

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

August 19, 2009

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular board meeting at 7 p.m. on August 19, 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 August 14, 2009, and published in the *Register-Guard* on August 17, 2009.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Beth Gerot, Vice Chair
Yvette Webber-Davis

STAFF:

George Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Celia Feres-Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management
Kay Mehas, Director of Elementary Services
Les Moore, Director of Computing and Information Services
Larry Sullivan, Director of Education Support Services
Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analysis Manager

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

None

MEDIA:

KRVM

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Board Chair Craig Smith called the regular meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

Superintendent George Russell asked to add an item to Items for Action - acceptance of the resignation of board member Yvette Webber-Davis and direction to staff to initiate the application process for a replacement board member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Russell recognized retiring staff member Kay Mehas, Director of Elementary Services, and thanked her for her service to the district and its students and her support for education. He announced there would be a back-to-school event on September 3 and drew the board's attention to materials related to a recent superintendent's meeting that were included in the board packet. He noted there were a number of new superintendents in Lane County and almost half of all the superintendents were women, reflecting the changes in educational leadership that had occurred in the county over the last 15 years. Also included in the board packet was information about appointments to the Online Learning Task Force established by Senate Bill 767.

Continuing, Superintendent Russell stated that the superintendents had sent a letter expressing concerns about the new federal race and ethnicity reporting requirements being implemented for the 2010-11 school year, however, their suggestions were not accepted. Superintendent Russell was particularly concerned about the requirement that school staff make a determination, based on observation, about race and ethnicity for a student who did not provide that information. He commended former board chair Dr. Charles Martinez for his keynote speech at a recent administrator's academy.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Ethen Perkins, Adams Elementary School parent and site council member, stated his concern that the superintendent's recommendation to extend leases at the Willard site would negatively affect Adams' enrollments, which had been a problem for some time. He said Adams was energized when it appeared there would not be so much competition for elementary students in the immediate neighborhood, but now the Family School was moving into the neighborhood and drawing students away. He urged the board to carefully consider the impact of approving the superintendent's recommendation on the neighborhood elementary school.

Nancy Willard stated she was on the Adams Elementary School site council when the decision was made to site the charter schools. She had strongly objected based on transfer patterns that indicated there would be direct damage to Adams and the following year, Adams lost 30 students and a new teacher, programs were cut and the school had to raise money to support its library. She said there were four competing schools in the Adams region and she did not see how the district expected Adams to continue to be a high quality school. She said there was a fiduciary duty to students in public schools and the charter schools were private schools that used public funds and damaged neighborhood schools. She said the only reason for extending the lease was because the schools had been unable to find a building in the south region and hoped that a neighborhood school would be closed. She had been told there were problems with the electrical system in the building that had not been disclosed and that presented both safety and liability concerns. She urged the board to appropriately support neighborhood schools. She announced that she was releasing internet safety professional development materials and would provide them to the district at no cost.

COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were no comments.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Debrief August 7, 2009, Board Retreat

Mr. Smith asked board members to share their thoughts about the recent board retreat.

Board Member Jim Torrey commended the retreat process, appreciating the focus on a sustainable budgeting process and agreement that the Budget Committee should be brought into the process at an earlier point. He said accountability for student success would become the screen for future decisions and the strategic allocation of resources.

Board Member Jennifer Geller agreed that the discussion of budget concerns was valuable. She appreciated the board's desire to acknowledge those concerns while continuing to move forward to provide the education students deserved.

Board Member Alicia Hays agreed with Mr. Torrey and Ms. Geller's remarks and liked the review of guiding beliefs and values and the board's goals as the new school year and budget cycle began. She thanked staff for their work.

Board Member Anne Marie Levis thanked the board and staff for their welcome to new members. She felt the board had made a good start at forging strong bonds and a common understanding of the challenges ahead. She was pleased that core values and what was best for students would guide decisions.

Mr. Smith thanked all who participated in the retreat.

Receive an Update on the Wallace Grant and Oregon Leadership Network

Superintendent Russell thanked Kay Mehas for her role in the Wallace Grant over the past seven years and her leadership, which had resulted in significant funding from the Wallace Foundation. The district received funding from the Wallace Foundation for leadership beginning in 2002. The 2009-10 school year was projected to be the final year for Wallace leadership funds. During the first five years, Wallace LEAD grants of \$1 million per year were received and over the past three years, funding from the State Wallace Funded grant supported the Oregon Leadership Network (OLN) and thirteen districts around the state.

Work centered on improving leadership with an emphasis on cultural competence and assessing leadership. The district, working closely with the University of Oregon, developed a tool for assessing leadership, the Educational Leadership Improvement Tool (ELIT). The focus of the funds for the district this year will be supporting the K-12 learning communities in the area of cultural competence, providing a mentoring program for new principals and supporting professional development for administrators.

