

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

Date: April 15, 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 April 10, 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
Matt Brown, Director of Finance
Kate Marrone, Director of Human Resources
Kelly McIver, Communications Director
Oscar Loureiro, Director of Research and Planning
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services
Jen Bills, Director of School Safety
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel
Steve Shiningier, Network Services Manager
Kevin Gordon, César Chávez Elementary School Principal
Jackie Garcia, Executive Assistant to Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Manager for the Superintendent's Office

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Kaleia Davis, Sheldon High School
Sheridan Schilling, Churchill High School
Lizbeth Maria Vargas, North Eugene High School

Cora Ludwig, South Eugene High School
Arnav Sivanandan, Eugene Online Academy (EOA)

OTHER GUESTS:

Laura Brown, Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Executive Director
Sarah Kordon, Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Board President

EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 1 President
Jamie Myers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President
David Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA) Vice President

MEDIA:

KRVM
Lookout Eugene-Springfield
Register Guard (virtually)

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 that one or more Eugene School District 4J Board of Directors (BOD) attended the following activities:

- Monroe Middle School spring concert
- Lane Education Service District (ESD) Budget Committee meeting
- 4J Budget Committee meeting
- Building Alliances Immigrant Rights event
- Youth Symphony at the Hult Center for Performing Arts
- Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Member Appreciation Dinner
- Q and A at Kelly Middle School student government class
- Children's Institute Policy group event
- Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) legislative policy meeting
- Shadowing an elementary-level counselor
- Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) board meeting
- Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Annual Gala
- Human Resources tour at 4J Education Center
- Webinar on parent engagement and absenteeism
- Transition program visit

Chair Di Liberto recognized volunteers during National Volunteer Month in April.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

There were no changes to the agenda.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Mickelson provided a report. She announced that the sale of the Wells Fargo building is now complete. She said the building sold for \$2.95 million and the funds will be used as one-time resources to help close the operating budget gap for next school year. She stated that reduction impact notices went out to staff last week and acknowledged educators for continuing to show up for one another and for students.

V. RECEIVE REPORTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Sheridan Schilling provided a report from Churchill High School. She reported that students are currently focused on upcoming exams. She said Churchill's counseling team has done a great job assisting students with scholarship applications. Ms. Schilling announced that the Lancer Pageant, a fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network, is happening on Friday, April 17 and prom is happening on Saturday, April 18.

Lizbeth Maria Vargas provided an update from North Eugene High School. She noted preparation for upcoming exams and positive engagement in Leadership. She said seniors have been attending mandatory advisory meetings ahead of graduation. She mentioned a recent varsity choir and wind ensemble performance at Disney Land. Ms. Vargas noted a concern about access to school facilities, specifically that groups are required to go through the district instead of the school directly and cited additional costs for building use. She announced that prom is happening on Saturday, May 9, a disc golf extravaganza on Saturday, May 16, and a graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 6.

Arnav Sivanandan provided an update from Eugene Online Academy (EOA). He explained that in light of recent budget cuts, EOA staff were reduced from 14 members to six. He said their school is still grappling with the news and cited anxiety. Mr. Sivanandan spoke on the topic of athletics at South Eugene High School, specifically naming current and future challenges related to working within a limited athletics budget.

Cora Ludwig provided a report from South Eugene High School. On behalf of students, she expressed concern and worry about budget cuts. She announced that prom is happening on Saturday, May 2 and their Spring Fest is upcoming.

Kaleia Davis provided an update from Sheldon High School. She reported on the success of the Winter Guard Team and noted a lack of support from the district. She announced that prom is happening on Saturday, April 18, a graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 6, and their Spring Fest is upcoming.

Mariella Guzman, via Ms. Munro, provided a report from International High School (IHS). IHS enrollment is increasing for the 2026-27 school year, yet due to budget cuts, the number of classrooms will reduce from 118 to 107. She cited a higher number of

students per class, less individual support, and the loss of Educational Assistants (EAs). Ms. Guzman reported that IHS is preparing for their end-of-year celebration and their graduation is happening on Friday, June 5.

VI. ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

David Igl, asserted that a fraudulent misrepresentation of Eugene history is being promoted by an individual to solicit charitable donations. Mr. Igl also provided written documentation and resources to support his stance.

Cassian Corey, 4J Educational Assistant (EA), voiced concern about the effectiveness of district approved crisis intervention programs. She listed scenarios she witnessed on the job, pointing out safety concerns involving students. She urged the use of properly implemented restraints and appropriate crisis intervention strategies.

Becky Thomas, 4J parent, provided comments related to a Sheldon High School educator, coach, and athletic director reportedly being placed on administrative leave more than six weeks ago. She noted uncertainty within the Sheldon community and urged open communications about how students will be supported academically and athletically. Ms. Thomas added that there is growing concern that the educator has been unfairly targeted.

Christopher Ashton, 4J parent, expressed support for a Sheldon High School educator, coach, and athletic director reportedly placed on administrative leave. He described the positive influence the educator has had on students, including his own son. He claimed that the issue was investigated and found to be unsubstantiated. Mr. Ashton added that he has submitted a formal complaint against the superintendent.

VII. COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) Chapter 1 President, provided comments. Their association is holding a School Bus Driver Appreciation Day event on Tuesday, April 28 at 6:30 a.m. Ms. Jenkins-Easton said it has been a few busy months since bargaining has concluded. She hopes the district and their guest teacher unit can settle a fair contract. Regarding budget cuts, she calculated that more than 140 classified staff positions will be displaced or reduced. She highlighted potential negative impacts to vulnerable students. She said initially it was presented that there would be 15 FTE reductions, but their association calculates that there have been 23.65 FTE cuts from student-facing school-based classified positions. She stated that 25 Nutrition Services Department employees will lose their health insurance.

Jamie Myers, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President, provided comments. She said 4J licensed educators are experiencing anger, fear, confusion, and worry. She said educators are angry because while they are receiving notices of impact, those responsible for a \$16 million miscalculation of public funds appear to be facing no consequences. She said their association was assured that budget cuts would be kept away from students

but cited impacts to elementary counselors. Ms. Myers urged transparency, clarity, and understanding.

VIII. CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. APPROVE DRAFT BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR: MARCH 4, 2026 REGULAR MEETING

There was no discussion.

2. BOND PROJECT – SHELDON HIGH SCHOOL WAREWASH RENOVATION

There was no discussion.

3. BOND PROJECT – ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTIAL ROOFING

There was no discussion.

4. BOND PROJECT – SOUTH EUGENE HIGH SCHOOL ROOFING

There was no discussion.

5. APPROVE ENROLLING OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENTS IN 2026-27 (INTERDISTRICT TRANSFERS)

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. EUGENE EDUCATION FOUNDATION – STATUS UPDATE AND REVIEW OF 4J—EEF

Eugene Education Foundation (EEF) Executive Director Laura Brown and EEF Board President Sarah Kordon provided a status update. Ms. Brown spoke about the role of EEF and its history supporting 4J. She said their Bright Minds Gala took place on April 2, 2026, and their foundation raised \$150,000 during the event. She said the application window for enrichment grants recently closed and they received 75 applications. She said EEF also has an urgent needs fund to support things like resource pantries. She described innovative financial literacy work being supported by EEF in partnership with the South Eugene High School Finance Club and the OCCU Foundation. Ms. Brown thanked Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Brooke Wagner and Ms. Newman for serving as ex officio members on their board and Superintendent Mickelson for speaking at the gala.

Ms. Newman asked how EEF prioritizes distributing the money to schools.

Ms. Brown said a Grant Review Committee is responsible for reviewing all grants submitted by educators. She noted that all identifying information is removed.

Chair Di Liberto acknowledged EFF's longstanding support and thanked the foundation for their generosity.

2. RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING CÉSAR CHÁVEZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NAMING REVIEW PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND PATH FORWARD

Chief of Staff Carmen Xiomara Urbina and César Chávez Elementary School Principal Kevin Gordon provided information regarding César Chávez Elementary School naming review via PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Gordon explained that after allegations against their school's namesake César Chávez surfaced, a small committee of stakeholders was formed to assess the impact.

Ms. Urbina provided context and background:

- César Chávez Elementary School was named in 2004 through a community-driven process
- The name reflects values of cultural identity, student belonging, and social justice
- In March 2026, national reporting raised new concerns regarding César Chávez
- This has resulted in:
 - Increased community communication
 - Questions about alignment with district values
 - Mixed perspectives

She outlined understanding the complexities:

- The issue reflects a tension between history, identity, and newly surfaced information – César Chávez represents both:
 - A symbol of a broader movement rooted in justice and labor rights
 - An individual whose legacy is now being examined
- Communities are holding multiple truths at once:
 - Pride, identity, and cultural significance
 - Concern, confusion, and questions about alignment with values

She outlined Process Clarification – Policy FF & FF-AR:

- Renaming is governed by Board Policy FF and Administrative Regulation FF-AR
- This is not a complaint process
- Requests are initiated at the building level through the principal
- A formal renaming process requires:
 - Broad and representative community engagement
 - A clear and formal rationale
 - Understanding impacts of fiscal considerations
- Final decisions are made by the Board of Directors

Why a preliminary phase:

- Situation is complex and sensitive
- District created a structured approach before initiation any formal process
- Purpose:
 - Do not act prematurely
 - Understand community input
 - Align next steps with Policy FF
 - Provide clarity to the Board and community

Role of the Subcommittee:

- Preliminary (pre-phase) review body
- Advisory only – not decision-making
- Guiding question: “Are we ready to initiate a formal renaming process under Policy FF?”
- Focus: Readiness, not outcome
- Included school, district, and community perspectives
- Board members participated in a listening and learning capacity (no action/quorum)

