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

September 30, 2009

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a Special Meeting at 7 p.m. on September 30, 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 September 25, 2009, and published in *the Register-Guard* on September *28*, 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
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Laurie Moses, Director of Secondary Services
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer
Sara Cramer, Director of Elementary Services

MEDIA:
KRVM

4J SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES:

Diana Bray
Wendy Laing
Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson
Lyllye Parker
Benjamin P. Sappington
Gary E. Rayor
Mary Walston
Cindy Weinhold

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

Board Chair Craig Smith called the Special Meeting of the 4J School Board to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes to the agenda. Mr. Smith asked the candidates for the board position vacated by Yvette Webber-Davis to think how their experience and background would help to achieve board goals regarding student achievement, stakeholder engagement, and stewardship of district resources.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent George Russell noted the presence of the candidates, calling them the board's special guests.

Superintendent Russell said staff had drafted a letter to the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) in response to the board's direction expressing appreciation for the revised six-classification alignment with hybrid leagues, copies of which were in the board's packet. He also noted that the board had been provided information on Oregon's efforts to win some of the Race to the Top money. He said the article also included the names of the people serving on the design team, who would be working with Governor Kulongoski and Susan Castillo, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Superintendent Russell remarked on how pleased he was with the caliber of the candidates who applied for the open board position. He said he could not imagine a greater group of people for the position. He believed the quality of people who wanted to join in helping children spoke well for how the board was received in the community.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Smith reviewed the guidelines for public comment.

Patricia Barajas stated that she was a parent at Yujin Gakuen Elementary School. She invited board members to come to the school at 3 p.m. any day of the week to witness the chaos and confusion caused by traffic congestion. She related that she had seen parents stop their cars on Silver Lane and beckon to their children to cross the road unattended to their vehicles. She said there were no traffic controls in front of the school, such as a signal or crosswalk. She had witnessed drivers becoming frustrated and irate and having near collisions with one another. She acknowledged that parents should take personal responsibility and needed to be safe and cautious while using the turnabout. She felt that utilizing the parking lot east of Corridor Elementary School would only increase congestion there. She understood that one option would be to extend the Yujin Gakuen turnabout so that it connected with the one located by Corridor and she supported exploring that option. She feared that someone would get hurt and then the district would be reactive instead of being proactive.

Beth Counts said this was her third year complaining about the traffic situation at Yujin Gakuen Elementary School. She related that after the school district had added an extra lane and turnabout, total chaos erupted because there was no guidance there. She had gone to the school every morning and afternoon for the past two and a half years to ensure that no children were hurt. She felt the district had not made an effort to make the school crossing safe. She was frustrated by the district's expenditures for other schools, while Yujin Gakuen continued to experience these problems. She highlighted some of the near misses caused by high school

students and frustrated parents on Silver Lane in front of the school. She stated that the board could do something and it should step up and make the problem a priority to be resolved.

Jennifer Eidahl indicated that she was also a parent of a Yujin Gakuen Elementary School student. She believed they had tried everything to mitigate the situation. She related that her husband had been out in the street with a small paddle stop sign helping the children cross the street for the past several weeks. She described the situation as a small turnaround by a busy street with kids everywhere. She said people swerved around other people to get around those who were waiting to get into the turnaround. She likened it to a three-lane one-way street, calling it scary. She believed that if someone would just witness the chaos, they would wonder what was going on with the school. She remarked that she and her family had just moved to Eugene from Vancouver, Washington, and it had been very different there; children were escorted to their parents' cars. She remarked that, in addition to the safety concerns, the board should consider the potential financial impact an accident could cause.

ITEM FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING

Appoint a Board Member to Fill the Unexpired Term of Yvette Webber-Davis

Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to appoint someone to complete the board term of Yvette Webber-Davis. She reviewed the process for the three-minute interviews and balloting.

Mr. Smith stated that board members are not compensated and meet twice a month on Wednesdays, though they hold open every Wednesday of the month for alternative meetings. He said they also have committee assignments. He underscored that serving on the board entails a significant time commitment. He asked that applicants indicate if they or family members were 4J employees.

