

Board of Directors Meeting
School District 4J, Lane County
Hybrid Meeting (virtual and
in-person)
200 North Monroe Street
Eugene, Oregon 97402
Wednesday, September 27, 2023

NOTICE: The Special Board Meeting at 4:00 p.m. will be open to the public to attend in person, via live broadcast on KRVM 1280-AM and 98.7 FM, on the internet at <https://icecast.4j.lane.edu/board> and via Zoom Webinar at <https://4j-lane-edu.zoom.us/j/91225128314>

The board will not be receiving public comment at this special board meeting.

**4:00 PM
Special Board Meeting**

- I. **4:00 p.m. Special Board Meeting:**
- II. Call to Order, Roll Call, Flag Salute, Land Acknowledgement
- III. Agenda Approval

- IV. **Items for Action - Consent Agenda**
 - 1. Oregon School Board (OSBA) Elections: Approve Nominee Judy Newman for OSBA Legislative Policy Committee
 Presenter: Jenna McCulley, Chief of Staff 2

- V. **Items for Information**
 - 1. Interview 7 Finalists for Board Member Position #2, followed by a 30 minute recess 5
 Presenter: Maya Rabasa, Board Chair
 5 hours, 30 minutes

- VI. **Items for Action**
 - 1. Select an Applicant Finalist to Fill Board Member Position #2 27
 Presenter: Maya Rabasa, Board Chair
 45 Minutes

- VII. Adjourn

INFORMATION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING:
Closed Captioning is available during Board meetings through a zoom live feed
which is also displayed at in-person meetings.



ITEM FOR ACTION — CONSENT AGENDA

Date of Meeting:

September 27, 2023

Title:

Oregon School Board (OSBA) Elections: Approve Judy Newman for OSBA Legislative Policy Committee

Presenter

Jenna McCulley, Chief of Staff

Description:

The Oregon School Boards Association is organized as one general state association with up to 21 elected representatives established across 14 geographic regions to support member participation and representation.

In even-numbered years an election is held for odd-numbered positions on the OSBA Board of Directors. Member boards also vote on the OSBA Legislative Policies and Priorities.

In odd-numbered years an election is held for the even-numbered positions on the OSBA Board of Directors. In odd-numbered years only member boards also elect the Legislative Policy Committee.

Nominations:

Serving on the OSBA Board and Legislative Policy Committee provides an opportunity to develop leadership skills and impact issues at the state and federal levels. School board members interested in running for a position on the OSBA Board of Directors or Legislative Policy Committee need to be nominated by a member board within their region. Nominations require official board action.

At the September 6, 2023 board meeting, the Board discussed the 2023 OSBA Elections. Within in that discussion, there was no objection when the Board received confirmation from Director Newman that she is willing to serve on the Legislative Policy Committee.

Candidate nomination materials are due in the OSBA offices by **5 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023.**

Discussion:

The Superintendent recommends that the board nominate Judy Newman for the OSBA Legislative Policy Committee.

The Board will need to take official action via motion to nominate Director Newman to the Legislative Policy Committee.

OSBA Voting:

School boards are asked to vote on the candidate(s) of their choice for their region no earlier than November 15, 2023, following the conclusion of all OSBA Fall Regional Meetings. Votes may be submitted to OSBA between November 15 to December 15, 2023.

2023 OSBA Elections Calendar

Adopted by the Board January 20, 2023

Nomination and election of regional members of the OSBA board of directors holding even-numbered positions and <u>all</u> LPC representatives		
August 21, 2023		Notice of position vacancies, candidate information packets, and official nomination forms shall be distributed to all incumbent directors and boards in eligible regions.
August 21, 2023, through September 29, 2023		A school board nominating one or more of its regional board members to the OSBA board of directors and/or LPC must do so by formal resolution of the board and timely submission of the nomination forms to the office of the OSBA. Nominations are closed after this date.
No later than October 13, 2023		Official ballots are distributed to member boards in each region 30 days prior to the date of the election, but no later than October 13.
No earlier than November 1, 2023		Member boards are asked to vote on the candidate(s) of their choice for their region no earlier than November 1, 2023, following the conclusion of all OSBA Fall Regional Meetings.
November 15, 2023, through December 15, 2023		Submission of votes to OSBA. Each member board in the appropriate region shall have one vote in the regional elections for members of the OSBA board of directors and LPC. The person receiving a majority of the votes cast for any position on the OSBA board of directors and LPC shall be elected.
As soon as possible		In cases where there are more than two candidates nominated for any position, and none receives a majority of the votes cast, a second ballot shall be required between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes. The one receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.
January 1, 2024		Newly elected officers and regional members of the OSBA board of directors and LPC officially take office.

OSBA Resolution Election		
No later than September 29, 2023		All resolutions to be submitted to the membership for a vote must be received at the OSBA offices.
No later than October 13, 2023		Resolution details, along with an official ballot, will be sent to the membership.
November 15, 2023, through December 15, 2023		Each member board in the state shall vote in the general election on resolutions, bylaws amendments, and Legislative Policies and Priorities (even-numbered years only) using the weighted voting system outlined in the bylaws.

OSBA Officer Elections		
September 22-24, 2023, or no later than October 31, 2023		The currently seated OSBA board of directors meets to elect officers. Candidates receiving a majority of the votes cast for any officer position on the OSBA board shall be elected.



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Date of Meeting

September 27, 2023

Title

Interview Finalists for Board Member Vacancy, Position #2

Presenter

Maya Rabasa, Board Chair

Description

Board Member Position #2 was made vacant upon the resignation of Board Member Laural O'Rourke, as of July 8, 2023. In accordance with state law and Board Policy BBE, the board will appoint a district community member to serve in Position #2 until June 30 following the next regular district election in May 2025.

