

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

Date: November 5, 2025

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular meeting 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 31, 2025.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

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
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Kelly McIver, Communications Director
Ryan Spain, Director of Facilities
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services (Virtual)
Teresa Martindale, Principal of Family School
Cynthia Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff/Board
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Autumn Thessen, Early College and Career Options (ECCO)
Elaina (Dallas) Radspinner, Early College and Career Options (ECCO)
Kathryn Hehman, International High School (IHS) at South Eugene High School

Lizabeth Margia Vargas, North Eugene High School
Josiah Mckinley, North Eugene High School
Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School
Isumi Goodall, Sheldon High School
Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School
Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School
Lovely Young-Page, Eugene Online Academy (EOA)
Arnav Sivanandan, Eugene Online Academy (EOA)

OTHER GUESTS:

None

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President
Joel Lavin, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS)

MEDIA:

KRVM

Lookout Eugene-Springfield

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

Chair Di Liberto called the regular meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He conducted roll call and read a land acknowledgment statement.

II. BOARD CHAIR WELCOME

Chair Di Liberto reported rotating Board of Director (BOD) attendance at community budget forums at Churchill, North Eugene, Sheldon, and South Eugene high schools. He announced the Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Gala, happening on April 2, 2026, and said that EEF is redoubling their fundraiser efforts.

He reported Board member presence at the Twin Oaks Harvest Festival, Sheldon High School, Awbrey Park Elementary School, and Edison Elementary School. Additionally, Board members met with McKinney-Vento staff and attended the Asian American and Pacific Islander Safety Public Safety Forum held on October 23, 2025.

In response to recent reports of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in Oregon, Chair Di Liberto reaffirmed Eugene School District 4J's commitment to ensuring the safety and support of every student. He stated that 4J does not enforce federal immigration laws and will not share personal or family information with ICE without a judge's signed court order.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Mickelson reported that the district has finalized the transition plan for moving the Yujin Gakuen (YG) Japanese Language Immersion Program to the South Eugene region. She said the 2025-2026 sixth grade cohort at Kelly Middle School will be the final group to complete the Japanese language immersion program pathway at North Eugene High School. She said they will remain at Kelly and graduate at North. She said this year's YG fifth grade students will be the first cohort to attend Spencer Butte Middle School and complete their entire pathway in the south region.

Superintendent Mickelson shared that a 4J budget thought-exchange closed on November 2, 2025. She will present a report at the November 19, 2025 work session. She reported that there were nearly 1400 participants in the thought-exchange.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School, provided a written report, read aloud by Chair Di Liberto. She mentioned student interest in the new cellphone policy, including storage logistics and potential impacts on classroom time. She described Leadership activities to boost student and teacher morale. Ms. Schilling said the College and Career Center is hosting a FAFSA and Scholarship Night on November 5. She promoted their play Radium Girls, debuting on November 6, and reported on the success of fall sports.

Autumn Thessen, Early College and Career Options (ECCO), provided information about their school, noting that they are an alternative high school, and many of their students have diverse and marginalized backgrounds. She said with their previous schedule, attendance and participation rates were low. This year, now that they implemented a new schedule, participation and productivity have increased. Regarding the cellphone policy, Ms. Thessen referenced a letter sent to the BOD.

Kathryn Hehman, International High School (IHS) at South Eugene High School, provided background information about IHS – a program that operates as a school within a school. She said the district has 3 participating campuses: Churchill High School, Sheldon High School, and South Eugene High School. IHS hosts Spanish and French immersion programs, and now, a Chinese immersion program. She described schedule changes accompanying the new Chinese immersion program. She reported concerns about students needing to choose between IHS and immersion programs, and mentioned an additional concern related to the IB program. She said IB administrators are ready to work with the district to fix the issue.