Diana Bray stated that she and her husband have been residents of Eugene for 22 years and both of their children, now in college, had been 4J students. She served 16 years as school-based parent volunteer, served on the Start Making a Reader Today (SMART) board and led the Eugene Education Fund for several years. She thought she could bring a fresh perspective and a more global sense from the school community. She had experienced the board/staff working relationship from both aspects and believed she understood the partnership. She had served as the Executive Director of the March of Dimes for 12 years and answered directly to its board. She said her current role as marketing manager for Valley River Center entails responsibility for the budget that supports marketing and public relations for its 420 tenants. She was fully aware that the financial times for the district were difficult. She thought she could be an asset to the board and district by enhancing stakeholder engagement, because of her established relationships with the business community, the media, educators, school families, and government folks. She said she was a person of integrity, a good listener, and would advocate for what she believed in. She pledged to follow through with all commitments. She noted that her husband had recently retired from the Springfield School District.

Board Member Anne Marie Levis recalled Mr. Smith's question regarding student achievement and asked Ms. Bray to respond to it.

Ms. Bray was aware that not everyone had the same opportunities and that children from families with lower financial means sometimes did not receive the academic resources they

needed. She wanted to ensure that they stayed on top of this so that, as an example, a student who was a slow reader could get the assistance he or she needed.

Ms. Levis asked which schools Ms. Bray's children had attended. Ms. Bray replied that they had gone to Crest Elementary, Jefferson Middle, and Churchill High Schools.

Board Vice Chair Beth Gerot ascertained from Ms. Bray that she was comfortable with the deliberative decision making process the board engaged in. She noted that the board had a tendency to process things and to ensure they received really good information.

Ms. Gerot noted that one of the concerns Ms. Bray had expressed on her application had been regarding the lack of vocational education. She asked Ms. Bray to elaborate on this. Ms. Bray replied that she had meant opportunities for young people to have hands-on experiences. She said the training skills that had once been offered in Home Economics and Woodshop classes were no longer available. She observed that not every child would graduate and go on to college, but they still needed skills to go out into the work force.

Wendy Laing said she was seeking this position because she wanted to help the community's children and the education system. She said she was a concerned parent and community volunteer who had given the board position a lot of thought over the past few years. She stated that she, her children and a vast majority of her relatives had attended 4J schools. She noted that two of her children attended the Buena Vista Spanish Immersion Elementary School and two attended Monroe Middle School. She attended Meadowlark Elementary, Madison Middle, and Sheldon High Schools. She related that she had earned a law degree and a Master in Business Administration. She had decided to stop working full-time when she had children. She had continued to serve the community with volunteer work. She stated that when she had served as president of the Junior League, they had taken a year hiatus to determine who most needed their help in the community. They had concluded that they would work to help foster children. As a result of this, she had served on the board of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for eight years because she believed the abused and neglected children needed a voice. She had also volunteered many hours inside the schools and believed this had given her a better understanding of the school activities and how the board's decisions affect schools. She said her four years on the 4J Budget Committee had given her an appreciation for the budgeting process. She commented on the challenges that the budgeting process from the previous year had presented. She believed there was no greater way to impact the community than to encourage and support the healthy development of all children. Regarding the question on furthering achievement for all, she thought the district should ask businesses and outside people to help with the process. She noted that the district and the board were doing a fantastic job at managing its money. She said, however, communication could be better to help offset rumors about administrators' pay and other issues.

Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson believed that everyone present was passionate about the schools and the community. He said he was an Arts and Technology Academy parent and some viewed him as a wannabe teacher. He found ways to participate through volunteer activities. He noted that his wife was a 4J teacher. He pointed to the core values that were listed on the wall behind the board and stated that he wanted to take them and turn them into actions and results. He stated that taking those challenges was not only about economics, it was about thinking differently about processes and the resources that did exist. He praised the administrators and teachers, calling them exceptional, and observed that they put in many hours. He believed that there were other ways to support them using the existing resources. He cited, as one example, the efforts around diversity. While he avidly supported the efforts

around cultural diversity, he thought the district could paralyze itself if it diversified its approach to education too much. He thought there were opportunities they could pursue that would not present additional economic challenges.

Lyllye Parker related that she was a product of School District 4J and graduated from Sheldon High School in 1964. She said both of her children had also attended 4J schools, though neither had attained a high school diploma. She explained that her daughter had been one-half credit away from a high school diploma and had finished her Graduation Equivalency Diploma before her death. She had pulled her son out of Churchill High School because the climate there was not conducive to him being the best student he could be. His experience improved after being enrolled in South Eugene High School, but he still had not graduated. She noted that he had gone to a college and played football, but had not taken classes that could be transferred back for degree completion. She was now raising her granddaughter and had pulled her out of Churchill High School, still feeling that the climate was not conducive to her being the best student she could be. She then placed her granddaughter in the Network Charter School, which she considered to be an excellent school, but she had not liked that it was headquartered in the downtown area, which was fraught with drug activity. She related that her granddaughter had entered a program at the University of Oregon and had now finished her freshman year. She said her nephew had taken her great-nephew to be registered at Churchill High School. She stated that he had been told that they did not want him, that he should be placed in an alternative high school. She declared that we were in the 21st century and no child should be left behind. Her great-nephew had called her for advice. From this she realized she could be part of a solution. She underscored her passion for children and for equity in education for all children. She said she was born and raised in Eugene and was not mono-cultural. Her culture was Eugene culture. She stated that there was a large group of socially and economically deprived students and more students were becoming homeless every day. She wanted them to be able to enter a school with dignity, expecting a quality education. She said they had to make sure, no matter how small the budget became, that each student had the opportunity to reach his or her peak. She considered the district's stakeholders to be every parent who had a student in school. She strongly believed that freedom came from education, but it brought with it responsibility.

Gary Rayor listed his previous experience in public service which included work with neighborhood associations, one term on the City Council, service on the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission, and the county Human Services board. He worked as an engineer and served on the board of the business and as a trustee of the pension fund. Among his volunteer efforts was work on a capital campaign for Temple Beth Israel and on its building committee. He had a lot of experience in roads and facilities through his work as an engineer. He noted that his daughter was entering kindergarten at Charlemagne. He considered himself a problem solver who could communicate openly. He believed in discussing something fully before making a decision on it. He had been closely following the work of the board for three years and had run for a seat on the board and applied to be on the Budget Committee. He thought the board should work on class size and the distribution of resources so that more interaction between the teacher and student could occur. He said he would consider stewardship of resources to be his strongest point. He considered himself a critical thinker. He stated that he had experience with budgets and he understood balancing revenues. He felt highly motivated to help the young people of Eugene.

Ben Sappington commended the slate of candidates. He expressed his desire to serve on the board for years to come. He noted that he was the only candidate who had been a 4J student within the past decade. He noted that a growing number of teachers and administrators were

retiring and younger educators were filling their roles. He felt they needed a younger person on the board that they could relate to. He stated that he was the only candidate who had run a successful legislative campaign regarding education in Salem. He believed he was also the only candidate who had seen the district from three different perspectives, from the administrative perspective because his father had been principal of Churchill High School until he retired, from the teaching perspective because his mother had been a first grade teacher for 30 years, and from his own perspective as a student and from having served as a student representative on the board. He said education policy was his passion. He considered himself battle-tested and ready to hit the ground running. He had created a 120-day plan for the district, copies of which he provided to the board, which he intended to work to enact if appointed.

Ms. Gerot asked him to elaborate about his contention that equality throughout district schools was one of the two most important issues facing the board. Mr. Sappington clarified that he meant equity in achievement, which he believed would come from better training for teachers and administration.

Ms. Levis asked him to describe further the legislative campaign he had worked on. Mr. Sappington explained that he had served as student body president at Western Oregon University and during that time he had been in charge of the legislative campaign run by the university. He had worked with administration and faculty to have a successful presence in Salem working on the higher education policy agenda.

