

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

**Date: October 22, 2025**

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 6:00 p.m. via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website on October 17, 2025.

**ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tom Di Liberto  
Ericka Thessen  
Maya Rabasa  
Jenny Jonak  
Judy Newman  
Morgan Munro  
Rick Hamilton (online)

**ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF:**

Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent  
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff  
Matt Brown, Director of Finance  
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel  
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services  
Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging  
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction  
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support  
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning  
Kelly McIver, Communications Director  
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer  
Kate Marrone, Director of Human Services  
Anna Grace, College and Career Readiness TOSA  
Courtney Leonard, Secondary Curriculum Administrator  
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services  
Cynthia Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff/Board  
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

**OTHER GUESTS:**

None

**EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Misty Jackson, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) Co-President

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

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**I. CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER, ROLL CALL**

Chair Di Liberto called the work session to order at 6:01 p.m.

**II. BOARD CHAIR WELCOME**

Chair Di Liberto recognized October as National Book Month, highlighting the work of reading educators, coaches, volunteers, families, and librarians. He acknowledged National School Lunch Week, occurring in the second week of October, and offered appreciation for employees supporting students' nutritional needs. He mentioned that the Board of Directors (BOD) received over 25 invitations to visit district schools and sites.

Chair Di Liberto reported recent Board activities: Each member reviewed Budget Committee applications (40 individual applications received); one member visited the library at Churchill High School; one member attended the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Breakfast hosted by Looking Glass Youth and Family Services; multiple members participated in the Twin Oaks Elementary School Fun Run; and multiple members attended two Budget Community forums. He congratulated Ms. Newman in light of recent recognition by the Jewish Federation of Lane County for her accomplishments and contributions to education.

**III. AGENDA APPROVAL**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were none.

**V. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) Co-President Misty Jackson acknowledged the anxiety, stress, and uncertainty surrounding potential budget cuts. She cited major reductions across all Eugene School District 4J employee groups, including executive leadership. Ms. Jackson encouraged the district to seek broad, structured input from students, families, employee groups, and community partners, and to target reductions using the district equity lens. She suggested protecting the highest leverage student supports, recalibrating resources, and thinking creatively.

## **VI. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION**

### **1. APPROVE ROUTINE PERSONNEL ACTIONS**

There was no discussion.

### **2. BOND PROJECT – MULTI SITE COVERED PLAYGROUND STRUCTURES**

There was no discussion.

### **3. BOND PROJECT – MULTI SITE TRACK SURFACING**

There was no discussion.

### **4. APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE BOARD MEETING CALENDAR FOR THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR**

There was no discussion.

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

## **VII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **1. 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE HUMANITIES**

College and Career Readiness TOSA Anna Grace presented information about 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities via PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Grace explained that the program supports students' social, emotional, and intellectual development while fostering safety, belonging, joy, and success in school through teacher collaboration in a cohort model. She said students who are on track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade are twice as likely to graduate from high school.

She said that 4J implemented a 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort model throughout district high schools. Research has shown that cohorts improve student engagement, attendance, transition to high school, overall academic outcomes, and increases the likelihood that students stay on track.

Ms. Grace highlighted the Humanities Steering Committee, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Team meetings, and cohort teacher collaboration.

She outlined next steps:

- Stronger program evaluation
  - Center 9<sup>th</sup> grade on-track to graduate data
  - Include survey data to determine student wellness, academic readiness and school involvement
  - Examine 10<sup>th</sup> grade student performance
- Strategize for Educator Wellness

- Work toward fidelity of implementation across all 4J high schools

Ms. Grace said the aim of Humanities is to increase school involvement and belonging, improve attendance, and improve access to AP, IB, CN, and CTE programs.

She opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Rabasa asked what type of data is discussed during cohort teacher collaboration.

Ms. Grace responded that the data includes, but is not limited to, student grades, test scores, and attendance.

Ms. Newman said her understanding is that AVID was going to be at all district high schools. She asked how AVID dovetails with Humanities, as some of the goals are similar.

Ms. Grace responded that Humanities has been referred to as “AVID light.” She said AVID is best practice, and they are using those best practices throughout the block.

Ms. Munro asked about the success class. She described receiving mixed reviews from students. She asked how the district is supporting educators.

Ms. Grace described embedding AVID, other curriculum, and shared strategies.

Ms. Munro asked how the district is best supporting students, noting that a grade cohort does not equal a proficiency cohort.

Ms. Grace responded that some of the curriculum comes with extensions and modifications. She mentioned other resources and emphasized collaboration.

Chair Di Liberto voiced his enthusiasm for 9th Grade Humanities.

## **2. RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE DIVISION 22 STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ASSURANCES**

Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Access Larry Williams presented Division 22 Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary School Assurances via PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Urbina outlined Division 22 Standards:

- Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: all Oregon administrative rules (OARs) set out in Chapter 581, Division 22.
- The standards that the Oregon legislature or the State Board has determined must be met in order to be a standard school district.
- Compliance with these rules ensures a baseline level of service across the state.

Ms. Urbina presented Division 22 Rule Categories:

1. High-quality learning experiences
2. Aligned and focused educational systems
3. Engaged partners and communities
4. Safe and inclusive schools
5. Committed and supported staff

She said the categories mirror 4J's priorities: academic excellence, wellbeing, equity, and belonging.

Ms. Urbina highlighted the following resources for information:

- ODE's Rules at a Glance Summary (provides a high-level summary of each rule)
- Secretary of State's Oregon Administrative Rules Database (consult the text of the OAR for all of the specific details)
- ODE's Division 22 Standards Newsletter (biannual publication that highlights new/revised rules, clarifies existing rules; provides insights on how the standards intersect with current issues and trends in K-12 education, as well as resources and promising practices)

Ms. Urbina outlined District 22 Standard Assurances:

- Combined accountability model
- Local accountability (must complete report by November 1)
- State accountability (must submit assurances to ODE by November 15)

Mr. Williams presented Division 22 Waivers for 2024-25:

- 581-022-2115(3) Assessment of Essential Skills:
  - Essential Graduation Requirements are waived for students graduating through the end of the 2027-28 school year.
  - Note: Local Performance Assessment requirement in Section (2) remains in effect.
- OAR 581-022-2120 Essential Skills Assessments for English Language Learners
  - This related policy requirement has also been waived through the end of the 2027-28 SY

Mr. Williams outlined Rule Revisions in Effect for the 2024-25 School Year:

- OAR 581-022-2030 District Curriculum:
  - Beginning in 2024-25, districts must have had:
    - A planned K-12 instructional program for Social and Emotional Learning; and
    - A planned 9-12 instructional program which includes the Personal Finance Education and Higher Education and Career Path Skills content standards

Note: 4J meets the current 2024-25 requirements for SEL and HECP implementation, with full compliance for Personal Finance Education scheduled for 2026-27.

Regarding K-12 instructional program for Social and Emotional Learning, Mr. Williams provided the following:

- K-5 (Elementary)
  - Second Step curriculum provide weekly SEL instruction
- 6-12 (Secondary)
  - Wayfinder, aligned with Sources of Strength, support SEL development
- 9-12
  - Higher Education and Career Path (HECP) implemented at all high schools
  - A Personal Finance course is in development and will be implemented in 2026-27

He outlined the following Rule Revisions in effect:

- Modified Diploma, Extended Diploma, and Certificate of Attendance
- OAR 581-022-2045 Substance Use Prevention and Intervention Plan

Mr. Williams reported that the District Leadership Team engaged in a comprehensive review, and 4J is in compliance with 58 out of 60 Division 22 standards. Staff are implementing a corrective action plan for two items. He highlighted the District Improvement Plan (OAR 581-022-2250) and timeline (adoption Fall 2026).

Ms. Urbina outlined New/Revised Rules and Requirements (OAR 581-022-2307) District Equity Committee (Educational Equity Advisory Committee):

- Represents students and families who have been historically underserved
- Advises on educational equity and system barriers
- Provides input on policies, programs, and practices affecting marginalized student groups
- Submits an annual summary or report, as determined locally, that may be shared publicly and with ODE
- Under the new law, the EEAC advises the superintendent directly and is exempt from public meeting law

Ms. Urbina provided New/Revised Rules and Requirements for Administration of State Assessments:

- Added SEED survey as required OSAS component
- Added mention of ELPA Screener as required OSAS component (not a new requirement, just making the rule more complete)

- Added clarification that districts must abide by ODE decisions regarding student test records

Ms. Urbina outlined New/Revised Rules and Requirements for Educational Leadership – Administrator Standards

- Updated to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership
- Districts must align administrator evaluations to the updated standards by September 30, 2027

In closing, Ms. Urbina concluded that 4J is in compliance with all Division 22 standards, with the exception of OAR 581-022-2115 (Assessment of Essential Skills – Local Performance Assessments), for which a compliance plan is underway for the current school year.

