

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

Date: April 23, 2025

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 April 18, 2025.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jenny Jonak, Chair

Tom Di Liberto, Vice Chair

Maya Rabasa

Ericka Thessen

Judy Newman

Morgan Munro

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rick Hamilton

STAFF:

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent

Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff

Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office

Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

Jill Cuadros, Nutrition Services Director and Warehouse

Seth Pfaefflin, Director of Student Services

Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning

Courtney Leonard, Secondary Curriculum and MTSS Administrator

Josh Davies, citizen of the Hanis Coos Tribe and 4J NATIVES Program Administrator Cynthia

Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff

Debbie McKim, Executive Assistant to the Interim Superintendent and Board

EMPLOYEE GROUPS:

None

OTHER GUESTS:

Jolene Bettles, citizen of the Klamath Tribe

Tahnee Mustoe, citizen of the Cherokee Tribe

Jan Smith, citizen of the Kiowa Tribe

Sandra Shotridge, citizen of the Tlingit Tribe
Trista Neuman, 15th Night School Program Coordinator
Teresa Suttin, Chef/4J Nutrition Services
Patrick Newsom, Regional Procurement Coordinator
Melina Barker, Rogue Valley Farm to School Director
Megan Schultz, Local Youth Advocate
Annette Pershern, Riverbend Farm

MEDIA:

KRVM

Register Guard

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Jonak called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. She said the names of the members present and recognized Debbie McKim in acknowledgement of National Executive Assistant Day.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

**1. APPROVE THE BOARD MINUTES DRAFT FOR THE APRIL 16, 2025
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**2. APPROVE CORRECTION TO PERSONNEL ACTION APPROVED ON
3/5/2025**

**3. BOND PROJECT – MULTI SITE PARKING LOT/PATHWAY
ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

4. BOND PROJECT – MULTI SITE COMPACTORS

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the consent group. Ms. Munro seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:1; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor.**

IV. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**1. STRENGTHENING SCHOOL NUTRITION THROUGH COMMUNITY AND
COLLABORATION**

Director of Nutrition Services and Warehouse Jill Cuadros and six regional partners provided information about Strengthening School Nutrition Through Community and Collaboration via PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Cuadros explained that nutrition is central to student success. By incorporating local food, Eugene School District 4J is investing back into the community. She said the Oregon Farm to School Program connects schools with local farms, helping to serve fresher, more nutritious food while strengthening the local economy. She said the district is fortunate to have support at the state level.

The Oregon Farm to School Network is a community driven network consisting of child nutrition practitioners, teachers, nonprofit partners, and food producers. They advocate for funding for child nutrition programs, promote farm and garden education, and provide technical assistance.

The statewide vision for the Oregon Farm to School Program is:

- Supports local food in schools across Oregon
- Supports Oregon's agricultural economy
- Equitable food access as a shared value
- Expands access to local, fresh foods in schools
- Connects kids to where food comes from

The 4J Farm to School Program is:

- Leveraging state funds to bring fresh produce to 4J students
- Building a model that centers farmers and students
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables offered regularly
- Students benefit from fresher, more engaging meals

4J is known for being innovative and its Farm to School Program is considered a successful model for other school districts across the state.

Regional Procurement Coordinator Patrick Newsom described his role facilitating connections and sales between local growers to provide food specifically for school districts, including developing crop plans with farmers. He said it is a win-win situation because farmers receive more stability and security while ensuring a more resilient food system, serving students, and the community.

Riverbend Farm owner Annette Pershern provided comments from the local farmer's perspective, stating that the Farm to School Program is huge for them and their business takes pride in growing products for 4J.

Ms. Cuadros introduced 4J Chef Teresa Suttan, stating that she utilizes a scratch cooking method to produce sauces, soups, entrees, and other meals from the acquired farm food.

Ms. Suttan described the process of using local farm produce in everything from salad bars to sauces. She said they currently receive produce from 15 local farms and 7 local companies.

Ms. Cuadros introduced 15th Night School Program Coordinator Trista Neuman, explaining that Ms. Nueman supports students through school-based food pantries and her perspective has helped the district understand that food access needs to extend beyond cafeteria hours.

Ms. Nueman described her role understanding student barriers and needs as they relate to food access. She said students are reporting needing more food, accessible food, fresh food, and clean food. She said food pantries are a critical tool and there is a need to expand and grow them districtwide.

Ms. Cuadros introduced local youth advocate Megan Schultz.

Ms. Schultz reported that school assessments have revealed food as a top need shared by staff and students. She advocated bringing together nutrition service partners from across the county, known as the Lane County Nutrition Services Coalition.

Additionally, Ms. Cuadros said they hosted a gathering of more than 30 farmers and eight school districts, the largest event of its kind in state history. She said the conversations laid the groundwork for a new kind of regional food system.

Ms. Cuadros described next steps and collaboration:

- Expand local sourcing and deepen partnerships
- Expand coalition efforts and partnerships
- Align districts with student-centered nutrition and food access

Ms. Cuadros opened the floor to questions.

Individual members of the Board of Directors (BOD) voiced their support for strengthening school nutrition through collaboration.

Interim Superintendent Gill complimented Ms. Cuadros on her vision, creativity, and tenacity.

Ms. Munro asked for more information about the supper program.

Ms. Cuadros said the supper program provides afterschool meals five days per week at district high schools. She said it is particularly helpful for athletes. An average of 2,000 meals are served monthly.

Ms. Rabasa asked how their department approaches providing food that is culturally relevant to students.

Ms. Nueman responded that it is a consideration for the food pantries. She said the students themselves provide a wish list, and there is involvement from district equity teams. She said Churchill High School is excelling at providing culturally relevant foods.

Overall, it is something their department is trying to improve upon.

Ms. Suttan described a time when their department prepared an indigenous meal made of bison, corn, beans, and squash.

In closing, there was discussion about legislative advocacy, including sustaining Farm to School and School Meals for All and a bill for \$2 million in funding for school cafeteria kitchen equipment.

2. TOTEM POLE RESPONSE

Interim Superintendent Gill and five tribal members – Jan Smith, Citizen of the Kiowa Tribe; Sandra Shotridge, citizen of the Tlingit Tribe; Jolene Bettles, citizen of the Klamath Tribe; Josh Davies, citizen of the Hanis Coos Tribe; Tahnee Mustoe, citizen of the Cherokee Tribe, held a discussion about the respectful removal of totem poles.

Interim Superintendent provided a background statement, explaining that the concern was brought to his attention by several local leaders, including Jan Smith, citizen of the Kiowa Tribe; Shortly following that, he attended a talking circle at the invitation of Josh Davies, citizen of the Hanis Coos Tribe. Interim Superintendent Gill said he is regretful that the process has taken as long as it has. He acknowledged that in the past several years, conversations with Native American community members, leaders, students, staff, and cultural experts have highlighted the need to address harm arising from cultural and historical inaccuracy of several totem poles displayed across the district. The poles were created as educational projects in past decades, yet without formal authorization or permission from associated tribes or Native carvers. Furthermore, the totem poles do not represent the peoples of the region.

Interim Superintendent Gill acknowledged that some community members hold positive memories of the totem poles. He cited misrepresentation of the local Native community, cultural appropriation, and lack of permission as reasons guiding the decision to remove the poles. He provided examples of similar actions taken in other communities. The timeline for the poles removal and renewal process includes a respectful and safe transfer of poles in summer of 2025. He said the district is renewing its commitment to working with Native community members and students to explore ideas for culturally appropriate symbols that authentically honor the region's Indigenous history and traditions.

Ms. Smith provided a statement. She said that there are 574 American Indian/Alaskan Native tribes in North America. She said that each nation has its own language, laws, and sacred rights, and the notion that one symbol can represent all tribes is a gross stereotypical misrepresentation. Ms. Smith described the totem poles as a mockery of true Native culture. She thanked the BOD for their willingness to listen with an open mind and acknowledged Interim Superintendent Gill's participation in the process. She requested that no photos, recordings, or videos of the cleansing ceremonies be taken.

Sandra Shotridge, citizen of the Tlingit Tribe provided comments, stating that the totem poles are disheartening. She said it is embarrassing to her as a member of a tribe with carving traditions. In her Native language, she thanked the BOD for listening.

Jolene Bettles, citizen of the Klamath Tribe offered that in educational institutions there are attempts to teach Oregon tribal history guided by strong Indigenous academic leaders. She acknowledged that things can be done with good intentions and still have harmful outcomes. She invited ongoing open conversations to build a path toward restoration.

NATIVES (Native Americans Towards Improved Values in Education and Society) Program Administrator Josh Davies, citizen of the Hanis Coos Tribe provided a statement. He said Ms. Smith's letter sparked a conversation that he felt needed to take place. He referenced a talking circle held which prompted more conversations about taking action regarding totem poles at 4J. He expressed that it is fitting for the district to repair and undo the harm that has been caused. He added that his utmost responsibility is to Native students and the Native community.

Members of the BOD responded to comments from tribal members.

Ms. Rabasa apologized to tribal members, specifically regarding district communication. She thanked Ms. Smith for her persistence addressing concerns regarding totem poles.

Vice Chair Di Liberto echoed Ms. Rabasa's sentiments. He asked how district students will be involved in the learning process moving forward and requested future updates.

Mr. Davies responded that the plan moving forward is that after the poles come down something will go in its place, potentially native gardens, murals, and/or dugout canoes. The decisions will be guided by community and student input.

In closing, Interim Superintendent Gill committed to honoring tribal members' requests to not document the removal of the totem poles nor the native garden planting.

V. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE ADOPTION OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Secondary Curriculum and MTSS Administrator Courtney Leonard recommended approving adoption of middle and high school science curriculum.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the adoption of middle and high school science curriculum. Ms. Rabasa seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:1; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor.**

2. READOPT ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY HEALTH CURRICULUM THROUGH 2032

Secondary Curriculum and MTSS Administrator Courtney Leonard recommended readopting elementary and secondary health curriculum through 2032.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the readoption of elementary and secondary health curriculum through 2032. Ms. Thessen seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:1; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor.**

VI. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL REVISIONS TO POLICY JEC – ADMISSION OF RESIDENT STUDENTS**

Director of Research and Planning Oscar Loureiro recommended approving revisions to Policy JEC to align with current standards.

2. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY GBEB – COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN SCHOOLS; DELETE POLICY GBEB – STAFF – HIV, AIDS, AND HBV; DELETE POLICY JHCC – STUDENTS – HIV, HBV, AND AIDS**

Director of Student Services Seth Pfaefflin recommended approving revisions to Policy GBEB, deleting Policy GBEB, and deleting Policy JHCC to ensure due diligence around communicable disease.

3. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY EFA – LOCAL WELLNESS

Ms. Cuadros recommended approving revisions to Policy EFA via PowerPoint presentation. She explained that the revisions reflect Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) recommendations, incorporate Administrative Rules (ARs), and align to state and federal laws. She provided relevant information about nutrition and instruction related to proposed revisions to Policy EFA and responded to questions from the BOD.

VII. ADJORN

Chair Jonak adjourned the work session at 8:00 p.m.



Colt Gill
District Clerk



Jenny Jonak
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 05/21/2025