Mary Walston believed she was the best prepared and most qualified candidate because of her knowledge and experience, commitment and motivation, and her skills and leadership experience. She stated that she had served on the Budget Committee and also on the 4J Audit Committee. She felt she had gained a good understanding of the financial status of the district, both at the micro level and the macro level. She said the district faced issues other than financial ones, but the great majority of the work done by the board was guided by the budget. She was familiar with state and federal funding mechanisms and how that money could be accessed by the district. She said she had demonstrated her commitment to the goals and aspirations of the board over the past ten years. She had engaged in a number of volunteer activities with the district, including serving as campaign coordinator for the local option levy. She underscored that education had been proven to be one of the most effective ways to foster a successful life, something they desired for everyone to have. She believed she had the skills, ability, and proven leadership qualities to be an effective member of the board. She had no agenda other than to serve the best interests of the children of the community. She understood policy governance and the deliberative decision making the board engaged in. She had lots of experience serving on non-profit boards. She said the board needed to keep long-term strategy in mind as it went through the year-to-year budget fluctuations. She agreed that the district needed to address the achievement gap and declining enrollment. She added that she was an example of the type of stakeholder that needed to be more engaged, because she did not have children in the district. She strongly believed in early education and providing holistic support for children and families. She also believed in stewardship and leaving the world a better place than she had found it. She noted that she had no relatives that worked in the district. Her employer, United Way, did have contacts with the district, but she did not believe this presented a conflict of interest.

Cindy Weinhold said she had served as a mentor at Roosevelt Middle School and had mentored a young person who was a recovering heroin addict. She felt this person could have been any of them. She had grown up in a family with a strong emphasis on education and had never considered not going on to higher education. She stated that she had worked in the

South Eugene High School Career Center, where they had focused a lot on helping people find their passion and develop their goal for education and life after high school. She felt she had a unique perspective as she had an elementary, middle, and high school student at the same time for three years. She said she was very concerned about reading and writing proficiency. She believed in stewardship whether one had children or not because the people who were in school today would be the doctors, lawyers, and bus drivers of the future. While she had a lot of passion for the education system, she was not strongly grounded in the budget at this point. She related that when her youngest had been born, she stopped working and since then had volunteered in her children's schools, the Relief Nursery, and CASA.

Mr. Smith encouraged the seven applicants who would not be appointed to the position to consider applying for other committees.

Board Member Jim Torrey ascertained from Mr. Smith that it would be possible to ask further questions after the first round of voting, should no candidate receive the required minimum of four votes.

Ms. Levis related that she had spoken to every candidate. She felt overwhelmed by having to choose between them because they were of such a high caliber.

Ms. Bellamy noted that Dr. Webber-Davis' term was slated to end in June, 2011, and anyone who wanted to serve beyond that would have to run in the next election.

The first round of votes was tallied and the results were, as follows:

- Mary Walston: 3 votes [Torrey, Geller, Hays]
- Ben Sappington: 1 vote [Levis]
- Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson: 1 vote [Gerot]
- Wendy Laing: 1 vote [Smith]

The second round of votes was tallied and the results were, as follows:

- Mary Walston: 3 votes [Torrey, Geller, Hays]
- Diana Bray: 1 vote [Levis]
- Wendy Laing: 1 vote [Smith]
- Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson: 1 vote: [Gerot]

Mr. Torrey asked the candidates to comment on their willingness to close a school if that was required in order to provide a quality of education that was equal throughout the district.

Cindy Weinhold said her willingness would depend on the facts and if it was best for the general public, she would be willing to do so.

Mary Walston recalled the conversation they had engaged in during the budget session in the spring around closing a high school. She said no one wanted to close a school, but sometimes they had to have the political courage to do so. She underscored that these were difficult times, requiring difficult measures. Nonetheless, it was difficult to have 300 people come before the board saying don't do this. She felt the district had done an outstanding job of stretching resources as much as possible in the last budget round. She said at some point this would have to change and this could mean closing a school. She did not foresee that they would be out of the recession soon and enrollment was declining.

Ben Sappington recalled that his very first meeting experience as a student representative on the School Board had included discussion on the possible closure of the Pipeline charter school. The experience of sitting in the auditorium and listening to a crowd of irate parents had inspired him to get into public science and had inspired every civic action he had taken in his life. He said if they needed to close a school, he would have the political courage to do so.

Gary Rayor felt that he had the courage to tackle the issue should it arise. He believed that the district needed to address declining enrollment. He would advocate looking at facility conditions and under or over representation at the different schools, such as the demographics of the number of homeless families and the number of children in the free or reduced lunch program. He noted that a recent report had indicated that the ideal school populations were 300 students per elementary school, 600 students per middle school, and 1,200 per high school. He thought School District 4J might need to move toward this model.