Under Oregon law, board members must be registered voters in Eugene School District 4J, and must have lived in the district for at least one year immediately preceding their appointment. Eugene School Board positions are non-partisan and are not connected to any specific region.

The application period for candidates to fill the board vacancy was open for 5 weeks, August 7 – September 11, 2023, and publicized in numerous ways. A total of 25 district residents submitted applications and one withdrew. The 24 candidates' applications were reviewed by the board of directors and at the September 20, 2023 board meeting, each board member selected 5 candidates. Any candidates receiving 3 or more votes was automatically moved forward to be interviewed as a finalist at this special board meeting, September 27, 2023.

Board members' candidate selections were:

Maya Rabasa—Jesina Hawkins, Laura McGinnis, Thomas Oommen, Heidi Schultz, Ericka Thessen

Jenny Jonak—Alana Folsom, Jesina Hawkins, Laura McGinnis, Thomas Oommen, Ericka Thessen

Judy Newman—Alaire Fajardo, Scott Fellman, Jesina Hawkins, Laura McGinnis, Ericka Thessen

Morgan Munro—Alaire Fajardo, Scott Fellman, Jesina Hawkins, Jessica Lloyd, Laura McGinnis

Rick Hamilton—Alaire Fajardo, Scott Fellman, Alana Folsom, Jesina Hawkins, Daniel Hogan

Tom Di Liberto—Alaire Fajardo, Alana Folsom, Laura McGinnis, Thomas Oommen, Ericka Thessen

The 7 candidates identified by 3 or more board members to be interviewed by the board during this special board meeting, in alphabetical order:

- Alaire Fajardo
- Scott Fellman
- Alana Folsom
- Jesina Hawkins
- Laura McGinnis
- Thomas Oommen
- Ericka Thessen

Board Position #2
Interview Schedule

Time	Name of Applicant
4:00 p.m.	Alana Folsom
4:45 p.m.	Ericka Thessen
5:30 p.m.	Laura McGinnis
6:15 p.m.	Thomas Oommen
7:00 p.m.	Scott Fellman
7:45 p.m.	Jensina Hawkins
8:30 p.m.	Alaire Fajardo

After all interviews are completed, the board will recess for 30 minutes. There will be no discussion by board members of any candidate/s during the recess, which is off the public record. The board will return after the recess and complete the selection process during the special board meeting, a public meeting.

	Maya Rabasa, Board Chair	Jenny Jonak, Vice-Chair	Judy Newman, Director	Morgan Munro, Director	Rick Hamilton, Director	Tom Di Liberto, Director	TOTAL
ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	
Backman, Karen							0
Balin, Samuel							0
Fajardo, Alaire			1	1	1	1	4
Fellman, Scott			1	1	1		3
Folsom, Alana		1			1	1	3
Hawkins, Jensina	1	1	1	1	1		5
Hogan, Daniel					1		1
Jones, Jay							0
Lawless, Matthew							0
Levenson, Burton							0
Litt, Steven							0
Lloyd, Jessica				1			1
May, Ashley							0
McDiarmid, Danny							0
McGinnis, Laura	1	1	1	1		1	5
Oommen, Thomas	1	1				1	3
Scanlon, Cynthia							0
Schultz, Heidi	1						1
Seigel, Odessa							0
Smith, Ronald							0
Stahl, Andy							0
Thessen, Ericka	1	1	1			1	4
Watson, Trojan, Rebecca							0
Wood, Philip							0
	5	5	5	5	5	5	30

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Alana Folsom

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation: Non-profit communications manager

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

I am a mother and community member who sees how important 4J is and I believe that my skills, experiences, and dedication can contribute to the advancement of our schools.

I am dedicated to promoting transparency, collaboration, and accountability within the school district, and am eager to work alongside fellow board members, administrators, and stakeholders to make informed decisions that prioritize student well-being, equity, and academic success..

I am excited about the opportunity to contribute my time, expertise, and energy to the betterment of our education system. I believe that by serving as a 4J school board member, I can help shape policies and initiatives that will positively impact the lives of our students.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

I think the most valuable skill I can bring is my communications expertise. The school board's first goal, is to increase quality engagement between all involved with 4J. This is work I do on a daily basis -- work I enjoy doing, and excel at. I believe I have the background to help 4J increase opportunities for parent/caregiver -- and student -- engagement, and, importantly, help increasing clarity and transparency of communication from the board and the district to the community. Through more efficient, clear, and empathetic communications, we can ensure that everyone's voices are heard as we work towards the board's important goals of improving equity and belonging and physiological safety, closing the opportunity gap, and make clearer our budgetary decisions.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

I am interested in amplifying the voices of underrepresented parents, teachers, and students so we can ensure we are properly meeting their needs. As a new(ish) parent who plans to send her children to 4J schools, I want to do my part to make sure my child has the best and most holistic education possible. I want to make sure that community members feel welcome and able to share their feedback and help to make 4J the best it can be.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

The impacts of COVID are still reverberating across the nation's schools, and Eugene is no exception. Two of the most important issues, exacerbated by the pandemic, are: teacher retention and student success/wellbeing. I can contribute to addressing these concerns by listening to the input of students, teachers, and parents (and my fellow board members) as we grapple with these issues, many of which come down to difficult budgetary decisions. I will work tirelessly to advocate for the programs and opportunities we collectively identify and agree will serve the greatest number of 4J students.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

A board member can only be successful if they have the trust of those around them. This is a volunteer position, embedded within the community, and I look forward to being able to learn and hear from the superintendent, staff, other board members, parents, and my fellow community members. A board member's relationship must be service-oriented. I am applying for this position to serve my community, and very much look forward to the connections I will build.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