Lizbeth Vargas, North Eugene High School, reported on the success of clubs and affinity groups. She said the Key Club started meeting in the library because they needed more space. She said student leaders are planning a Unity campaign to help improve school culture after reports of racial and ableist charged speech. She mentioned poor attendance

linked to 90-minute periods. She announced the Black Student Union's Ruby Bridges walk on November 14 and reported on choir and sports.

Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School, reported on fall sports. She said their Principal Advisory Committee held their first meeting. Affinity groups have noted attendance being a challenge due to lunchtime scheduling and the inability for clubs to provide food without paying out-of-pocket. She said the Disability and Divergent Alliance raised concerns about strobe lights at the Homecoming dance. The Gender and Sexuality Alliance reported vandalism of posters. In closing, she reported unresolved issues with the Arts page on the Sheldon website, and concerns about the new cell phone policy impacting students in band who rely on cell phones to tune their instruments.

Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School, reported on a Principal Advisory Committee discussion about the new cell phone policy. She mentioned the need for students to communicate and coordinate with siblings. She said school office phones are not a practical solution due to volume. Ms. Ludwig noted students' concerns that harsher restrictions could result in more conflict between teachers and students. She suggested the new policy creates a safety issue for students who go off campus at lunchtime. She recommended a policy requiring students to keep their cell phones off and away in their backpacks or lockers bell-to-bell.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Shawna Smith, Live, Grow, Share Supervisor, provided comments about districtwide mental health support. She explained that Live, Grow, Share has partnered with 4J to provide trauma-informed therapy and skill building. She shared concerns that 4J's lack of deescalation training and mental health support have left staff unsupported and students unsafe. She challenged an October 14, 2025 decision by 4J's Administrator for Prevention and Mental Health Services to terminate all Live, Grow, Share services districtwide, citing therapeutic abandonment and the need for continuity of care. She mentioned ORS 675.020 and asserted that the action was unlawful and unethical. Ms. Smith said multiple requests for an explanation have been met with no response.

Members of the Emerald Empire Kiwanis Club described the positive outcomes resulting from a partnership between Kiwanis and El Camino del Rio/River Road Elementary School, including contributions of time, supplies, funding, and the purchase of a book vending machine. Furthermore, their club submitted a grant to the Pacific Northwest Kiwanis Foundation and was awarded \$2,500. They presented the award to El Camino del Rio for the purchase of library and vending machine books.

Ashley Teeters, Live, Grow, Share Co-Founder, advocated for access to mental health supports districtwide. She highlighted the services that Live, Grow, Share provides and emphasized student need. She requested a meeting with the BOD.

Aiden Brahn-Perrot, Live, Grow, Share Program Manager, reiterated comments from her colleagues related to access to mental health supports districtwide. She pointed out that the services provided by Live, Grow, Share are cost-free and available to students with Oregon Health Plan (OHP). She provided statistics and scenarios to underscore her point.

Laurie Moses, Merri Steele, Paul Duchin, and Beth Gerot, thanked the BOD for joining the federal lawsuit concerning the Department of Education's (DOE) Dear Colleague letter and certification requirements related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Ashley Potter, 4J parent and volunteer, provided comments about Family School amidst uncertainty due to budgetary constraints. She described educators at Family School supporting her son, offering wrap-around support, and fostering a close-knit community. She urged the BOD to protect Family School.

Danya Ariel-Boggs, 4J parent, spoke about his long history of positive experiences with Family School. He noted that many students, including his child, attend from out-of-district. He said it is important to have an alternative to home schooling and highlighted a risk of losing revenue if a program like Family School is cut.

Erica Walla, 4J parent, advocated for more family engagement, including more access to students' curricula plans and opportunities for meaningful conversations and influence, citing state standards.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President, shared concern about the impact of potential budget cuts. She said they appreciate open and early communication about the budget process, including providing opportunities for input. She said over 1400 ideas were posted by staff and community members. She shared common themes, such as keeping budget cuts far away from students and working to maintain class size and program offerings. She pointed out some areas for improvement regarding the thought-exchange, citing potential harm and stress for certain employee groups. She recommended creating an intentional space for staff to reflect, highlighting mental health and wellness support, and celebrating staff contributions. She mentioned that an EEA Benefits Liaison will soon offer their support and collaboration.