Lyllye Parker observed that change was always hard and painful. She had found it painful to see Bailey Hill Elementary School close 25 years after leaving it. Her granddaughter's elementary school had closed – she had finished her elementary time at Adams Elementary School. She said it was a hard fight and even a hard speak to address excellence and equity. She felt that if they were committed to doing the work, they would do it. She related that in her work as an academic advisor for the University of Oregon, she served on the Scholastic Review Committee which determined which student could stay and which would not be able to return, based on scholastic performance. She had been amazed by the number of students who had graduated from 4J that had been sent home at the end of the quarter. She remarked that some students come in with a 2.7 grade point average after taking Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes while others come in with a 3.5 GPA with none of those types of classes on their transcript. The latter sometimes were very disappointed to learn they were not prepared for college by their high school education. She said to attain equity and excellence, they might have to scale down, though it was a long, hard, painful decision, and she was willing to sit at the table and make such a decision.

Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson said closing a school was unpopular and unpleasant but it was something the board would be faced with. He related that on a personal level he had faced a similar situation as he had to cut his work force by 25 percent. He stated that he would be willing to address a school closure if necessary. He would ensure that the decision would be made with all of the variables that would go into it and would want to place it in the context of how it would fit into the five-year or ten-year plan for the district.

Wendy Laing stated that she lived in the northern side of Eugene, in the Sheldon High School region. She understood that the Coburg Elementary School enrollment was declining, but she had read that there were different options on the table such as partnering with the city on how to bring in new revenue. She recalled the outcry that the potential move of Meadowlark Elementary had brought about. She commented that she had been a political science major in college and understood that the good of the many outweighed the good of the few. She said if they looked at all available options and nothing else made sense, they would have to close a school. She felt that in that case she would have to know that the board made the right decision.

Diana Bray believed it was not what they would do, but how they would do it. She said if she was part of this team, she would approach this as a team member. She felt that without insulting people, they could help them understand the need to pursue this direction. She recalled a close friend who had been a teacher involved in the merger at Cesar Chavez

Elementary School and how successful down the road the bringing together of two families had been in that school environment. She believed that people did have the ability to move on when it involved their children.

The third round of votes was tallied and the results were, as follows:

- Mary Walston: 3 votes [Torrey, Geller, Hays]
- Diana Bray: 2 votes [Smith, Gerot]
- Wendy Laing: 1 vote [Levis]

Board Member Jennifer Geller asked the applicants to speak on closing the achievement gap and what they knew about that topic.

Gary Rayor commended Superintendent Russell for promoting differentiated staffing to address the equity issue. He felt that the choice system should not be allowed to highly segregate schools. He said there were some schools that were very high achieving. He thought differentiated staffing would mean a higher student-to-teacher ratio for students who were not having trouble achieving in school and a lower ratio for students who were having trouble. He supported this approach, but he thought it would be better to combine the groups of children more and balance their contact time.

Ben Sappington noted that this was a point he had addressed in his application. He agreed that it was a challenge to close the achievement gap in the face of a diminishing budget. He believed in the board's commitment to the Response To Intervention (RTI) model in allowing students to mix in classrooms. He felt it would eventually help to close the achievement gap. He noted that his mother, when she had begun her teaching career, had four aides and student teachers, but when she retired six years ago she had a diversity of learning abilities in her classroom that she was not trained for. He said they should lean on the great civic organizations in the community to aid education.

Mary Walston quipped that if she knew how to close the achievement gap, she might be Secretary of Education. She said one thing she credited Superintendent Russell and the board for doing was that they had taken some discretionary funds and targeted some schools that had gaps, such as River Road Elementary School. She considered school choice to be a great thing, but observed that sometimes there were unintended consequences in that some inequities were created. She noted that she had served as principal for the day for River Road Elementary, Fox Hollow Elementary, and Harris Elementary Schools – three very different schools. She said one could see the inequities in the River Road school. She liked that they had used the discretionary funds. She agreed with the suggestion that some schools should be consolidated. She felt that class size had been a problem and a large elementary school class hindered the teacher's ability to educate the children.

