MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

Date: February 4, 2026

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 January 30, 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
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Matt Brown, Director of Finance
Sebastian Bolden, Director of Middle School Education
Melissa Ibarra, Director of Elementary
Jeff Johnson, Director of Elementary Education
Seth Pfaefflin, Director of Student Services
Kat Lange, Assistant Director of Youth and Family Support
Casandra Kamens, Curriculum Administrator (online)
Kate Marrone, Director of Human Resources
Kelly McIver, Director of Communications
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services (online)
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Jackie Garcia Villa, Executive Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:
Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School
Deeya Patel, South Eugene High School
Lizbeth Maria Vargas, North Eugene High School

OTHER GUESTS:
Tara Kamp, Municipal Auditor, Clear Trails CPA
Linda Hamilton, Lane Education Service District
Tony Scurgo, Lane Education Service District

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:
Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President
David Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA) Vice President
Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President
Scott Mayers, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) Co-President

MEDIA:
KRVM
KVAL
Register Guard (online)
Lookout Eugene-Springfield

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

Chair Di Liberto called the Eugene School District 4J Board of Director's (BOD) 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 provided a statement of support following the recent federal response to national and local citizens advocating for immigration rights.

He reported attendance of one or more board members at the following activities:

- Graphic novel Gallery Walk at Cal Young Middle School
- Unified Basketball game between Churchill High School and North Eugene High School
- South Eugene High School Swim Meet
- Benefits Exposition at North Eugene High School
- City Club of Eugene Town Hall
- Ribbon cutting at Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School
- NAACP Reflection Breakfast
- League of Women Voters Town Hall

- Press Conference with Eugene Mayor Kaarin Knudson and Oregon Governor Tina Kotek

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Miriam Mickelson declared that 4J schools are safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning spaces for all students. She described the ways that school leadership center the safety of students and emphasized the importance of belonging. She closed by with a quote by Dr. Brené Brown, reaffirming the district's commitment to its students.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Deeya Patel provided a report from South Eugene High School. She said that students engaged in Wellness Week, Spirit Week, and held a notable assembly celebrating fall sports accomplishments. She reported on the success of unified physical education. Their Winter Formal is taking place on February 7, 2026. Regarding the e-hall pass system, Ms. Patel stated that students are not in favor, citing concerns about student privacy and the erosion of trust between students and educators.

Lizbeth Maria Vargas provided a report from North Eugene High School, including recent happenings, such as the unified basketball jamboree and the theatre department preparing for their production of Fiddler on the Roof. North's Hall of Fame induction ceremony is scheduled for February 7 and the Martin Luther King JR assembly is on February 12, 2026. She highlighted student Maria Teleshiva, an accordionist who was recently featured on NPR's Tiny Desk Concert; and student Alita Christianson, who recently published a book, "The Place Between Nowhere: Blank." Ms. Vargas mentioned that slick concrete on cold mornings presents a safety issue.

Sheridan Schilling provided a report from Churchill High School, first highlighting the successes of sports teams and athletes; in particular, the unified basketball team. Ms. Schilling mentioned that a unified basketball game and Senior Night are both happening on February 11, 2026. She reported on the recent success of the One Act Festival – during which students performed a one-act play that they wrote and produced.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Joey Carlson, 4J parent, advocated for the proposed co-location of Family School to Camas Ridge Community School. He cited concern about impacts to current school leadership and offered recommendations, including forming a Bridging Committee.

Jennifer Orton, 4J guest teacher, described the role of guest teachers in the district and advocated for fair and living wages when negotiating contracts.

Valerie Blood, 4J parent and volunteer, provided comments related to special education, inclusion, and the district budget. She challenged budgetary decision making, specifically its impact on staff positions, citing potential trauma for SPED students. She emphasized the legal rights of students with disabilities.

Michelle Dunn, 4J educator, offered appreciation for the superintendent and BOD, specifically recognizing their support of a district Inclusion and Access resolution passed last year. She raised concern about inadequate adaptive physical education staffing levels.

Lindsay Selser, 4J parent, advocated for the proposed co-location of Family School to Camas Ridge Community School. She cited concern about impacts to current school leadership. She urged engaging families in the relocation process.

Shannon Sprouse, 4J parent, expressed support for the proposed relocation of Family School to Camas Ridge Community School. She encouraged child-centered, community-based solutions.

Katrina Allen, 4J educator, provided comments against the proposed middle school bell schedule change, citing its impact on students, specifically the district's must vulnerable students, accessing supports and electives. She urged the Board to reconsider.

Astrid MacLean, 4J middle school student, provided comments challenging the proposed middle school bell schedule change and describing its potential impacts from a student's perspective. She reflected on the negative impact of having only one elective class and music no longer being considered a core class.

Bob Fordham, 4J guest teacher, highlighted the recent compensation agreement for classified employees and advocated for fair and living wages when negotiating guest teacher contracts. He said the district's latest offer is inadequate.

Erica Walla, 4J parent, offered suggestions for 4J leadership about how to best partner with parents and guardians, including support directories, encouraging parents to go beyond booster activities, conducting exit surveys for families who have not reenrolled, offering public survey results, and educating families about children's educational system at the national, state, and local level. She emphasized legally mandated standards and the universal design for learning.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Jamie Meyers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President, provided comments. She described the role of Eugene Association of Substitute Teachers (EAST) members – stating that they are the backbone that keep the district running. She said EAST members have been working under an expired contract during the 2025-26 school year and have

yet to reach an agreement with the district. She pointed out that information about negotiations with EAST is unavailable on the district website. She announced that the next bargaining session is scheduled for February 11, 2026, and urged the BOD to attend.

Scott Mayers, Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS), Co-President, provided comments related to proposed budget cuts. He said among district employees, uncertainty, apprehension, and worry about their futures persist. He urged the district to continue naming the reality of the constraints and the emotional toll they carry.

VIII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES FOR: JANUARY 14, 2026 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

There was no discussion.

> **MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve the Consent Agenda. 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.**

IX. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J

Director of Student Services Seth Pfaefflin and Assistant Director of Student Services Kat Lange provided an update on Special Education and Inclusive Practices via PowerPoint presentation.

After providing historical context for the update, Ms. Lange presented a table titled Current Special Education Data, depicting a steady increase in the percentage of district students enrolled in special education in recent years. Currently, 15% of students are identified as having special needs. She noted that the services are poorly underfunded at the state level, placing a strain on students and educators.

Mr. Pfaefflin added that roughly 200 incoming Kindergarten students will utilize special education services.

He provided information about the Special Education Parent Advisory Council:

- 10 parent members who represent students with disabilities at elementary, middle, and high schools, and across the range of disabilities experienced by 4J students
- SEPAC started in fall 2024
- Meetings first Tuesday monthly, 5-6:30 p.m.
- School Board members are invited to SEPAC meetings
- Next meetings are March 3, April 7, and May

Mr. Pfaefflin described components of the advisory council and examples of the types of topics they discuss.

He provided the following information related to implementation of the May 2025 Special Education Resolution: Affirming the Rights, Inclusion, and Success of Students with Disabilities:

- Inclusion and Accessibility plans
- Principal book study: Learning for All
- Anti-ableism training

Inclusion and Accessibility Plans:

- Each school worked with their staff and stakeholders to develop and Inclusion and Accessibility Plan, using the district template provided (see handout).
- This included parent survey data, student interviews, and building staff assessing the following four domains:
    - Environment and physical accessibility
    - Access to schoolwide programs, activities, and events
    - Inclusive instruction and learning supports
    - School culture, belonging, and community engagement

Mr. Pfaefflin noted that their department is still waiting on information from four schools before completing a full district analysis. Given the domain scores, every school is or has created four inclusion improvement goals. He provided examples: calming/break space in each classroom, a focus on clubs, affinity groups, and enrichment programs, implementation of student accommodations and modifications, and centering student leadership and voice.

Ms. Lange described a need for their department to extend the timeline for goal completion, citing budgetary and other challenges.

Mr. Pfaefflin closed by sharing SEPAC parent reflections and recommendations.

Mr. Pfaefflin and Ms. Lange invited questions from the Board.

Ms. Jonak asked if there has been analysis on how Phase 3 budget reductions might impact special education and inclusion efforts, and how that will be dealt with.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded that while impacts to their department are minimal, there are other reductions which may impact students with disabilities. He indicated that their department is brainstorming ways to accommodate those changes.

Ms. Lange provided further context in response to Ms. Jonak's question.

Vice Chair Thessen raised the topic of centering student voice, specifically via site councils.

Ms. Newman asked for clarification around slowing the pace of the work.

Mr. Pfaefflin explained that originally they had expected to complete the first round of goals by June 2026, but now they wish to extend the timeline through January 2027.

Responding to a question posed by Ms. Newman, Mr. Pfaefflin described SEPAC membership.

Ms. Newman recommended a charter to ensure the future work of SEPAC.

Ms. Rabasa asked if budget cuts will impact professional development for special education educators, general education teachers, and educational assistants (EAs).

Mr. Pfaefflin and Ms. Lange explained that they are considering offering stronger and more substantial onboarding for special education EAs, new ways of disseminating information, and intentionally enhancing professional development.

Ms. Rabasa asked if there will be anti-ableism training opportunities for parents.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded affirmatively.

Ms. Rabasa mentioned the difficulty of accessing special education evaluations and/or having an evaluation result in receiving services. She expressed a desire to see data related to those instances.

Mr. Pfaefflin said he will follow up with the information.

