

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

Date: December 10, 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 December 5, 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
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Finance
Judy Jesiah, Manager of Financial Stewardship and Compliance
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services
Kelly McIver, Communications Director
Greg Borgerding, District Athletic Director
Sebastian Bolden, Director of Middle School Education
Jeff Johnson, Director of Elementary Education
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Jen Bills, Director of Safety and Emergency Management
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Cynthia Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff/Board
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School
Arnav Sivanandan, Eugene Online Academy (EOA)

Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School
Autumn Thessen, Early College and Career Options (ECCO)
Brennan Sheedler, International High School (IHS)

OTHER GUESTS:

None

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President
Sally Duerfeldt, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Vice President
Scott Mayers, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) Co-President

MEDIA:

KRVM
Lookout Eugene-Springfield
Student Media from Sheldon High School

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

Chair Di Liberto called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He said the names of the board members who were present and read a land acknowledgement statement.

II. BOARD CHAIR WELCOME

Chair Di Liberto reported Board of Director (BOD) attendance at the following activities:

- Howard Elementary Crafts Bazaar
- PTO Meeting at El Camino del Río/River Road Elementary School
- Classroom visit at Sheldon High School history class
- Classroom visit at AP Domestic and Global Politics and Governance class at South Eugene High School

He thanked in advance classified, licensed, and administrative staff for their work guiding students and helping them focus leading up to winter break.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Mickelson shared that she has been conducting staff and student listening sessions as part of the district budget process. She acknowledged the difficult conversations. She commented on the professionalism and grace that staff members have demonstrated, as well as students' questions and input. She thanked staff, families, and the community for their commitment to students.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School, reported student feedback regarding the new cell phone policy. She said students are worried that each teacher will have a slightly different method of enacting the policy and that it could distract from their teaching. She said students have expressed anxiety, confusion, and lack of clarity. She encouraged the

district not to settle for the initial cell phone policy but to continuously improve it based upon effectiveness and the current needs of students. Ms. Schilling invited Board members to attend Sheldon's annual student versus staff basketball game on Sunday, December 14, 2025, which serves as a fundraiser for their Holiday Cheer Drive.

Autumn Thessen, ECCO, stated that overall student morale is good. She reported on activities currently underway, including ECCO's Food Drive and Winter Festival.

Arnav Sivanandan, Eugene Online Academy (EOA), raised concerns about district budget cuts. He described EOA as a program that helps a lot of students – students with jobs, family obligations, unique learning needs, neurodivergence, and marginalization. He shared a quote from another EOA student, Lovely Young-Page. He emphasized that EOA helps students succeed in their education and protect their futures.

Brennan Sheedler, International High School (IHS) provided relevant background information. He reported concerns about students' ability to meet their graduation requirements given Chinese Immersion, citing students being forced to choose between IHS and immersion. He said many students choose immersion to later enter the IB program; and that IB program administrators are ready to work with the district to resolve the issue. Mr. Sheedler said their school has seen a large enrollment this year and is projecting to reach 1,100 students in the 2026-27 school year. He mentioned that students are interested in how the new cellphone policy will be implemented and enforced.

Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School, expressed support for Sheldon Colorguard and highlighted some of their successes. She cited a district pause on the performance group and stated that every student should have equal opportunity to participate in sports. She expressed her disappointment. Ms. Davis reported on active affinity groups, school drives, and campaigns.

Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School, thanked Superintendent Mickelson for meeting with students to discuss pending budget cuts. She said that while Superintendent Mickelson clarified what will not be cut, students remain concerned about several viable programs, positions, and groups. She provided several examples and urged the district to continue centering student voices in their decision-making process.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Joey Carlson provided comments in favor of Family School, citing concern over proposed budget cuts. He offered relevant information, statistics, and data about Family School and brought forth suggestions to preserve the program. He cautioned that the district would lose money if it closes Family School.

Larry Lewin (online), Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE), highlighted an article recently published in Lookout Eugene-Springfield, featuring South Eugene High School HumanITech educator Lallie McKenzie. He said every 4J educator should be expected and supported to teach like Ms. McKenzie.