I am a parent of an 18 month old who plans to send her child(ren) to 4J schools, as I attended public school my entire life in inner-city Los Angeles. I have two nieces attending 4J schools. I am an involved and interested community member.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

Equity in K-12 education means providing every student with fair opportunities to succeed, regardless of their background. It's about acknowledging and addressing the diverse needs and challenges students face, ensuring they have equal access to quality resources, support, and teaching. Equity aims to bridge achievement gaps, create an inclusive learning environment, and promote a just and equitable society. I'll add, too, that equity extends to educators, recognizing that they need the necessary training, resources, and support to effectively teach a diverse range of students.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

If I were on the school board, I would actively contribute to the goals of diversity, equity, and access in education by advocating for:

- Regular dialogue and collaboration with students, parents, and community members to ensure that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed in the decision-making process.
- A curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives, cultures, and histories
- Fairly distributed resources, including funding, technology, and educational materials.
- Professional development programs for teachers that emphasize culturally responsive teaching practices and strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners effectively.
- Programs that provide support to students who face barriers to success.
- Data-driven decision making to identify disparities and develop targeted strategies for improvement.
- Accessible facilities

In summary, as a member of the school board, I would work tirelessly to ensure that DEI is at the forefront of our work.

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Ericka Cralle Thessen

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation: Physical Therapist for Sacred Heart Riverbend Hospital

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

I am applying because I believe in public education, I believe in the 4J school district and because I believe in our educators, staff and students. I am applying because I believe that public schools unite us as a community. And most importantly I believe that I have experiences and skills to help bring the focus of the board back to the students and on unity of the board and district leadership. I believe that school board members are advocates for the students and community to educate and nurture our future- the youth of Eugene. I am applying because I have a commitment to service to the 4J school district, our staff and students and to the community at large.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

I am a compassionate, reliable, transparent and collaborative team member. I believe that all teams and boards must center respect and accountability in all decisions and board work. My leadership roles and styles are being a bridge builder and storyteller that centers the lived experiences and stories of the people we are serving and representing. I am a clinician who values objective data, research, clear policies/procedures and precise communication. I believe in evidence-based research and practices that is also rooted in the human stories and experiences of the students and staff of our district. I will bring a communitarian and service rooted calm leadership to the board. I have been an active volunteer and advocate in the district for the past 12-15 years and am well aware of the history, challenges and difficulties the board has faced and will be facing in the years ahead as well as the time commitment it entails. I have worked hard to build my leadership skills since applying for the open seat in 2019. Board service has been a dream and goal of mine for 5 years, I do not currently have political aspirations beyond service on this board and if appointed I will run for the seat in 2025.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

I am interested in improving student engagement and voice. I would like to see more use of site councils and town halls to improve community voice and input. I am a frontline healthcare worker and also a parent of students with disabilities and mental health struggles. I would like to see investment in and growth of the student health centers to include one in each region to improve health outcomes and the mental health of our students and community at large. I also feel it is important to increase the efficiency and process of getting students on IEPs and 504 plans as the process is laborious and students suffer during those long wait times.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

The biggest issue ahead for the board funding, in particular working to restore public trust and faith to renew the nearly \$19 million district levy passed by voters in May 2019. This is critical as it is over 9% of the district's operating budget and helps fund school operations and staffing. I recommend the board have town halls in all the district regions as well as online meetings and surveys to gauge the concerns the public has as well as explain the importance of renewing the levy.

I have direct applicable experience with getting a measure on the ballot successfully passed by voters. I served for 18 months on the Lane County Parks Funding Task Force and we were tasked with assessing the needs, engaging voters and coming up with a funding measure. We enjoyed over 60% voter approval in May 2022. I bring solid experience in working with the public on ballot measures.

The other massive issue the board and district faces is staffing shortages and staffing instability. The board needs to work with district leadership to retain and recruit experienced staff and educators. The board and district need to establish a culture of teamwork, safety, acceptance, excellence and mentorship so that we are a district that people want to come work for and stay for many years contributing growth of the talent and treasure of our workforce.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

Communication, transparency, accountability and respect is the key to all of these relationships. The superintendent is the one 4J employee directly recruited, hired and evaluated by the board. The superintendent is responsible for the execution of board policy, vision, goals and expectations both directly and through staff that the superintendent directly oversees. The board-superintendent relationship is one of the most important with continuous engagement, trust and transparency.

The board relies upon staff to get feedback about the effectiveness of policies and curriculum and should be rooted in respect and collaboration. Our staff are our most valuable resource and we need to ensure that staff can give feedback and constructive criticism to the board and district leadership about goals and areas of improvement.

Parents entrust us with their children every day and we must prove that their trust is not misplaced by centering the needs of students in all decisions. The students are why the 4J school district exists. The district needs to always find varied ways to engage with parents where they are and in ways that work in their work and family lives. This means making meetings, official communications and feedback like surveys accessible and meaningful. It does no good to have events to engage the public if it is inaccessible or during most parent's work hours.

The community votes for the board members as well as on bonds and levies that fund our district. The board is responsible for representing the values, views and desires of the people within the district. We owe the public integrity, transparency, engagement, fiscal responsibility and excellence in education. We develop and grow this relationship again with activities like regional town halls, meetings, public comment and surveys.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

I am parent of two former and one current 4J students and I am an engaged and invested 4J district community member.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

I believe that equity in education means establishing a district and schools where all students thrive, are safe and belong. Where we build equitable learning communities where all students have dignity, voice and agency. Where we provide academic excellence opportunities in a science based, trauma informed and both restorative and transformative and social-emotional learning rooted practices. It means

providing an education that is equally accessible to all students, especially students of color, students with disabilities, neurodiversity or mental health struggles as well as students with financial, food and housing insecurity. It means “nothing about them without them”: engaging our most underrepresented, historically excluded and marginalized students and community members in decision making that may or will disproportionately affect them.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

I am a compassionate leader who is reliable, hardworking and who believes in respectful collaboration rooted in the shared humanity of all I interact with. I operate with the values of integrity, transparency and accountability. I have been a volunteer in 4J schools for over 15 years. I have served on site councils at McCornack Elementary, Kennedy Middle and Churchill High schools. I have served on the 4J Budget Committee for two years now. I applied for the open seat in 2019 and have remained meaningfully engaged in the district and board by often attending meetings and at times testifying during public comment. I have board experience formerly with Whole Earth Nature School and Wiggly Tails Dog Rescue understanding the ethical and legal responsibilities of board service. I volunteered formerly doing street outreach with CORE Eugene and have direct experience and knowledge working with unhoused youth. I am currently board president of a local grassroots 501(c)3 charity, the 86 Hunger Foundation working here in Lane County to reduce food insecurity and food waste to all who need it through food rescue, a free market and Lane county's first free food truck.

Personally, I am a single working mother of three young people who have disabilities, who are autistic, who experience mental health difficulties and who are LGBTQ. I have watched firsthand how they struggle(d) in public school systems that fall short keeping them safe and meeting their educational needs. I am a mother who will bring the lived experience of raising school aged children with financial, food and housing insecurity. I understand all too well the pressures and stressors of single working parents/guardians and the barriers that hinder their involvement in their student's education and schools. I have been a frontline healthcare worker for over 26 years here in this community and I understand the unique health disparities in Lane county that negatively impact our students and their families. As a PeaceHealth employee for 23 years, I have perspective and insight on the difficulties on the horizon especially as PH is closing the University District Hospital and some critical services are ending which will negatively affect some of our most at risk students and families. This helps especially bringing experience and insight into the importance of our school nurses and student health centers as well as the importance of improving and growing these resources.

Most importantly, I am committed to the service of our district and community, and I am prepared and ready to serve from day one!

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Laura McGinnis

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation: Sr. Manager of Press & Public Relations for PFLAG National

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

I am a parent of 2 students enrolled in 4J schools, the daughter of K-12 educators, a foster-adoptive parent, a professional in the national civil rights movement, and the beneficiary of public school education from preschool through graduate school, (Master of Public Administration). I value public education and recognize the diversity of challenges faced by public school districts to foster a healthy educational ecosystem. I seek to join the 4J school board to use my experience, my training, and my skills to ensure every student can learn and thrive, every educator has the tools and support they need to succeed, and every school is a place of welcome, inclusion, and safety.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

I bring to 4J a wealth of insight as a parent of students in elementary school, and as a professional with federal, state and local insights into trends and opportunities affecting public education. Professionally, I serve on national federal policy task forces to ensure the rights of every student are protected, no matter where they come from, how much their family makes, their race, genders, disability or religion. I also work with families in all 50 states to help ensure schools adopt enumerated anti-bullying and harassment policies, that school boards protect students' freedom to learn, and that transgender and nonbinary students, faculty, and staff -- like all students and employees -- are treated with dignity and respect.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

Much is asked of teachers and administrators, and as the child of two K-12 educators, I recognize their value. I hope to be an advocate for those who do the hard work in the classroom. I also am aware of efforts to undermine public education and seek to be an advocate -- and a vote -- to ensure that every student in 4J has the freedom to learn and to thrive.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

The school district faces a staffing challenge as we look to FY24 and FY25, inclusive of the loss of temporary federal relief that has aided through FY23 and the need to negotiate in good faith with

administrative staff/MAPS. The district also must evaluate options to deal with a persistent General Fund revenue shortfall, recognizing that the current rate of distribution is unsustainable.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

A school board member is a representative voice of the community, and thus must listen with respect to community and parent voices, including those with challenging insights, with the intent to learn. Others who serve on the board do so with the best interests of the students, staff and community at heart. As elected or appointed officials working in a uniquely lonely public space, it is important to develop collegial working relationships that protect the integrity of the school district, its employees, and the board.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

My family lives in the Santa Clara neighborhood in Eugene. Our two children are enrolled at River Road Elementary/El Camino Del Rio. I volunteer at the school in the afternoons, and as parents, we also volunteer for field trips, school events and activities.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

Every student, Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, straight or LGBTQ+, deserves the freedom to learn. Public K-12 education ensures that every student, no matter their income, disabilities, or where they are from, has the tools they need to be their best and to thrive.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

As a professional working in the national Civil Rights Movement, I would use my personal and professional skills and insights to inform my actions as a school board member. However, to ensure my work on the school board is inclusive and representative of the populations that most rely on inclusion of diversity, equity and access throughout 4J, I would rely on the stories and lived experiences of the vulnerable and underrepresented populations among Eugene's students, families, employees and community members.

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Thomas Anil Oommen

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation:

Education - Administrator

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

I am a parent of children who have attended Eugene 4j schools. I am an educator who has worked with students at every level. I know what it's like to be a teacher. My current work preparing teachers for the work force in a very challenging time has shown me the importance of strong policy and infrastructure to guide our work of providing free public education centered in equity and focused on learning outcomes. I want to be a board member in this moment because I feel called to serve in this capacity at this time.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

My work as a teacher educator provides me with unique insights into the experiences of new teachers in the district. I am an advocate of equity and as a member of a minoritized community that understands my privileges and struggles, I believe I can bring a balanced perspective to the 4j school board. Recently, I have engaged in organizing an event that centers the experiences of the South Asian diaspora. The work that my small team has done to create a space for an often invisible "minority within a minority" has drawn attention at the state level and will provide young people a platform for expression that is authentic to their unique experiences as individuals who are part of the South Asian diaspora. What I bring to the school board is the ability to understand the nuances of minoritized groups that are often exoticized or hidden in Eugene. I bring the ability to see the big picture of schooling in Oregon and understand the importance of policy that appropriately addresses the nuances of youth who have a deep understanding of their intersectional identities that include race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and more. I bring a global perspective and understand the importance of local action.

I am an advocate for youth with a compass that reminds me how to use my privileges for the improvement of the whole community.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

We are in an important moment for public schools, one in which our schools need informed, even-tempered, positive leadership that knows how to listen and respond to the issues at hand. I want to be a part of a board that listens to the public and has the courage to make the right decisions for K-12 students and their teachers. I am well informed about educational issues and pragmatic when it comes to the advocacy of students. I want to be sure that the decisions that we make as a board have positive outcomes for the least privileged students and student groups in our school district. I have earned a reputation as a thoughtful and civic-minded

individual through my service in the community serving on advisory boards and cultivating spaces for professional development that is anchored in equity work. I understand that equity is more than providing access to education and resources – it is also about cultivating a sense of belonging in schools and communities.

I have a deep commitment to promoting inclusiveness and justice in our communities. I believe that is true of everyone on the board and I want to be a part of the emerging school board. If I were to be appointed to the board, I can guarantee that I will work to understand better the values and principles on which the school district wishes to stand and work to move our work forward with those values in mind. I am interested in centering equity and I am equally concerned that it has become a buzzword.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

We are still recovering from the pandemic. The pandemic pulled back the curtain on many of our societal challenges we face and intensified them. In this context, I see student well-being issues as one of the two most important issues confronting the board. The other one is declining teacher morale, which is contributing to the loss of many good teachers. Extreme views about school curricula, specifically having to do with history, identity, and social studies have intensified in many places around Oregon and the nation. As a board member, I will need to keep the big picture in view as I navigate with other board members the everyday issues like snow days, textbook adoptions, and contract negotiations.

There are many reasons to be optimistic about who this next generation of students is becoming. However, based on my work in schools, I also see reasons to be concerned about student well-being. I don't have a silver bullet to offer to what seems like an intensification of stress and anxiety students appear to be feeling. But I do think our youth would be well-served if we attended to a broader array of educational outcomes. Specific subject matter learning goals are important. But so are things like joy, food security, feeling connected, and experiencing material hope.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

My understanding is that the primary role of the school board is to hire and provide broad direction to the Superintendent. A board's role is not to micromanage a Superintendent, but to provide guidance about district priorities as representatives of the local constituencies the school district serves. The board also plays a role in educating the public about school policy and practices.

As for teachers and staff, the board should listen to district employees to better understand the impact of policy on students and families. It is not, however, a board members role to direct or in any way supervise District employees other than the Superintendent.

Board members relations with one another should be cordial and respectful. Differences of opinion about policy are inevitable. There should be space for disagreement and the voicing of divergent views, but this can and should be done with respect and openness.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

I serve on the district's equity committee had three children go through the 4j school system and support partnerships between the school district and efforts to diversify the teacher work force.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

Equity in the K-12 context is anchored in the policy and practice of making sure that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances have equal access and opportunity to reach their academic potential and feel a sense of belonging in the places they choose to inhabit.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

I want to focus on policy that ensures equitable outcomes for the least privileged students.

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Scott Fellman

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation:

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

Public education is the most important service our government provides to a community. It's the way we ensure that all community members have the skills and abilities to make their way in life as contributing young adults. It's the place we set the foundations for future leaders, teachers, and voters to understand our unique system of government. It's where young people and their parents get to build relationships with people who might not otherwise be in their social sphere and learn to see the world through different eyes. It's where we learn about our rights and responsibilities as community members. It's the first chance for many to break generational cycles of poverty or abuse. For many it's the first chance to learn how big and interconnected the world is.

As a recently retired Eugene Police supervisor with a broad range of experiences and education, I'm looking for a way to continue to serve my community. Applying my experience and abilities by supporting our school system as a board member would be a rare opportunity to impact not just today's students, but to build on the hard work of past boards and steer our schools toward ongoing improvement. I want to donate my time and energy where they can have the most positive impact, and education is the best place to do that for my children, and their children's children. I want to give back and to help represent those who can't make the same contributions because they must focus first on just surviving.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

In my life I have experienced the benefits of privilege, and the challenges of prejudice. I have lived in another country where I had to learn a new language and participated in a different kind of school system. I have benefited from my participation in the public education system and seen as a student and parent where the strengths and challenges of such systems impact the people they serve.

I have unique and broad-based experience with the 4J community. I have lived in Eugene since 1989 and resided in the West University Neighborhood, North River Road, South Eugene, and most recently on the rural outskirts of West Eugene. In my career with the Eugene Police Department I served people from all parts of Eugene. I am familiar with every neighborhood, every school's local community, and people from all walks of life and all demographics. I have comforted crying children when a parent was harmed or arrested. I have helped people overcome unfathomable challenges and struggled to help others to no

avail. I have mentored young people who have gone on to lead healthy productive lives. I haven't lived others' lives, but I'm familiar with the entire community, and this would help me represent otherwise underrepresented people by recognizing where their input and concerns might be impacted by board decisions.

I have strong conflict resolution skills in a broad range of contexts. These include assisting residents in conflict with elected representatives or their neighbors, protesters and police, or people in crisis from emergencies, past trauma, or psychological disorders and substance abuse, as well as parents with their children or co-parents and various family structures.