Joel Lavin, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) President, provided comments in the context of budgetary constraints, acknowledging the reported \$30 million reduction. He said he remains hopeful. He described the role of MAPS employees, and said when leadership remains steady, schools build momentum. He cautioned against moving and shifting administrators and urged the BOD to avoid destabilizing schools and center humanity of MAPS employees.

VIII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

**1. APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR: OCTOBER 8, 2025
REGULAR MEETING AND OCTOBER 22, 2025 WORK SESSION**

There was no discussion.

2. APPROVE BOND PROJECT – ADAM’S HVAC IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN

There was no discussion.

**3. APPROVE BOND PROJECT – MULTI-SITE HVAC IMPROVEMENTS
DESIGN**

There was no discussion.

**4. APPROVE SOUTH EUGENE HIGH SCHOOL – REAL PROPERTY /
WASTEWATER PIPING**

There was no discussion.

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

Ms. Jonak was not present at the time of the motion.

IX. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM FAMILY SCHOOL

Family School Principal Teresa Martindale provided an update alongside a gallery of photographs displayed on PowerPoint. She said that Family School is one of the oldest choice schools in the district. She provided background information and gave a sense of school culture. She said both the student body and educators represent a largely diverse and neurodiverse population, and that Family School is a model for inclusion.

Ms. Martindale provided the following statistics:

- 30% of students are from out of district
- 29% of students have IEPs or 504s
- 15% are neurodivergent but without formal plans
- 25-35% would seek charter or homeschooling if Family School did not exist
- Tied for the 3rd highest needs index among district elementary schools

Following Ms. Martindale’s presentation, Family School parents and educators provided passionate personal stories about their positive experiences at Family School. They urged the BOD to not cut Family School in light of budgetary constraints. They encouraged working together to find a solution.

Mr. Hamilton asked what enrollment numbers are.

Staff responded that enrollment is currently 111 students.

Ms. Jonak inquired about class sizes. She asked if Family School were to move locations and their class sizes increased, if it would impact their model and student population.

Ms. Martindale responded that their largest class has 22 students and their smallest class has 16 students. She said they have been able to more with less by leaning into Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). She said even with higher numbers they could still serve students with their current model. She cited robust parent volunteer support.

Ms. Newman asked how much additional support their school receives for students on IEPs.

Ms. Martindale responded that they have a seven-hour Educational Assistant for SPED and a BBSA.

Ms. Rabasa validated the testimonies provided by members of Family School.

In closing, Ms. Martindale noted that the community has expressed a desire for Family School to continue through the eighth grade. She said it would likely increase enrollment.

2. BUDGET COMMITTEE FINALIST PRESENTATIONS

Vice Chair Di Liberto engaged Budget Committee finalists in 5-minute presentations. He noted that while there were originally six finalists, one finalist withdrew their application.

Chanda Diekotto provided personal background information, including that she is a graduate student in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management at the University of Oregon. In partnership with the UO law school, she said they have been working with districts across Oregon who are facing budgetary challenges. She highlighted additional experience as a K-8 educator. If selected for the Budget Committee, Ms. Diekotto said she would be an advocate for students and focus on their responsibility to taxpayers.

Dakota Boulette described his previous role on the Budget Committee, including serving as Chair for the past two years. Other experience includes serving as Treasurer for the Democratic Party of Oregon Stonewall Caucus. He shared personal experience contributing to his qualifications on the Budget Committee.

Keith Frazee provided a statement relating to his interest in serving on a Budget Committee. He provided background information illustrating his passion for public schools and his role as an educator. He listed the challenges the district is facing, demonstrating his knowledge on the topic. Mr. Frazee's credentials include earning a PhD in Educational Administration, instructing at the UO College of Education, and serving as UO's Associate Vice President for Communications. He is also a Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) board member.