Veronica Dutton, former 4J student, spoke on the topic of Sheldon High School Colorguard. She described her background with Colorguard, emphasized its influence and impact (including scholarships for higher education), and shared program successes. She expressed opposition to the decision to pause Colorguard.

Susan Fricke, 4J parent, provided comments in support of CALCI, specifically Creative Currents and Future Build. She provided personal testimony about her two children and their successes participating in CALCI programs. She emphasized its lifesaving impact.

Blake McWilliams provided comments in favor of Family School, citing concern over proposed budget cuts. He provided robust insight into the school community and urged the Board and district to preserve Family School.

Madeline Humphrey, 4J student, spoke on the topic of Sheldon High School Colorguard. She cited recent impacts to Colorguard, specifically the district's decision to unclassify the program as a school-sponsored activity thereby prohibiting the use of district facilities (i.e. gymnasiums) for rehearsals. She highlighted significant program successes and urged the district to reconsider.

Emma Icenhower, 4J student, spoke on the topic of Sheldon High School Colorguard. She challenged the decision to pause the program, provided relevant information, and urged the district to reconsider.

Hailey Lessel, 4J parent, provided comments in favor of Family School, citing concern over proposed budget cuts. She offered information about her son's experiences at 4J, citing a lack of support in district schools other than Family School. She said once her son went to Family School he improved drastically and, as a result, she moved all her children there. She urged the district to preserve Family School.

Valerie Munthe, 4J parent, provided comments in favor of Family School, citing concern over proposed budget cuts. She emphasized the positive impact of Family School on families and students and said the program should be emulated and echoed to all corners of 4J. She urged the district to find a solution and to rescind the decision to not allow alternative schools to cohabitate in neighborhood schools.

Beth McWilliams, 4J parent, provided comments in favor of Family School, citing concern over proposed budget cuts. She highlighted the significant impact of successful volunteerism at Family School. She reported an estimated 6,000 volunteer hours last school year and suggested that Family School is saving the district money.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President, provided comments. Sally Duerfeldt, OSEA Vice President, provided an informational handout to the BOD. Ms. Jenkins-Easton cited information from 4J audited financial statements and budget documents, suggesting that for the past four years 4J has projected large general fund deficits yet every year have ended up with millions of dollars remaining. She also brought up that the district holds more in reserves than

policy requires. She underscored the importance of accuracy, transparency, and responsible stewardship of public dollars. Ms. Jenkins-Easton urged the district to work with OSEA concerning agreeable budgeting practices, communications, and employee contracts.

Scott Mayers, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) Co-President offered comments. He said that current budget reductions and the impact on staffing are difficult, citing uncertainty, stress, and concern. He reflected on the value and contributions of MAPS members and acknowledged their sacrifice being made in service to the whole.

VIII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR:

November 19, 2025 – Board Work Session

2. APPROVE PERSONNEL ACTIONS

There was no discussion.

3. APPROVE BOND PROJECT – MULTI-SITE VIDEO MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VMS) AND CAMERA REPLACEMENT

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. Newman, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

IX. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Matt Brown provided a monthly Finance Report via PowerPoint presentation. He presented graphs depicting general fund revenue, expenses, and over/underspending.

He highlighted a general fund revenue increase due to property tax revenue. He noted that the beginning fund balance for the general fund was budgeted \$700,000 less (a 1.5% difference) than what was forecasted.

2. RECEIVE INFORMATION ON PHASE 1 OF THE BUDGET REDUCTION PLAN

Superintendent Mickelson and Mr. Brown provided information on Phase 1 of the Budget Reduction Plan via PowerPoint presentation.

Superintendent Mickelson provided opening comments, stating that behind every painful budget reduction are staff members who help students thrive. She said the district is doing their best on behalf of students, balancing the needs of every individual, the holistic needs of the district, centering students, and doing their best to be compassionate. She said the reductions will help to stabilize the district and will not affect the commitment to safety, wellbeing, learning, behavior support, social-emotional learning, and equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Ms. Mickelson said the district will conduct a Strategic Planning Process in the fall of 2026-27.

