

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

Date: January 14, 2026

The Board of Directors (BOD) of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a special 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 January 9, 2026.

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
Melissa Ibarra, Director of Dual Languages
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Matt Brown, Director of Finance
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Finance
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Jen Bills, Director of Safety and Emergency Management
Kris Seibel, Digital Communications Director
Kelly McIver, Communications Director
Dana Brummet, Principal at McCornack Elementary School
Karen Ramirez Gutierrez, Principal at River Road/El Camino del Rio Elementary School
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services (online)
Cynthia Calletano, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff/Board
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

OTHER GUESTS:

Hazel Ellis, Student at River Road/El Camino del Rio Elementary School
Grey Lawrence, Student at McCornack Elementary School

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 1 President
Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President
David Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA) Vice President
Scott Mayers, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) President
Joel Lavin, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS)

MEDIA:

KRVM
Lookout Eugene-Springfield
Register Guard (online)

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

Chair Di Liberto called the special meeting to order at 6:22 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 welcomed attendees. On behalf of the Board of Directors (BOD) he thanked students for their appreciation during School Board Recognition Month in January. He acknowledged budgetary challenges impacting Eugene School District 4J.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There was consensus to postpone the Item for Action #1 – Approve Agreement with Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) until the next regular Board meeting, scheduled for January 21, 2026.

Chair Di Liberto provided a statement related to the topic, including that the postponement will allow time to receive confirmation from OSEA regarding concluding their ratification process.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Mickelson introduced Hazel Ellis from El Camino del Rio Elementary School and Grey Lawrence from McCormack Elementary School. Ms. Ellis and Ms. Lawrence read statements honoring the BOD during School Board Recognition Month.

V. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Angela Pruce-Finneran, Eugene Online Academy (EOA) educator, provided comments related to the impact of budget cuts on EOA. She described the student body of EOA as largely neurodivergent. She shared her personal experience as the mother of a

neurodivergent student and expressed the challenges that many students face. She described the ways that EOA educators meet the needs of their students.

Stephanie Luiere, Eugene Online Academy (EOA) educator, provided comments related to the impact of budget cuts on EOA. She challenged the notion that the budget cuts to EOA are moderate, citing a reduction in licensed staff from 14 FTE down to 6. She said their school community is struggling to process the full implication of the district's decision. Ms. Luiere described EOA as having a critical role in the district and urged reconsideration.

Ryan Hansen, CALCI and HumaniTech educator, provided comments related to the impact of budget cuts on programming. He described the successes of CALCI and HumaniTech and said that students engaged in the programs are thriving. He recommended preserving essential components, such as block scheduling, co-teaching, direct community involvement, consistency, and access. He urged thoughtfully protecting and growing the programs.

Harry Sanger, 4J parent, provided comments related to the impact of budget cuts. He noted that the district, specifically Superintendent Mickelson, has had good communications. He brought attention to Family School, encouraging the district to preserve and/or co-locate it. Regarding Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, he recommended reimaging or consolidating into afterschool programs utilizing existing community partnerships.

VI. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President, provided comments related to the impact of budget cuts. She described worry and uncertainty amongst EEA members, specifically early career and new educators. She said employees are still seeking clarity about the budget reduction process and provided examples of questions that they have. She urged the district to provide clear answers to their questions as soon as possible. On another topic, Ms. Meyers stated that EEA will be reaching out to Board leadership regarding an opportunity to travel to Salem to rally for increased support for school districts. She said a Fight for Our Future Coalition rally is scheduled for Thursday, February 5, 2026.

Joel Lavin, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) President, provided a statement. He reported that district students are fearful as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) tactics become more aggressive and violent nationwide. He said recent current events have sent shockwaves through local families. He described a myriad of implications on district students. Mr. Lavin cited Resolution 2024-1, reaffirming 4Js commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment regardless of immigration or documentation status. He urged the district to continue following the resolution with action and conviction.

VII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

There were none.

VIII. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECAP OF PHASE 1 AND 2 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Superintendent Mickelson, Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina, and Finance Director Matt Brown provided a recap of Phase 1 and 2 Budget Reductions via PowerPoint presentation, highlighting an approximate \$30M budget shortfall for the 2025-27 school year.

