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

February 18, 2009

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 6 p.m. followed by a regular board meeting at 7 p.m. on February 18, 2009, at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on February 13, 2009, and published in The Register-Guard on February 16, 2009.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:
Charles Martinez, Jr., Chair
Yvette Webber-Davis, Vice Chair
Craig Smith
Alicia Hays
Jim Torrey
Eric Forrest
Beth Gerot

STAFF:
Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Laurie Moses, Director of High School Services
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement
Kerri Sage, Language Arts Staff
Arbrella Luvert, Special Assistant to Superintendent
Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management
Chad Williams, Director of Food Service
Tim Carmichael, Athletic Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:
Linda Gai, IHS, All Campuses
Mallory Bray, Churchill High School
Lizzy Monroe, South Eugene High School
Joel Iboa, Sheldon High School
Jennifer Kerfoot, North Eugene High School

MEDIA:
KRVM

OTHERS:
Victor Musial, Oregon School Employees Association
Jill Simmons, President, Eugene Chapter of the Oregon School Employees Association
Merri Steele, Co-President, Eugene Education Association
Paul Duchin, Co-President, Eugene Education Association
WORK SESSION ON THE DISTRICT’S TALENTED AND GIFTED (TAG) PROGRAM

Board Chair Charles Martinez called the work session to order.

Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement, said over the past five years the district’s TAG program had moved from a site-based model to a systemic approach. She said most of the TAG identifications occurred at the elementary level and fewer and fewer students were being identified as teachers’ workloads increased and principals took on that task. She said half of Kerri Sage’s FTE was dedicated to TAG and that had enabled the district to move to a systemic program.

Ms. Sage provided an overview of statutory requirements for TAG and the state’s guidelines. She said the TAG program was required to have written district policies and procedures for identifying and assessing students, parents must be included in the process and students had to be met at their rate and level of learning. She described the three TAG categories:

- Intellectually gifted
- Academically gifted (reading or math)
- Potential to perform

Ms. Sage said blanket testing had been conducted during the past two years using the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) and that had resulted in many more students being identified. She explained the test was considered a screening process and the school team looked at those results and other information related to the student in order to make a TAG determination. She said that younger students were referred to a school psychologist for more in-depth testing before being designated as intellectually gifted. When TAG identification was made, an orange TAG folder was created for that student, parents were notified and informed about the plan for the student and the student was flagged in eSIS for tracking purposes.

In response to a question from Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis, Ms. Sage said the school team consisted of the classroom teacher, TAG coordinator, principal, student achievement coordinator or anyone else who looked at data and knew the student; a team had to have at least three members and composition might vary among schools.

Dr. Martinez asked if the responsibility for identifying TAG students rested primarily on the shoulders of the classroom teacher. Ms. Sage said the onus tended to fall on the classroom teacher, although professional development and district support did help teachers with identifying TAG students and meeting their needs. Ms. Curtis added that it was typical across districts and states that the classroom teacher was the one most responsible for identifying TAG students.

Continuing, Ms. Sage related that the district was required to submit a written TAG plan to the state describing how it would comply with the law. She said some schools, particularly at the middle and high school levels, had a school plan for meeting student needs rather than individual student plans. The state did not require written student plans, but the district was required to document that it had met with parents to discuss how a student’s needs would be met. She said issues surrounding identification of TAG students were the cost of testers and materials, an increasing number of referrals from kindergarten through second grade who required further testing by a school psychologist and under-representation of minorities, economically disadvantaged and ELL students. Ms. Curtis noted that there were not enough school psychologists to handle all the referrals.
Ms. Sage used graphs to illustrate the increase in the number of black and Hispanic students identified as TAG. She said in most buildings the principal was the TAG coordinator and that role was time-consuming and included a significant amount of recordkeeping. Another challenge was meeting the needs of TAG students in the classroom in a way that addressed their assessed level and rate of learning. She said professional development had been used to help teachers and TAG coordinators understand the social, emotional and academic needs of a very diverse population of TAG students.

Ms. Curtis remarked that the district had done a good job of refining the identification process, but assuring deep and rich instruction for all TAG students was still a complex challenge, especially given the minimal budget for the TAG program.

