

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

December 19, 2007

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 6:00 p.m. and a regular meeting at 7 p.m. on December 19, 2007, 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 December 14, 2007, and published in *The Register-Guard* on December 17, 2007.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

George Russell, Superintendent of Schools and District Clerk
Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement
Abby Lane, ELL and Foreign Language Grant Program Coordinator

MEDIA:

KRVM

WORK SESSION: The Work Session convened with the above board members and staff present.

Conduct a Work Session on English Language Learner Instruction

Abby Lane, ELL and Foreign Language Grant Program Coordinator, reviewed handouts showing the language distribution of English Language Learners (ELLs), with 414 students and 27 languages, including 311 Spanish and 58 Korean, and explaining Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

Ms. Lane shared summaries of potential impacts of proposed state initiatives that would prohibit teaching students in languages other than English for two years and allow state cooperation with immigration enforcement. She found the idea of dictating English-only instruction after two years and the provision that would prevent the district from providing native language support frightening. She added that California and other states allowed waivers when school districts, prompted by parental requests, asked for waivers, but she did not know if that would apply here.

Board Chair Charles Martinez felt people should know that 23 states now had English-only statutes on the books. He explained that there was no federal statute setting English as the

official language, but survey data showed repeatedly that most people view English as the official language of the U.S.

Board Vice Chair Beth Gerot noted that Hawaii had the second oldest public school system in the nation, and the children were taught in Hawaiian. In the 1800s, the language was banned in the schools and between then and 100 years later, student achievement went way down. Now that Hawaiian had been made the official state language and schools returned to incorporating the Hawaiian language and culture, graduation and students going on to college had increased dramatically.

Ms. Lane said experts all agreed that native languages were a tool to help kids learn English.

Staff would keep the board informed.

Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, noted that the board could take a stand by resolution before the election, and the staff would be bringing information to the board.

Superintendent George Russell commented that there was a general knowledge deficit about what ELL programs did and did not do. He said many people thought that schools took ELL kids through the whole system in their native language, perpetuating the belief that districts did not help students learn English and be successful in both languages.

Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis noted that the district had 27 different languages represented. She wondered if the public assumed students were being taught in 27 languages.

The superintendent wanted to be very clear: This was not about people who spoke Ethiopian or Burmese.

Ms. Lane said a common argument was that the district should not provide for one group what it could not provide for all.

From a political standpoint, Board Member Jim Torrey recommended having people working in the field identify reasons why ELL programs were appropriate from a professional standpoint, and he wanted to hear people from both sides of the argument.

In response to a question from the superintendent, Ms. Lane said one of the high school issues was that ELL did not count for graduation credit. She said some Korean parents wanted their children to be immersed in English.

Dr. Martinez commented about the importance of critical mass, since the district did better when there were high concentrations of special education or ELL students in a school. He wondered about resource allocation when there were kids who needed help in a school, but not a critical mass.

Ms. Lane said students could be clustered or their instruction could be targeted.

Board Member Craig Smith asked what that would mean in policy terms.

Ms. Lane said the district was considering regional clustering, gathering ELL students into one middle school and two elementary schools, but there were concerns about the choice and transportation issues.

Superintendent Russell said the Bethel School District told people who wanted the services where they had to go.

Board Member Eric Forrest wondered if Bethel had a higher percentage of kids who waived ELL instruction.

Ms. Lane said it had not been an issue and the district had gotten positive feedback from a recent Oregon Department of Education visit.

Dr. Martinez remarked that part of the tension around clustering stemmed from questioning why the district needed to do it. Why not have teachers trained to teach English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), he asked?

Ms. Lane said Cesar Chavez school had been targeted, but isolated schools had not gotten the training. In hiring, the district looked at teachers' ESOL background, she said.

Mr. Torrey commented that the board and staff needed to consistently use words that people understood instead of acronyms.

Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement, said another idea related to clustering stemmed from concerns about students being isolated in buildings where the staff did not look like them. A benefit of clustering was that both students and their families benefited from a sense of belonging.