Ms. Mehas distributed and reviewed a handout detailing the history of Wallace LEAD Grant funding since 2002 and the programs that were supported by those grants. She said the greatest impact on the system was enhanced communications among K-12 learning communities. Ms. Mehas distributed the ELIT manual and said the ELIT instrument included performance measures aligned with state standards for principals and was unique in that it addressed cultural competence.

Ms. Mehas distributed an excerpt from the draft of a study done by the University of Washington that discussed the district's efforts with respect to equity. She said the plan of work for the current Wallace grant was to continue with the mentoring and Coaching for Educational Equity programs and pursuing work with the K-12 learning communities. She expressed her appreciation for working with the district and the Wallace Grant program.

Receive an Update on the District's Technology Related Consortium Efforts

Les Moore, Director of Computing and Information Services, used a slide presentation to provide an update to the board and illustrate the location of members of the consortium. The district worked in collaboration with other Oregon districts and Education Service Districts (ESD) for several years to standardize student information systems, allowing for shared resources and expenses. The efforts began in 1997-98 with Beaverton, Springfield and Multnomah ESD. The local consortium was formed in 2003-04 to serve three districts and has now expanded to include six districts: Bend/La Pine, Coos Bay, Eagle Point, Springfield, Three Rivers and 4J. This was the seventh full year of using the Student Information System (eSIS). The district added a data warehouse to its consortium efforts during 2004-05 and all of its eSIS partner districts participate in the effort. During 2006-07, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) joined the data warehouse efforts with the KIDS project (Pre-K through Grade 16 Integrated Data System) in which all districts in the state were becoming associated with a regional data warehouse and, in turn, the ODE data warehouse.

Mr. Moore said the initiative was authorized by the board with an investment of \$1 million and no additional funding had been required. He said the first year's cost averaged \$22 per student. He noted that 4J was the only district that hosted other school districts among the consortia in the state and currently managed 18 separate databases. The system's annual cost to the consortium, excluding staff, was \$500,000 and the district received sufficient income to pay all of its expenses except staff, which was why no funding beyond the initial investment had been requested. He said eSIS was designed as a transactional system and the data warehouses accommodated data analysis of student achievement. He noted that ODE was pushing districts throughout the state to become associated with data warehouses.

Mr. Torrey asked if the system had the ability to access information about individual student achievement. Mr. Moore explained that Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) data was loaded into the data warehouse and teachers could access it at the classroom or student level.

Mr. Smith asked how capital costs for equipment replacement would be funded. Mr. Moore replied that consortium members contributed to an equipment reserve fund annually for that purpose.

Mr. Torrey asked why the Bethel School District was not a consortium member. Mr. Moore said Bethel had been invited to participate, but had declined because that district had decided to use a student data application other than eSIS.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Revised Recommendation Regarding Willard Building

Superintendent Russell reviewed the board's March 2008 decision to end the lease of the Willard building to charter schools after June 2010, which was part of the *Shaping 4J's Future* report and recommendations. He said the Village School had requested an extension of the timeline so that they might have additional time to seek out other possible sites for relocation of the school. He supported the request and recommended a one-year only extension to June 30, 2011. During the extension, if there were any systems failures that required investment in excess of \$5,000 for any given repair, the tenant would be responsible for funding the repair(s).

Superintendent Russell said the charter schools located at the Willard site have been good partners and contributed to the community. He acknowledged that their students were primarily from 4J. He said it was clear that the location and impact of charter schools in the south region needed to be examined, but he felt that the one-year lease extension should be approved with the understanding it was the final extension. He commented that charter schools offered educational services that some parents wanted and felt they needed for their children. He was not certain that if the charter schools relocated, whether all of their students would return to their original schools. Charter schools were a trend nationally and considered an important element of choice and in addressing student achievement. He did not feel that a one-year extension would irreparably damage neighborhood schools and expected the district would make a decision about disposition of the Willard site.

MOTION: Mr. Torrey, seconded by Ms. Hays, moved that the board approve a revision to the action of March 19, 2008, regarding the Willard building by extending the timeline for occupancy of the site by the Village School and the Ridgeline Montessori charter schools until June 30, 2011.

Mr. Torrey understood the concerns expressed by those who spoke earlier in the meeting, but felt it was important how the district approached new facility construction and requests for funding. He said the district was in an entirely different financial situation than when *Shaping 4J's Future* recommendations were developed and approved. He regretted any hardship that neighborhood schools might experience, but agreed with Superintendent Russell that the district had chartered the two schools using the Willard building and the lease extension request was not unreasonable.

Ms. Geller said she understood the concerns about competition with neighborhood schools, but the option was a short-term one that would allow charter schools that served students enough time to find the right location and balance.

Ms. Hays said it was a difficult decision. She had visited Adams and was impressed by the care and hope for success that occurred there. She looked forward to the district's examination of school location and the one-year extension would allow time for a thoughtful approach.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously; 5:0.