I have extensive experience in collaborative policy development, and implementation as well as a post graduate degree in Public Administration. This includes practical experience with police and municipal policy development shaped through input from subject matter experts, community stakeholders, and involved labor unions. I have learned the hard way what works and what doesn't work to achieve goals and overcome obstacles in a collaborative environment and how to follow up on such efforts to effect ongoing improvement.

I have a demonstrated ability to work with stakeholders on a wide range of issues to address complex matters including everything from working with unhoused people to working with neighborhoods like Whiteaker or the West University Business District, collaborating with non-profits like Whitebird and supporting organizations like the Midtown and Downtown business organizations, Looking Glass and others.

I know how to participate in, and how to lead inclusive discussions by actively engaging stakeholders and how to learn about issues and help find resources and solutions that work within budgetary constraints.

I have prior board experience as a member and as an external resource. I was a Safe Place board member and served on the Temple Beth Israel board. I have worked with other community advisory boards to develop and implement new city policies, and I know how to adjust such processes to be effective and efficient while ensuring that community values are addressed. I have experience and education relating to managing budgets built from people's tax dollars from my work experience and studies in Public Administration.

I have a broad range of other experiences including community outreach, media relations, budgeting, labor relations, and personnel management. While I'm not a certified teacher, I have extensive teaching experience from my years in police and public outreach training and have been a 4J classroom volunteer and Site Council member.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

Some of my particular interests and concerns include ensuring that the quality of public education remains competitive with or exceeds the quality of education available from private education. I am concerned about how we teach our children to behave as members in a larger community, from social responsibility and respect to individual leadership responsibilities we all have a part in. I worry about violence in our communities, and teaching young people how they can resolve conflict. I want everyone to learn to better understand and respect people who are different from them without fearing them, and to understand the underpinnings of our government and society across history.

I want to ensure our students are learning to navigate the modern media world carefully, how to be a critical consumer of information, and how to recognize when someone is playing on their fears for nefarious purposes. The recent rise in racist, anti LGBTQ+ and other discriminatory rhetoric and actions are complex issues, and our young people need to learn how to study and understand the history and future risks of these or other emerging issues for themselves.

I worry that our schools are too focused on college bound students, and don't provide enough opportunities for learning a trade, or pursuing a different career path. I worry that our schools may not

provide enough practical training in life skills like budgeting, navigating government systems, relationship skills, sex education, and preparing for future roles as parents.

Most of all, we know that children who grow up in an abusive home are more likely to be abused or abusers in adulthood. This same cycle applies for drug abuse, racism, poverty or homelessness. Public school is the first place, and perhaps greatest opportunity to help kids break this cycle and set their own paths for success. The most important thing a child can learn in school is how to learn, so they can lead their own learning later in life.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

I think the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years are guiding the district staff in nurturing and ensuring a culture of continual improvement and using the board influence to collaborate with other leaders in education policy in the county and state to find better funding for public education in the long term.

Budgets are always limited. However, there are usually opportunities through leveraging the experience of our own employees, and programs from other places, to find more efficient ways to use our money. The board is one of several groups in a position to tackle potential systemic efficiencies. For example, what if we could save class time and still get worthwhile standardized testing data by leveraging the results of existing tests so we only had to test once to get actionable performance measures?

Throwing money at problems is not a strategy by itself. And yet, if you'll wander into a vision with me for a moment, imagine what would happen to our existing system if we could reach a funding level that allowed us to limit classes to 16 students and pay staff what they're really worth? The additional time per student alone, would have tremendous positive impacts on students from all backgrounds and make it easier to meet our equity goals. The improved pay would ensure we continue to attract excellent staff and retain them.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

My general philosophy is that elected boards should focus on policy level guidance and budget approval that allows professional staff to do their work to the best of their abilities. A board should base its policy guidance on a synthesis of statutory requirements and inputs from all stakeholders. It is important for individual members to be open to input from anyone, and to be able to ask questions to help them in decision making. A board member should not go so far as to determine exactly how policy is implemented.

Board members should be accessible to all stakeholders and should communicate well about board activities, and reasons for those activities. Board members should set an example for district staff and students in how they handle conflict and support district goals and needs.

With the superintendent the relationship is one of supervisor to employee. While the superintendent is an important participant in board processes, board members should provide guidance in terms of what the stakeholders expect, should solicit input in terms of what the district needs to achieve goals, and should hold the superintendent accountable for meeting expectations. If goals are not being met, board members should provide input and support so the superintendent can meet the goals better. It should be up to the superintendent to implement district goals and policies.

With staff, board members should be seen to be taking an active interest in all levels of the organization while being careful not to undermine supervisory structure or conflicting with labor agreements. It's important for staff to know board members care, are engaged, listening, and are considering their input in

decision making. Board members should be public and positive in their support of all district staff. Board members don't need to become subject matter experts in all the various aspects of district work, but they should know who the key district experts are.

With other board members, the relationship should be supportive, respectful, and collaborative. Board members should be willing and able to disagree with each other respectfully and still focus productively on doing the board's work effectively. Board members should support each other, call each other out in a supportive respectful way when needed, and agree to support board decisions once made. Board members should listen carefully to each other and use the strengths of each to help the group make the best possible decisions. Board members should be comfortable admitting to each other when they could do better.

Board members are the representatives of the district's parents, and though they weren't mentioned specifically in this question, I think it's implied that board members also represent the students. In both of these relationships it's important for members to listen and be accessible for input, and that they ensure board decisions consider the best interests and concerns of all involved. Members should be sure questions are answered and that the board is communicating well what their decisions are and why. Board members can be a place to vent frustrations or ask questions, but not all of those will be appropriate for board action. In those cases, board members should listen to add to their understanding of district matters, and then refer parents or students back to the appropriate staff for support.

The board represents those in the community who are not parents. These people are all impacted at some point by the education provided by the district whether as future employers, co-workers, or neighbors and they should be listened to and communicated with as thoughtfully as with any other stakeholder. It's important for the community at large to see that the district's work is valuable and worth supporting, and that won't happen without deliberate attention and interaction. The board is also a member of a larger community of regional, state, and national school boards as well as other governmental bodies such as City Council. As part of this governing community, board members should be actively communicating with peer groups to build support for board goals and public education in general and to ensure collaborative approaches to policy, funding, and strong intergovernmental collaboration.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

As a local police officer, I worked frequently with schools, staff and parents. I provided bike safety presentations at Gilham Elementary, gave presentations at alternative schools, and spoke to student groups at North Eugene HS. I have seen the challenges students and parents from all walks of life face at home. I have seen what happens when students have to worry first about food and shelter instead of education. I have seen how disruptive students can adversely impact other students, and I have seen how much our teachers and staff give beyond just their time in the classroom. I have helped ensure regional law enforcement are prepared to respond to active shooter events, and I have helped teachers lead elementary school students in their first and subsequent active shooter drills and seen how those young children were impacted by those activities.

That being said, I'm not applying to be a 'police officer' on the school board. I'm applying to be a school board member who happens to have police experiences that help make me a well-informed candidate. I have three 4J students in my blended family who started in 4J schools at kindergarten. I have volunteered in the classroom, served on a PTO and served as a Site Council representative working with School Staff and District Staff on facilities issues. Two of our kids are now in high school with the third in middle school. When I think about my connection to 4J I'm not just thinking about past experience, but the present safety and education of our older kids, and the school system their kids may someday attend. I'm thinking about their friends, and their parents, and all their extended connections as well.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

Each child in the 4J district has a different story to tell. Some come from wealth and privilege. Some come from poverty and worse. Some kids find themselves identifying with the more common social norms, some find they don't fit neatly into those old, limited categories. Some come primed to learn, fed, rested, and confident in their ability to succeed. Some come fearful of failure, some are focused on surviving when they get home until they get to the next school day. Some face less common but intensely impactful challenges that may not be well understood by others. From one extreme to the other, and everywhere in between, these kids are our responsibility as a community. Along with their families, we the larger community, and the 4J organization in particular are responsible for helping prepare each child for their futures.

In the case of advanced learners well suited to current educational approaches, this is a comparatively simple task. In the case of children with special needs, it means providing the extra support, or differentiated teaching approaches that will put them on even footing with their peers. In the case of advanced students, it also means helping them excel and not holding them back from their potential. But the steeper hill to climb is for those who need more from schools to help compensate for challenges at home, in their unique learning abilities, and additional needs.

Success means different things for different kids, but every single student must receive, to the best of our ability, the resources and support they need to fit their particular situation. For some this means getting into college, for some preparation for a trade school, for some a GED, or one of several paths directly into the working world. We should have a system that helps each student meet their own potential, whatever path they may need to take.

For the district this means finding the resources to make this vision a reality and making sure we continue to apply our equity lens when making decisions. For the community it means valuing and supporting people who may not be part of their social sphere. For the students it means learning to support each other, to value differences, and to value learning about life experiences that differ from their own.

Lastly, equity for K-12 education means not assuming that what we're providing is adequate. It means supporting and continuing a culture that constantly strives to do better for everyone. This means listening, considering, and applying input from those who traditionally haven't been heard as well as updating our approach through application of research based best practices.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

I know how important it is to have diversity of opinion when making decisions that impact large groups of people. While one person can't represent everyone and all their varied stories, as a board member my prior public service would help me to represent a wider range of 4J residents than most. At a minimum I would bring experience with a wide enough sampling of people of different backgrounds from throughout Eugene 4J to know when I couldn't adequately represent them without getting direct input from them.

This same experience would help me assist the board to develop policy that fits as well as possible for the most people possible, while giving staff the flexibility and resources to fill in the gaps where equity and access are challenged. This is a core value for me because I know from experience how much is at stake in our systems for those historically sidelined or not represented in public services. I could also further the board's work by using my media and public presentation experience to share our efforts with the public, gather input, and build support.

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Jensina Hawkins

Email:

Phone:

Home Address: Yes

Occupation: Yes

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

As a local citizen, parent, and business owner, I'm highly invested in the welfare of our community.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

I am empathetic, respectful, and an effective communicator. I've been described as having "an intense curiosity" that drives me to seek answers and collaborative solutions.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

Civic service is of paramount importance to me, particularly when it relates to shaping the future landscape for my children. I am the vice chair of the Eugene police commission, and I serve on the Community Health Council of Lane Council. As a formerly single mother living in deep poverty in the 4J school district, and as a current married parent of four children, I am wholly committed to advocating for the equitable allocation of resources for all of our future citizens and community leaders.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

The public's perception of the efficacy of the school board took a direct hit in the last year from some turbulent events. I would respectfully engage with fellow board members to present an example of how diversity can still result in solidarity.

Security, both physical and perceived, is prominent in the minds of most 4J citizens. I would request to participate in fact-finding conversations around the absence or presence of SROs, and furthermore I would diligently strive to present the final resolutions in a manner palatable to the majority of the public.

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

Respect, respect, respect. Respect for the board who makes decisions, respect for the staff who have to carry out those decisions, respect for the parents who may not appreciate those decisions, respect for the community who may not receive a full understanding of those decisions.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

In addition to my daughter at Churchill High School and another daughter in Chinese Immersion School, I also have a son who graduated from Churchill High School and another daughter who will hopefully attend Chinese Immersion School.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

The Bush administration made the expression, "No Child Left Behind" trite and cliché, but the underlying philosophy remains. Every child deserves equal and open access to the very best their community can offer to set them up for success.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

I am a Korean American woman, raised by White parents, married to a Black man (who is the current president of Lane NAACP), and together we have six children of multiple races. I am a medical software consultant who specializes in assisting Federally Qualified Health Centers with providing equitable, quality care to all the underserved, underprivileged, and underrepresented communities. Hopefully my record speaks for itself.