Mr. Torrey asked whether the district made an effort to hire bilingual teachers.

Ms. Lane said it was each school's choice, and the district had just hired a new Latino family liaison who was recruited by Carmen Urbina, Parent, Family and Community Coordinator.

Ms. Curtis questioned whether the board was asking if we grow people for our positions? Mr. Torrey inquired about outreach and training assistance for people who were bilingual.

Dr. Martinez felt that spoke to the problem that the district had cultural competencies in staff who did not get certified, and that was why the Pathways Program was essential.

Ms. Lane explained that she had obtained certification through a career ladder program in Los Angeles that paid for her education. She said the district now had four staff in the Pathways Program, which helped non-certified staff in their efforts to attain certification.

Dr. Webber-Davis responded that career ladder programs in many places had not been as effective because of the time needed to move up the ladder, and a fast-track approach was needed to make such programs viable. She thought clustering students seemed logical with ESOL or any other type of special instruction, because she wanted certified teachers there for students.

Dr. Martinez thought if the local districts made a pact to focus hires by saying ESOL was essential, not just a bonus, and required all new hires to have ESOL training, the pool would expand quickly. He noted that those were the kinds of structural things that pushed the system forward and could have a profound impact on students. He said ESOL could easily be integrated into a typical teacher education program. With early enough advice, Dr. Webber-Davis added, and Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, agreed.

Ms. Lane observed that ESOL endorsement made teachers better in the classroom for English language learners, but the district still needed to provide English language development, and she felt good about what 4J was offering in that regard. Her big concern now was the access to content in the regular classroom.

The group discussed various ways that could be implemented to train existing staff in ESOL, including having universities teach on campus at times teachers could attend and offering incentives such as additional compensation or paying for instruction and tuition.

Mr. Forrest said he had heard the district had a hard time recruiting and wondered what the result of more stringent requirements would be.

Dr. Webber-Davis pointed out that ESOL-endorsed teachers were in demand across the country, and she felt that if the district offered incentives, it should require teachers to serve the district for a certain number of years.

Ms. Lane wanted to hear board feedback about the idea of starting a K-12 dual Spanish-English program, with 50% of the population Spanish speaking and 50% English speaking, meaning at any one time half the students would be learning a second language. She said a big benefit for ELLs in such a program was that Spanish became an academic language that they learned to read and write.

In reply to a question from the superintendent, Ms. Lane said an English-only law could prohibit a dual-immersion program. She said in other states it had prohibited state funding to support it.

Mr. Forrest asked about achievement results. Ms. Lane said the federal government had been pushing ELL programs and had found that in programs like 4J's, ELL students did okay in elementary school, but lost ground in middle and high school. In bilingual programs, the kids kept going up and meeting the same standards as the native English-speaking students, and they ended up being bilingual, something society needed.

In response to a query from Mr. Torrey, Ms. Lane said the program resulted in better language instruction for everybody if it was done well.

Dr. Martinez said his experience with kids attending Buena Vista, a single immersion Spanish school, was that he could not drag Spanish conversation out of them. He thought there was a natural disconnect between the context in which they were using their language skills and the rest of the world.

Ms. Lane agreed, noting that students in the immersion program were great at academic language, but froze when they went out into the community.

Dr. Martinez invited board comments. Ms. Lane said the Chinese immersion program was federally funded and wondered how the board felt about her pursuing federal funds for researching and designing a Spanish dual-immersion program.

Mr. Smith asked if she were describing another alternative school.

Dr. Martinez said there were alternatives, including hybrid models that could be done in neighborhood schools. He wanted to know in what ways it could be integrated and what it would compete with.

Dr. Webber-Davis did not want to create a two-tiered immersion system and wanted more information from that point of view.

Ms. Lane agreed that it would be good to survey the Latino community regarding interest.

Ms. Gerot said she would support a survey to gauge interest in the community. Other board members agreed.

Mr. Smith pointed out that there would be an assumption that the program needed a critical mass of native English-speaking students as well.

The work session was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING: The Work Session recessed and after a short break, the regular meeting convened with the above board members present, along with the following:

STAFF:

Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management
Laurie Moses, Director of High School Services

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Vivek Patel, North Eugene High School
Katie Melton, Sheldon High School

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

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

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no agenda changes.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Russell said Dr. Webber-Davis had asked a question earlier in the week about the recent Oregon Department of Justice opinion about full-day kindergarten. He said Mr. Henry was working closely with the district's attorney to determine where the district was in respect to the issue.

The superintendent shared that two meetings had been held with staff from throughout the district to discuss issues related to *Shaping 4J's Future* with each other. Associate Professor Ed Weeks from the University of Oregon Public Policy Institute, who developed the survey questionnaire, had also shared survey results at both meetings with staff. Mr. Russell thought the meetings were worthwhile, and people had had an opportunity to hear different points of view in their discussions.

On a sadder note, the superintendent related that a student from Willagillespie and her mother had died from injuries they received in an automobile accident. He said the child and others had been part of the Korean community that had put on a performance a few months earlier at the opening of the Multicultural Center at Sheldon High School. He offered condolences to the family and to the students and staff at Willagillespie.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Katie Melton, Sheldon High School, reported on Snowflakes of Joy, a fundraiser through which Sheldon hosted a family and some kids in the community to buy Christmas presents. She said a dance also raised money for the project. Mr. Irish, a program working through Children's Miracle Network, had just started, and the school completed its canned food drive.

Vivek Patel said North Eugene High School had started Mr. North and had wrapped up Project Give and won in the competition among the high schools, raising 11,020 pounds of food that would be delivered to 75 families in Aubrey Park Elementary, River Road Elementary and North Eugene High School. The school also purchased 75 gift cards of \$35 each for the families.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Tamara Torrence, 1845 Villard St., an Eastside parent with children in 1st and 3rd grades, saw many benefits to co-location with another school and to being in a stand-alone site. Should a decision be made to co-locate, she thought Family School would be a good match for several reasons, including the philosophies of the two schools being fairly similar so the communities would mesh well.

Dan Herbert, 1913 Potter, reviewed the model he had presented at the last meeting to look at how paving alleys had reduced crime and vandalism in the West University area. He indicated that his next diagram showed that finding interrelationships between housing patterns and student achievement was more complicated and would require a more complex model to make the data accessible. He thought there might be computer programs available as a tool to study correlations and alternatives to existing patterns.

COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Paul Duchin, Co-President of the Eugene Education Association (EEA), passed out brochures for the EEA seminar series. In the 12 years of the program, it had provided professional development for the school district and had expanded greatly, through funding from the National Education Association. He said the biggest expansion had come after Mr. Henry's office provided FTE for organization.

Merri Steele, Co-President of EEA, said presenters came through a coordinated effort of all local universities, Northwest Christian College, the University of Oregon and Pacific University. She said 150 people had signed up for the seminars, and survey results had been outstanding. She added that the organization looked for practical topics people needed and noted that a number of states had called for information about the program.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Receive a Report on the Results of Shaping 4J's Future Survey Newsletter

Superintendent Russell reiterated that Ed Weeks, University of Oregon Planning, Public Policy & Management, had already shared results of the Shaping 4J's Future survey newsletter, which had been distributed to parents, staff and the broader community in mid-October, with staff. He said Ms. Bellamy would be sharing the results at a parent meeting the next day.

Ms. Bellamy reminded listeners that the survey was the third phase of the district's strategic-planning process, which had started over a year ago, and she reviewed the previous two phases. She noted that during phase 2, Dr. Weeks had brought a proposal for a dialogue process to broaden the public conversation about the issues involved.

Ms. Bellamy stated that the survey newsletter had been mailed to all parents, including a Spanish version for households that had indicated they spoke Spanish at home, and inserted in the *Register-Guard*. The questionnaire was posted on the 4J website in English and Spanish. About 2400 people had responded.