Ms. Jonak mentioned that she has observed drastically different IEP standards from school to school.

Mr. Pfaefflin assured Ms. Jonak that there is a procedural model meant to align schools to the same procedures. He said their department is engaging staff in an IEP alignment training this month.

Ms. Rabasa recommended collecting data on students being offered modified diplomas.

Mr. Pfaefflin responded that their department is tracking that data.

In closing, Mr. Pfaefflin and Ms. Lange emphasized the need for advocating for special education funding at the state legislative level.

2. RECEIVE THE EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 2024-25 FISCAL YEAR

Finance Director Matt Brown and Clear Trails CPA Financial Auditor Tara Kamp presented the annual Financial Report for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year.

Ms. Kamp explained that the audit covers three areas:

- Financial statements audit

- Oregon minimum standards compliance audit
- Federal single audit
    - Financial compliance requirements for specific grants

She said the audit does not cover assessing the financial health of the district nor does it express an opinion on the internal operations of the district.

She presented the following audit results:

- Financial audit: unmodified opinion (no reservations)
- Oregon state minimum standards audit: exceptions found required comment (noted on page 139 of the audit report)
- Federal single audit: 1 issue of noncompliance
- Deficiencies and material weaknesses (noted on page 146 of the audit report)

Ms. Kamp reported overall good results regarding the annual Financial Report for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year.

3. RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING LOCAL ELECTIONS AND ZONING

Ms. Newman presented information regarding Local Elections and Zoning via PowerPoint presentation. Three additional documents were provided in the Board's meeting packet.

She explained that the BOD is reviewing how school board elections are conducted, specifically regarding representation and zoning. She noted a requirement to make any change six months prior to elections. She conducted research on the topic, including reviewing statutes and information from sixteen other school districts.

She summarized the following:

- 4 districts have all their elected positions in geographic zones, but all voters vote on all positions
- 2 districts have a hybrid; some positions are in geographic zones and some are at-large
- 1 district requires representatives to live in zones but all positions all voters vote on all positions
- 10 districts where all districts are at large and are voted on by everyone

She posed three questions for discussion:

1. If and how to divide up the district into geographic zones?
    - Option 1: All seven positions are at large (status quo)
    - Option 2: All positions are geographic zone positions and candidates must live in the zone

- Option 3: A "hybrid" with some geographic zones where candidates must live and some "at large" positions

2. If divided into zones, how many and what would the zones look like?
    - Equal number of residents in each zone
    - High school catchment area
        - Three potential options were identified – Option #3 was the most viable option (below)
        - Option 3: When the number of students at each high school is considered, another possibility emerges:
            - 1 representative from Sheldon area
            - 1 representative from South area
            - 1 representative from Churchill area
            - 1 representative from North area
            - 3 "at large" representatives

3. How would we vote on candidates from each zone?
    - Option 1: All positions are voted on by all voters living within the school district boundaries whether they are positions that represent a geographic zone and/or positions that are "at-large" positions
    - Option 2: Only voters who live in a geographic zone can vote for the position that represents the geographic zone they live in. If there are also "at-large" positions, all voters vote for those positions
    - Option 3: Rank choice voting for all the "at-large" positions. This is not allowable in Lane County currently

She presented the following next steps:

- Do we want to include geographic zones in the make up of the school board? What are the parameters?
- Considering population size of each zone, clarify which zones would be acceptable under Oregon statutes and rules
- Would all positions be voted on "at-large" or the geographic zone positions only by voters living in that zone?

Vice Chair Thessen brought up economic and housing insecurity and its potential to impact and zoning in the near future. She also raised the topic of school choice. She said she supports continuing an at-large election process.

Ms. Jonak articulated pros and cons of changing the election process.

Ms. Munro suggested advocating to the state legislature for rank choice voting. She provided legal context for districting. She expressed that she is not in favor of changing the election process at this time.

Ms. Rabasa agreed that she is not in favor of changing the election process at this time, stating that the change would promote regionalism.

Chair Di Liberto shared his perspective being formerly employed in a school district with regional representation. He emphasized that he represents all of 4J, not just the region where he resides. He advocated for maintaining the current election process.

Mr. Hamilton raised the challenge of recruiting regional candidates, for example there may be four candidates all from the same zone.

There was consensus to not proceed with discussions pertaining to changing local elections and zoning.

4. RECEIVE A RECAP OF PHASE 3 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Superintendent Mickelson, Mr. Brown, Director of Elementary Education Melissa Ibarra, Director of Elementary Education Jeff Johnson, and Director of Middle School Education Sebastian Boldon provided a recap of Phase 3 Budget Reductions.