Mr. Brown mentioned an approximate \$2.3M reduction in Phase 1 and an approximate \$18M reduction in Phase 2. He provided the following information:

Unemployment Costs

- State of Oregon Unemployment
 - Maximum weekly benefit (2025): \$872
 - Benefit duration: Up to 26 weeks of payments within a 52-week claim year
 - How it is calculated: 1.25% of total pre-tax earnings from base year
 - \$872 x 26 weeks = \$22,672

Extended Day

- Relocation to ECCO in second semester
- Still includes transportation options
- Savings on support staff and mileage
- Maintaining credit opportunities
- Currently around 90 students enrolled

Eugene Online Academy

- Eliminating the middle school online academy
- At the high school, we identified that the district would be looking at resizing this program to match staffing with student enrollment, which will be included in the Phase 3 reductions

CALCI Transitions

- CALCI will end programs and transition to high school based CTE course offerings
 - Ending lease of the downtown building
- Future Build will remain at North HS
 - Course of study will be adjusted with new staffing levels
 - Continue to be offered district-wide with transportation
- SEHS will regain an Engineering Technology Pathway involving some of the course components from HumaniTech
- Sheldon will add a Digital Arts pathway using course components from Creative Current

- EmpowerED will be paused
- As staffing in 2026/27 is planned, current CALCI programs will be shifted to building based CTE pathways and FTE within high schools

CTE Offerings Looking Forward

**Subject to change as plans for 2026/27 begin and enrollment*

Churchill HS

Digital Arts

Engineering Technology

Health Sciences

Natural Resources

Sheldon HS

Business Mgmt. and Admin.

Digital Arts

Forestry and Forest Products

Info and Comm. Technology

North HS

Info and Comm. Technology

Early Childhood Ed

Digital Arts

Manufacturing

Culinary Arts

Architecture and Construction

South HS

Digital Art

Early Childhood Ed

Engineering Technology

Journalism and Broadcasting

Culinary Arts

Web and Digital Comm.

BEST Program

- Living within 21st Century Grant – \$450K
 - 2026/27 will be year 4 or 5 with the grant
- Closely collaborating with ODE to maximize grant funds
- Admin team is collaborating to create a high-level program within the financial constraints of the grant
 - Still in the middle of planning for 2026/27

Summer Programs

- ODE will release a competitive summer grant that may offer up to \$1M to districts for programs. 4J will apply.
- Without the grant, the focus would be on credit recovery and level transitions for Tier 2 students (Kinder, 5th>6th, 8th>9th).

Ms. Urbina outlined Next Steps:

**Summarized below*

- Communicate with clarity, care, and compassion
- Plan responsibly for today and tomorrow
- Survey launched January 14, 2026
- Forming One System Readiness Think Tank

Staff responded to questions from the Board related to district priorities, programmatic changes, and transition plans resulting from proposed budget cuts.

Superintendent Mickelson emphasized that the district is focused on thoughtful and meaningful planning early in the budget reduction process, including being guided by following five key questions: What do we preserve and protect? What do we scale back? What do we pause? What do we implement? What are the trade-offs?

IX. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL BOARD RESOLUTION 2025-26-07 RELATING TO PHASE 2 PROGRAM CHANGES AND AUTHORIZING A REDUCTION IN FORCE

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approval of Board Resolution 2025-26-07 Relating to Phase 2 Program Changes and Authorizing a Reduction in Force. She recapped details pertaining to the scale of the reductions.

Ms. Munro sought clarification that the resolution reflects an upper limit and authorizes, but does not require, that level.

Superintendent Mickelson responded affirmatively.

Ms. Rabasa acknowledged that some of the hardest hit programs serve students needing a different pathway than the standard. She encouraged rebuilding or reimagining programs which have proven to be impactful.

Vice Chair Thessen agreed.

Ms. Jonak requested that when considering cuts, the district focus on equity and students that otherwise cannot access education without the supports that the programs provide.

Chair Di Liberto reflected on the budget reduction process. He acknowledged a sense of helplessness and thanked the community for their patience and understanding.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Board Resolution 2025-26-07 Relating to Phase 2 Program Changes and Authorizing a Reduction in Force. Mr. Hamilton 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 of the motion.**

2. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: FINALIZE 4J BOARD LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Ms. Rabasa recommended approval of finalizing 4J Board Legislative priorities, which she outlined in detail for the Board.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Board Legislative priorities. 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 of the motion.**

3. APPROVE PROPOSED POLICY CEA—SUPERINTENDENT'S EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND DELETE POLICY BCFA—EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ms. Urbina recommended approval of Proposed Policy CEA—Superintendent's Educational Advisory Committee and Delete Policy BCFA—Educational Equity Advisory Committee to align with current statute and best practices.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve revisions to Policy CEA—Superintendent's Educational Advisory Committee and Delete Policy BCFA—Educational Equity Advisory Committee. 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 of the motion.**

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL REVISIONS TO POLICY GCBDE/GDBDE – MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

General Counsel Christine Nesbit recommended approving revisions to Policy GCBDE/GDBDE – Military Leave of Absence. She explained that the district has not had such a policy before and provided relevant background information.

**2. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL REVISIONS TO POLICY JHCA –
IMMUNIZATION SCHOOL SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

General Counsel Christine Nesbit recommended approving revisions to Policy JHCA – Immunization School Sports Participation. She provided relevant background information.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

There were none.

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

There were none.

XIII. ADJOURN SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the special meeting at 8:24 p.m.



Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent



Tom Di Liberto, Chair

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG