

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

January 16, 2008

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular meeting at 7 p.m. on January 16, 2008, at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media, posted in the Education Center, and published in *The Register-Guard* on January 14, 2008.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

George Russell, Superintendent of Schools and District Clerk
Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Natalie Harrison, Churchill High School
Zach Schneider-Lynch, IHS, All Campuses
Vivek Patel, North Eugene High School
Katie Melton, Sheldon High School
Noah Henry-Darwish, South Eugene High School

MEDIA:

KRVM

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

Board Chair Charles Martinez called the meeting of the Eugene 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 George Russell stated that he would make his report later in the evening.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Zach Schneider-Lynch related that IHS students were raising money for the Heifer Project to help impoverished people in other countries.

Katie Melton reported that at Sheldon, Mr. Irish was going on and a Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly would be held on Friday.

Noah Henry-Darwish related that South Eugene was doing pretty much the same as Sheldon, the Mr. Axeman competition had started and an MLK assembly would be held on Friday.

Natalie Harrison said Churchill was doing the Mr. Lancer pageant, one of the year's big events on April 10. She had asked some of the executive leadership students for their thoughts on Churchill's dwindling population. Their comments included athletics at other schools like South Eugene and Sheldon, Churchill did not have a lot of funding, big-name colleges did not look at Churchill, and South Eugene and Sheldon had immersion programs.

Dr. Martinez asked whether the funding issue was related to concern about athletics. Ms. Harrison stated she did not know. Mr. Henry-Darwish thought it related to fewer students creating a less competitive environment as far as teams.

Vivek Patel related that North Eugene had changed its MLK Assembly to Tuesday and expanded third period classes so that the assembly could be longer. The Mr. North competition was underway.

Mr. Patel left the meeting.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Dr. Martinez reminded people that during the comment period, the board was there to listen closely, but would not respond.

Dan Herbert wanted to thank board members for the time and effort they put into their work. He thought they were doing a good job, even though he continued to urge them to do more. He had read the superintendent's report on *Shaping 4J's Future* and had been favorably impressed with the format of beginning with goals and principles. He was glad to know it was based on solid research as well as input from the community.

Mr. Herbert was pleased to see two things in the goals and principles that reinforced his notion that the board should look at housing patterns and grow the schools in the neighborhood. He noted that one of the principles said the neighborhood school was a critical resource in more economically and socially diverse communities. He had made the point before that schools and their communities were locked together. He liked that one of the principles, taking environmental sustainability into consideration, indicated the board was willing to look beyond the next step and encouraged him that the board would take action on his favorite topic, housing patterns as related to the student achievement gap.

Kevin Hornbuckle, whose son attended Family School, said he had recently had two experiences that bore on the question of co-location of the alternative schools with regular neighborhood schools. Family School had been putting on a Rainbow Conference every year to justify its distinctiveness. In the last year, there had been no presentations on Mexico, and to

his knowledge, there were no Mexican students in Family School. He felt that having a Rainbow Conference without a social justice element was unbearable.

Last year, when his son was in 4th grade studying Lewis & Clark, the students were asked to project themselves into roles of the members of the expedition. At the parent meeting, he said he felt students could also project themselves into the roles of Native Americans, and a parent shouted to him repeatedly, “so transfer your son to a private school.” He observed that even kids in the alternative schools were expected to adopt viewpoints contrary to the schools’ implied missions.

Annie Lloyd Burchett, a parent of ethnically-diverse children attending Family School, said it was her understanding that Family School and Cesar Chavez shared some resources for art, physical education, technology and high-quality core programs, which was beneficial to both schools. Her son, a 3rd grader, loved going to school with other brown children and with children of multi-ethnic backgrounds. In his class alone, there were five other multi-ethnic students. He also benefited from the richness of Cesar Chavez during lunch. She asked the board not to put Family School and Chavez in with other schools having conflicts as it considered relocating alternative schools. From a parent’s perspective, Family School and Chavez worked well together.

COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were no comments by employee groups.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Receive an Enrollment Report

Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer, presented a brief overview of enrollment projections by school for 2008-2009, enrollment estimates for the period 2008-2012, and responded to board members’ questions, referring to a memo from Dennis Urso, Evaluation Specialist. He noted that the difference between the actual enrollment this year and the projected enrollment next year was a decrease of 287 students, which was a smaller decrease when comparing projections for this year with projections for next year.

Mr. Henry pointed out several significant changes in elementary schools for this year compared to projected enrollments: Awbrey Park’s actual enrollment was down by 27 from projections, Bertha Holt was down by 31 (which he said was significant for that school), Cesar Chavez was up by 38, River Road was up by 31 and Willagillespie was up by 61.

In the middle schools, Mr. Henry said Cal Young enrollment this year was down 20 students from projections, Madison was up 18 students and Roosevelt was down 34 students.

Mr. Henry noted that the biggest losses from projections this year were in the high schools, with North Eugene, Churchill and South Eugene all losing around 100 students more than had been projected, while Sheldon remained flat.

Board Member Eric Forrest thought that given the principles the board was looking at in terms of high school size, when they started talking about having four schools with 1,500 students and projections showed 5,100 kids in 2012-13, it would be hard to hit that number.

Mr. Henry said if one looked at projected changes in enrollment by 2010, Churchill would drop to 961 students, North Eugene would be at 1,137, Sheldon at 1,596 and South Eugene at 1,514. He noted that those numbers could change based on the board's decisions on managing enrollment.

Dr. Martinez wanted Mr. Henry to clarify what was at stake when talking about projections; that they were really talking about resources. Mr. Henry explained that the chart compared the number of students who were in school at the end of September this year to numbers the district projected for next September. Those numbers would be used to provide resources such as staffing and textbooks to buildings, he explained.

Dr. Martinez commented that when comparing the projections, the trend of losses was even more dramatic.

Receive a Report on the Superintendent's Report and Recommendations for Shaping 4J's Future (Part 1)

Dr. Martinez noted that Superintendent Russell, in crafting goals and principles, had provided the context of the ground rules for the recommendations that would be presented at the February 13 board meeting. He explained that this would be a discussion about those principles, with the board providing its input, and there would be no vote.

Using a Power Point presentation, Superintendent Russell reviewed key pieces of his report, including core values driving the development of the goals and principles, noting that it all started with excellence. He reviewed the district's commitment to excellence, equity and choice and what each of those terms meant.

The superintendent summarized survey results, both local and national, and noted that the data were not dissimilar, particularly regarding the issue of choice. He reviewed the goals he recommended:

Goals:

1. To ensure that elementary buildings have sufficient resources to offer high-quality core programs, the targeted elementary school size should range from 300 to 450 students.
2. To ensure that middle schools have sufficient resources and program offerings to provide high-quality core programs, the targeted middle school size should range from 400 to 600 students.
3. To ensure that high schools have sufficient resources and program offerings to provide high-quality core programs, high school campus size should range from 1,200 to 1,500 students.
4. Some smaller neighborhood schools and alternative schools may be determined to be a viable option to:
 - Provide for the diverse needs and interests of students, particularly low income and English language learners;
 - Reflect district approved enrollment caps for alternative schools;
 - Meet enrollment capacity and facility needs; or
 - Serve demographically diverse neighborhoods.

5. The district will be a district of small and medium-sized elementary and middle schools, with four moderately-sized high schools and with highest priority in terms of resources, programs, and staff support directed to neighborhood schools. (The superintendent explained that he considered the size ranges outlined in goals 1 through 3 to fit his definitions of those size ranges).
6. Ensure that school choice and open enrollment do not leave neighborhood schools with limited resources or diminish ongoing efforts to integrate schools economically, racially or culturally.
7. Relocate elementary alternative schools to stand-alone sites or sites with another alternative school. Achieve greater special education service, program and enrollment balance across the district.
8. Achieve special education service, program and enrollment balance across the district.
9. When planning for the future, provide space for all-day kindergarten.

Dr. Martinez suggested getting board members' thinking about the goals section before proceeding to the principles.

Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis thanked the superintendent for his well thought-out goals. She commented that she noticed the mention of various groups, but no specific mention of all district students and thought that should be added. She liked the idea of looking ahead to provide space for all-day kindergarten, which she felt should be available to parents of all types of students in the district at some point.

Mr. Forrest found little to argue with and observed that the rubber would hit the road in implementation, which would require some ranking of priorities. He echoed Dr. Webber-Davis' comments about specifically mentioning all students, because as a parent of students in a large neighborhood school identified as high learners, he felt they sometimes could get lost without a highly-involved parent group.

Superintendent Russell agreed that it would be good to spell out what inclusive meant and stressed that the goals were numbered, but not prioritized.

Board Member Jim Torrey agreed that there was little to argue with, but was concerned that the district had not yet captured the sense of the community and was moving too fast. He felt the survey responses had come from people with burning concerns about the issues involved. He also totally supported all-day kindergarten.

Board Member Alicia Hays said in a survey of Lane County citizens completed for the county's comprehensive plan, kindergarten and pre-kindergarten came out the lowest with only 56% expressing concern compared to other issues such as high school drop-out rates. She observed that people were missing the connection between being ready to learn and success in school. She disagreed that there was nothing to argue with in the goals, because she knew there was concern in the community about the location of alternative schools. She supported the goals, including Goal 7, but wanted to make sure the community had time to get involved.

Mr. Forrest appreciated their comments, but felt the district had plenty of surveys, plenty of data, and had talked about the issues a lot. He believed people would come when the

superintendent's specific recommendations came out, and the board needed to make hard decisions and show leadership.

Dr. Martinez wanted to underscore Mr. Forrest's point. He said it was awkward to discuss goals and principles without specifics, but he understood the need for a sense of the rail. He had no qualms about moving too quickly, because he had seen the time and energy expended to get to this point. He strongly invited people to participate in the discussion.

Dr. Martinez understood that in some ways Goal 4 was a caveat to Goals 1-3. He had concerns about what smaller meant in this context and wondered if there should be discussion about the viability of smaller schools. He wondered if the use of the word *ensure* in Goal 6 was a euphemism for management enrollment.

Superintendent Russell said enrollment management could be one way; another could be differential resource allocation.

Dr. Martinez wondered why Goal 8 singled out special education, but was silent on the English Language Learner Program (ELL), one of the major targets of the thinking around *Shaping 4J's Future*.

The superintendent said ELL was mentioned in other goals, but this one related to location of cognitive and behavioral programs, regional learning centers, and distribution of both throughout the district. He noted that those were brought up specifically by the Think Tank, Access and Options, and Schools of the Future because often those programs were placed in schools with space, which because of the choice program, often meant the schools with smallest enrollment, and most diverse and highest socio-economic status (SES) student body.

Dr. Martinez said there was both a demographic issue and a service issue. With ELL, he said it was primarily a service issue, but he felt it was important to address because some schools had flourishing programs serving ELL students and others had minimal programs that had much harder times meeting the needs for a smaller proportion of students. He shared the sentiment of his colleagues about the importance of all-day kindergarten. He questioned whether the district meant that for all schools, since some alternative schools did not presently have kindergartens, and whether those were considered.

Superintendent Russell said he had recommended that Buena Vista add kindergarten when space became available. He said part of the challenge was that neighborhood schools complained that students came to their kindergartens knowing that in first grade they would transfer to alternative schools. In his thinking, even alternative schools would plan space for kindergarten.

Dr. Webber-Davis asked the superintendent to expand more on Goal 5, where the focus seemed to be on directing resources to the schools, not students.