Dr. Martinez asked about the impact of the blanket screening process on identification of TAG students of color at an early stage. Ms. Curtis replied that five years ago there were few students of color identified in any of the TAG categories. The district had identified that as a problem and had begun to pilot blanket screening; now that blanket screening had been implemented, more students of color were being identified. Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, said that the actual numbers were more indicative of progress than just the percentages.

Dr. Martinez asked what level of constancy existed in terms of carrying forward a student’s TAG plan when it had been developed informally by a teacher in conversation with parents, but was not tracked as an individual plan. Ms. Curtis said establishing a TAG folder with documentation on the student was a start, but there was no formal process for moving a plan forward from grade to grade. She said it worked best in a building with a TAG coordinator, but there was a gap when students moved from elementary to middle school level.

Board Member Eric Forrest expressed regret that the district lacked the resources to meet students’ needs. He related his personal experiences in an enriched academic program. He said it was especially a concern with students’ whose home environment might not be able to provide other enrichment.

Dr. Martinez agreed that families without the resources to provide an enriched environment were at a disadvantage and that created a disparity between them and families that were better able to meet their children’s intellectual and academic needs.

Board Member Jim Torrey asked if the district had the same legal responsibility to provide services to TAG students as it did to students with disabilities. Ms. Curtis said there was a responsibility to meet TAG students’ rate and level needs, but it was difficult to determine how that was being done because there were no specific requirements like having to write an IEP and provide progress reports. She said there were higher level courses at middle and high schools; the greatest challenges and concerns were at the elementary level.

Mr. Torrey asked if TAG students were accelerated to the next grade. Ms. Sage said the district’s policy for accelerating students included an assessment tool, the Iowa Acceleration Scale. She said the tool assessed the student academically, physically, socially and psychologically and research indicated that TAG students were typically very successful when accelerated to the next grade. She said teachers were aware of any elements that a student might have missed by skipping a grade and made sure those were addressed. Ms. Curtis added that accelerating a student was not just a parental decision; it was a collaborative
process with the principal, who ultimately made the decision. Acceleration would never occur over a parent’s objection.

Ms. Sage said that acceleration by subject area, rather than a full grade, was more common.

Dr. Webber-Davis asked how a student’s needs would be addressed when he or she was gifted in a particular discipline, such as math, and ready for instruction at a much higher level. Ms. Sage said it varied by school and was a site-based decision. She said other factors were scheduling and the classroom teacher’s ability to provide that instruction; there was no one model used across the district.

Mr. Forrest felt that providing an opportunity for TAG students to work together with a teacher who could expose them to new ideas and directions was a valuable experience that was missing. Ms. Curtis agreed that clustering students was a best practice model and research demonstrated that if TAG students could be brought together for 20 percent of their instructional time they tended to excel. She said developing that type of instructional model was particularly challenging at very small schools.

Dr. Webber-Davis remarked that high school students had advanced placement and international baccalaureate opportunities and many students excelled in those programs. She asked how the district, given its fiscal situation and limited resources, could provide additional opportunities such as independent studies or other proficiency-based experiences that might provide students with the type of experiences spoken to by Mr. Forrest. Ms. Curtis said there were opportunities for students to take college level courses, but again that varied by building and region. She said staff was beginning to explore online options for TAG students.

Dr. Martinez adjourned the work session at 6:55 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Dr. Martinez called the regular meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order at 7 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, said that Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, would provide a legislative report and Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer, would provide an update on the budget situation.

Ms. Bellamy said members of the legislative delegation had been urged by staff and board members to tap the Education Stability Fund (ESF) to help balance this year’s budget. She said a revenue forecast on March 6 would provide more information about the financial situation next year, but the legislature’s focus at this point was on balancing the current year’s budget. She said the House appeared to be more supportive of tapping the ESF than the Senate and districts had been warned that the March financial forecast was not likely to be improved and could be worse.
Board Member Craig Smith concurred with Ms. Bellamy’s remarks. He was particularly struck by a comment from Senator Floyd Prozanski about the possibility of closing schools early as a result of budget deficits. His sense was that there were few options remaining for this year and a shortfall of between $2 and $3 billion was predicted for the next biennium.

Board Member Alicia Hays said board members and staff had done their best to promote the use of the ESF, but it seemed that some legislators believed that there were large contingency or reserve funds in some districts and were reluctant to tap the fund until those reserves were spent. She was thankful that the district had been conservative in its budgeting and did have some reserves to mitigate the impact of state funding reductions.