She outlined General Areas of Focus:

**Specific areas of focus were also provided*

- Academics and Equity
- Behavioral Support
- Social-Emotional Learning/Belonging
- Safety and Wellbeing
- Family Engagement
- Climate and Culture
- Focused Delivery of Services
- Fiscal Sustainability

She outlined Stability and Care for Students – What Will Continue:

**Not an exhaustive list*

- High-quality instruction in every classroom
- Core academic programs
- A commitment to a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment
- Special Education
- Dual language immersion
- Intervention supports
- Social emotional learning and mental health supports
- Commitment to equity and student voices
- Free meals
- Family engagement
- Technology access

Superintendent Mickelson outlined Phase 1 Reductions with Cost Estimates:

Technology Subscriptions: \$252,417

- Contracts are related to products that provide tech access, such as Thought Exchange, Seesaw, Rosetta Stone, and other products.

Professional Development: \$500,000

- Departmental professional development reductions and MAPS member PD disbursements will be paused for 2026/27.

School Discretionary Budget: \$222,000

- School discretionary budget reductions for 2026/27 for each school.

Professional Service Contracts: \$32,762

- Contract reductions to individuals that are providing services for items such as investigations, job interviews, coaching, and other services.

Department Reductions: \$407,250

- Products and services related to departments. This includes general materials and services, and contracts related to providing services.

Staffing and Stipend Reductions: \$893,525

- Staffing and reductions in associated payroll costs. Unemployment estimates are included for staff reductions.

Total Phase 1 Reductions: These total an estimated \$2,307,954 and are intentionally focused on items *outside* of the classroom and do not directly impact students.

Superintendent Mickelson provided Next Steps/Timeline:

October – November: **ENGAGEMENT**

December – January – February: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Superintendent presents recommendations (3 phases)
 - Phase 2: MAPS and program changes – January 7 and 14, 2026
 - Phase 3: Licensed and classified staff and school impacts – January 21 and February 4, 2026

February – March: **STAFFING AND BUDGET DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT**

April – June: **ADOPTION**

- Budget Committee Meetings: March 31, 2026; April 8 and 15, 2026
- Board Public Hearing: May 13, 2026
- Board Adopts Budget: May 27, 2026

Superintendent Mickelson opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Schilling asked if Canvas will be impacted.

Superintendent Mickelson responded that Canvas is not included in the current reductions and is not likely to be impacted.

Ms. Munro asked about Superintendent Mickelson's level of community engagement and information gathering moving forward, specifically over the next five weeks.

Superintendent Mickelson recapped information gathering that has already been conducted and highlighted an upcoming listening session. She said during winter break staff will synthesize and analyze the information gathered.

Ms. Newman requested that Superintendent Mickelson summarize the Executive Leadership Team restructure for the listening audience.

Superintendent Mickelson stated that budget reductions start with the Executive Leadership Team; and that streamlining involves reducing from four assistant

superintendents (Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Access, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Special Education, and Mental Health) to one assistant superintendent next school year.

Ms. Rabasa brought attention to a pattern of naming projected shortfalls and them not materializing.

Mr. Brown provided some context for Ms. Rabasa, including that recent forecasts have been much closer. He committed to following up with more information as it becomes available.

Ms. Rabasa asked what plans will look like if the district has less of a shortfall than projected.

Superintendent Mickelson responded that if there ends up being more in the ending fund balance, she would hope the district could develop a strategic plan to guide what to bring back and/or what to do with the extra funds.

Ms. Jonak requested data from the past two years showing projections versus actuals.

Ms. Newman asked if the district is budgeting more accurately without contingency funds within each budget area.

Mr. Brown responded yes and cited a change in practice roughly two years ago.

Ms. Newman asked if the likely loss of federal funds has been factored into the \$30 million in reductions.