Ms. Urbina and Mr. Williams briefly responded to questions from the BOD.

Ms. Newman asked if ODE will withhold funds for being out of compliance given the new accountability bill (SB 141).

Ms. Urbina implied that it is not yet certain.

Regarding the accountability bill and testing requirements, Ms. Munro asked about dovetailing the Local Performance Assessment piece.

Ms. Urbina responded that it may align with what the district is doing, and it may not. She assured Ms. Munro that conversations are underway with ODE and staff will provide updates as soon as they become available.

### **3. RECEIVE MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT**

Director of Financial Services Matt Brown provided a monthly finance report including enrollment trends, general fund revenue, general fund expenses, and a financial summary via PowerPoint presentation.

He highlighted key components of the data:

- Enrollment increased from what was projected, but remains lower than last year
- Enrollment is expected to continue decreasing
- Enrollment has decreased 20% from 2020
- Staff has increased 25% from 2020
- General fund revenue is on par with what was projected
- General fund expenses increased slightly from previous years
- General fund expenses are slightly outpacing revenue

Mr. Brown reported that the annual financial audit is currently on schedule. He said financial statements may become available in late November.

Mr. Brown briefly outlined budget bucket basics:

- 100 General Fund – 53% of budget
- 200 Special Purpose – 11% of budget
- 300 Debt Service – 9% of budget
- 400 Capital Projects – 17% of budget
- 600 Insurance Reserves – 9% of budget
- 700 Private Trust – > 1% of budget

Mr. Brown provided a September 2025 financial forecast. He said the ending fund balance is just below the reserve policy and reiterated that expenses are currently outpacing revenue. He said that with no changes, by the end of the 2026-27 school year, the ending fund balance will be -\$9 million. Mr. Brown said changes are necessary to be in compliance with ODE.

He said there are few opportunities to increase revenue and suggested reducing expenses. He recommended a reduction of \$30 million in the 2026-27 school year and \$8 million in the 2027-28 school year.

Mr. Brown mentioned that a PERS bond is coming up in a couple of years, and the district must decide if it will go out for another one. He cautioned that the bond may not be as advantageous as in the past.

He provided context about the current financial forecast – How Did We Get Here?:

- Federal ESSER dollars with significant hiring
- Employee costs, such as COLA, retirement, and insurance costs
- Enrollment decline
  - Low birth rates
  - Housing costs
  - Smaller families
- Legislation in Salem
  - State School Fund allocations
  - Unfunded mandates

He outlined reductions made to the 2025-26 budget:

- \$20.7 million
  - \$1.6 million (8%) elementary staffing based on enrollment declines
  - \$19.1 million (92%) administrative staffing, materials, and one-time transfers

He outlined current year changes: What Are We Doing Now?:

- Moving to a hybrid-centralized purchasing process
- Pcard reductions

- Reducing professional development
- Hiring process reviews for all positions
- No new programs or services
- Not currently looking at mid-year staffing reductions to preserve current services and current programs to students

Referencing the approximate \$30 million proposed reduction for next school year, Superintendent Mickelson acknowledged that budget reductions have a very real human impact. She said it is important to her as a superintendent to approach the task of balancing the budget with care, compassion, humanity, transparency, and collaboration. She highlighted the next steps:

- October/November
  - Engage with leadership, departments and buildings
  - Reach out to stakeholders and community
  - Identify opportunities and review all options
- December-January-early February
  - Superintendent recommendations (3 phases)
  - Phase 1 – Executive Leadership and Directors
  - Phase 2 – Managers/Administrators/Professionals/Supervisors (MAPS) & Programmatic Changes
  - Phase 3 – Licensed and Classified Staff
- Mid-February-March
  - Staffing allocations to buildings and work on a 26-27 budget document; HR and contractual notifications begin
- April-June
  - Budget Committee meetings
  - School Board adopts budget by June 30, 2026

Superintendent Mickelson emphasized her commitment to presenting a balanced budget for next school year. She said the role of the Budget Committee is to approve the financial plan and overall amount. They do not have authority to direct the superintendent on programmatic changes. She noted that the final budget must be approved by June 30, 2026. The district's hope is to approve the budget in late May 2026.

Ms. Munro asked for clarification around the timing of the Budget Committee, noting that the committee meets late in the year while the budget process and work occur early in the year.

Superintendent Mickelson responded that there are contractual stipulations that govern the timing. She provided some examples.

Mr. Brown added that their intention is to invite Budget Committee members to Board meetings during which the budget process and reductions will be discussed.

Ms. Jonak asked if programmatic changes, including potentially moving or closing schools, will be done in a time frame such that parents have the final information before making choice decisions.

Superintendent Mickelson offered assurance that she will communicate with staff and families affected by any proposed school closures. She pointed out that the Board has final approval.

Ms. Munro brought attention to uncertainty around federal funding changes.

Mr. Brown validated Ms. Munro's point and said it is difficult to forecast federal funding changes.

Rick Hamilton left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

## **VIII. ITEMS FOR ACTION**

### **1. APPROVE REVISIONS TO POLICY JFCEB – PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Ms. Urbina presented revisions to Policy JFCEB – Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media.

Vice Chair Thessen brought attention to the need for exceptions for students who are also parents.

Ms. Urbina responded that staff are addressing all potential exceptions within Administrative Rule (AR), rather than in policy.

Ms. Jonak flagged the statutory language “medical providers order” as a potential accessibility issue and recommended clear communication with parents and families.

Ms. Rabasa said she is in favor of the motion, knowing there is the ability to revise the policy. She noted that exceptions that live in AR may need to live in policy later. She pointed out an equity issue concerning students' ability to use cell phones off campus, given that some students must remain on campus to receive free lunch.

Ms. Urbina said full implementation will occur on January 1, 2026.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Policy JFCEB – Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media. Ms. Newman seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro all voting in favor.**

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to delete the previous Policy JFCEB – Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media. Ms. Munro seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro all voting in favor.**

## **2. APPROVE PROPOSED REVISIONS TO POLICY JOA – DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

General Counsel Christine Nesbit presented proposed revisions to Policy JOA – Directory Information.

There was no discussion.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve proposed revisions to Policy JOA – Directory Information. Seconded by Ms. Munro; **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro all voting in favor.**

## **3. APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR STATE REVENUE FROM LANE EDUCATION SERVICES DISTRICT (ESD) FOR 2025-2026**

Mr. Brown presented approval of the Request for State Revenue from Lane Education Services District (ESD) For 2025-2026.

There was no discussion.

**MOTION:** Ms. Jonak moved to approve the Request for State Revenue from Lane Education Services District (ESD) For 2025-2026. Vice Chair Thessen seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 6:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro all voting in favor.**

## **4. BUDGET COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS FOR 2025-2026**

Mr. Brown engaged the BOD in the Budget Committee Selection Process for 2025-2026. There are two open Budget Committee positions, one is to be elected by the BOD, and the other is to be nominated by the Educational Equity Advisory Committee (EEAC).

Chair Di Liberto reported receiving approximately 40 applications for the Budget Committee vacancy. He described the role of the Budget Committee within the context of the budget process; and read a statement acknowledging the current state of the budget.

Mr. Brown explained the voting process. He instructed each Board member to select (i.e. write down) their top six candidates from the list of 40 applicants.

Staff then conducted a tally to determine the finalists, as follows: Stacy Dervin, Chanda Diekotto, Sarah Hagen, Dakota Boulette, Rene Jaramillo, and Keith Frazee. The finalists are invited to speak at the regular board meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.

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

**IX. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING**

**1. CONSIDER PROPOSED REVISIONS TO POLICIES GBNAA/JHFF AND JHFF/GBNAA – SUSPECTED SEXUAL CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

General Counsel Christine Nesbit presented proposed revisions to policies GBNAA/JHFF and JHFF/GBNAA – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students and Reporting Requirements.

She said the policies are duplicate policies lettered in different chapters of policy code. They involve suspected sexual conduct against students (i.e. boundary violation policy). The proposed changes are to align the policies with current standards.

Proposed revisions include:

- Expand the definition of student to include one year after attendance/graduation
- Require that contractors be mandatory reporters of sexual conduct, specifically contractors who interact with students
- Expand/refine electronic communications protocol

**X. ADJOURN**

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the work session at 8:53 p.m.

*Minutes Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG*

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Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent

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Tom Di Liberto, Chair