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

The 2009 Legislature passed House Bill 2599, which expanded requirements for school district policies prohibiting harassment, intimidation, bullying and cyberbullying, effective with the 2009-10 school year. Although the district's step-by-step complaint process for reporting and addressing those incidents reflected most of the provisions of the legislation, Board Policies JB and JFCFA/GBNAA were revised to include some additional elements.

Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, said the revisions before the board for consideration better aligned the policies with the legislation passed during the 2009 session; otherwise the content remained the same.

MOTION: Ms. Hays, seconded by Ms. Levis, moved to approve the revisions to Board Policies JB and JFCFA/GBNAA.

Ms. Geller pointed out that while the legislation required districts to establish anti-harassment policies, 4J's policies had been in place for a long time. She said the policies were distributed annually and not only provided redress, but also an opportunity for educating and creating a safe environment for students.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously; 5:0.

Resignation of Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis

Mr. Smith announced that Yvette Webber-Davis had submitted her resignation from the board, citing health issues and a need to focus her energy on regaining her health.

Ms. Bellamy said replacing Ms. Webber-Davis would involve the remaining board members interviewing applicants and appointing someone to fill her position. She recommended that the board direct staff to develop a timeline for the process that would provide 30 days to receive applications. She hoped the board could schedule interviews at an extra meeting in September so that the application period could remain open longer. Staff would poll members to schedule a special board meeting on September 23 or 30.

MOTION: Ms. Hays, seconded by Mr. Torrey, moved to accept the resignation of Yvette Webber-Davis effective August 31, 2009.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously; 5:0.

The board agreed with Ms. Bellamy's recommendations regarding a process for appointing a new board member.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

Adopt the Revised Guiding Beliefs and Values Statement

Ms. Bellamy stated that the board annually reviewed and affirmed or revised a statement of Guiding Beliefs and Values to articulate the core values that guided the board and all district

staff in achieving the district's mission. She said that staff had prepared a preliminary draft of proposed revisions, which was included in the board packet, and a second version that included revisions incorporating references to accountability had been provided in the red folder. She reviewed the proposed changes in Draft – Option 2 of the Guiding Beliefs and Values and invited feedback from the board.

Superintendent Russell said he had initially proposed deleting the phrase “*and ourselves*” from the third bulleted item under the Staff section of the draft document, but upon reflection, felt it should remain. He said there had also been considerable discussion about being accountable not only for student growth, but student learning, although he did not have specific language to suggest.

Mr. Torrey emphasized that the board and staff were collectively responsible for providing all students with a quality education and individualized assessment was an essential component.

Mr. Smith expressed an interest in data that would track the individual education and growth of students over time.

Adopt the Board's Goals and Annual Agenda for 2009-10

Ms. Bellamy said that an effort had been made to develop measurable goals, achievable over a period of time, especially in the key areas of student achievement and instruction. No changes were being proposed to those key results. She asked if there were other goals or key results that the board wished to have developed. She said there were some changes to the goals related to stewardship of district resources, based on the board's interest in reviewing and updating the Facilities Long-Range Plan and establishing a timeline for a capital bond measure in 2011 or after. She reviewed other changes in the Draft board Goals and Annual Agenda for 2009-10.

Ms. Geller asked whether some of the specific financial challenges facing the district should be mentioned in the goals related to stewardship of resources.

Superintendent Russell said staff would review both the guiding beliefs and values and board goals and offer any suggestions they might have at the next board leadership meeting, but the hope is the board would take action on both at its next meeting so he could begin to develop more specific goals for himself and district staff.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Geller highlighted library programs that helped students succeed, including the summer reading program and a feature on the library's website that provided help with homework through chats with certified tutors.

Mr. Torrey commented that literary grant awards had been made to a number of organizations, particularly schools, and it was clear during the application review process that resources in the community were scarce. He was impressed by how highly regarded Eugene's education system was by those on the review committee.

Ms. Hays thanked the county's superintendents for being proactive in raising concerns about new federal reporting requirements for race and ethnicity. She asked Superintendent Russell to speak to the Equity Committee about that issue at its next meeting.

Ms. Levis said she had established a personal goal of visiting all district schools during 2009. She said that social media, outreach to those in the community who could not attend board meetings, was important and stressed the need to engage the public on the critical issues being discussed by the board. She thanked Ethen Perkins for his passion about Adams Elementary School.

Mr. Torrey said he had received many inquiries from the public about whether the district had developed a policy regarding H1N1 flu. Superintendent Russell replied that staff would provide an update at the board's next meeting.

Mr. Smith said Ms. Webber-Davis had been a valuable board member and would be missed.

ADJOURN

Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

George Russell
Superintendent

Craig Smith
Board Chair

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)

Attachments to Official Minutes:

1. Draft Board Policy JB – Intimidation, Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Hazing and Retaliation
2. Draft Board Policy JFCFA/GBNAA – Cyberbullying
3. Letter of Resignation from Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis
4. Draft Board Guiding Beliefs and Values Statements – Option 1 and Option 2
5. Draft Board Goals and Annual Agenda for 2009-10