Cindy Weinhold felt that the board had made difficult decisions regarding closing schools. She believed they had weighed the options and closed the schools that benefited the district the most. She would be amenable to moving the alternative schools. She said not everyone learned the same way and it was good to provide alternative learning environments for students, but she did not want to do so at the expense of the ability for neighborhood schools to survive.

Lyllye Parker recalled several years earlier that 4J, Bethel, and the Springfield school districts had indicated to the University of Oregon School of Education that if things did not change, they would not engage student teachers. She related that because of this, the university had bowed to the will of the majority and was trying to produce innovative, creative, young educators, but

the districts were so top heavy there was no room for the young teachers to come in. Then, as a result of the economic downturn, the teachers with the least seniority were laid off first and the district would lose a lot of the great talent that it needed. She understood, regarding equity, that those areas with lower property taxes had poorer schools than those with higher property taxes. She witnessed, in her work as an academic advisor, that some young people were well prepared for college and others were affected by the achievement gap. She said they needed to look at the resources they had and the resources they were turning away because the district did not have room. She added that she appreciated the time they had taken in the interview process, but she intended to graciously withdraw from consideration.

Jonathan Ohlsen-Johnson believed that the Arts & Technology Academy was working to close the achievement gap. He related that they had seen 10% and greater gains in math and reading comprehension. He said they had targeted classroom management. They had observed that the greatest hindrance to learning was classroom behavior. He stated that they had put a lot of interventions in place and this did not mean that they had only placed more bodies in the room. He related that they had found that most students were visual learners and they had developed teaching techniques based on that. He said they had also found that there was not enough alignment between teachers. He stated that there were some superstar teachers who were compiling lesson plans and that they did not have a way to share their innovations. He thought one option would be to adopt a teaching hospital model – so that they could get a greater level of internships at schools with a greater level of need.

Wendy Laing supported the use of targeted funding. She believed that more resources were needed to go to those people who need it the most. She felt that having two different lottery lists for the alternative schools had benefited the process. She said the decision to close some of the smaller schools had been difficult and consolidation into larger schools had provided more opportunities for students that struggled more with achievement. She believed that the district should centralize the alternative schools, so that it was easier for students to get there. She suggested that the district could partner with Lane Transit District (LTD) so that students could get to the schools they wanted to attend. She noted that she had a friend who taught at River Road Elementary, whose children attended school with her children. She related that the one difference her friend had noted was that she did not have the parental support that the teachers had at the school her children attended. She said not everyone who watched over a child could actually get to their school and suggested that they could solicit volunteers to fill their shoes.

Diana Bray suggested that not everyone in the community understood the lingo of closing the achievement gap and therefore, it might be difficult to figure out what to do to help as a concerned parent or business person. She related her personal experience, having children who attended an elementary school with great economic resources. She said the students had raised money to keep their physical education teacher when it looked like his position would be cut. She stated that her children had attended a middle school with children from all levels of economic backgrounds. She felt their children had benefited from a more diverse experience. She thought parent support was helpful. She believed they could look at the Eugene Education Fund more closely and ask that those dollars be redirected to more basic goals.

Ms. Levis reiterated that all of the applicants were very qualified. She said any one of them would be a phenomenal board member.

Mr. Torrey said the public, had they had the opportunity to listen to the applicants, would have really been impressed. He felt the board was hearing some important messages. He complimented all the candidates.

The fourth round of votes was tallied and the results were, as follows:

- Mary Walston: 3 votes [Torrey, Geller, Hays]
- Diana Bray: 2 votes [Smith, Gerot]
- Wendy Laing: 1 vote [Levis]

Mr. Smith called for a five-minute break and reconvened the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

The fifth round of votes was tallied and the results were, as follows:

- Mary Walston: 5 votes [Torrey, Geller, Hays, Smith, Gerot]
- Diana Bray: 1 vote [Levis]

Ms. Walston was declared to be the new member of the Eugene School District 4J School Board.

Mr. Smith encouraged all of the applicants to consider applying for the Budget Committee openings.

Superintendent Russell administered the oath of office and Ms. Walston was sworn in. There was a round of applause.