Mr. Brown responded that the likely loss of federal funds is not reflected and that the reductions are focused solely on the general fund. He said their department will begin looking at potential federal funding impacts in early January 2026.

In closing, Superintendent Mickelson acknowledged Family School's requests to partner and said there may be additional opportunities for engagement before a final decision is made. Regarding equity, inclusion, and belonging, she noted that the district's focus will continue and the department will be guided by Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina.

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE STUDENT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (SIA) 2025-27 GRANT AGREEMENT

Manager of Financial Stewardship and Compliance (State and Federal Grants) Judy Jesiah and Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina recommended approval of the Student Investment Account (SIA) 2025-27 Grant Agreement. Ms. Urbina provided relevant background information and Ms. Jesiah detailed the SIA 2025-27 grant agreement.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve the SIA Grant Agreement. Mr. Hamilton seconded. **The motion passed unanimously,**

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

2. APPROVE REVISIONS TO POLICY AC – NON DISCRIMINATION

General Counsel Christine Nesbit recommended approval for revisions to Policy AC – Non Discrimination.

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

3. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-26-06 AUTHORIZING A REDUCTION IN FORCE – ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approval of Resolution No. 2025-26-06 Authorizing a Reduction in Force – Administrative Staff. She provided relevant background information, specified that she is requesting authorization to reduce up to 32 administrative positions for the 2026-27 school year, and briefly responded to questions from the Board. She clarified that individual conversations with affected staff members will occur before winter break.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Resolution 2025-26-06 Authorizing a Reduction in Force – Administrative Staff. Mr. Hamilton seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

4. REVIEW BOARD POLICY DI – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND DISCUSS THE DISTRICT'S RESERVE FUND

Mr. Brown recommended approval of Board Policy DI – Financial Management Policies and Discuss the District's Reserve Fund via PowerPoint presentation. He detailed the district's financial management policies (adopted in February 2025), the current reserve policy (8%), and provided possible scenarios.

He outlined Scenario A, maintaining an 8% reserve policy and a \$30 million reduction in the 2026-27 school year.

He outlined Scenario B, changing the reserve policy from 8% to 5% and a \$30 million reduction in the 2026-27 school year.

He outlined Scenario C, changing the reserve policy from 8% to 5% and allow the district to spend \$7.6 million in 2026/27.

He outlined Scenario C (2)– changing the reserve policy from 8% to 5% and allow the district to spend \$4 million 2026/27.

Mr. Brown recommended Scenario B. He engaged the BOD in a robust discussion about the possible scenarios.

MOTION: Ms. Rabasa moved to reduce the reserve policy from 8% to 5%. Vice Chair Thessen seconded. **The motion passed, 5:2:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Jonak voting in favor; Ms. Munro and Mr. Hamilton voting against.**

MOTION: Ms. Newman moved to approve the superintendent's guidance to continue a proposed \$30 million reduction in the 2026-27 school year. Seconded by Ms. Munro. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

5. CONSIDER ADDING "SUGGESTIONS BY THE BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS AT A FUTURE MEETING" TO WORK SESSION AGENDAS

Vice Chair Thessen recommended that the Board consider adding "Suggestions by the Board for Consideration of Items at a Future Meeting" to work session agendas.

MOTION: Chair Jonak moved to add "Suggestions by the Board for Consideration of Items at a Future Meeting" to work session agendas. Ms. Rabasa seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Newman, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor.**

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

There were none.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rabasa provided a report from the first Legislative Committee meeting of the school year.

Ms. Newman reported attending a Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) meeting and a Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) meeting. She mentioned that the EEF Gala is scheduled for April 2, 2026.

Vice Chair Thessen provided a report from the Lane ESD Board meeting.

Chair Di Liberto reported visiting four district charter schools as part of his role on the Charter School Committee.

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

Ms. Rabasa sought information about a potential mid-year Board retreat.

Ms. Newman requested an update on the state of inclusion in the district, specifically an update from the CPAC Board.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the regular meeting at 9:35 p.m.



Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent



Tom Di Liberto, Chair

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG

