

Board of Directors Meeting  
School District 4J, Lane County  
Hybrid Meeting (virtual and  
in-person)  
200 North Monroe Street  
Eugene, Oregon 97402  
Wednesday, April 8, 2026

**NOTICE:** The Budget Committee meeting will be open to the public via live broadcast on KRVM 1280-AM, via live stream <https://icecast.4j.lane.edu/board> and via the internet at Zoom Webinar <https://4j-lane-edu.zoom.us/j/97298154318>

**Budget Committee**

The Budget Committee, which meets each spring to review and approve the proposed budget for the financial year that begins July 1, provides opportunities for public comment. Up to 10 community members will be scheduled to provide public comment at each meeting, with a 3-minute time limit per speaker. If more than 10 people request to speak, priority will be given to district residents who did not provide public comment during the previous two meetings, after which the selection of speakers will be determined randomly. Comments may only address topics listed on the published agenda for the budget committee.

Request to speak form (by 5 p.m. the Monday before the budget committee meeting)  
Email the budget committee

**6:00 PM  
Budget Committee Meeting**

- I. **6:00 p.m. Budget Committee Meeting:**
- II. Call to Order, Roll Call
- III. Items for Action at this Meeting
  - 1. Committee Administration
    - a. Election of Officers:
      - Budget Committee Chair
      - Budget Committee Vice Chair
    - 2. Approve Meeting Minutes 3
      - DRAFT Meeting Minutes for the April 15, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting
      - DRAFT Meeting Minutes for the April 22, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting
      - DRAFT Meeting Minutes for the April 29, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting
      - DRAFT Meeting Minutes for the May 5, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting
- IV. Superintendent Welcome  
Presenter: Dr. Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent
- V. Budget Process and Review  
Presenter: Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services
- VI. Superintendent Budget Message for 2026-27 Budget  
Presenter: Dr. Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent
- VII. Review of the 2025-26 Budget and the Development of the 2026-27 Budget  
Presenters: Dr. Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent; Mr. Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services and Mr. Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services
- VIII. Preparing for the 2026-27 School Year  
Presenter: Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff

- IX. Questions?
- X. Items Raised by the Audience
- XI. Comments by Employee Groups
- XII. Preview for the next Budget Committee Meeting on April 22, 2026  
Presenter: Dr. Miriam Mickelson, Superintendent
- XIII. Adjourn

**INFORMATION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING:**  
Closed Captioning is available during Board meetings through a zoom live feed  
which is also displayed at in-person meetings.

**MINUTES OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**Date: April 15, 2025**

The Budget Committee of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular Budget Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website.

**ROLL CALL**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dakota Boulette  
Abbie Stillie  
David Wallace  
Courtney Salic  
Scott Fellman  
Eric Richardson (online)  
Amy Fellows (online)

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Maya Rabasa  
Jenny Jonak  
Morgan Munro  
Judy Newman  
Tom Di Liberto  
Rick Hamilton  
Erika Thessen (online)

**STAFF:**

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent  
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff  
Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services  
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services  
John Goldberg, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable  
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction  
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support  
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer  
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services  
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office  
Kelly McIver, Communications Director  
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services

Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Belonging  
Seth Pfaefflin, Director of Student Services  
Erin Gaston, MTSS Administrator  
Courtney Leonard, MTSS Administrator

**EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Dave Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA)  
Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Dakota Boulette called the Eugene School District 4J Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. He said the names of all members present.

**II. ITEM FOR ACTION**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

**MOTION:** Ms. Rabasa moved to elect Dakota Boulette as Chair of the Budget Committee. Ms. Fellows seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, Mr. Boulette, Ms. Stillie, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Mr. Richardson, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor; 14:0:0.**

**MOTION:** Ms. Newman moved to elect Eric Richardson as Vice Chair of the Budget Committee. Ms. Munro seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, Chair Boulette, Ms. Stillie, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Mr. Richardson, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor; 14:0:0.**

**2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS YEAR MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Ms. Stillie moved to approve the meeting minutes from the previous year. Mr. Hamilton seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, Chair Boulette, Vice Chair Richardson, Ms. Stillie, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor; 14:0:0.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Valerie Blood, 4J parent and substitute Educational Assistant (EA), spoke in opposition to budget cuts to elementary education. She said that elementary schools are already short staffed. If the budget cuts occur, she anticipates larger class sizes and less one-on-one instruction. She said as a result the district will not have improved testing scores and high graduation rates. Ms. Blood brought attention to nutrition services, stating that the free breakfast and lunch is vital to student success. She challenged that the proposed budget will have a minimal impact on students.

Brianna Deyling-Demers, 4J employee and parent, explained that her position as a Buildings Behavior Support Specialist at Buena Vista Elementary School is being displaced. She provided a description of her day directly supporting children at the elementary school level. Ms. Deyling-Demers emphasized the level of need, cited the impact the potential budget cuts would have on students, and urged the Committee to reconsider.

Robyn Loudon, Student Success Coordinator at Buena Vista Elementary School, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts. She explained that Buildings Behavior Support Specialists and Student Success Coordinators provide onsite behavior and social and emotional intervention to all students, respond to crises, and ensure student safety throughout the school day. They also provide critical support for staff and teachers. She cited the district's commitment to student safety, mental health, and wellbeing and cautioned that proposed budget cuts would be devastating.

Lodi Soderholm, 4J educator, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those impacting Bilingual Educational Assistants. She said the assistants are cultural navigators, trusted liaisons, and academic lifelines for multilingual students and their families; and the proposed budget cuts contradict the district's commitment to equity.

Arthelda Avila, 4J parent, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those impacting Resource Room Coordinators. She described the core services that the Resource Room provides for students and families, including assistance meeting their basic needs. She urged the Committee to reconsider the proposed budget cuts, stating that it would directly impact her family's wellbeing.

Gavin Ogan, 4J employee, referenced a petition signed by 136 district employees in opposition to proposed budget cuts. The petition outlined the following five demands:

1. Absolute transparency of 4J assets, revenues, and expenditures
2. Wage freeze of all administrative staff receiving compensation in excess value of \$100,000
3. All attempts to be made to sell the Wells Fargo building with all proceeds from the sale being used to retain student support staffing hours

4. Commitment to maintain the student support staffing hours at their current level with a goal of zero FTE reduction in all school buildings for classified and certified staff
5. Postpone final staffing assignments and displacement plans until the above demands can be met

Kara Whipple, 4J employee, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those impacting Teacher Mentors in Special Education (SPED). She said cutting Teacher Mentors and Staff Development Specialists removes critical support for SPED educators. Without that support, teaching goes from being extremely difficult to almost impossible. She pointed out that SPED is already where many staffing vacancies exist, and removing Teacher Mentors will make it harder to recruit and retain teachers. She urged the Committee to reconsider the proposed budget cuts.