Superintendent Russell said the number of four high schools was significant, and the goal also specified that priority would be placed on giving resources to neighborhood and comprehensive schools before choice schools.

Dr. Martinez noted a value implication about the importance of neighborhood schools, which he felt made Goal 5 very important.

The superintendent acknowledged that he had a strong bias toward neighborhood schools. He said a decision might be made to have fewer, but the district should ensure the viability of the ones it kept.

Mr. Torrey reiterated that he felt the challenge was how to bring the community along with the board. He wondered what would happen if the district took the enrollment area of each school and the students in that enrollment area and applied the student dollar accordingly, so that if a student chose to leave, the student's money would stay in that neighborhood. He asked whether the district should consider putting a price on choice.

Mr. Torrey noted that the City Council had just voted to do a buildable land study, a first step toward expanding the urban growth boundary, which could affect housing development. He hoped the district would get involved in the process.

Dr. Martinez wanted to reaffirm the district's coherency about the spirit of choice, while at the same time making important distinctions between the importance of choice and the importance of vibrant neighborhood schools.

Ms. Hays agreed and supported choice, but not at the cost of neighborhood schools. She too had read case studies and found them painful, because there was no clear answer to how the district would serve all its values without unintended consequences. She acknowledged there would be conflict and urged the board to slow down in its listening.

Superintendent Russell noted that in fact, Eugene was one of the case studies Boulder, Colorado looked at several years ago.

Dr. Martinez asked for student comment. Mr. Schneider-Lynch saw a lot of goals for bringing up students at the low end of achievement and would like to see a commensurate focus on bringing up achievement for TAG students.

Superintendent Russell reviewed his recommended principles:

Principles:

1. "*What is best for students*" will be the paradigm through which all options are considered.
2. Equity and equality, though closely related, are not the same. Achieving equity will require an unequal distribution of resources and services. Equity involves opportunity, access, elimination of barriers, distribution of resources based on student needs, socio-economic factors, availability of funds for academic and other programs and more.
3. Strategies designed to increase equity should not negatively impact disadvantaged students.
4. Neighborhood schools should have the resources to provide a strong, well-rounded program that includes art, music, physical education and use of technology.
5. When small neighborhood and alternative schools are determined to be viable options, there will be some trade-offs. Some program and service amenities that would otherwise be available in larger neighborhood schools may not be available.
6. Strategies and decisions should avoid increasing, and instead have the goal of decreasing, the range between highs and lows of student demographics among schools.

7. The student population of alternative schools should reflect the diversity of students in the region. Alternative school student demographics should be within a reasonable range of the region average for each demographic group.
8. Communities benefit from having neighborhood schools where families and children are more likely to connect with one another at school and as a result are more likely to be connected to their neighbors and neighborhoods. The neighborhood school is a critical resource in more economically and socially diverse communities.
9. Neighborhood schools should be geographically dispersed, with reasonable walk/bike distances and commute times available to students and families.
10. Boundary changes should be adopted only as necessary to address the goals. Efforts will be made to keep geographically and historically defined neighborhoods together and to consider the proximity of students to school when redrawing boundaries, closing or consolidating schools.
11. Efforts to balance enrollment at secondary schools should be managed through the transfer policy process whenever possible, rather than through boundary changes.
12. Environmental sustainability should be taken into consideration when developing strategies and initiatives related to school buildings, service delivery and transportation, including parent and student provided transportation. (The superintendent said he had been surprised how often this came up at listening sessions and therefore had added this principle.)

Mr. Torrey thought the principles were well-stated. He urged presenting the goals and principles to the City Council and County Commission for feedback, along with initiating a conversation about development.

The superintendent pointed out that he and the board president met regularly with the mayor and city manager to talk about issues that affected both entities, and he thought sharing this was a good idea.

Dr. Webber-Davis expressed concern about families and wanted to make sure they were given information as quickly as possible to facilitate their decisions.

