

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

August 5, 2009

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held an executive session at 6:30 p.m. followed by a regular board meeting on July 1, 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 July 30, 2009, and published in the *Register-Guard* on August 3, 2009.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

Craig Smith, Chair
Beth Gerot, Vice Chair
Jennifer Geller
Alicia Hays
Anne Marie Levis
Jim Torrey

STAFF:

George Russell, Superintendent of Schools and District Clerk
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
Kay Mehas, Director of Elementary Services
Laurie Moses, Director of Secondary Services
Christine Nesbit, Associate Director of Human Resources

MEDIA:

Anne Williams, *Register-Guard*

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Under provisions of ORS 192.610 – 192.690, Open Meeting Laws, the Board of Directors conducted an Executive Session for the following purpose: To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (d).

REGULAR BOARD MEETING: The Executive Session recessed and the regular meeting convened with the above board members and staff present along with the following:

STAFF:

Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer
Celia Feres-Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management
Sara Cramer, Director of Elementary Services
Brad New, Secondary Services Administrator

MEDIA:

KRVM

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

Board Chair Craig Smith called the meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order at 7:10 p.m. Mr. Smith apologized for the late start to the meeting due to the executive session running longer than had been expected.

AGENDA REVIEW

Superintendent George Russell noted no changes to the board meeting agenda, but confirmed that the board members had received copies of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between School District 4J and the Eugene Education Association (EEA) regarding the Arts and Technology Academy (ATA).

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Russell introduced Sara Cramer and noted that she had recently been selected as the Director of Elementary Services to succeed Kay Mehas in that position.

Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer, reported that the district's preliminary report regarding the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards had yielded no significant surprises. He noted that all of the district elementary schools had satisfied the standards and that five of the district's middle schools had satisfied the standards, with eight middle schools also satisfying the AYP benchmarks for English/Language Arts.

Mr. Hermanns further reported that the three middle schools that had not fully satisfied the AYP guidelines were deficient primarily with respect to math for students with disabilities. He explained that this was due to the district's initiative to provide special education students the opportunity to participate in general education testing as part of its access to general education policies. Mr. Hermanns noted that similar discrepancies were present in the AYP results for district high schools.

Mr. Hermanns noted that South Eugene High School had satisfied the AYP standards while the remaining three high schools had not. He further explained that those schools had shown below satisfactory ratings with respect to both math and English/Language Arts for students with special needs.

Mr. Hermanns noted that the AYP scores for minority and lower-income students at the three under-performing high schools, while not significant on their own, could when aggregated, negatively affect the AYP performance of all four district high schools.

Mr. Hermanns commented that the board goals which had been developed by the district to address several of the AYP requirements had resulted in a number of instructional intervention practices and initiatives that had made a positive, concerted effort towards improving the overall district AYP performance.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Board Member Alicia Hays, noted that South Eugene's higher AYP scores were the result of that school's smaller student population.

Mr. Hermanns, responding to a question from Mr. Smith regarding AYP cut scores, noted that many of the AYP requirement numbers had been increasing in recent years.

Superintendent Russell reported he had participated in a teleconference with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and further noted that Secretary Duncan would be holding monthly teleconferences with various educators from around the country to discuss key educational issues related to the use of American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding.

Superintendent Russell reported from his teleconference with Secretary Duncan that ODE was currently planning to submit applications for federal Race to the Top funding, noting that the grant application process was considered to be highly competitive. Superintendent Russell proceeded to briefly outline the Race to the Top application criteria for the benefit of the board and further noted that he would distribute copies of those criteria for any board members or staff who requested them.

Superintendent Russell reported that Secretary Duncan had also briefly discussed the U.S. Department of Education's concern regarding possible outbreaks of the H1N1 or swine flu virus in the fall. He noted that Secretary Duncan had urged local school districts to ensure that they were adequately prepared for such occurrences.

Superintendent Russell, responding to a question from Ms. Hays, noted that the district would be sending several representatives to Governor Kulongoski's upcoming H1N1 influenza summit.

Superintendent Russell noted that the Superintendents of Public Instruction Summer Institute conference was currently underway at the Eugene Hilton for teachers, administrators and school district board members to discuss recent revisions to Oregon state high school graduation requirements.

Superintendent Russell reported that the recent revisions to the Oregon state high school graduation requirements had been summarized as part of ODE's "The Oregon Diploma: Moving Education Forward" public awareness campaign.

The board members proceeded to view a DVD presentation titled, "The Oregon Diploma: Moving Education Forward" which described in greater detail how the recent revisions to high school graduation requirements would be addressed:

- Increased Credit Requirements
- Essential Skills
- Personalized Learning
- Credits for Proficiency
- Modified Diplomas

Superintendent Russell congratulated new board members Anne Marie Levis and Jennifer Geller and further congratulated Craig Smith and Beth Gerot on their elections as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

No members of the public were present to offer comments.

COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

No representatives from any employee groups were present to offer comments.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Report on New Graduation Rate Formula

Director of Secondary Services Laurie Moses and Secondary Services Administrator Brad New offered a report on the new Cohort Graduation Rate (CGR) formula as detailed in Oregon State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo's "Superintendent's Update #306" document.

Ms. Moses described how the CGR would essentially look at the number of students who entered the ninth grade in a given year against how many of those students would graduate from high school with a regular diploma in four years.

Ms. Moses noted that while the CGR would help track the progress of district students much more carefully than in the past, the new rate would significantly change the district's graduation figures. She reported that, using the most recent available data, the CGR had changed the district overall graduation rate from 91% down to 76% while the state's overall graduation rate had gone from 84% to 68%.

Ms. Moses commented that under the CGR, the district would no longer be able to factor in students receiving modified diplomas or equivalents such as GED's or alternative certificates. She further reported that students taking more than four years to graduate were also not counted under the CGR.

Ms. Moses, responding to a question from Mr. Smith regarding the effect of the CGR on AYP performance figures, noted that the graduation statistics determined by the CGR were not yet applied to any determinations of AYP compliance.

Ms. Moses, responding to a request for clarification from Board Member Jennifer Geller, noted that any summer classes or similar extra credit opportunities utilized by students would be considered to be included in the standard four year timeline of the CGR.

Board Member Jim Torrey felt the CGR represented a good opportunity to better reflect the district's overall performance to the community. He hoped that the City of Eugene and the district might eventually be used by the University of Oregon or another agency as a test market case study to determine how the CGR might encourage a variety of new educational initiatives to help under-performing students.

Ms. Moses responded to Mr. Torrey's suggestion by stating that district staff had reviewed the results of such test-market studies from other communities and had already applied some of their findings to district policies.

Superintendent Russell commented that it was often difficult to survey drop-out or similar non-completing students from the district in order to determine the best manner in which to help those individuals.

Mr. New noted that exit surveys completed by district graduates as well as other "early-leaver" reports in recent years had helped influence many of the revised graduation practices incorporated into ODE's CGR formula.

Mr. New, responding to a request for clarification from Mr. Smith regarding "early-leaver" reports, noted that those reports were required by ODE and helped to accurately determine drop-out student statistics throughout the state. Mr. Smith added that an examination of those reports might provide significant information on how and why some students could not complete their high school education.

Mr. Torrey noted that while the University of Oregon and other agencies would not conduct drop-out studies related to the district for free they could develop certain analytical tools to help reveal why certain students might drop out. He felt that investigating the matter further might help the district as well as the State of Oregon at least get an idea of where the gaps are that we might have the ability to fill.

Mr. Torrey hoped that implementation of the CGR formula and other practices such as the reviews of the district AYP results would provide information on any under-performing students who were at risk of not completing their educations.

Mr. New responded to Mr. Torrey's concern and commented he had been working with district staff to learn from individual students why they might be at risk for dropping out, but that it was often the case that individual students could not fully articulate why they were at risk.

Mr. New stated that the Oregon Diploma program and the CGR formula allowed the district and its educators to significantly enhance their abilities to serve individual student's needs.

Superintendent Russell expressed concern that the district might not be sending positive enough messages to students who "marched to the beat of a different drummer" whose personalities and academic temperament might not be best utilized by existing district programs and curriculums. He wanted to ensure that each district student felt that their work and their input was academically and socially valuable.

Ms. Gerot commented that she had recently spoken with a friend who complimented the district on its support of her daughter who had dropped out of school for a period of time, but with the help of the district, eventually she managed to come back and earn her diploma.

CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Memorandum of Agreement with the Eugene Education Association Addressing How Contract Provisions Apply to the Arts and Technology Academy

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is between the district and the Eugene Education Association (EEA) and extends a prior agreement through the 2009-10 school year. The purpose of the MOA is to clarify how several provisions of the contract which describe leadership stipends and other terms of employment at elementary and middle schools apply to unit members assigned to work at Arts and Technology Academy, a K through 8 school. A copy of the MOA was included in the board packet.

The superintendent recommended approval of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Approve Memorandum of Agreement with the Eugene Education Association Addressing Method of Payment of Final Paychecks

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), a copy of which was included in the board packet, is between the district and the Eugene Education Association and concerns the method of payment of final paychecks. The MOA provides needed clarification about when a unit member who separates from employment will receive their final paycheck.

The superintendent recommended approval of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Approve Grant Application: 4J Technology-Rich Classrooms

Staff from the Instruction Department submitted a grant application to the Oregon Department of Education for \$245,040 over a two year period. The district and its partners at the University of Oregon seek to create four model Technology-Rich Classrooms (TRC) at Chavez Elementary, a school that has high needs related to low achievement and high poverty. Focusing on the English Language Arts content area, the TRC Project will impact reading and writing across the curriculum by integrating access to 21st century technology learning tools.