Max Irving, 4J educator and Unified coordinator, asked the Committee to reconsider how the district allocates inclusive program funding, specifically for the Unified program. He said that Unified funding is limited to SSD funds. He urged the district to provide district stipends, not building stipends, for Unified coordinators, provide coaches pay for outside events, a Unified Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), access to student investment accounts, and reinstate the adapted physical education (PE) Specialist. He recommended that the funds come from the district's athletics and activities budget.

Angie Gee, 4J educator, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those impacting Resource Room Coordinators. She expressed concern about the impact the changes would have on students and families. She described the relationship building inherent in providing resources to families and said establishing that kind of trust and accessibility is difficult, if not impossible, to create through a centralized system. She urged the Committee to reconsider the proposed budget cuts.

#### **IV. COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

Dave Wines, Vice President of Eugene Education Association (EEA), on behalf of educators, staff, and students, urged the Committee to keep student impact at the center of every decision made throughout the budget process. He said any potential reduction must consider how to maintain the balance between available staff and the increasing demands of the student population. He cited 13 of 20 licensed staff vacancies and 38 of 122 classified staff vacancies in SPED. There is deep concern about how the process will impact the already strained SPED program. He mentioned an unwillingness on the district's part to hold a discussion about budgetary decisions concerning staffing, stating that a policy review is in order. Mr. Wines urged the Committee to ensure that any budget decisions prioritize the impact on students, particularly those needing the most support.

Lisa Jenkins Easton, President of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), spoke on the topic of proposed budget cuts and its impact on employees. She said it has been a

difficult month for employees since the announcements were made. She said that budget cuts should be made far away from the classroom, but the proposed cuts are close to the classroom. She challenged data provided by the district reflecting student enrollment projections. She requested information about actual employee costs by employee group. Ms. Jenkins-Easton reported that employees are devastated by the proposed budget cuts.

## **V. BUDGET COMMITTEE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

There were none.

## **VI. BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Interim Superintendent Gill presented the Budget Message and a statement. He referenced the 2025-26 Budget Document which provides a detailed overview of 4J's financial landscape, priorities, and the steps the district is taking to ensure long-term stability. The document reads that 4J is facing a districtwide budget reduction, which the district has not had to navigate for more than a decade and a half. This reflects a decline in student enrollment paired with a previous increase in staffing and expired ESSER (COVID-relief) dollars. 4J extended the positions for an additional year utilizing reserve funds, however, moving forward the district must ensure that staffing levels align with ongoing financial resources. To communicate that point, he showed a chart detailing enrollment and staffing levels over the past five years. He said there is added budgetary pressure related to PERS retirement costs increasing by 24%, cost of living adjustments, increased fuel and electricity costs, and economic and political uncertainty potentially impacting revenue. He cited potential impacts to Title I funding based on federal measures and proposed policy changes with the potential to dramatically impact federal school funding.

Interim Superintendent Gill stated that no one wants to make reductions to services and programs that serve students, and the district would not be proposing so unless it were necessary. He acknowledged that every reduction is difficult. He said the district hopes to accomplish personnel reductions through attrition and displacing staff and reassigning them to other positions. He outlined a measured approach to proposed reductions, resulting in a net reduction of \$17.5 million to the general fund. 20% of the proposed reductions are at the school level, and 80% of the proposed reductions are outside of schools. He added that the budget process is a dynamic one, shaped by the Budget Values Framework, the Budget Committee, and ultimately the Board of Directors (BOD). He explained that the Budget Committee has two primary roles: approve a property tax rate and approve the 2025-26 budget. He outlined four possible options for the Budget Committee to consider:

1. Not to make any reductions and operate at the same level of services next year
2. Make deeper reductions and not need to make reductions for the next several years

3. Make somewhat deeper reduction this year and review again for 2027-29 biennium
4. Accept proposed budget and make adjustments next year and beyond

Interim Superintendent Gill responded to questions from the Committee.

Chair Rabasa inquired about how the budget adoption timeline aligns with the decision-making process for employees who have been told that their positions are being reduced. For example, what if a position an employee left became viable again?

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that licensed staff are going through a voluntary process called “expo” where they may apply for positions across the district that they have an interest in. If positions are restored, the district will offer the first opportunity to the individual who was displaced. He added that the process is slightly different for classified staff, but they too would have first opportunity if their position were restored.

Ms. Jonak asked if there is a fifth possibility, such as budget cuts that land between the no reductions level and the proposed budget level.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded yes – it is a sliding scale.

Ms. Munro asked if within the next 24 to 36 months, the district will have to be making \$29 million in cuts one way or another.

Mr. Brown responded affirmatively.

Ms. Fellows asked for clarification about what staffing reduction decisions have already been made versus decisions based on the final adopted budget.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that the district wanted to notify staff of potential outcomes based on the highest level of reductions that could possibly be adopted in mid-May. He said nothing is final until the budget is officially adopted.

Ms. Newman referenced the aforementioned 80%/20% split. She asked if the district anticipates having to make deeper cuts into schools moving forward.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that ultimately it is the decision of the Committee and the BOD. He said some of the reductions are one time in nature. He underscored the importance of finding the balance between enrollment, state funding, and staffing. Any long-term reductions would result from finding that balance.

Associate Director of Financial Services Bob Blyth, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable John Goldberg, and Mr. Brown introduced the Budget Committee Roadmap including Insurance Reserve Funds, Debt Service Funds, Capital Funds, and Special Purpose Funds (Curriculum and Nutrition, State Grants, and Federal Grants) via PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Blythe presented information pertaining to Insurance Reserve Funds proposed appropriations. Budget updates for FY26 include:

- Unemployment changes and associated costs
- Paid Leave Oregon (PLO)
- Transfer from General Fund
- Insurance contributions

Mr. Goldberg presented information pertaining to Capital Funds proposed appropriations. Budget updates for FY26 include:

- Network infrastructure upgrades
- Financial software system
- Playground equipment improvements
- Covered play area enhancements
- Bus purchases
- Ongoing vestibule security upgrades
- Roof upgrades
- Track replacements

Mr. Brown presented a pie chart with data pertaining to Special Revenue Funds.

MTSS Administrators Erin Gaston and Courtney Leonard provided information about the Curriculum Fund and associated timelines.