Sarah Hagan provided professional background information, including a PhD in Mathematics, a master's in mathematics for Teaching, and a background in education and

business finance. She has served on the Oregon Community Credit Union Board and is the current Treasurer for the Adam's Community Group. She articulated an understanding of past and current 4J budgetary decisions and priorities. She suggested prioritizing programs with proven effectiveness and focusing on the fundamental mission of public schools.

Stacy Dervin described personal experience that contributes to her understanding of making difficult decisions, like budgetary decisions. She described her unique skills, including finding creative solutions, a deep sense of responsibility, a strong sense of justice, a focus on equity and inclusion, and thriving under pressure. Ms. Dervin's relevant professional experience includes serving as the Director of Investments for the UO Foundation.

3. RECEIVE THE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOMINATION FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE

Finance Director Matt Brown provided relevant background information. He announced that Eric Richardson was nominated to continue serving as the Educational Equity Advisory Committee (EEAC) Budget Committee member.

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. BUDGET COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS

Mr. Brown engaged the BOD in the Budget Committee selection process. Each Board member selected their preferred candidate and staff tallied the vote: Directors Di Liberto, Thessen, Rabasa and Newman selected candidate Dakota Boulette; Director Jonak selected candidate Stacy Dervin; Director Munro selected candidate Keith Frazee and Director Hamilton selected candidate Sarah Hagen.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to appoint Eric Richardson and Dakota Boulette to the Budget Committee. 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.**

2. APPROVE REVISIONS TO POLICIES GBNAA/JHFF AND JHFF/GBNAA – SUSPECTED SEXUAL CONDUCT WITH STUDENTS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

General Counsel Christine Nesbit recommended approving revisions to Policies GBNAA/JHFF and JHFF/GBNAA – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve revisions to Policies GBNAA/JHFF and JHFF/GBNAA – Suspected Sexual Conduct with Students Reporting Requirements. Ms. Jonak seconded. **The motion passed unanimously,**

7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro all voting in favor.

3. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-26-05 DIRECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE BUDGET

Superintendent Mickelson acknowledged the difficult budgetary challenges, citing the scope of reductions. She reiterated her commitment to navigating with care, compassion, and transparent communications. She said she is grateful for educators, families, and community members. She said her job is to present the Budget Committee and BOD with a balanced budget for next school year.

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approval of Resolution 2025-26-05 – Directing the Development of a Sustainable Budget. The resolution formalizes information about the budget reduction timeline and demonstrates a commitment to transparency. She acknowledged the continued stress that accompanies discussing the budget.

She highlighted the following Key Budget Questions:

- What must we protect or preserve?
- What can we preserve but scale back?
- What are the trade-offs?
- What can we pause until financial conditions improve?
- What can we de-implement?

She highlighted the following Guiding Questions:

- Alignment
- Student Impact
- Equity and Access
- Sustainability
- Focus and Efficiency
- Community Voice
- CBA/Legal/Fairness

Superintendent Mickelson received comments from the BOD, specifically from Ms. Munro and Ms. Rabasa, who expressed appreciation with Superintendent Mickelson's approach to the budget.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Resolution 2025-26-05 Directing the Development of a Sustainable Budget. Ms. Rabasa 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.**

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J BOARD OF DIRECTORS VOTE ON OREGON SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION (OSBA) ELECTIONS

Chair Di Liberto engaged the BOD in a review of Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) elections. He explained the rules of engagement and provided the names of the candidates. He said the election itself will take place on Wednesday, November 19, 2025.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rabasa suggested that the Legislative Committee schedule their initial meeting.

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

Related to the budget, Ms. Rabasa requested a discussion about the 4J reserve minimum.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the regular meeting at 8:46 p.m.



Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent



Tom Di Liberto, Chair

Minutes Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG