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

Date: May 21, 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 May 16, 2025.

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, Finance Director
Bob Blyth, Assistant Finance Director
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Seth Pfaefflin, Director of Student Services
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support
Erin Gaston, Curriculum Administrator
Casandra Kamens, Curriculum Administrator
Jennifer Bills, Director of School Safety
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Kate Marrone, Director of Human Services
John Wayland, Kelly Middle School Principal
Tanner Faris, Kelly Middle School Teacher
Tim Everett, Kelly Middle School Teacher
Leah Cruzin, Kelly Middle School Teacher
Cynthia Calletano, 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) President

OTHER GUESTS:
None

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.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Jonak requested pulling Consent Group Item for Action No. 5 – Approving the Amergis Healthcare Staffing Contract for Nursing Services for discussion. The agenda was approved as amended.

III. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were none.

IV. CONSENT GROUP

1. APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR THE APRIL 23, 2025 BOARD WORK SESSION

2. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-054, DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO SUPERINTENDENT AND APPROVING THE SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

3. DESIGNATE AGENT FOR CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

4. APPROVE THE REPLACEMENT OF INTERCOM TECHNOLOGY AT 4J SITES THAT IS AT END OF LIFE

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the consent group as amended. Ms. Munro 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.**

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. KELLY MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SCIP) GOAL #1: PROGRESS UPDATE

Principal John Wayland and educators Tanner Faris, Tim Everett, and Leah Cruzen provided information about the Kelly Middle School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) Goal #1: Progress Update via PowerPoint presentation.

The focus of the goal is to provide more clarity and consistency on report cards by adopting a common grading scheme.

Mr. Faris introduced Proficiency Based Grading, as follows:

- Leads to more focused teaching
- Paves the way for students to take ownership of their learning
- Is bias-resistant, accurate, and motivational
- Allows students to try as many times as they need until they understand, supporting a growth mindset

He introduced Gross Motor Skills/Development for early toddlers (18 months):

- Locomotor movements
- Balance and coordination
- Object manipulation with gross motor involvement
- Spatial awareness and motor planning

He introduced a Proficiency-Based Academic Report:

- Am I supporting the student's most current level of understanding and skill?
- Does this grade reflect the student's growth through multiple learning opportunities?
- Am I using assessment to inform instruction and encourage improvement?
- Am I grading based on the standard and meaningful indicators of mastery for each level – what the student knows and can do?

Ms. Cruzen provided information about utilizing an English Language Development (ELD) Lens. She said proficiency grading is beneficial in the following ways:

- It combats racial, linguistic, and cultural bias
- It takes language out of the equation and shows what students actually understand

She provided information about the Special Education (SPED) Lens:

- Proficiency-based grading is better for SPED students as it promotes soft skills development for all students:
    - Working collaboratively
    - Time management
    - Project planning
    - Making decisions
    - Completing responsibilities

Mr. Everett presented the following challenges:

- Percentages coming through on grades in the mobile app
- Inputting outcomes (standards) into the gradebook is incredibly time-consuming
- Parent and involvement and understanding
- Consistency throughout the building

He described a shift in reporting from ABCDF or P/F to Proficient, Nearly Proficient, and Not Yet Proficient (i.e. proficiency-based grading). He provided a report card to demonstrate how confusing the current model is, given that there are several different grading modalities. He said they are working toward improving the reporting system and implementing a new version schoolwide.

Vice Chair Di Liberto asked if any other Eugene School District 4J middle schools are implementing proficiency grading.

Principal Wayland responded that both Spencer Butte Middle School and Madison Middle School are using proficiency-based grading. He said that they are working with Sebastian Bolden, Director of Middle School Education.

Ms. Munro commented that from her perspective, as the parent of a middle schooler, it would be helpful to know both where they are proficient, and what assignment is missing. She brought attention to concerns raised by other parents about discrepancies or delays in reporting.

Ms. Newman asked if the skills accumulate like developmental skills or if they are additive.

Mr. Faris said the skills build upon each other and allow for interventions.

Mr. Everett added, from the SPED perspective, that it allows for more honest reporting about what a student can do, accounting for all skills, rather than failing because they cannot do x, y, or z. He emphasized providing appropriate supports for students.

Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Thessen, and Vice Chair Di Liberto voiced enthusiasm for the Kelly Middle School SCIP goal.