Ms. Gaston explained that every seven years the district must review curriculum to determine if they meet Oregon Department of Education (ODE) standards. Every year a different subject matter comes up for review – it is called an adoption year. She referenced a table detailing curriculum costs and timelines. She noted that during the 2024-25 school year, math and science underwent review and adoption.

Nutrition Services Director Jill Cuadros provided information about the Nutrition Services Fund and proposed appropriations. Budget updates for FY26 include:

- Federal changes
- Support from the General Fund
- Ongoing cost variables

She brought attention to an increase in salaries to a minimum of \$18 per hour. She added that their department currently has one hundred percent staffing levels. Regarding federal funding changes, Ms. Cuadros said the budget does not reflect those potentials. She said raising the poverty level to the threshold of 60% would have a huge impact on funding. A requirement of 100% verification of families would present additional challenges. Ms. Cuadros added that the district services over 2 million meals annually, \$500,000 is spent

locally, high school meal participation went up 566%, and there is now a pathway to serve suppers to high school students.

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Belonging Juan Carlos Cuadros, and Executive Director of Youth and Family Support Kat Lange provided information about Special Revenue Funds: State and Local Grants. Budget updates for FY26 include:

- Additional accountability reporting
- 4J planning v. doing

Main State and Local Grants:

- Early Literacy
- Outdoor School (OSU)
- Preschool Promise
- EWEB
- Farm to School
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- LETRS Grant

Mr. Brown outlined Integrated Guidance makeup (\$22 million). Additional information was provided via handout.

Mr. Brown highlighted Federal Grants Budget updates in FY26:

- Some reductions anticipated
- Additional accountability reporting

Main smaller federal grants:

- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program
- Youth Transition Program
- Lane ESD
- Safe Routes to School
- Natives
- Perkins

Ms. Lange and Director of Student Services Seth Pfaefflin presented information about Special Revenue Funds Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Budget updates for FY26 include:

- \$3.6 million in 2025-26
- 99% dedicated to staffing
- 32.72 FTE

- 12.76 FTE Licensed
- 19.96 FTE Classified
- 0 FTE MAPS/Admin

Ms. Lange outlined Title grants:

- Title I – Low Income
- Title II – Teacher and Principal Quality
- Title III – English Learners
- Title IV – Student Support and Enrichment

Title funds:

- \$7.9 million in 2025-26
- 90% dedicated to staffing
- 63.38 FTE
- 21.15 FTE Licensed
- 41.43 FTE Classified
  - 0.80 FTE MAPS/Admin

Interim Superintendent Gill, Ms. Lange, and Mr. Pfaefflin responded to questions from the Committee.

## **VII. ITEMS RAISED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **1. NEXT MEETING**

The next Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, 2025.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Boulette adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**Date: April 22, 2025**

The Budget Committee of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular Budget Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website.

**ROLL CALL**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Eric Richardson  
David Wallace  
Courtney Salic  
Scott Fellman  
Abbie Stillie (online)  
Amy Fellows (online)

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dakota Boulette

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF:**

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent  
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff  
Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services  
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services  
John Goldberg, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable  
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction  
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support  
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer  
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services  
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office

Kelly McIver, Communications Director  
Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services  
Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Belonging

**EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Dave Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA)  
Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Vice Chair Eric Richardson called the Eugene School District 4J Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. He said the names of all members present.

**II. REVIEW PREVIOUS MEETING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS**

There were no comments.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Hilary Lindsey, 4J parent and educator, advocated for fewer proposed budget cuts to teacher FTE, citing the likelihood of increased class sizes in district elementary schools. She said larger classes without Educational Assistants (EAs) will exacerbate challenges and may be catastrophic for the wellbeing of students and teachers. She added that she is sad to lose her position teaching the first grade at Edgewood Elementary School. She urged greater cuts to non-school based administrative positions.

Megan Murphy, 4J educator and swim coach, voiced opposition to cutting adaptive physical education (PE) specialists. She shared a personal story about an adaptive PE specialist providing support to a visually impaired athlete/swimmer throughout elementary, middle, and high school. She said without the support, the district will lessen the opportunities for students with disabilities to have the skills and confidence to participate in sports at the high school level and will impact the efforts of access and inclusion. She urged the Committee to reconsider cutting funding for adaptive PE specialists.

Valerie Blood, 4J parent and volunteer, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts. She asked the district to justify the cost of the incoming superintendent, the salary ranges of the executive leadership teams, and the assistant superintendent, chief of staff, and chief of operations positions. She questioned how the district can provide an education for all of its students given the proposed budget cuts.

Kerry Tedesco, 4J parent, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts. She articulated parallels between budgetary decisions she witnessed in the health care setting and the

school district, stating that administrative positions are outpacing ground staff positions at an increasing rate; and it falls to the people on the ground to carry the burden of cost savings. Ms. Tedesco suggested that assistant superintendent level administrators take a 10% pay cut in solidarity.

Charlotte Shuffield, 4J elementary school student, provided comments about proposed budget cuts. She said there should be more than one behavior support specialist at her school because kids need more help than one person can do in her classroom. She described meltdowns, throwing things, and inappropriate language. She reported that students have a hard time learning and concentrating. Ms. Shuffield said kids are feeling unsafe and unable to learn in their classrooms. She suggested budget cuts at the administrative level.

Melissa Nixon, 4J educator, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts and in support of retaining essential staff working directly with students. She explained that before the 2024-25 school year, challenges in district elementary schools stemmed from being significantly understaffed, particularly concerning classified positions. This year, the district has finally seen improvements thanks to support staff. Ms. Nixon urged the Committee to support district students by supporting staff.

Krystal Elms, 4J parent and volunteer, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts. She urged prioritizing preserving resources closest to the students. She proposed that staff not spending at least one day per month on campus be considered for budget re-evaluation. She called attention to examining compensation for assistant superintendents and pausing infrastructure projects. She urged the Committee to reconsider the proposed budget cuts.

Bobbie Willis, 4J educator, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts. She reported that employees are struggling after learning about proposed budget cuts. She stated that accessing the information regarding proposed budget cuts is a challenge. Ms. Willis offered suggestions and requested that the Committee reconsider the scope and ramification of the proposed budget cuts.

Kristin Denmark, 4J parent, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts. Her primary concerns are increased class sizes beyond appropriate levels and a reduction in support staff, including elementary school librarians and nutrition staff. She implored the Committee to find alternative ways to reduce costs and lessen the severity of cuts impacting the district's youngest student population. She stated that the level of cuts are too significant and should be offset with other cuts. Ms. Denmark urged the Committee to reinstate the librarian program in full and consider expanding it.

#### **IV. COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

Dave Wines, Eugene Education Association (EEA) Vice President, raised concerns about the financial narrative driving proposed budget reductions, specifically the assumption

that the district must spend \$30 million in reserves and that deep cuts to student facing positions are inevitable. He suggested that the district has historically incorrectly forecasted drastic reductions in the ending fund balance. Mr. Wines provided information via PowerPoint presentation, including a series of bar graphs depicting 4J ending fund balances. He pointed out a pattern of errors in the predictions of ending fund balances. He said that every year there is a projection of financial hardship, yet the reserve grows instead. He suggested that it is a systemic issue having to do with how the district models the budget. Mr. Wines challenged the district's narrative that there are balanced budget cuts between work groups. He described district positions potentially being affected by the proposed budget cuts. He urged the Committee to take a deeper look at the model being used to justify the proposed budget reductions.

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President, read aloud the letter about proposed budget reductions received by classified employees. She reported that 29 classified staff are being reduced and 53 fully displaced in the proposed budget cuts. She requested information about how much of each dollar is spent on which employee group and the total dollar amount of vacancy savings for unfilled positions. She brought attention to specific schools and programs which would be negatively affected by the proposed budget reductions. Ms. Jenkins-Easton is seeking clarity after reportedly being told that the vote to increase reserves would not impact the amount needed for classified negotiations. She provided the Committee with a handout including data relevant to the proposed budget reductions.

## **V. BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Interim Superintendent Colt Gill and Finance Director Matt Brown provided a presentation of the 2024-25 Proposed Budget via PowerPoint presentation with links to additional information and source data.

Interim Superintendent Gill presented a table detailing district leadership structures at comparable districts throughout the state of Oregon.

Interim Superintendent Gill presented tables detailing staffing by group, staffing costs by group, and beginning fund balances and descriptions.

Interim Superintendent Gill presented a bar graph of the general fund beginning fund balances, highlighting that the anticipated fund balance reflects that the district expects to spend \$29 million more than it receives this year.

Mr. Brown presented a line graph of the beginning fund balances, bringing attention to the growth over time and acknowledging historical projections. He said errors in historical projections have improved significantly in the past three years.

Mr. Brown outlined the following forecast assumptions:

- PERS +24% increase in PERS cost
- Enrollment -1.78% decrease each year
- State School Fund +8.98% assumption (2025-2027)
- State School Fund +4.00% assumption (2027-2029)
- Employee COLA
- Reserve Policy 8%
- Transfers Out

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that the role of the Committee is to approve the property tax rate and the 2025-26 budget by giving direction on the overall level of reductions and the Budget Values Framework. He acknowledged the public comments received about specific reductions within the district, stating that reductions are painful. He said the district has a responsibility to name when the district is headed toward funding cliffs. He explained that federal COVID relief dollars exited the district in September 2024, further complicated by record low enrollment and record high staffing. He recognized that district students have incredible needs. He added that by reducing in targeted areas the district is trying to preserve nearly \$300 million in spending that supports student learning and services.

Interim Superintendent Gill introduced three options for the level of reductions:

1. Make virtually no reductions to operate at the same level of services next school year (expending nearly all reserves)
2. The proposed budget puts the district in place to make adjustments (\$10-25 million) next year and perhaps for the following biennium
3. Deeper reductions (\$5-25 million more) this year and reduce the need for reductions in future years

Mr. Brown provided information about increases to the general fund reflecting a total of \$4,923,000.

He provided information about level 1 reductions to the general fund reflecting a total of \$9,965,700.

He provided information about level 2 reductions to the general fund reflecting a total of \$5,080,000.

He provided information about level 3 reductions to the general fund reflecting a total of \$6,025,000.

He provided information about level 4 reductions to the general fund reflecting a total of \$2,925,000.

He provided information about level 5 reductions (optional) to the general fund reflecting a total of \$7,500,000.

He provided additional information about general fund reductions reflecting a total of \$23,995.700

Mr. Brown presented three pie charts depicting general fund revenues, general fund expenditures (excluding reserves), and general fund expenditures (with reserves).

He presented three bar graphs depicting a general fund forecast with no reductions (status quo), a general fund forecast for the proposed budget, and a general fund forecast for the proposed budget plus \$10 million in reductions.

Mr. Brown invited questions from the Committee, prompting deep discussion about the proposed options for the level of reductions.

Interim Superintendent Gill spoke about proposed level 1 reductions, specifically affecting 19 elementary level educators. He explained that the district has not adjusted staffing to account for the decline in enrollment for several years. If adopted, they project that class sizes would range from 13 to 28 students per class. The average class size for Kindergarten would be roughly 19 students.

Mr. Fellman asked how the school choice policy affects adjusting class size to staff.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that it has an impact. He provided one example, and said the solution is moving staff where they are needed and/or hiring additional staff.

Mr. Fellman said they might consider changes to the school choice program to help address the budget shortfall and minimize cuts.

Interim Superintendent Gill agreed. He suggested that it be considered in future years as it would be difficult to accomplish in one budget season.

Ms. Rabasa asked for further clarification about level 1 reductions, specifically cuts affecting all student-facing positions.

Interim Superintendent Gill provided further clarification.

Ms. Thessen asked for more information about level 3 reductions, specifically cuts to nutrition services.

Mr. Brown responded that it reflects one MAPS employee reduction and a minor change in service levels.

Ms. Munro asked for more information about level 2 and 3 reductions, specifically instruction (staff reduction and contracts).

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that level 2 reductions reflect cuts to Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) and level 3 reductions reflect additional cuts to TOSA and instructional technology positions.

Ms. Thessen and Ms. Rabasa requested data about the history of TOSA positions.

Mr. Brown said he would follow up with more information if available.

Ms. Munro brought up Mentor Teachers.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that the proposed TOSA reductions are at the central district level and do not include instructional coaches and coordinators at the elementary level. He said the proposed reductions impact Student Success Coordinators at the high school level. He referenced a one-page document detailing mentor programs.

Ms. Thessen observed that some of the schools with the highest cuts seem to be the most vulnerable.

Vice Chair Richardson asked for more information about level 5 reductions, specifically the facilities - reduction to 2024-25 transfer.

Mr. Brown responded that it is a one-time reduction in the transfer in the current year's budget. For level 4 and under reductions, they are proposing a facilities reduction to impact future years.

Ms. Newman asked for more information about level 5 reductions, specifically closure of an elementary school.

