

# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **4J School Board Votes to Hire New Superintendent**

*Dr. Gustavo Balderas named to lead the Eugene School District*

The Eugene School Board has voted to make a formal offer of employment to Dr. Gustavo Balderas to become the next superintendent of Eugene School District 4J.

After a months-long superintendent search process that has involved extensive community and staff involvement, it was announced last week that Dr. Balderas was the board's top candidate and that the board's negotiating team was beginning discussions with him about contract terms. The board voted 7-0 in open session this evening to extend an offer of employment to Dr. Balderas at a salary of \$185,000. The board is expected to finalize a contract with Dr. Balderas soon.

School board chair Jim Torrey says, "Dr. Balderas is a committed, caring, high-caliber educational leader. He is thoughtful and committed to education and understands the importance of equity and inclusion. He is also a committed listener and collaborator. We saw in his visit to Eugene that he really heard what our community said they wanted in a new superintendent. He is praised by colleagues and community members for his extraordinary commitment to inclusive, collaborative leadership. We believe he is an excellent fit for our district and for Eugene."

"I am deeply humbled to be offered this opportunity and eager to join the 4J team," Dr. Balderas says. "The Eugene community's support for and engagement with public schools are truly exceptional, as is the district's commitment to providing quality education even in difficult circumstances. I'm looking forward to returning to my home state of Oregon, setting down roots in Eugene, and engaging with the district and the community to carry forward that tradition of excellence."

Dr. Balderas is in his 25th year as an educator, currently serving as superintendent in the Ocean View School District in Huntington Beach, Calif. Prior to that he served as superintendent of the Madera Unified School District in Madera, Calif.

Dr. Balderas has served in elementary and middle school administrative roles and has served as a high school teacher and counselor in the Hillsboro School District in Hillsboro, Ore. His central office experience includes being an area executive director overseeing a cluster of K-12 schools and coordinating district curriculum as well as serving as an assistant superintendent of support services, also all in the Hillsboro School District.

Some of his career highlights include his work around equity and cultural proficiency through the state-level work of the Oregon Leadership Network and the State Action for Educational Leadership Project, and with district work in developing equity systems around instruction, student behavior and hiring practices.

#### *4J School Board Announces Superintendent Finalist – 2*

Dr. Balderas graduated from Western Oregon State College with a secondary education degree, received his master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Portland State University, and completed his doctoral degree in educational leadership at the University of Oregon.

Dr. Balderas currently serves on the Huntington Valley Boys and Girls Club Board and the Encuentros of Orange County Board, and is the Southern California Board representative for the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators. Dr. Balderas focuses his volunteer time on working with non-profit organizations that focus on underserved students. He is the co-founder and past president of the Oregon Association of Latino Administrators.

The search for a new superintendent began last year, after Dr. Sheldon Berman announced that 2014–15 would be his final year as superintendent of Eugene School District 4J. The school board began the superintendent search process by selecting an executive search firm, appointing a citizen screening committee and seeking community input on the strengths and qualities desired in the district's next leader. This public input was used in developing the position description. The nationwide superintendent search garnered 29 applicants.

The screening committee reviewed applicants, interviewed top candidates and recommended semifinalists to the school board. The board selected a slate of semifinalists to interview and put forward three finalists. The finalist candidates returned to Eugene on March 5–6 for a public candidate forum and additional interviews with stakeholders including school staff and community groups. The board considered input from community and staff members in selecting Dr. Balderas from a strong pool of candidates.

Dr. Balderas is expected to begin his position on July 1. Prior to that, he will return to Eugene this spring to plan for the transition with the school board and departing superintendent Shelley Berman.

#### **ABOUT THE DISTRICT:**

Eugene School District 4J is a K–12 public school district in and around Eugene, Ore.

*Enrollment:* About 16,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade

*Schools:* 18 elementary schools, 1 K–8 school, 8 middle schools, 4 comprehensive high schools, alternative high school programs. School programs include Spanish, French and Japanese language immersion, international high school programs, and strong and varied neighborhood schools; there also are 4 public charter schools located in the district

*Staff:* About 1,500 full-time equivalent positions

*Budget:* \$152 million general fund operating budget for 2014–15

*Location:* The district spans 155 square miles including most of the city of Eugene and areas outside the city boundaries. Eugene has a population of about 160,000 within the city boundaries and is home to the University of Oregon, the state's largest university.

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