

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR COMMON GROUND

Eugene District 4J affirms its commitment to equity and belonging

Change brings uncertainty. Education leaders in our area hear anxious questions from our families, partners and community about how changes in our country will affect our local schools that have been so well-supported and reflect the values of the community.

In Eugene School District 4J, our answer is to reaffirm our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment — one where every student is valued, supported and challenged to reach their full potential.

At the heart of 4J's mission is a strong commitment to equity and belonging. Our district policy makes it clear:

The district prohibits discrimination and harassment on any basis protected by law, including but not limited to, an individual's perceived or actual race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, or veterans' status; or because of the perceived

or actual race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, or veterans' status of any other persons with whom the individual associates.

This policy aligns with state and federal law, affirming that who you are, how you identify, and where you come from are valued and celebrated in our schools — you belong here.

We know that recent executive actions and orders have raised questions and concerns. Our team is actively reviewing each new statement, policy and action to assess how they may impact our district, students and staff.

Specifically, we are monitoring changes that may affect student services and funding for our highest-needs students. We are paying close attention to potential increases in discrimination or harm to historically and currently underserved communities, and we are reviewing alignment with federal, state and local laws as well as 4J policies and values. 4J is also engaging with leaders at the local, state and federal levels to seek clarity and advocate for our community, including emerging guidance from the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Governor's Office

This work takes time. Policies and legal

interpretations evolve, and we want to provide you with accurate and thoughtful guidance. We will provide updates as we learn more.

Our commitment stands firm: The Eugene School District 4J Board of Directors has reinforced our commitment through district policies and resolutions:

Resolution 2024-10 reaffirms our commitment to a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for every student, welcoming students of all national origins without barriers related to immigration or documentation status.

Resolution 2025-01 affirms gender identity, expression and equity for transgender and gender-expansive students and staff.

Oregon and 4J recognize that student health and safety are cornerstones of education and that all students are entitled to a high-quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived or actual race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status or veterans' status, and without fear or threat of violence.

All staff and leaders are also entitled to work in environments that are free from discrimination or harassment, and visitors should be able to participate in school

activities without concern for their safety.

These are core values, and we will protect them by all legal means available.

Oregon's Every Student Belongs statute and rule requires 4J to adopt policies and procedures to respond to bias incidents. Consistent implementation of these policies is essential to ensure that all students are treated equitably.

Understandably, people seek clarity in times of uncertainty. We ask for grace as we take the time necessary to navigate a path forward with the support of a community that cares deeply about all its children and their equitable access to a caring, inclusive, high-quality education system.

We appreciate that people of many beliefs and political views have shared how much the well-being and academic achievement of all students means to them. Our children are our common ground.

Every day, schools and educators across our community create moments of magic — welcoming students with warmth, love and a commitment to excellence. Our schools are vibrant centers of learning and belonging because of the passion and dedication of our teachers and staff, families and community.

Together, we will protect and strengthen this shared treasure, striving to ensure that every student receives the very best.

Colt Gill is Eugene School District 4J's interim superintendent.

slant showing Up

BY EW EDITORIAL STAFF

>> This week is **Eugene Weekly's Know Your Rights in the Trump Era issue**, and it gives us hope to see how many organizations and institutions want to ensure that queer, trans, BIPOC, women, immigrants and countless others who are feeling fear right now are supported. Check out (and suggest additions to) our resource guide at [EugeneWeekly.com](https://eugeneweekly.com) and read online extra viewpoints from the community. And next week's issue, in addition to being our annual Love and Sex issue, will have more fighting-the-reign-of-Trump stories.

>> **Overwhelmed with politics? Need a break?** You're always welcome to stop by and cuddle the office dogs — and on that note, check out Biggie in the What's Happening Calendar this week. Speaking of our always-free, never-a-paywall community calendar, that's one place to go to find events and other distractions to take a Trump-free breath (nothing says no politics like goat yoga, right?) You can also go online for a review of *Into the Woods* by Dan Buckwalter, photographs of Public Enemy and others

performing at Restore & Rebuild LA by Todd Cooper and much more. Prefer it in print? Well, not gonna lie, we love our print pages, too. Support *EW* with a personal ad! No, really, go old school! Next week you too can express your love in an "I Saw You"! Tell us you love us, tell your mom you love her, tell your cat you love him! Give us a call at 541-484-0519 or email Classy@EugeneWeekly.com.

>> **Springfield-Eugene Showing Up for Racial Justice is organizing a rally from 11 am to noon Saturday, Feb. 8, at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza.** SURJ says they expect County Commissioner Laurie Trieger to attend and to sign the pledge from SURJ National to protest and resist. Local elected officials, faith leaders and others nationwide are being asked to sign on: "I pledge to show up to protect the rights, safety and dignity of people in my community and resist Trump's antidemocratic and immoral agenda consistent with the principles of nonviolence."

>> **Not surprised but disappointed that the conservative-leaning**

members of the Lane County Commission tentatively approved, by a 3-2 vote, the controversial Old Hazeldell Quarry proposal on TV Butte near Oakridge. Old Hazeldell — associated with Ed King of King Estate Winery — is seeking the rezoning of 46 acres from forest lands to quarry and mine operations. The quarry is opposed by folks in Oakridge who have concerns over big game, noise, traffic, effects on the town's growing mountain biking economy and more. The battle over TV Butte has been ongoing since around 2016, and we doubt it's over yet. Sometimes the little guys win, we hope.

>> Local long time social and political activist Thomas A.W. Brown passed away Jan. 22. **He worked with Our Revolution Lane County, Lane County for Bernie Sanders and more.** There will be a Celebration of Life 11 am to 1 pm March 8 at Theo's Coffee House, 199 West 8th Avenue. Attendees are invited to bring remembrances and potluck offerings.

• **Donald Trump doesn't like the media and, honestly, we're OK with**

him not liking this little alt weekly rag. But in an age where folks are screaming "news desert" and "fake news," here at *Eugene Weekly* we want to give a shout out to the media in this community keeping us informed: KLCC, *The Register-Guard*, KEZI, KVAL, KMTR, *Whole Community News*, KEPW, *Daily Emerald*, *The Torch*, *Eugene Magazine*, *The Chronicle*, *Highway 58 Herald*, *McKenzie River Reflections*, *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, *Oregon News Herald*, Lane County Mugshots Uncensored and more. We've said it before — it's not a news desert, it's more like a news dessert (we're sweet like that).

>> **We are sad to hear that Maude Kerns Art Center has made the hard decision to sunset its longtime Art and the Vineyard festival.** The three-day festival of arts and music that took place around July 4 each year in Alton Baker Park was a community staple. The art center says the costs were too high and the weather "too unpredictable." Also gone from Alton Baker is Eugene Pride, which has moved from August to late June and from the park to the Lane Events Center.