Dr. Martinez wanted to encourage adding the words *all students* to Principle 1. He found Principles 4 and 5 dramatically contradictory and was troubled by that.

Superintendent Russell agreed that the two conflicted somewhat, but wanted to clarify that trade-offs would be necessary to maintain small schools.

Dr. Martinez was more troubled by the use of regional comparison for population data in Principle 7. He noted that the trend around re-segregation of public schools in the country and in Oregon had in part to do with neighborhood characteristics and housing patterns. He felt using the regional comparison rather than a broader view of the district would sanction segregation in those schools.

The superintendent acknowledged that as a concern. He had come back to whether he was willing to pursue a goal of busing kids to another part of town to increase the diversity. He noted that the North Eugene and Churchill regions were much more diverse economically, ethnically

and culturally than Sheldon. He wondered if it would be fair to tell the Sheldon region it needed to look more like the North Eugene region.

Dr. Martinez would say adamantly yes, in referencing alternative schools, because it was about promoting access across the district. He felt if the district was serious about access for alternative schools, the issue went beyond transportation issues and put a burden on the school to do outreach to a more diverse population.

Ms. Hays appreciated his bringing the issue up and wanted to have more of a conversation about it.

The superintendent said the upcoming work session would focus on many of these issues. Mr. Forrest felt if the district was not going to provide district-wide transportation, it would be unfair to hold alternative schools to a district-wide standard and thought that needed to be fleshed out.

Mr. Henry-Darwish believed if the district was trying to help neighborhood schools make connections with neighbors, busing students across the city would go against making some of these communities.

Receive the District's Annual Report on Compliance with Oregon Minimum Standards

Mr. Henry reported that the district was in compliance with the Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools from OAR Chapter 581, Division 22, with one possible exception that required providing kindergarten programs free of charge. He said the district had two enrichment programs that were not all-day kindergarten programs that charged students to attend. The district was analyzing the extent to which the programs were in compliance.

CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Grant Application: Girls' Group Grant

Staff at Sheldon High School submitted a \$4,820 grant application to the EC Brown Foundation. The primary focus of the Girls' Group was to assist 8-12 girls in their individual quests to define their identity and develop self awareness. Once a week for nine weeks, the girls would participate in activities that promote understanding one's self through art, discussions, and other participatory experiences. They would be taught skills to express their sense of self and be given opportunities to practice these skills in the safety of the group. They would be introduced to local health, mental health and social service resources in the community. It was hoped that this class would be held once a year at Sheldon High School.

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

Vote: The motion passed unanimously, 6:0.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING

Consider the 2008-2009 Lane Education Service District Local Service Plan

Debbie Egan, Superintendent of the Lane Education Service District (Lane ESD), reviewed highlights of the Lane ESD Local Service Plan for the next four years, including a full-time school psychologist, two full-time teachers for students with emotional and behavior disorders, and serving preschoolers. The district provided some services for migrant workers or ELL students, career and technical education and safe schools. She said 470 4J educators had participated in professional development, 57 participated in ELL professional development, 1,200 students participated in career-related activities, and 235 educators had participated in professional development in instructional technology.

Ms. Egan expressed appreciation for the superintendent's support of Lane ESD locally and on a state level.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

There were no comments.

ADJOURN

Dr. Martinez adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

George Russell
District Clerk

Charles Martinez, Jr.
Board Chair

(Recorded by Susan Wulfekuhler)

Attachments to Official Minutes:

1. Superintendent's Report and Recommendations for Shaping 4J's Future (Part 1)
2. 2008-2009 Enrollment Projections Report – 12/21/07
3. 2008-2009 Enrollment Projections Report – Revised 1/16/08
4. Annual Report on Compliance with Oregon Standards – January 2008
5. Grant Application: Girls' Group Grant
6. Annual Charter School Reviews for Network Charter School, Ridgeline Montessori, and Village School