**Board Application – Position 2
September 2023**

Full Name: Alaire Fajardo

Email:

Phone:

Home Address:

Occupation: Self Employed

Why are you applying to be a 4J school board member?

I recently moved to the 4J district from Junction City where I served on the Junction City School Board for one year. During that time I was actively involved in a complete overhaul of our school board policies, creating a new strategic plan, our equity advisory committee, and during this process I found that I am passionate about helping to create a school environment where all students feel a sense of belonging to they can learn and grow to their full potential. I feel strongly about getting involved with our local community, and now that we are living in the 4J district with 4 children who are attending school here, I am hoping to start getting active in our community.

What strengths do you think you will bring to the school board?

I believe one of my biggest strengths is my communication skills. I understand the school board is a non-partisan seat, and therefore we have people serving from all walks of life. I value listening to others and trying to understand their perspective, even if I do not agree. I believe we are here for the children, teachers, and staff that help make up the district and communication is key to ensuring we work together to create a safe and respected school environment. I am also a strong leader who is not only passionate, but compassionate. I believe in leading by example, and if we want to raise children who are going to be strong leaders, they need to see strong leaders engaging with one another in a way that will get things done. I also have experience on a school board and during that time we were able to make many strides in improving our district.

What are some of your particular interests or concerns?

My interest is in helping to create a safe learning environment where all kids can learn and grow. I have more of a community oriented mindset and believe that perspective is what I can bring to the table. I am new to this district so I don't feel like I have enough information to have any serious concerns, my hope is to be an active participant who can collaborate with the board, superintendent, and community to ensure our students and families feel a sense of relief knowing our school board and district is working hard to ensure their students are getting the best education we can provide.

What do you think are the two most important issues confronting the board in the next two years, and how can you contribute to addressing them?

Being new to this district, I am not sure I have enough information to make an informed response to this question. I do however, believe I can contribute to the conversations that are already being had. If

appointed, I will be a collaborative member who is quick to listen and slow to speak when needed. I will place value on everyone's insights and bring my knowledge and expertise to the table, when I have some!

Effective board members must engage in a variety of relationships, for example, with the superintendent, staff other board members, parents, and the community. How do you perceive a board member's relationship with each of these?

As a board member it's important to understand your role, when in the board room and out of the board room. I am a very relational person, and value community, good communication, respect, and collaboration. My hope is to have a relationship with all stakeholders that upholds these values and allows people to know I am a safe person to communicate with, no matter what the situation is.

Please describe your connection to Eugene School District 4J.

We are new to the 4J district, and have 4 children who are attending schools here. I have a 17 year old niece who came to me this year through foster care and will be attending Sheldon, a 15 year old daughter who is a sophomore at Sheldon, and 13 year old twin boy's who are at Monroe Middle.

What does equity mean to you, as it relates to K-12 education?

Equity means everyone has an opportunity to succeed and receives what is specifically necessary for their situation. It also means everyone has the opportunity to learn in an environment that is safe, and inclusive for all.

If you were on the board, how would you see yourself contributing to the goals of diversity, equity and access in education?

As a Latina woman who was in foster care, adopted at age 10, then had divorced parents at the age of 12, and found myself on the streets and pregnant at the age of 17, and then getting a bachelorette degree in Psychology at the age of 35 with 5 children, I have a unique perspective that will be invaluable to our goals of equity, diversity, and access to education.



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

ITEM FOR ACTION

Date of Meeting

September 27, 2023

Title

Select an Applicant Finalist to Fill Board Member Position #2

Presenter

Maya Rabasa, Board Chair

Description

Upon return from a 30-minute recess, the special board meeting will be called back into session and the board will engage in a process to select one of the finalists to fill board member position #2.

Each board member will name one of the candidates as their choice to fill the vacancy. If a candidate gets named by four or more board members, that person will be selected to fill the vacancy.

If all candidates are named by fewer than four board members, there will be a second round where each board member will name two candidates as their top choices.

If the first two rounds do not result in a selection, then the board chair can open the floor for board member discussion regarding the candidates, and then conduct two further rounds of naming 2 top candidates.

If a round identifies more than one candidate named by 4 board members, a "run-off" round will be held between those candidates, with each board member naming one candidate.

When one candidate emerges with the most votes, a formal motion is made and seconded and the board votes on the candidate.

Oath and Certification of Appointment

The Superintendent will administer the oath of office to the interim board member at the beginning of the October 4th board meeting.

	Maya Rabasa, Chair	Jenny Jonak, Vice-Chair	Judy Newman, Director	Morgan Munro, Director	Rick Hamilton, Director	Tom Di Liberto, Director	
ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	ROUND 1	TOTAL
Thessen, Ericka	1	1				1	3
McGinnis, Laura				1			1
Oomen, Thomas							0
Fellman, Scott			1		1		2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

	Maya Rabasa, Chair	Jenny Jonak, Vice-Chair	Judy Newman, Director	Morgan Munro, Director	Rick Hamilton, Director	Tom Di Liberto, Director	
ROUND 2	ROUND 2	ROUND 2	ROUND 2	ROUND 2	ROUND 2	ROUND 2	TOTAL
Thessen, Ericka	1	1	1			1	4
McGinnis, Laura				1	1		2
Oomen, Thomas	1	1				1	3
Fellman, Scott			1	1	1		3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	12