Process and Methodology:

- Comprehensive review of all communications received
- Stakeholder categorization
- Thematic analysis
- Policy alignment review
- Identification of gaps, risks, and conditions

Community Input Overview:

- 17 request reviewed
 - 53% community members
 - 41% parents/guardians
- Input is:
 - Important
 - Valid
 - Informative
- Limitations:
 - Self-selected group
 - No staff input
 - Not representative

Key Themes:

- 82% support renaming
- 100% raise values concerns

- 70% express urgency
- 59% suggest alternatives

Critical Insight:

- We are not missing concern or awareness
- We are missing representative evidence required under Policy FF

Pathways Considered:

- Option A – Continue Monitoring and Communication
- Option B – Route Through Principal (FF – AR)
- Option C – Initiate Formal Renaming Process (Policy FF)

Policy Alignment:

- Policy FF requires:
 - Broad, representative community input
 - Clear and formalized rationale
 - Sufficient evidence for decision-making
 - Understanding of impacts and implications

Recommendation:

- Do not initiate a formal renaming process at this time, because:
 - Policy threshold has not been met
 - Input is not yet representative
 - Risk of acting prematurely

Path Forward:

- Continue clear and consistent communication
- Expand and structure community engagement
- Gather representative input
- Utilize surveys and facilitated engagement opportunities
- Ensure inclusive and balanced participation

Key Considerations:

- Balance urgency with thoughtful deliberation
- Honor both the individual and the broader movement
- Preserve community identity, pride, and belonging
- Ensure clarity and integrity of process
- Recognize statewide implications
- Navigate complex and conflicting perspectives
- Maintain transparency and communication
- Consider long-term impacts and unintended consequences

Current District Context:

- Significant budget reductions
- Staffing adjustments and system stabilization
- Planning for upcoming school year
- These realities require the district to move with focus, alignment, and disciplined prioritization
- This context reinforces the need to proceed thoughtfully and not prematurely

Conclusion:

- Concern is real and meaningful
- Conditions for formal action have not been met
- District must move responsibly toward readiness not reaction
- The district's responsibility is to move not toward immediate resolution, but toward readiness grounded in policy, community voice, and trust

Next Steps and Commitment:

- No formal renaming process is being initiated at this time.
- The district will:
 - Continue clear and consistent communication
 - Expand structured community engagement
 - Gather broad and representative input
 - A formal recommendation will be brought forward only when Policy FF conditions are met

Mr. Gordon provided a closing reflection:

- This is more than a name
- It reflects:
 - How we listen
 - How we engage
 - How we act responsibly
- The process matters as much as the outcome
- Commitment to integrity, inclusion, and community trust
- The outcome matters – but the integrity of the process matters just as much

He thanked staff, committee members, and parents and guardians for their engagement in the process thus far.

Ms. Urbina and Mr. Gordon invited questions and comments from the BOD.

Ms. Newman recommended developing a timeline for the potential renaming process.

Responding to a question posed by Ms. Jonak, Ms. Urbina recommended an engagement survey followed by a presentation to the Board. She also emphasized educating the community on the history of the naming of César Chávez Elementary School.

Ms. Rabasa shared her perspective that for elementary school students, their school is a big part of their identity. She said she appreciates the approach taken thus far.

X. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. DIRECTION TO INITIATE SCHOOL NAMING PROCESS – BOARD POLICY FF NAMING OF SCHOOLS, FACILITIES AND DISTRICT PROPERTY

Ms. Urbina recommended approval of initiating a school naming process – Board Policy FF naming of schools, facilities and district property.

MOTION: Ms. Munro moved to accept the recommendation to actively seek input from the César Chávez Elementary School community. Vice Chair Thessen 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.**

MOTION: Ms. Rabasa moved to direct the superintendent to bring Policy FF to the Policy Review Committee. Vice Chair Thessen 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 BOARD POLICY IKF – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Superintendent Mickelson recommended approving revisions to Board Policy IKF – Graduation Requirements. She provided relevant background information.

MOTION: Vice Chair Thessen moved to approve revisions to Board Policy IKF – Graduation Requirements. Ms. Jonak 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

There were none.

XIII. CONSIDER BOARD REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS OR INFORMATION

Ms. Thessen recommended a late spring work session to review Board processes.

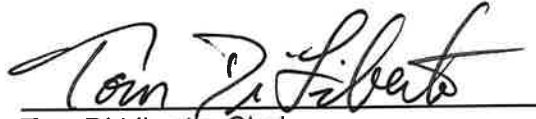
Ms. Rabasa recommended revisiting the topic of individual Board comments during meetings.

XIV. ADJOURN

Chair Di Liberto adjourned the regular meeting at 7:56 p.m.



Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent



Tom Di Liberto, Chair

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