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

Approve Board Meeting Minutes

The superintendent recommended approval of the minutes from the June 3, June 17, and July 1, 2009 regular board meetings. Copies of the minutes were included in the board packet.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey, seconded by Ms. Levis, moved to approve the consent items.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously; 6:0.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

Approve Revised Recommendation Regarding Willard Building

Superintendent Russell reminded the board of their March 19, 2008 approval of a recommendation regarding the Willard building which specified that the building would no longer be leased to charter schools after June 2010 and also called for the eventual demolition of the building.

Superintendent Russell reported that representatives of the Village School currently utilizing the Willard building had requested an extension of their lease so that they might have additional time to seek out alternative facilities.

Superintendent Russell stated that he supported a one year extension of the current timeline to June 30, 2011 with the caveat that any systems failures costing more than \$5,000 during that extension period would be the sole responsibility of the Willard building tenants. He further noted that the recent fire at the building, coupled with recent deferrals of preventative maintenance and capital system upgrades, made the potential for such systems failures much more likely.

Superintendent Russell briefly discussed the history and various circumstances surrounding the tenancy of charter schools at the Willard building.

Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management, responding to a question from Ms. Hays regarding the current state of the Willard building, noted that while there were some structural modifications and electrical repairs to be made to the building, the burned out area was a relatively isolated structure that could be demolished without significantly affecting other areas of the property.

Approve Revisions to Board Policy JB - Intimidation, Bullying, Harrassment, Discrimination, Hazing & Retaliation and to Board Policy JFCFA/GBNAA – Cyberbullying

Barb Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, provided a brief overview of the proposed changes to district Board Policies JB and JFCFA/GBNAA necessitated by the recent approval of House Bill 2599 by the Oregon State Legislature.

Ms. Bellamy commented that district legal counsel Joe Richards believed that the revisions were required in order to comply with the language and intent of HB 2599, as well as to strengthen and better define the district's legal position with respect to instances of both intimidation/bullying and cyberbullying.

Ms. Bellamy noted those requirements of HB 2599 that affected the two board policies and which were listed in the materials distributed to the board members and staff.

Ms. Hays pointed out that statements had been made at a recent 4J Equity Committee meeting reflecting the state's admiration and support of Board Policies JB and JFCFA/GBNAA.

Ms. Bellamy noted that Parent/Community Diversity Coordinator Carmen Urbina would be working with the 4J Equity Committee and staff to closely review the district's various bullying and harassment policies to see if any further improvements or revisions might be made.

Ms. Bellamy, responding to a request for clarification from Ms. Geller regarding the definition of "protected class" as it applied to HB 2599, noted that she would consult with Mr. Richards and return to the board with further information.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Gerot indicated that she had recently spoken with Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis during her convalescence and that Dr. Webber-Davis' health appeared to be improving. Ms. Gerot further noted that Dr. Webber-Davis had informed her that she might be attending some portion of the upcoming board retreat.

Ms. Gerot reported that a former student representative to the board, Brett Close, had recently been married.

Ms. Gerot reported that the August issue of the *American School Board Journal* contained a particularly good article regarding the Lighthouse Project and the characteristics of an effective school board. She encouraged the other board members to read the article before their upcoming retreat.

Mr. Torrey noted that he had not received copies of the recent board leadership minutes and asked that staff provide additional copies to board members before their upcoming retreat.

Ms. Levis commented that she had greatly enjoyed her first month as a board member and had spoken to several community members regarding their concerns about the district. She hoped that the board and staff would continue to investigate new and effective ways to reach out to the community.

Mr. Smith noted that he, Ms. Gerot, and Superintendent Russell had met with Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, City Manager Jon Ruiz and Assistant City Manager Sarah Medary on August 4 to discuss a variety of topics including the H1N1 virus, Civic Stadium, the district's recent sale of its Santa Clara property, and consolidation of services between the two agencies.

Ms. Hays requested that a comprehensive update on the district's preparedness regarding possible H1N1 outbreaks be provided at the next board meeting.

ADJOURN

Mr. Smith adjourned the regular meeting at 8:24 p.m.

George Russell
Superintendent

Craig Smith
Board Chair

(Recorded by Wade Hicks)

Following the adjournment of the regular board meeting, the board reconvened in executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Under provisions of ORS 192.610 – 192.690, Open Meeting Laws, the Board of Directors conducted an Executive Session for the following purpose: To consider complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (b).

Attachments to Official Minutes:

1. Memorandum of Agreement with EEA Addressing How Contract Provisions Apply to the Arts and Technology Academy
2. Memorandum of Agreement with EEA Addressing Method of Payment of Final Paychecks
3. Grant Application Form: 4J Technology-Rich Classrooms
4. Draft Board Policy JB – Intimidation, Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Hazing and Retaliation
5. Draft Board Policy JFCFA/GBNAA – Cyberbullying