Interim Superintendent Gill confirmed that consolidating or closing an elementary school is an option.

Ms. Munro asked about the impacts of proposed reductions to the maintenance department.

Mr. Tucker responded that there is current bond money dedicated for deferred maintenance, but costs have risen significantly (over 40%). He added that one of the purposes of the capital reserve fund is not only the facilities component, but it is an operational reserve (nutrition, technology, and transportation). He said the impacts would be alarming to a district this size.

Ms. Rabasa asked what the current percentage level of reserves is.

Mr. Brown responded that he would follow up with the information.

Ms. Rabasa asked if levels 1 through 5 could be annotated further for better comprehension throughout the Committee. She also questioned if notifications were sent to staff across all levels.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that all individuals whose positions may be reduced (other than the potential school closure outlined in level 5) were notified.

Ms. Jonak commented that she found the community and staff input compelling. She said the district has high needs right now and that dollars should be spent on kids today. She advocated for reductions far from the classroom. She suggested receiving input from employee groups about where they see the greatest efficiencies.

Ms. Thessen said she understands the need to adjust class sizes to be in line with enrollment. She suggested limiting the cuts to support services.

Ms. Newman brought up the importance of maintaining reasonable class sizes.

Ms. Newman and Mr. Di Liberto requested information about the mechanisms leading to the finance department making better projections now versus previously.

Mr. Hamilton commented that when there are obligations that need to be paid it is better to pay now than later. He said that no one wants to make cuts but they need to do something.

Ms. Thessen asked for guidance from Interim Superintendent Gill regarding the clarification he is seeking from the Committee.

Interim Superintendent Gill said he would like to know what the Committee wants to target as a level of reduction, and direction around the proposed \$5 million.

Ms. Munro acknowledged that education is perennially underfunded. She said if the district does not make meaningful cuts, they are going to be much worse next year.

Mr. Fellman said he is leaning toward level 4 plus the facilities line item from level 5. He said there is an obligation to do it today to protect our schools for tomorrow.

Vice Chair Richardson said he is leaning toward level 3 but would consider incorporating the facilities line item from level 5.

Ms. Newman said she aligns with the proposed level with an emphasis on not altering current class size ratios.

Ms. Rabasa said she prefers level 1 along with adding facilities from levels 2 and 3 and would consider the school closure outlined in level 5 in the future.

Ms. Salic prefers aspects from level 3 but believes support staff should be restored.

Mr. Wallace prefers level 4. He questioned moving the program from Lane ESD in-house. He recommended using the savings and not reducing classified staff.

Ms. Munro said she aligns with level 4.

Ms. Stillie said her preference aligns with Ms. Jonak’s proposal.

Ms. Fellows said her preference also aligns with Ms. Jonak’s recommendation.

Mr. Di Liberto said his preference also aligns with Ms. Jonak's recommendation.

In closing, Interim Superintendent Gill said staff will do their best to provide a projection of each proposal at the next Budget Committee meeting.

**VI. ITEMS RAISED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**1. NEXT MEETING**

The next Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2025.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**Date: April 29, 2025**

The Budget Committee of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website.

**ROLL CALL**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dakota Boulette  
Eric Richardson  
David Wallace  
Courtney Salic  
Scott Fellman  
Abbie Stillie  
Amy Fellows (online)

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF:**

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent  
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff  
Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services  
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services  
John Goldberg, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable  
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction  
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel  
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support  
Kyle Tucker, Chief Operations Officer  
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services  
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office  
Kelly McIver, Communications Director

Jill Cuadros, Director of Nutrition Services

Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Belonging

**EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Dakota Boulette called the Eugene School District 4J Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:29 p.m. He said the names of all members present.

**II. REVIEW PREVIOUS MEETING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS**

There were no comments.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ethan Tibbs, 4J Teacher Librarian, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting elementary school librarians. He described various aspects of his role as a school librarian. He said school libraries should reflect Eugene School District 4J's mission. Mr. Tibbs said widespread reductions to elementary school librarian hours would be a detriment to the district.

Martha Dyer, 4J Teacher Librarian, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting elementary school librarians. She urged the district to keep supporting libraries as they ignite student excitement to practice reading skills. She said that school libraries serve a vital function.

Melissa Nixon, 4J educator, voiced support for retaining staff positions, specifically BBSAs, Educational Assistants (EAs), and classified teachers. She brought attention to the salaries and staff increases in Managers, Administrators, Professionals, and Supervisors (MAPS) positions. She urged the Committee to cut MAPS positions before other staff positions.

Eli Oestreich, 4J educator, provided comments. He said compared with other districts he has taught in, 4J classes are smaller and there is more support staff. He described the positive outcomes of having adequate staffing. Mr. Oestreich said the proposed budget cuts will have impacts in the classroom. He expressed opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting educators and support staff.

Jordon Zeigler, 4J educator, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts to licensed and classified staff. She suggested proposing budget cuts to district administration. She said with the current staffing levels teachers are barely keeping their heads above water. She

described the disruptions that would result from the proposed budget cuts at the elementary school where she works. Ms. Zeigler urged the Committee to reconsider the proposed budget cuts.

Erin Crews, 4J educator, provided comments related to proposed budget cuts, specifically to Bilingual Education Assistant positions, Teacher Librarians, and College and Career Center positions. She pointed out that Churchill High School is facing more proposed budget cuts than any other high school. She urged the Committee to be thoughtful about budget cuts.

John Stiegeler, 4J educator, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts. He said his position is at risk of being displaced. He challenged that the proposed displacements are justifiable. He described significant challenges that may arise as a result of the proposed budget cuts and urged funding student-facing educators. Mr. Stiegeler suggested that district administration shoulder the burden of budget cuts.

Greg Graziano, former 4J educator, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting Educational Assistants (EAs), Teacher Librarians, and classified teachers. He said cutting those positions will affect student's safety nets.

Hilary Lindsey, 4J educator, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts. She cited disruptions to schools, overcrowded classrooms, and all-time high Kindergarten enrollment at Edgewood Elementary School. She urged the Committee not to cut funding for EAs and elementary school teachers and instead target staff without direct contact with students and/or those with the highest salaries.

Valerie Blood, 4J parent and volunteer, stated the following annual salaries: Three Assistant Superintendents: \$184,621, one Assistant Superintendent: \$162,975, one Chief Operations Officer: \$184,621, one Chief of Staff: \$210,871, one General Counsel: \$184,621, one District Ombuds: \$159,843, and one Superintendent: \$300,000. The starting annual salary for a teacher is \$46,230 and Educational Assistants (EAs) make roughly \$27,000 per year. She asked the Committee to consider all the public comments received before making the final budget decision.