Dr. Martinez underscored that the uncertainty could leave the district with no other option than to close schools early and it was important to be clear with the community about the impact on students of losing school days.

Board Member Beth Gerot reported that Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) officers met with legislative leadership. She said the state was looking at a potential decline of three percent in the consumer price index by September, which would result in deflation. It was likely that the May forecast would be lower, but that information would not be available until tax data was tabulated. She said the need to use the ESF as a tool to enable districts to get through this year and plan for the next biennium was discussed.

Ms. Bellamy said the federal economic stimulus package had some education stability funds for states, but she did not know the precise number. She said states had some discretion about when to use those funds over the next three years. She referred to a news release from co-chairs of the Ways and Means Committee that indicated while the federal stimulus dollars would be used to help schools this year, tapping the ESF was not recommended.

Ms. Fahey said there was more clarification about the current revenue picture and the next biennium with respect to the stimulus package. She estimated the district would receive $2.7 million in the next biennium for title funding and $4 million for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding; the requirements and stipulations attached to those funds were not yet known. She said the Ways and Means Committee co-chairs’ proposal for the current biennium did tap state stabilization funds in the stimulus package and it appeared based on the proposed reductions the district could be facing another $3 to $5 million revenue reduction this year, in addition to the $2.1 million reduction in the November forecast.

Ms. Bellamy referred to a news release from Republican leaders that reflected an ongoing belief that there were reserves in districts that were expected to be used, despite the fact that most districts had drawn down their reserves in order to make the initial budget cuts.

Mr. Smith pointed out that the governor would make automatic five percent reductions across the board if the legislature failed to act to balance the budget.

**COMMENTS BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

International High School representative Linda Gai described the IHS application process and said that applications were due on March 20; informational meetings were being held across the district. She said submissions for the IHS film festival were due on April 3. The IHS literary magazine, *Swan Song*, recently received the highest ranking from the National Council of English Teachers.
Sheldon High School representative Joel Iboa reported results for girls and boys teams. He said that Mr. Irish was raising funds for the Children’s Miracle Network and invited support from the board and community.

North Eugene High School representative Jennifer Kerfoot said that junior and senior Latino students were participating in a Lane Community College scholarship information program. At least 10 students and families from North would be participating. She said North Eugene night school classes were now underway and it was an excellent opportunity for 11th and 12th grade students to participate in credit recovery without having to travel across town. She said a new 9th grade math and English credit recovery class had also been created for freshman students during the day. She distributed brochures about the Small School Preview Night.

Churchill High School representative Mallory Bray said that Mr. Lancer candidates had been selected and the first fundraiser was occurring at Track Town Pizza. She said the musical, Once Upon A Mattress, was opening in a week.

South Eugene High School representative Lizzy Monroe reported on the Valentine’s Day dance and said there was a Mr. Axeman versus Mr. Irish basketball game set for February 19.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Judy Volta, mayor of Coburg, thanked the board and staff, especially Tom Henry, for working with the city to keep Coburg Elementary School open. She said Coburg was a unique community and an anomaly in the district. She hoped it would continue to be seen as a positive exception. She invited everyone to attend Coburg’s heritage celebration on February 20.

Ann Mortenson spoke to the importance of promoting a balance between academic and physical activities. She recognized the impact of physical education on the physical, mental and social well-being of students, but felt that having physical education in school, followed by after school sports activities, lead to a young adult that was fatigued. She requested the board’s consideration of reinstating the policy of allowing students to receive credit for after school sports activities, whether sponsored by the district or another entity. She understood there was concern about which activities would qualify for credit and recommended looking at agencies that were licensed and accredited with policies regarding attendance and sportsmanlike conduct. She said based on her personal experience, there were many children involved in after school sports and urged the board to think about creating more balance in a young person’s day.

COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Jill Simmons and Victor Musial, Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), addressed the board on the subject of contracting out services as a follow-up to the OSEA white paper on the subject distributed at a previous meeting.