Dr. Weeks shared the results of the survey in a Power Point presentation entitled *Shaping 4J's Future Survey Results*. Hard copies were distributed to everyone present. He stressed that a lot of careful work by many people had provided the foundation for the survey and the data was just one part of the public participation process. He said the general sample came from those who received the newsletter through the mail or by insert and chose to respond. The random sample response, 181, was less than he had expected. His report was based on a total return of 2,339 surveys.

Mr. Forrest wondered if there had been safeguards to prevent people from voting early and often. Dr. Weeks replied that addresses had been checked, and duplicates would have been caught in the data entry process.

Mr. Torrey wondered how staff in the Churchill region and the South Eugene region had responded regarding enrollment restriction. Dr. Weeks replied that staff living in the South Eugene region had been less supportive of enrollment restrictions than staff living in other regions, and if he were doing it again, he would ask staff where they worked.

Following Dr. Weeks' presentation, Mr. Torrey commented that the rubber would hit the road when the superintendent presented his recommendations. He would hope there would be an opportunity for public discussion around those recommendations.

Superintendent Russell noted that there would be public hearings, as well as meetings with the community at schools that would be most affected. He said there would be a period of six weeks for the public to weigh in. He agreed that most people would not come out until specific recommendations had been made.

Dr. Martinez commented that the survey had been designed to give the superintendent additional grist for his recommendations and wondered if it had accomplished that.

The superintendent replied that the survey provided useful data, but was just one indicator of what people thought about some of these issues, and there was more processing that would occur. He noted that in addition to the 1½ -year 4J process, he continued to look at what other school districts with similar issues of declining enrollment and achievement gaps had done.

Ms. Gerot felt it was important to remember that the survey was just a step in many processes the district had undertaken since 2000, with opportunities for input with each of the initiatives that have built on one another.

Mr. Forrest commented that the survey for the most part was exactly what he had expected: The staff had been and was ready to make changes and had ideas. Unfortunately, he said,

whatever the board did in Eugene, it would anger about half the people. He observed that the board had some tough decisions ahead and would have to take a leadership role.

Dr. Martinez was curious about the question regarding the general trends between staff and parents. He said one could say the staff was on board and ready for change and they were the experts, or one could argue the other way, that families, parents and the community understood what was in kids' best interest. He wondered about the thinking about the differences by group in terms of staff vs. parents and things that might account for the trends, and whether there was anything in the data that might shed light on the group differences.

Dr. Weeks said he was intrigued by what Dr. Martinez had said and would have to look at the data more closely to see if he could tease out more. He had been curious whether people who strongly favored Option A strongly opposed Option B, because in Eugene people tended to be for one thing and hate the other, but that had not been the case. He said much more typically, people favored one option and were okay with the other, or their opposition was very slight. Because of this, he thought there was a possibility of avoiding some of the rough politics that so often occurred in Eugene.

Mr. Smith said what he took away from the results was that the district basically had satisfied customers. He noted that the board had always believed that the community supported the district. He thought parents might be resistant to change because they were satisfied with where their kids were and how they were doing, so he was not surprised parents would prefer the status quo. He suggested that part of the district's challenge came from how it would spend its built-up political capital, and the district needed to be careful in how it spent the capital.

Superintendent Russell commented that the staff were much more aware of the issues because they had been discussing the issues for several years and because they experience the consequences of the existing structure on a daily basis. He agreed with Mr. Smith about parents, but also thought parents looked at what was best for their kid as opposed to looking at the whole district.

The superintendent added that in the two meetings that had been held with staff, a wide range of differences had emerged, as well as a huge variety of things staff felt should be done or not be done.

Dr. Webber-Davis remarked that the questions regarding providing support for transportation were wonderful, but they did not address the question of the cost, who would bear the cost, or the state guidelines that would be involved. She asked the superintendent whether the board would be able to take a look at those types of specific issues when he made his recommendations.

Superintendent Russell said the board would be getting his guiding principles January 16 and his specific recommendations on March 5. Between those dates, he expected a lot of discussion and input. He added that everyone interpreted data differently. There were things that struck him as interesting. It was not a surprise to him that people preferred finding options that would allow low-income students to get on a bus and go to them or put more money into the school where they are. He thought it would be interesting to ask how people felt about kids from more affluent communities getting on a bus to go to school in other communities. He would be thinking about what things meant and where the burden fell in terms of the district's goal of improving achievement for all students.

Dr. Webber-Davis asked whether there were breakouts of data from parents of special education students, and if they were consistent with other parents. Dr. Weeks said the data regarding elementary school size questions were completely consistent, and no differences stood out in relationship to other issues.

Mr. Torrey supported what Mr. Smith said about expecting certain things. He expected people to agree with questions until issues affected them personally. He felt it was easy for people to say they wanted something until they had to pay for it.

Superintendent Russell agreed that was an issue, especially with the revenue forecast and declining number of dollars to work with over the next three years, which would require trade-offs for programs the district wanted to do.

Ms. Gerot thought that was where the superintendent's guiding principles would be helpful.

Dr. Martinez wanted to return to a point he felt was important: The survey questions were worded in such a way that the options were not mutually exclusive, while when it came to decision-making, some of the choices were mutually exclusive. He saw a unique opportunity to look at the data in some interesting ways, because the questions allowed the flexibility to show support for current status and to indicate a willingness to change. He was curious whether it would be possible to get an analysis that focused on the willingness to change by looking at how weak or strong the relationships were.

Dr. Weeks said he could do that and might pay Dr. Martinez a visit when he worked on that. He noted that there had been a number of follow-up calls for the random sample, and one of the things they heard was just what Dr. Martinez said, they had a lot of confidence in the board and administration.

Dr. Martinez reviewed the *Shaping 4J's Future* calendar leading up to the board's anticipated vote on March 19 and invited people to participate.

- January 16 – Superintendent would present guiding principles for his recommendation.
- February 13 – Superintendent would present recommendations.
- February 20 – Public hearing.
- The board was also scheduled to discuss *Shaping 4J's Future* at work sessions and/or meetings on January 30, February 27, March 5 and March 12.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING

Adopt the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Superintendent's Goal Statement and Establish the Criteria for the 2007-08 Annual Evaluation

Superintendent Russell reviewed minor modifications to the draft goals he presented at the December 12 board meeting. The revisions were made following discussion at the December 13 superintendent's staff meeting.

Mr. Smith requested that a section be put back in that he felt had articulated the expected outcome of Goal 3 concerning increasing student achievement. After some discussion, the superintendent said he would put back the original wording.

Motion: Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Gerot, moved to adopt the superintendent's goals for 2007-2009 and 2007-08 evaluation criteria.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously, 6:0.

CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Regular Board Meeting Minutes

The superintendent recommended approval of the board meeting minutes from the regular October 3, 2007 and October 17, 2007 board meetings.

Approve Personnel Items

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

Motion: Mr. Forrest, seconded by Dr. Webber-Davis, moved to adopt the consent items.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously, 6:0.

Comments and Committee Reports by Individual Board Members

Dr. Webber-Davis had attended another 4J Graduation Requirements meeting and had been particularly struck by the good work being done by district staff and teachers around articulation of middle school to high school. She would look forward to opportunities to hear where the district was heading and the initiatives that would result from the meetings.

Ms. Gerot said she had sent members a calendar related to diversity training and shared that Mr. Duchin and Ms. Steele would welcome board members' attendance. She encouraged members to finish reading Ronald Heifetz's book, *Leadership on the Line*, over the holidays in preparation for the board's work in the winter and spring.

ADJOURN

Dr. Martinez adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

George Russell
District Clerk

Charles Martinez, Jr.
Board Chair

(Recorded by Susan Wulfekuhler)

Attachments to Official Minutes:

1. Results from the *Shaping 4J's Future* Survey Newsletter
2. Superintendent's Goals for 2007-08 and 2008-09
3. Personnel Action Items