Alia Nickel, 4J parent and substitute, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those impacting EAs, classroom teachers, and nutrition services. She said that nutrition staff are already working as hard as humanely possible and the proposed budget cuts are unreasonable – likely resulting in skipped breaks and staff working unpaid hours. She said the proposed budget cuts will directly impact students.

Rebecca Gourgey, 4J educator, voiced opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting SPED. She said that the district moved to full inclusion without a model and SPED educators struggling without ongoing training. She said the cuts will further

weaken the fragile system. She reported a 51% drop out rate for high school SPED students. She urged the Committee to consider different budgetary options.

Michelle Dunn, 4J educator, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts, specifically those affecting adapted physical education (APE). She urged district leadership to maintain current APE positions to successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities. She cited the Budget Values Framework and federally and state mandated services.

Ali Magee, 4J educator, voiced support for retaining Student Success Coordinators (SSCs). She said SSCs are pivotal to the success of students, especially those who are credit deficient, chronically absent, and struggling to stay engaged in school. She cited equity issues. She urged the Committee to reconsider the proposal to remove SSCs.

Morgan Raikes-Bennett, 4J educator, stated that a lack of investment in front line staff results in missed opportunities, particularly for vulnerable students. He provided an example of inadequate staffing for College and Career Options and its impact on students. He cited unrealistic work and expectations faced by educators and other staff. He urged the Committee to reconsider the proposal to increase reserves in the face of upcoming barriers and obstacles.

#### **IV. COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA) President, recognized that the Budget Committee has been increasingly engaged in the budget process. She said this year's Committee is engaging at the highest level yet. She said EEA has been warning of inflated predictions of dire circumstances that do not come to light leading to a high reserve account balance and leaving students and staff with unmet needs and insufficient supports. On behalf of EEA, she said that the staffing cuts currently planned for next year are based on a draft budget that incites fear and includes unnecessarily drastic reductions. She acknowledged that some budget cuts must happen, citing declining enrollment. Ms. Gordon recommended making adjustments to administrative staffing alongside other employee groups. She posed the following questions: Where is the parody in cuts at the upper administrative level? Do any of the budget proposals reflect the savings that could be garnered from reducing top level administrative positions? Would the impact of reductions at the administrative level be felt by students more or less? Ms. Gordon urged the Committee to approve a budget not based on fear, but values.

Lisa Jenkins-Easton, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) President, provided comments. She brought attention to administrative level pay. She said front line staff are those who the students trust and depend on to keep them safe at school. She asked if the equity tool was used to evaluate the Managers, Administrators, Professionals and Supervisors (MAPS) employee group. She recommended assigning a committee to conduct such a process. Ms. Jenkins-Easton cited harm to the mental health of staff. She

urged the Committee to ask about all accounts, how they are used, be provided with budget documents that show spending levels and balances, and address six-figure salaries.

**V. INFORMATION REQUESTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no comments.

**VI. BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Interim Superintendent Colt Gill and Finance Director Matt Brown provided a presentation of the 2025-26 Proposed Budget via PowerPoint presentation with links to additional information and source data.

Mr. Brown presented the following considerations:

- All proposals will require further reductions in future years.
- Consider your decisions as multi-year obligations. A \$5M add-back is just for that 1 year. The next year this cost is \$5.25M, then \$5.51M in year 2, and so on. No decision has a single year effect.
- Fund balances can impact the district's bond rating. Dropping below the reserve policy may affect future bond rates.

Interim Superintendent Gill explained that the following six proposals (Proposals A through F) were produced based on Committee member feedback provided at the previous Budget Committee meeting. He summarized the components of each proposal, including pros and cons. Mr. Brown provided the long-term projections for each proposal.

Further detail for each proposal is available in the PowerPoint presentation/handout.

Proposal A contains the following:

- Reductions with the "Outside School" category are included (\$19.2M)
- Remove the \$4.7 reductions directly related to schools

Proposal B contains the following:

- Proposed Budget
- + Level 5: \$2.7M reduction in the current year facilities reserve transfer

Proposal C contains the following:

- Proposed Budget
- + Elementary Schools adding back 7 Licensed FTE
- + Middle Schools adding back 3 Licensed FTE
- + High School adding back 6 Licensed FTE

Proposal D contains the following:

- Proposed Budget
- + Elementary Schools adding back 7 Licensed FTE
- + Middle Schools adding back 3 Licensed FTE
- + High School adding back 6 Licensed FTE
- +1 FTE Library Services across district
- +Nutrition Services programs at Fox Hollow and Family School

Proposal E contains the following:

- Level 1 reductions
- + Additional Facilities Transfer reductions of \$6.5 million (total of \$9 million)

Proposal F contains the following:

- Proposed Budget
- + Adds back all classified staffing

The Proposed Budget contains the following:

- Reductions of about \$23.9 million with the addition of programs and services of just under \$4.9 million
- Equates to a net reduction in the General Fund of about \$19 million

Regarding Special Purpose Funds, Interim Superintendent Gill said that program reductions from ESEA Title Programs, SIA, and other Special Revenue Grants have not been restored. This means the Committee has not addressed some reductions raised in public comment including, but not limited to, first grade educational assistant time and family resource coordinators serving four schools.

Interim Superintendent Gill invited questions from the Committee.

Ms. Jonak requested more information about what is paid for by the general fund versus specialized funds, specifically Early Literacy, Walk to Read, Unified sports/adapted physical education (APE), Educational Assistants (EAs), BBSAs, library staff, MTSS Specialists, Teacher Mentors including SPED Teacher Mentors, and proposed staffing cuts in the transportation or nutrition services department.

Ms. Rabasa requested more information about Family Resource Coordinators.

Mr. Brown responded that Early Literacy and Walk to Read is a grant in the special purposes fund. EAs are widespread depending on available funds. Unified sports/APE is in the general fund. Teacher Mentors and SPED Teacher Mentors are out of SIA/Integrated Guidance. Transportation and library services is out of the general fund.

Nutrition services is out of the general fund and the nutrition services fund. The BBSAs are out of the general fund. MTSS Specialists are out of SIA/Integrated Guidance. The Family Resource Coordinators are out of Title.

Ms. Fellows asked if further administrative cuts are reflected in proposals A through F.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that there are not administrative cuts reflected in proposals A through F.

Ms. Stillie asked who was involved in the process of deciding which positions to cut or how much FTE should be reduced per school. She asked if all staff positions were considered under the same framework in terms of student impact and equity. She proposed considering whether 12-month positions may be reduced to 9-month positions for a few years; and/or furlough days for positions that are not student facing.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that there was no discussion about reducing the contract length for any positions. The budget proposals were based on the Budget Values Framework and brought forward by the Executive Leadership Team and Superintendent Leadership Counsel.

Mr. Fellman asked for more information about the proposed 4% MAPS cuts.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded the proposed 4% MAPS cuts represents 7 FTE.

Ms. Rabasa asked, concerning the proposed 7 FTE, how many are unfilled positions versus staff that will be displaced.

Mr. Brown responded that four out of the seven are vacancies that are currently not filled.

Regarding Proposal A, Mr. Di Liberto asked if the FTE that were added back were not adjusted for enrollment drops, would the district be improving the teaching ratio.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded affirmatively.

Regarding Proposal A, Mr. Di Liberto asked if any of the positions would fall into the supplant and supplement.

Mr. Richardson asked for more clarification about Proposal D.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that Proposal D includes reductions from levels 1, 2, and 3, but it adds back 7 Elementary Licensed staff, 3 Middle School Licensed staff, 6 High School Licensed staff, 1 library staff, and nutrition programs at specific schools. It does not include any reductions from level 4. He added that it involves reductions of 12 elementary staff.

Mr. Fellman asked if Proposal B and Proposal D are the only proposals that do not have reserves below the established minimum for 2026-27.

Mr. Brown responded that Proposal D barely drops below the reserve minimum.

Mr. Fellman asked which proposal best addresses both district equity values and minimizing impact on students directly – Proposal B or Proposal D?

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that Proposal D has a more positive impact on students for the next school year. He said that Proposal B does a better job of preserving funds for the long term.

Ms. Newman asked Interim Superintendent Gill if the Budget Values Framework was applied to district cabinet members and executive level positions.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that the Budget Values Framework was not applied to all 2,224 district positions. He pointed out that classroom reductions address declining enrollment and is standard practice.

Ms. Munro brought attention to the chronic underfunding of public education. She said she wishes the state of Oregon funded based on need, not on numbers; but since they do not, the district must figure out how to do the best they can with the money it has. She suggested that the district must be solvent. She acknowledged that the decisions feel wrong, but the district must work with the funds it has.

Ms. Newman suggested a glide path.

Ms. Fellows said her focus is on maintaining enough EAs in the classroom. She regrets not requesting a proposal to address further administrative cuts.

Ms. Thessen asked when the governor's accountability measures would kick in. She agreed with Ms. Fellows about addressing administrative cuts.

Interim Superintendent Gill said the accountability bill starts to take effect in 2026-27.

Ms. Stillie asked for a description of what happens when the district's bond rating falls.

Mr. Goldberg responded that when the district's bond rating falls, it is difficult to sell district bonds at a premium. Given a potential deficient, he said the district would have to make up the difference in proceeds.

Ms. Jonak asked if potential funds from the SPED cap being lifted, or the sale of the Wells Fargo building, is reflected in the Proposed Budget.

Mr. Brown responded that neither are reflected in the Proposed Budget.

In the context of federal funding uncertainty, Ms. Munro emphasized the importance of the district having enough reserves to ensure that it can cover ongoing payroll costs. She added that one third of the state's budget comes from the federal government.

Ms. Rabasa shared her perspective that the Proposed Budget is self-imposing some of the elements that led the district to resist the Dear Colleague letter in the first place.

Mr. Brown offered the Committee may add stipulations (e.g. further staff reductions) that the Finance Department can address with the Board of Directors and discuss throughout the year. He suggested engaging employee groups sooner.

Mr. Richardson reflected that the district needs follow-through in the context of federal uncertainty. He said it is time to proactively support education and fight back. He cautioned against being too risk adverse when children and families are asking for bravery and courage.

Mr. Hamilton said that at the end of the day the bill is going to be there. He said the question is does the district want to make the sacrifice now or next year?

Ms. Rabasa brought up the impact of reductions, including staff burn out and impacts on morale. She added that there is an expense to hiring new staff.

Following the discussion, Committee members verbalized the proposal or combination of proposals that they are currently most in favor of. Interim Superintendent Gill recorded Committee member feedback as it relates to the proposals.

**MOTION:** Ms. Jonak moved to hold a Budget Committee meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.; and staff will inform employee groups that they may provide budget input to the Committee by 10:00 a.m.; and staff will return with a proposal detailing the cost of Proposals D/F. Ms. Rabasa seconded. **The motion passed unanimously, 14:0:0; Chair Boulette, Vice Chair Richardson, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Stillie, and Ms. Fellows all voting in favor.**

#### **VII. BUDGET AND TAX RATE APPROVAL**

The budget and tax rate approval were postponed until the next meeting.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Boulette adjourned the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**EUGENE SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**Date: May 5, 2025**

The Budget Committee of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a Budget Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. in-person at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street in Eugene, Oregon, via live-stream and broadcast on KRVM. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the media and posted on the 4J website.

**ROLL CALL**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Eric Richardson  
Dakota Boulette  
David Wallace  
Courtney Salic  
Scott Fellman  
Abbie Stillie  
Amy Fellows

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF:**

Colt Gill, Interim Superintendent  
Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff  
Matt Brown, Director of Financial Services  
Bob Blyth, Associate Director of Financial Services  
John Goldberg, Financial Supervisor of Operations and Accounts Payable  
Christine Nesbit, General Counsel  
Larry Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction  
Kat Lange, Executive Director of Youth and Family Support  
Brooke Wagner, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services  
Lisa Fjordbeck, Operations Coordinator for the Superintendent's Office  
Juan Carlos Cuadros, Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging  
Kelly McIver, Communications Director

**EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Sabrina Gordon, Eugene Education Association (EEA)

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Boulette called the Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. He said the names of all members present.

**II. BUDGET COMMITTEE DELIBERATION**

Chair Boulette engaged members in a deliberation concerning the Eugene School District 4J proposed budget.

Interim Superintendent Gill mentioned a document provided to the Committee detailing the latest budget proposals for reference.

Mr. Richardson acknowledged the difficult nature of making budget decisions. He recommended a budget that would recognize the voices and issues raised during public comment.

Ms. Stillie suggested combining Proposals D and F but including a \$2.7 million in reduction to the facilities reserve transfer and adjusting nutrition services programs at two sites. She said she would support Proposal A if it maintained class sizes.

Ms. Fellows said she prefers Proposal A, citing less impact on classroom staffing, Educational Assistants (EAs), and teachers.

Mr. Fellman shared his perspective that while concerns raised in public comment are critically important, the district is looking at a financial reality that is dismal. He cited a state budget made up of 30% federal funds. He voiced support for Proposal D.

Ms. Jonak said she prefers Proposal A along with accounting for declining enrollment, stating that she wants to keep direct services in place.

Mr. Fellman cautioned against a budget that could cause a worse scenario next year. He suggested making moderate impacts this year and the following three years instead of making minimal cuts this year and significant cuts in the following years.

Interim Superintendent Gill encouraged the Committee to engage in the budget process early next year to slowly develop a plan designed to do the least amount of harm possible.

Mr. Di Liberto noted a difference in the school environment from last year following changes made in the district. He said he does not want to lose any momentum and is leaning toward Proposal A.

Ms. Newman raised the topic of spending down reserves and potentially lowering the reserve rate. She cautioned against spending down reserves too abruptly. She would like more clarity around which proposals prioritize critical positions.

At Mr. Fellman's request, Interim Superintendent Gill detailed components of Proposal D plus F.

Ms. Jonak pointed out that other factors, including a potential sale of the Wells Fargo building, could mitigate the impact of current budget decisions.

At Ms. Rabasa's request, Interim Superintendent Gill clarified components of Proposal A.

Ms. Rabasa suggested a slow and steady approach to budget cuts. She is leaning towards Proposal A with the addition of maintaining class sizes.

At Ms. Salic's request, Interim Superintendent Gill provided distinctions between Proposal D plus F and Proposal A.

Regarding Proposal D plus F, Mr. Wallace asked how sustainable the proposed maintenance cuts are.

Mr. Brown responded that the reduction in transfers from the maintenance department is a one-time reduction. He said the impact is that there will be less funds available in the future for capital projects that are outside of the bond – such as boiler, roof, or car replacements.

Ms. Newman asked if funds from a future potential sale of the Wells Fargo building be used for facilities.

Mr. Brown said that when the district previously sold property, the money went into a property sales fund. However, the Wells Fargo building funds could go back into the general fund because that was the fund used to purchase the building.

At Mr. Di Liberto's request, Mr. Brown provided further clarification of Proposal D, specifically regarding maintaining class sizes.

At Ms. Salic's request, Interim Superintendent Gill provided further distinctions between Proposal D and Proposal D plus F.

Ms. Newman asked for clarification about nutrition services proposals, specifically that nutrition programs at Fox Hollow and Family School would prepare food off-site.

Interim Superintendent Gill responded that the sites would have the same meals and still meet the needs of students (concerning allergies, etc.). He explained that the nutrition department may consider preparing meals off site regardless of the Committee's decision, citing low enrollment.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to how much the projected budget estimates might fluctuate.

Interim Superintendent Gill said all the projections are built off a number of assumptions, including approval of the governor's proposed budget. They do not include assumptions such as the special education cap or high cost disability fund bills passing, nor the sale of the Wells Fargo building. He mentioned enrollment projections also having a potential effect. He estimated that the budget estimates could easily fluctuate \$5 million in either direction.

Ms. Munro pointed out that Proposals A, D, and D and F all put back recurring costs and rely on one-time savings, which she said is problematic.

Ms. Newman asked what kind of impact changes to the high cost disability fund might have on the district. She asked if there is an associated dollar amount.

Ms. Lange responded that the district received less funds this school year from the high cost disability fund, even though there were more students. She estimated that the district receives less than \$1 million dollars.

Interim Superintendent Gill added that if the legislature passes the bills, but does not fund the additional dollars, 4J would get a smaller slice of the pie because there are districts with a greater percentage of students with special needs.

Chair Boulette raised the topic of district efforts to increase enrollment.

Ms. Jonak responded that the best way to maintain enrollment is by continuing to provide services and keep students supported. She suggested that if cuts are more extreme than anticipated, it might have the opposite impact. She provided an example of disabled students feeling pushed out.

In closing, the Committee discussed the process for voting on a budget proposal.

### **III. BUDGET TAX RATE APPROVAL**

**MOTION:** Mr. Fellman moved to declare the tax rate and debt service levy for the general fund tax rate 4.7485 per \$1,000 assessed valuation of the district; and for the local option levy tax rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of the district; and for the debt service fund tax levy of \$37,560,172. Seconded by Ms. Munro. **The motion passed unanimously, 14:0:0; Chair Boulette, Vice Chair Richardson, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Salic, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Rabasa, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Munro, Ms. Newman, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Thessen all voting in favor.**

#### IV. BUDGET APPROVAL

Following a short break, Mr. Brown presented Proposal H – representative of Committee discussion – for review.

##### Proposal H

- Proposed budget reductions (Levels 1 through 4)
- Adds back 7.0 Licensed FTE in Elementary Schools
- Adds back 3.0 Licensed FTE in Middle Schools
- Adds back 6.0 Licensed FTE in High Schools
- Adds back 1.0 FTE of Library Services across the district
- Adds back 4.5 Classified FTE across the district
- Adds back 6.3 Classified FTE in High Schools

**MOTION:** Mr. Fellman moved to approve the budget total for all funds, including the general fund total of \$298,389,000 and other funds total of \$262,597,917. Seconded by Ms. Jonak. **The motion passed, 11:3:0; Vice Chair Richardson, Mr. Fellman, Mr. Wallace, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Salic, Ms. Fellows, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Thessen, Mr. Di Liberto, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Rabasa all voting in favor. Chair Boulette, Ms. Newman, and Ms. Munro voting against.**

**MOTION:** Ms. Stillie moved to recommend Proposal H to the Board of Directors and recommend that they use the upcoming year to plan for next year's budget process; continue to focus on those with special needs and positions that stabilize classrooms; apply the Budget Values Framework uniformly across staff including exempts; provide education around what exempt staff do for the district; and consider positions funded outside the general fund, including Family Resource Coordinators, Title programs, elementary Educational Assistants (EAs), high school Student Support Coordinators, Early Literacy and Walk to Read, library staff, MTSS Specialists, and SPED Teacher Mentors. Seconded by Ms. Salic. **The motion passed, 11:3:0; Chair Boulette, Ms. Stillie, Ms. Fellows, Mr. Fellman, Ms. Salic, Ms. Jonak, Ms. Rabasa, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Di Liberto, Ms. Thessen, and Ms. Newman all voting in favor. Vice Chair Richardson, Ms. Munro, and Mr. Wallace voting against.**

#### V. ADJOURN

Chair Boulette adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.