Mr. Brown presented the following:

Addressing a $30 million shortfall:

- A system reset and resizing
- A strategic realignment of staffing and resources with enrollment decline and state and federal funding realities
- A path toward sustainability, stability, and long-term viability

Budget reductions in Phases 1-3

- Phase 1 Reduction Estimates: $2.3 million
- Phase 2 Reduction Estimates: $18 million
- Phase 3 Reduction Estimates: $9.88 million

Mr. Brown presented a graph detailing staff "up-to" reductions by employee group for all three phases (classified: 9.8%, licensed: 13.7%, and non-bargaining: 18.4%).

Mr. Brown presented a graph detailing enrollment versus staffing.

Ms. Ibarra highlighted the proposed Family School co-location at Camas Ridge:

- Camas designed for 450 students
- Camas current enrollment: 263 students
- Projection for 2026-27: 250 students
- Space capacity can protect stability, programs, and flexibility

She presented questions under analysis:

- Shared spaces: cafeteria, gym, playground, classrooms
- Staffing levels and class sizes
- Schedules: arrival/recess/lunch/dismissal
- Health and safety
- Resources and fundraising/account structures

Mr. Johnson shared engagement and next steps:

- Family School and Camas Ridge conversations
- If co-location is approved, a Transition Committee will be immediately formed
- Leadership reset

Mr. Bolden presented information related to the proposed bell schedule change:

- Return to a six-period day
- Start time and end time the same

He shared 6-Period Day Rationale:

- Prioritizing instructional depth and staff workload sustainability
- Longer instructional minutes for deeper learning
- Current 38-minute Wednesday periods 'limiting' for meaningful instruction
- 67.8% of all middle school staff prefer a 6-period day
- Fewer transitions
- More financially sustainable than a 7-day period
- Cost savings

Mr. Boldon shared engagement and next steps:

- Communicate with clarity and care
- Support people and communities through change
- Plan responsibly for today and tomorrow

Director of Human Resources Kate Marrone shared next steps:

- Reduction-in-Force (RIF) process
- Expo for licensed staff
- Recall list
- Plan responsibly for today and tomorrow

Staff received robust feedback from the BOD, including their concern about impacts on electives, the need to maintain opportunities and access for special education students, and identifying creative approaches to fulfilling core requirements.

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-26-08 RELATING TO PHASE 3 – STRATEGIC BUDGET REDUCTIONS – AUTHORIZING A REDUCTION IN FORCE AND CO-LOCATION

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approval of Resolution 2025-26-08 – authorizing a reduction of up to 95 licensed staff and up to 15 classified staff and the relocation of Family School to Camas Ridge Community School.

Ms. Rabasa declared a potential perceived conflict of interest and thus did not participate in the discussion nor the vote.

> **MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Resolution 2025-26-08 Relating to Phase 3 – strategic budget reductions authorizing a reduction in force and co-location of Family School to Camas Ridge Community School. Effective for the 2026-27 school year, Family School's new address shall be 1150 E 29th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97403. Seconded by Mr. Hamilton. **The motion passed, 6:0:1; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Chair Thessen, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton voting in favor; Ms. Rabasa recused.**

2. APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-26-09 RELATING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approval of Resolution 2025-26-09 – relating to middle school schedules.

> **MOTION:** Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve Resolution 2025-26-09 – relating to middle school schedules. Seconded by Ms. Newman. **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 REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY IKF – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Bolden and Curriculum Administrator Casandra Kamens recommended approval of revisions to Board Policy IKF – graduation requirements.

Ms. Rabasa recommended further review of the honorary diplomas section.

> **MOTION:** Ms. Rabasa moved to postpone consideration of proposed revisions to Policy IKF – graduation requirements until the next regular board meeting scheduled for March 4, 2026. Seconded by Vice Chair Thessen. **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.

4. APPROVE THE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FOR THE EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 2024-25 FISCAL YEAR

Mr. Brown recommended approval of the Corrective Action Plan for the Eugene School District 4J Annual Financial Report for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve the Corrective Action Plan for the Eugene School District 4J Annual Financial Report for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year. Ms. Newman seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 7:0:0; Chair Di Liberto, Vice Thessen, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Newman, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Hamilton all voting in favor of the motion.**

XI. ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

1. CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL YEAR TWO OF THE 2025-27 LANE EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT (ESD) LOCAL SERVICE PLAN

Tony Scurgo and Linda Hamilton presented information related to approval of year two of the 2025-27 Lane Education Service District (ESD) Local Service Plan. They provided historical context, relevant details about the partnership between Lane ESD and 4J, and the current contract status. The Local Service Plan will come before the BOD for approval at a future meeting.

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Hamilton reported attending AVID Friday Movie Night.

XIII. CONSIDER BOARD REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS OR INFORMATION/SUGGESTIONS BY THE BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS AT A FUTURE MEETING

Ms. Rabasa requested a primer and/or training on unfair labor practice claims.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the regular meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent

Tom Di Liberto, Chair

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)