 4J graduation rates compare with other Lane County districts. 4J ranked between fifth and eighth throughout the 2018-2024 school years.

Mr. Loureiro presented a table showing five-year graduation rates, reflecting a minimal decline in the district during the 2023-24 school year.

Mr. Williams explained 4J's next strategies to improve graduation rates, such as an extended day program and online courses, schedule changes, focusing on attendance and engaging families, and increased planning time to support teachers.

Mr. Loureiro and Mr. Williams invited questions from the BOD.

Ms. Thessen asked what the district is doing to support homeless students.

Mr. Williams responded that last year the district hired a third professional to work with McKinney-Vento students. He explained that the position was extended beyond the school year into the summer, which they believe will help.

Ms. Newman commented that the impact of CTE on graduation rates is encouraging. She asked about the drop in the 9th grade on-track. She questioned whether having fewer instructional hours had a significant impact.

Mr. Williams believes that having fewer instructional hours has a significant impact because in certain courses more time is beneficial.

Mr. Loureiro responded that the decline in 9th grade students on-track is due both to students taking fewer classes and students failing a higher number of classes than before the pandemic.

Interim Superintendent Gill commented that he believes the whole team is clearly unhappy with the 2023-24 graduation rates. He does not think it reflects the potential of students or the efforts of staff. He mentioned the number of changes that have been introduced, which he said students and staff are still getting used to. He said the supports being put into place should result in gains in the district.

Ms. Rabasa requested data about migrant education program students.

Mr. Loureiro responded that the district does not present data when the student group has less than five represented, as is the case with migrant education program students.

Ms. Rabasa asked if the district is tracking the number of students dropping out between 8th and 9th grades.

Mr. Williams responded affirmatively.

Ms. Rabasa recommended possibly offering CTE opportunities at lower grade levels.

2. SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT: 07/01/2024 THROUGH 12/31/24

Finance Director Matt Brown and Associate Finance Director Bob Blyth presented information about the second quarter financial report via PowerPoint presentation. He referenced a financial report provided in the meeting packet.

Mr. Brown highlighted the following in the 2nd Quarter Financial Report:

General fund:

- The district is on track to spend what is appropriated and budgeted for the year
- Limited vacancy savings going into 2026 due to adjustment to EEA agreement
- Spend down of beginning fund balance estimated at \$30.9M (starting FY26 at \$44M instead of \$75M)

Supplemental budget:

- Supplemental budget planned for March/April
- Additional appropriations in response to finalized EEA & MAPS agreement, additional grants, and organizational cleanup

Mr. Brown presented 2025 budget roadshow tour dates. He explained that they expanded the locations this year to include elementary and high schools.

Mr. Blyth outlined the following budget buckets: general fund (100s), special purpose (200s), debt service (300s), capital projects 400s), insurance reserves (600s), and private trust (780). He noted that the general fund accounts for roughly 50% of the budget. He stated that \$.89 of every dollar is spent on people in the district.

Mr. Brown noted that there has been a significant increase in staffing over the past four years. The vacancies are primarily classified positions in special education and transportation.

Mr. Blyth brought attention to enrollment rates and the State School Fund (SSF). District enrollment has been declining every year since 2020, and the trend is expected to continue.

Mr. Brown added that staffing is outpacing enrollment. He outlined forecast assumptions, including but not limited to: enrollment decreases, PERS increases, SSF increases, and reserve policy increases. He noted that the budget reflects an increase of \$24,150,000 in costs from last year to this year. He showed a chart revealing a \$30.9 million dollar gap (i.e. overspending) and said the status quo moving forward is not a sustainable model. To right size the budget, one approach is reducing expenses by \$10 million, \$20 million, or \$30 million—with a \$30 million reduction being the most effective. He reiterated that 90% of the budget is spent on people (i.e. staff).

Mr. Brown explained that the district projects to begin next fiscal year with about \$44 million, spending down \$31 million of the \$75 million that the district currently has. He noted that the actuals will be updated throughout the budget process and prior to presenting a proposed balanced budget to the Budget Committee in the spring. They will not have information from the legislature relating to the SSF until May. He added that the interim superintendent and the executive leadership team are developing a budget decision tool to guide budgetary decision-making.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Blyth invited questions from the BOD.

Interim Superintendent Gill mentioned that there will be key legislative updates occurring within the next several weeks which may signal revenue forecasts likely to impact the district in a variety of ways.

Ms. Munro asked if, related to district enrollment decreases, there is an opportunity to maximize the fact that 4J has historically been a desirable district for students to attend.

Mr. Blyth responded that neighboring districts are also experiencing drops in enrollment.

Chair Jonak asked if there is reason to be concerned about impacts to the state fund as a result of impacts to federal funding.

Mr. Blyth responded that it is a concern.

3. 4J SCHOOL BOARD COMMUNITY CHATS AND PRINCIPAL STUDENT ADVISORY VISITS

Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Ubrina provided an update about the School Board Community Chats and Principal Advisory Visits.

Ms. Urbina explained that the initiative is designed to create intentional, meaningful dialogue between the Board, students, and the community, ensuring that family and student voices have a role in shaping district priorities and decision-making. Phase one, a community engagement chat, was completed in fall 2024. She mentioned that key themes and takeaways have informed ongoing district and student engagement efforts. Phase two will begin in March 2025. The next stage involves direct engagement with students through Principal Advisory Groups and Board member engagement with students.

IX. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. AUTHORIZE BOARD CHAIR TO SEND A CLOSURE LETTER FOR A COMPLAINT DATED DECEMBER 1, 2024.

There was no discussion.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to authorize the Chair to send a closure letter for a complaint dated December 1, 2024. Ms. Thessen seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

2. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY DI—FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Mr. Brown presented information related to proposed revisions to Policy DI – Financial Management Policies.

Mr. Brown referenced a document provided in the meeting packet detailing reserve policies at comparable school districts including, but not limited to: Portland, Salem, and Beaverton. Additionally, information was gathered relating to 4J's previous financial management policies, specifically the reserve policy. Data revealed that the reserve policy has been roughly 5% since 1998.

Ms. Newman proposed increasing reserves to 9.5% with 4.5% in contingency funds and 5% in unappropriated funds.

Chair Jonak asked how much flexibility or nimbleness increasing the reserves would provide the district if faced with cuts at federal level.

Mr. Brown responded that the district would have more contingency funds to move into appropriations for spending.

Vice Chair Di Liberto shared his perspective that while he was initially inclined to keep the reserve policy the same, threats from the federal government that may affect the district have given him reason to be more cautious and he is in favor of backing the 8% reserve policy staff recommendation. He recommended re-evaluating the reserve policy within one year.

Ms. Rabasa expressed opposition to the reserve policy staff recommendation. She added that she would like to revisit the policy after classified employee bargaining.

Ms. Thessen echoed Ms. Rabasa's sentiments about waiting until after bargaining.

Chair Jonak explained that she has generally not been in favor of increasing reserves, but she is concerned about the unprecedented level of unpredictability of funding at the federal level potentially impacting direct and indirect district funding. She said being more conservative fiscally makes sense. She added that while she would like to wait, there is a short timeline to complete the budget.

Ms. Munro emphasized the need to be stable, consistent, and supportive of staff. She cautioned against issuing staffing cuts with no warning and expressed support for raising the reserve policy to serve as a buffer.

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved to approve increasing reserves to 9.5% with 4.5% in contingency funds and 5% in unappropriated funds. Mr. Hamilton seconded. **The motion failed, 2:5:0; Ms. Newman and Mr. Hamilton voting in favor; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Thessen opposed.**

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to approve proposed revisions to Board Policy DI, increasing reserves to 8% with 3% in contingency funds and 5% in unappropriated. Chair Jonak Seconded. **The motion passed, 5:2:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton voting in favor; Ms. Rabasa and Ms. Thessen opposed.**

MOTION: Chair Di Liberto moved to re-evaluate the reserve policy within one year. Ms. Thessen seconded. **The motion passed, 6:1:0; Chair Jonak, Vice**

Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Munro, Ms. Thessen, and Mr. Hamilton voting in favor; Ms. Newman opposed.

2. APPROVE REVISIONS TO POLICY CBC—SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT (SECOND READ)

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced revisions to Policy CBC – Superintendent Contract.

Interim Superintendent Gill referenced questions posed during the previous discussion. He reviewed the statute relating to a 12-month notice for termination without cause and confirmed that it references a 12-month notice and it does not include a revision about the remainder of the contract.

Related to the purchase and use of charter schools, he said that the provision is limited to district property or school property that the superintendent has authority over. He updated the policy language to specify a district sponsored public charter school.

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to approve revisions to Policy CBC—Superintendent Contract. Ms. Newman seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT 2025-27 LANE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT (ESD) SERVICE PLAN

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced approval of the 2025-27 ESD Service Plan. He noted that the plan was reformatted to be more readable. The plan also includes more information about funding streams and services, including special education funding, professional learning and development, diversifying the workforce, and migrant education services. He mentioned that the Lane Career Academy is now a fully funded core program. Interim Superintendent Gill reported that all 16 county superintendents and the Lane ESD Board unanimously approved the service plan.

2. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL NEW POLICY KJG—TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced approval of Policy KJG – Tribal Consultation. The policy was developed in consultation with the Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Office of Indian Education at ODE, and the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA). He explained that in some circumstances, tribal consultation is required both state and federally to help ensure that the district is following treaty rights, honoring Native American and Alaskan Native traditions, and ensuring that Native students are well served with respect to their language, culture, heritage, and the wishes of their tribal

nation. He added that a certain level of Title VI funding requires tribal consultation, however the policy includes the intent that the district honor tribal consultation regardless of federal funding thresholds.

3. CONSIDER FOR ADOPTION NEW BOARD POLICY EBCA—SAFETY THREATS (FIRST READ)

Director of School Safety and Emergency Management Jen Bills and Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Brooke Wagner presented information about the adoption of Policy EBCA—Safety Threats.

Ms. Bills explained that the district regularly communicates every safety threat and works hard to not increase fear, to communicate clearly, and in a timely manner. The main tool for communicating is ParentSquare and via email.

Interim Superintendent Gill added that the new policy is required following a bill passed in 2023.

4. CONSIDER PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY EBCB—EMERGENCY PROCEDURE DRILLS AND INSTRUCTION (FIRST READ)

Ms. Bills and Ms. Wagner presented information about proposed revisions to Policy EBCB—Emergency Procedure Drills and Instruction.

Ms. Bills explained that the policy revisions reflect updates to staff and student training for lockdown, shelter in place, secure evacuations, and holds. She said the drills have been conducted multiple times at every district school.

5. CONSIDER PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY GCDA.GDDA—CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS AND FINGERPRINTING (FIRST READ)

Ms. Bills presented information about proposed revisions to Board Policy GCDA.GDDA—Criminal Records Checks and Fingerprinting.

Ms. Bills explained that revisions to the policy include removing the ability for individuals to have direct contact with children until their criminal record check is completed. She added that the district is looking for ways to reduce the cost of fingerprinting for parent volunteers.

Ms. Munro brought attention to a discrepancy in the policy related to the cost of background checks.

XI. COMMENTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rabasa reported that herself and Ms. Thessen visited Washington D.C. as part of a delegation organized by OSBA and they will soon be sharing more information.

Mr. Hamilton acknowledged statements made by the student representatives and encouraged them to keep coming forward with issues.

Chair Jonak shared a personal statement honoring Black History Month.

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

Ms. Newman suggested holding a work session to share information collected in the community listening sessions.

Ms. Munro requested a Friday memorandum with data about 9th grade on-track to graduate.

XIII. ADJORN

Chair Jonak adjourned the regular meeting at 9:43 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Jenny Jonak
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 03/05/2025