2. BOARD LEADERSHIP ELECTION PROCESS FOR 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR
Chair Jonak engaged the Board of Directors (BOD) in a discussion about the Board Leadership Election Process for the 2025-26 School Year.

She explained that traditionally the BOD has nominated and elected leadership during their July meeting. She suggested they might consider submitting interest in leadership positions in advance of the meeting. She asked members if they want to elect leadership positions via motion. Chair Jonak asked for general feedback on the leadership election process.

Chair Rabasa said she likes the idea of submitting interest ahead of time. She suggested the names be submitted to the Board Secretary, collected, and shared during the meeting.

Chair Jonak asked if members would be open to the names being shared before the meeting.

Ms. Rabasa said she would be in favor of that.

Ms. Newman offered that every member of the BOD should have an opportunity to be in leadership. She said she would be in favor of a rotation, with the ability to decline.

Chair Jonak commented that the Chair has historically been a time-consuming role, and that is a barrier to serving. She said having different leadership styles could make it more accessible.

Ms. Thessen suggested considering a two co-chair leadership model.

Ms. Newman suggested that the Chair delegate emails to a non-leadership member to save time. Responding to the suggestion about a two co-chair leadership model, she cited a recent leadership change and said more advice would be needed before considering it.

Responding to the suggestion about submitting interest ahead of time, Ms. Munro wondered if it would be considered a nomination. She advocated for nominations still being allowed on the day-of.

There was discussion about possible variations of a rotational system.

Mr. Hamilton suggested providing a period of time for the Vice Chair to consider if they would accept serving as Chair.

There was some discussion about the election process, including ballot versus motion. Chair Jonak asked members to voice their individual preferences.

Ms. Newman said she prefers rotation.

Vice Chair Di Liberto said he prefers ballot.

Ms. Munro said she prefers motion.

Mr. Hamilton said he prefers motion.

Chair Jonak, Ms. Rabasa, and Ms. Thessen all expressed neutral preference.

There was consensus for submitting interest in advance of the meeting and nominations day-of.

VI. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. ADOPT 2025-26 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET (SECOND READ)

Finance Director Matt Brown, Associate Finance Director Bob Blyth, and Interim Superintendent Gill recommended adoption of the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget via PowerPoint presentation.

Interim Superintendent Gill provided an Oregon June revenue forecast, long range enrollment outlook, Board Policy DI, and the Approved Budget for consideration.

Regarding the Oregon June revenue forecast, he reported that the state economist said a recession is not forecasted at this time, despite elevated risk. He said the three revenue sources that make up the State School Fund are down, as are local revenue and cash reserves.

Interim Superintendent Gill provided COSA analysis, including that unless there are further surprises in the economy or a significant loss of federal funds before the end of the biennium, the Legislature will likely support the GRB of $11.36 billion that the Approved Budget is based upon. He mentioned that Moody's downgrading of the United States bond rating has potential to send ripple affects throughout the economy.

On the topic of shifting demographics, Interim Superintendent Gill said that 4J's declining enrollment mirrors the state trend. He added that district staffing is likely at its highest, and the Approved Budget does not reflect that reality. He detailed the new Approved Budget, including positions restored from the previous Proposed Budget. He noted one important change in the staffing arrangement: rather than restoring 6 FTE at the high school level, they recommend restoring 3.5 FTE at the high school level and restoring 92 hours of first grade educational assistant time to better support early literacy.

Interim Superintendent Gill briefly highlighted staffing reductions in the General Fund based on the Approved Budget. He revealed the Approved Budget forecast, noting that at this time next year, they are forecasted to be below the reserve level. He noted that Board Policy DI states that they may approve a temporary change in the General Fund to go beyond the reserve level. He advised careful monitoring and outlined the following three potential options to rebuild the ending fund balance:

1. The Board may direct the Superintendent to underspend the budget
2. The Board may plan to further reduce the 2026-27 budget
3. The Board may opt to change the minimum reserve level it has set in policy

Interim Superintendent Gill responded to questions from the BOD.