Mr. Smith noted that the Board Leadership group met with Superintendent Russell in his office on Monday afternoons, usually at 4 p.m.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Torrey requested a report on the concerns expressed by the Yujin Gakuen parents. Superintendent Russell responded that Sara Cramer, Director of Elementary Services, was working on a report about the issue. He considered it to be a problem, and though the district had worked on it in the past, it continued to be an issue and would continue to be that way as long as they had two alternative schools sitting next to a busy high school. He believed that the long-term solution would be to disassociate the elementary schools from the high school.

Ms. Geller reported that she and Board Member Alicia Hays had attended the first district Equity Committee meeting of the school year. She noted that there had been new members who were still becoming oriented. She said they had continued the discussion regarding obtaining achievement data earlier in the year. She related that there was concern about the change in the federal requirements and that it might require students to be identified as multicultural rather than of a specific race. She thought it could make things become more difficult to track. She also related that they had discussed the bullying survey that had been launched the previous spring. She said a statewide conference was planned to be held here by Oregon high schools on October 23 and 24. She added that she had been very impressed by the applicants for the board position.

Ms. Hays related that she had been meeting with district staff regarding career and technical education issues. She reiterated her thanks to the people who applied for the board position, calling them an impressive group.

Ms. Levis reported that she had visited Edison, Camas Ridge, Cesar Chavez, Gilham and Adams Elementary Schools, the Yujin Gakuen and Corridor Schools, and the Village School. She noted that they had discussed the parking issue at Yujin Gakuen and she understood that there had been a plan to put in a driveway in front of the school at one time that had been shelved. She said the school visits had been eye-opening, especially in comparing the smaller schools with a school like Gilham. She also had observed the differences between schools such as Cesar Chavez and Edison, just in the difference in the school populations and the different ways that things were done. She said she and Ms. Gerot had attended the Oregon Small Schools Initiative (OSSI) Workshop on September 25. She found the experience to be very educational; it had been good to see the processes that all of the different schools had gone through. She noted that only one other school district, Central Point, had board members in attendance at the workshop. In closing, she echoed appreciation expressed for the board applicants.

Ms. Gerot commented that because her son had attended North Eugene High School and because the retired teachers from North Eugene were volunteering and raising money for scholarships, she often heard their concerns about the changes brought about by the OSSI at that school. She had found it very affirming to listen to the principals and the teachers at the workshop speak about their work and to express their enthusiasm for and steadfast belief in the changes that have occurred. She had been impressed by their connections with the students, which she felt was much stronger than it had been at the old North Eugene. She also reported that she and Mr. Torrey had gone to North Eugene to serve as authentic evaluators of some students' group projects. She had served in this capacity for several years and found that the level of engagement of the students had increased substantially.

Continuing, Ms. Gerot stated that she was serving as a part of the low-performing schools Race to the Top work group. She said the timeframe was compressed; a draft report was to be completed by October 15. She reported that they were looking at two things: How to identify the schools that were performing in the lowest five percent in Oregon and the achievement index they were using to determine this AND her group was working to identify three to five key components that could be utilized to turn around low performing schools. She had some concern with the timeframe, as it did not allow the opportunity to fully consider the work that was happening in Oregon and other states in this regard. She noted that there were more than 40 schools in Oregon that were currently closing the achievement gap and this was not being considered. She said there was a lot of good research in the ExEL work that they were doing in the district and it was also not being considered. She added that the ExEL team had met for the first time this school year earlier in the day.

Mr. Smith reported that he had participated in the Charter Schools Council meeting on September 29. He noted that there had been a fair amount of discussion regarding the Network Charter School's proposal to lease and ultimately buy a city building located at 858 Pearl Street, which had been approved by the city. He said there was some discussion about the challenges that having two campuses for the Montessori school were presenting.

Mr. Smith added that as he had officiated at the Margaret Johnson Bailes dedication of the track he had been impressed by a comment she had made about how important her coach had been to her. He observed that the relationship between a coach and a student could be profound for a student.

Ms. Walston expressed her appreciation for the many votes that the board had undertaken and the deliberative process that had been engaged. She said she looked forward to working with the board members.

ADJOURN

Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

George Russell Superintendent	Craig Smith Board Chair

(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)

Attachment to Official Minutes:
1. Oath of Office – Mary Walston