Mr. Musial described his background relevant to the issue of contracting. He said in 2003 there was an alarming trend with the loss of approximately 500 OSEA members to privatization in transportation, food and custodial services. He said a study by the University of Oregon Labor Education Research Center was commissioned and resulted in an all costs report, a copy of
which had been provided to the board. He said OSEA had embarked on a campaign to educate all stakeholders about the threats and pitfalls of contracting out.

Mr. Musial defined privatization as outsourcing public services to private, generally for-profit contractors. He said this was typically done because of perceived cost savings, but those savings were only short-term. He said contractors’ profits were realized by paying employees lower wages and providing reduced benefits or none at all; the effect of that was felt throughout the community. Most large contractors doing business in the United States were privately held and limited liability corporations with little accountability. He reviewed a list of major contractors and their annual profits. He said between 35 and 40 percent of each dollar a district spent for contracted services went to profit; many companies were headquartered in other countries and those profits left the community, the state and the country. He stated that OSEA was willing to work with districts on creative solutions that would avoid the dangers of privatization.

Merri Steele and Paul Duchin, Co-Presidents of Eugene Education Association (EEA), indicated that EEA was well aware of the district’s budget problems and would speak to that issue at the March 2 Budget Committee meeting. They read a proclamation honoring the 105th birthday of Dr. Seuss on March 2, recognizing the Reading Across America initiative and emphasizing the importance of reading and adult involvement in the education of students. They administered an oath to read daily to all those present.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Receive an Update Regarding an Intergovernmental Agreement with Coburg**

Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer, reported on the development of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the City of Coburg. He said a tentative agreement on the amount Coburg could contribute to help offset the cost of operating the Coburg Elementary School had been arrived at; however, given the budget exigencies facing both the district and the city, it would be prudent to wait until next month to finalize the IGA if the board agreed. He said both parties to the agreement would have a better idea of their financial situations at that time.

**Receive an Update on Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) League Proposals**

Laurie Moses, Director of High School Services, stated that the OSAA Classification and Districting Committee had determined that the classification alignment proposed in November 2008 was unsatisfactory and was proposing three other classification alignments. She said written testimony was being accepted and public testimony would be taken at the committee’s February 23 meeting. She referred to a January 16, 2009, memorandum from Mike Wallmark and Peter Weber of OSAA describing the three proposals:

- **#2 – A Six-Classification Alignment** with adjusted cut-off points from those currently in place, and a revision of a number of specific school placements. If accepted there would be one more team in the Southwest Conference, which would mean somewhat more travel for South Eugene and Sheldon high schools.

- **#4 – A Five-Classification Alignment** that included elements of several five-classification approaches reviewed by the committee. 4J schools would be impacted by lowering the cut-off point for the highest classification to 1,350. South Eugene and Sheldon high
schools would be placed in the 5A Southwest Conference with a travel distance of five hours round trip. Churchill and North Eugene high schools would be in the 4A Midwestern League. Sheldon and South Eugene would continue to play half of their games in southern Oregon; Churchill and North Eugene would be playing games in Bend, Coos Bay and Sweet Home.

#3 – A Six-Classification Hybrid Alignment which included four “hybrid” leagues that contained schools from multiple classifications. The hybrid leagues are regional leagues specifically created in an attempt to reduce travel for the schools in those regions. There would be a blended league in the Eugene/Springfield area that would allow schools to play their games locally across classifications and split off for state competition. Travel during the regular season would be dramatically reduced and gate receipts would be higher if local schools played each other.

Ms. Moses expected that proposal #4 would be strongly opposed by many schools because of the travel involved. She said the hybrid proposal would have a minimal effect on instructional time and parents would have better opportunities to see their students play; the four Eugene athletic directors preferred the hybrid proposal, as did the principals. She said the hybrid option was offered by the committee in response to widespread concern across the state about increased travel.

Dr. Martinez asked about sentiment around the state regarding the proposals. Ms. Moses replied it sounded as though the five-classification alignment was not as popular and while the six-classification alignment was of interest to many districts, if those that preferred it knew they could remain in that classification while allowing the hybrid proposal to go forward for districts most impacted they would likely not object.

Mr. Torrey asked if schools like La Pine could block the proposal. Tim Carmichael, Athletic Director, expected that schools would make their concerns known at the first meeting on the new proposals. He thought it was possible that La Pine would support the hybrid approach.

Mr. Forrest asked if it had been determined how schools would qualify for the state play-offs in some sports. Mr. Carmichael said athletic directors had met several times to discuss that issue and he described several scenarios for playing varsity football games, which had different competitive and equity issues to be considered. He said the details were still being worked out.

Dr. Martinez determined that board members strongly supported the hybrid proposal as being very responsive to concerns that had been raised and approved a letter from the board chair to OSAA conveying that support.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING

Approve Superintendent’s Recommendations Regarding the Middle School Alternative School Review

Mr. Hermanns stated that the superintendent concurred with the school review team’s conclusions and recommended:
1. da Vinci continue the merger process with Kelly Middle School, and the Family School middle school program continue its proposed K-8 integration with the elementary Family School program;
2. No change in status for the three middle school language immersion alternative programs; and
3. Program modifications for the Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion middle school program, to take place over the next two years, that will result in increased engagement of its students over the entire course of their middle school years and the reintroduction of a curriculum subject area into its program.

**MOTION:** Mr. Forrest, seconded by Ms. Gerot, moved to approve the school review team’s three recommendations.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

**CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION**

**Approve Expenditures for June, July, August, September, October, November, and December 2008 and January, 2009**

A summary of the district’s expenditures for June 2008, totaling $43,364,469.63; July 2008, totaling $5,862,640.36; August 2008, totaling $15,706,764.68; September 2008, totaling $17,004,102.73; October 2008, totaling $20,520,852.21; November 2008, totaling $19,390,933.70; December 2008, totaling $17,274,960.98; and January 2009, totaling $25,193,748.82 were included in the board packet.

The superintendent recommended approval of the June, July, August, September, October, November and December 2008 and January 2009 expenditures.

**Approve Grant Application: Beyond the Asphalt Outdoor School #2**

Staff from Kelly Middle School submitted a grant application to the National Education Association (NEA) for $5,000. This grant application was an additional source of funding for Kelly Middle School’s “Beyond the Asphalt” outdoor experience program. The program will provide opportunities for students to increase their understanding of the relevance of environmental science and technology, helping them to make connections to the natural world. All activities will take place at the McKenzie River Conference Center for three days of intense learning and fun along the banks of the McKenzie River in the Willamette National Forest. The experience will offer students, many of whom rarely explore beyond the asphalt parking lot in their urban environment, an opportunity to participate in GPS navigation in a natural setting, study ecosystems, learn survival skills and identify and appreciate plants and wildlife.

The superintendent recommended approval of the grant application. A copy of the grant description form was included in the board packet.

**Approve Board Minutes for November 19, 2008, and December 3, 2008, Regular Board Meetings**

The superintendent recommended approval of the minutes from the November 19, 2008 and December 3, 2008 regular board meetings. Copies of the minutes were included in the board packet.
Approve Personnel Items

The superintendent recommended approval of the personnel items included in the board packet. These cover employment, resignations, and other routine personnel matters.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey, seconded by Ms. Hays, moved to approve the consent items.
VOTE: The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Torrey expressed appreciation for the presentations by OSEA and EEA and looked forward to EEA’s recommendations to the Budget Committee.

Ms. Hays expressed her appreciation for the legislative meetings in Salem.

Mr. Forrest commented that the private sector was facing the same types of financial problems as the district. He said the private sector often sought efficiencies through shared services, mergers and acquisitions. He hoped that school districts in the area would begin to discuss new ways of doing business, working together and sharing benefits and successes.

Mr. Henry said some discussions were already underway and he would provide that information to the board.

Dr. Martinez reminded the board to be sensitive to the impacts on students, families and schools as it discussed the district’s financial issues and economic uncertainties.

Mr. Torrey reported that he had recently participated in the Lane Education Service District’s program for students applying for jobs and was amazed at the number of students who said they needed a part-time job to help their families.

ADJOURN

Dr. Martinez adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

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George Russell     Charles Martinez, Jr.
District Clerk      Board Chair
(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)

Attachments to Official Minutes:
1. District/EEA Proclamation Promoting Reading by Endorsing the NEA’s Read Across America Program
2. OSAA Update on the Proceedings of the Classification and Districting Committee
3. Summary of Expenditures from June 2008 through January 2009
4. Grant Application Form: Beyond the Asphalt Outdoor School #2
5. Personnel Action Items