Ms. Munro provided a statement voicing opposition to the Approved Budget, stating that it ignores financial reality, leaves the district vulnerable to likelihood of federal funding cuts, and sets leadership up for unnecessarily brutal cuts next year.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget. Ms. Thessen seconded. **The motion passed, 5:2:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Thessen all voting in favor; Ms. Munro and Mr. Hamilton voting against.**

2. APPROVE FINAL DRAFT OF RESOLUTION #2025-05: AFFIRMING THE RIGHTS, INCLUSION, AND SUCCESS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SECOND READ)

Director of Students Services Seth Pfaefflin and Executive Director of Youth and Family Services Kat Lange recommended approving the final draft of Resolution #2025-05: Affirming the Rights, Inclusion, and Success of Students with Disabilities. Ms. Lange explained that the latest feedback provided by the BOD was incorporated into the resolution.

MOTION: Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the final draft of Resolution #2025-05: Affirming the Rights, Inclusion, and Success of Students with Disabilities. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **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.**

3. APPROVE REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY IKF – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (SECOND READ)

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Access Larry Williams and Director of Research and Planning Oscar Loureiro recommended approving revisions to Board Policy IKF – Graduation Requirements.

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to approve revisions to Board Policy IKF – Graduation Requirements. Mr. Hamilton 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.**

4. APPROVE THE AMERGIS HEALTHCARE STAFFING CONTRACT FOR NURSING SERVICES (2025-26)

Mr. Pfaefflin and Ms. Lange recommended approving the Amergis Healthcare Staffing Contract for Nursing Services (2025-26). Mr. Pfaefflin explained that Amergis is a healthcare contract staffing agency used to fill gaps; for example, temporary contracts such as Outdoor School.

Ms. Munro asked if the approval is new or a renewal.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded that it is a renewal.

Chair Jonak asked about district plans to reduce reliance on health care contract work.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that he believes there will always be a need for contracted services. He said that even in a new staffing model in the future, the district would ask for approval of the Amergis contract.

Ms. Thessen validated the need for contract nursing, but cited challenges, specifically related to pay differences between staff and contract nurses. She said the district is in a unique position and suggested that the health careers pathway might support positions.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded that staff are discussing those prospects.

Ms. Rabasa asked for clarification that the proposed renewal is not to replace 4J nurses but to use contractors in emergent and temporary situations.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded affirmatively.

> **MOTION:** Vice Chair Di Liberto moved to approve the Amergis Healthcare Staffing Contract for Nursing Services (2025-26). Seconded by Mr. Hamilton. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:1:0; Chair Jonak, Vice Chair Di Liberto, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor; Ms. Thessen voting against.**

VII. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL THE NAMING RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CHINESE IMMERSION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ms. Thessen, Principal Jen Hebard, and Xiaowen Jensen recommended approval for the naming recommendation for the Chinese Immersion Elementary School via PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Thessen summarized the more than yearlong naming process – including forming a Naming Committee and collecting name suggestions at in-person cultural events, via surveys, and newsletters.

Ms. Hebard and Ms. Jensen introduced the following four names for consideration: *(Ms. Jensen translated the names into Chinese and Pinyin)*

1. Sprouting Mountain
2. Harmony Grove
3. Home of Peaches and Plums
4. Morning Star

The BOD was invited to consider and ultimately select a name reflecting the spirit of the school, community, and home region.

Interim Superintendent Gill referenced survey results by members of the Chinese Immersion School community reflecting their name preferences.

Ms. Munro asked what language the name will be presented in.

Ms. Hebard responded that the name will be presented in Chinese and Pinyin. She added that they are hoping to hear of the naming decision by the end of the school year.

2. 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE 2025-26 CALENDAR

Ms. Lange presented the 2026-27 school year calendar and adjustments to the 2025-26 calendar.

3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING CALENDAR DRAFT (FIRST READ)

Chair Jonak introduced considering approval of the 2025-26 BOD meeting calendar draft.

4. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY IIA – INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION (FIRST READ)

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Larry Williams and Curriculum and MTSS Specialist Erin Gaston introduced considering for approval revisions to Board Policy IIA – Instructional Materials Selection. Ms. Gaston noted key changes, including clarifying language and better alignment with Oregon School Board Association's (OSBA) recommended language.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jonak adjourned the work session at 8:49 p.m.

Colt Gill
District Clerk

Jenny Jonak
Board Chair

(Recorded by LCOG)
Approved on 06/04/2025