

EEA Statement to 4J School Board

9-1-21

Good evening Board members and Superintendent Vandercar. My name is Sabrina Gordon and I am president of Eugene Education Association.

I want to start by addressing a statement that was made toward the end of the last Board meeting during the discussion about authorizing ODE allowances for instructional time. District staff said, "It appears that EEA contacted many of you with proposals, and that's a concern." I'd like to make clear that EEA does not engage in bargaining with the school board nor individual board members. EEA members and leaders do, however, communicate with individual board members and the entire board about issues that impact our students and decisions that the board has control over. And we do so every time from a place of love and concern for our students. As the elected leader of EEA, I will assert and continue to utilize my right to speak with board members, of course without violating any law, to communicate what EEA members believe is in the best interest of students.

And now let's talk about the best interests of students as they come back to school next week. Licensed staff continue to have questions about our ability to keep students safe and provide the learning experience that they need and deserve. Educators want assurances in several areas:

- To what extent is distancing by 3 feet a **reality** in our classrooms?
- Does **every learning space** have adequate ventilation or air filtration?
- Will the district direct mealtimes to be outside whenever possible, like Portland Public Schools have committed to for the first 6 weeks?
- Will students get the attention they deserve from a teacher engaged in just **one** mode of instruction, **either** in-person **or** online but not both at the same time?

These are just a few of the critical details that educators need in order to keep kids safe and learning with as few interruptions as possible. We're looking forward to kicking off a new year and want to do so with safety and sound educational practices at the core of 4J's plan.