The Alternative School Review Report

Submitted to Superintendent Russell

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Introduction

The Eugene School District 4J is in its second year of a comprehensive effort to support all of the district’s elementary schools – neighborhood and alternative – in providing effective learning environments and equitable access and opportunity for all the district’s children and families.

As one component of that effort, the Board has directed the superintendent to periodically review the district’s alternative schools to ensure that they continue to meet Board and district goals, and perform consistent with Board policy. The superintendent appointed a review team consisting of Carl Hermanns, Jerry Henderson, Kay Mehas, and Ray Gross to conduct these alternative school reviews.

Last year four alternative schools were chosen for review: Eastside, Family School, Hillside, and Magnet Arts. The remaining four alternative schools – Buena Vista, Charlemagne at Fox Hollow, Yujin Gakuen, and Corridor – are the subjects of this report.

In the introduction to last year’s Alternative School Review Report we outlined the research and the historical and local context that informed and guided our thinking as we proceeded with the review process. We have included that section in the Appendices of this year’s report for readers who would like to review those factors (see Appendix 11).

Prior to presenting the criteria assessments for the schools we reviewed this year, we would like to provide a brief overview of four topics that are pertinent to the assessments: language immersion, special education and language immersion, grade-level caps, and diversity.

Language Immersion

Three of the four schools we reviewed this year are language immersion schools. Of those schools, Yujin Gakuen and Charlemagne have implemented a program in which children spend half of their day learning in the immersion language and half of their day learning in English. We refer to those programs as 50/50 in our school criteria assessments. Buena Vista is in the process of transitioning from a 50/50 program to what we refer to as a full immersion program, in which children spend their entire day learning in the immersion language until 3rd or 4th grade, when English instruction is then added and the program begins to function as a 50/50 program. Because most children served by this type of program speak English as their home language, research has shown that the students learn their new language effectively and efficiently through the immersion program and generally catch up quickly to their monolingual peers when instruction in English is introduced at the 3rd or 4th grade.

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1 Buena Vista’s immersion transition will be completed next year. This year, half day English instruction is introduced in 3rd grade; next year it will be introduced at 4th grade.
Special Education and Language Immersion

While serving children with special needs is an important concern for all schools, the relationship of special education with our language immersion schools raised specific questions in our reviews of the immersion schools. As reported in the Superintendent’s Access and Options report, there have been anecdotal reports that some alternative schools, including some immersion schools, had discouraged special education students from attending their schools, or counseled them out of their programs. These reports led us to consider three questions:

1) Are the immersion schools discouraging special needs children from attending their schools, or counseling them out once they are there?
2) Is the relatively low percentage of special education students attending the immersion schools a result of an unwelcoming atmosphere, or the result of parents’ and/or the schools’ beliefs that immersion schools would not be educationally helpful or appropriate for special needs students? and
3) What does the research about special education and language immersion tell us?

In examining question 1, principals and staff at some of our immersion schools acknowledged that in the past, children with special needs have been counseled out of immersion programs, and/or advised that language immersion programs might not be educationally appropriate for them. However, all three schools emphatically assert that although that may have happened in the past, it does not happen now. All three schools do have special education teams, and we observed special needs children being served in all three schools during our school visits. We recognize that in certain cases the placement of a special needs child in an immersion program could be legitimately questioned by the child’s parents or the school. In such cases, we agree with the Access and Options recommendation which states that the school must have a meeting with the principal, the parent, and a special education administrator to review why the child’s placement is being questioned, in order to assure that attending a different school would in fact be in the best interest of the child; and, if that is the case, to determine where a better placement for the child might be. We recommend that the district implement this procedure immediately.

Question 2 asks if the relatively low percentage of special education students attending the immersion schools is a result of an unwelcoming atmosphere at the school, or of parent/community beliefs about the educational appropriateness of immersion schools for special needs students. Our observations during the school visits and our conversations with the staffs at each school did not qualify the review team to definitively assess if there are underlying issues at the schools that may discourage special education students from attending the immersion schools. Therefore, while we did not observe any such issues and believe that the schools are sincere in their desire to serve special needs children well, we have recommended in the individual school reports that district staff work with the immersion schools to look at their school culture and climate to determine if there are impediments to special needs children, or any children, attending and being well-supported in their schools.

Regarding parent/community beliefs, we did find evidence that some parents and community advocates for special needs children believe intuitively that language immersion programs may not be suitable for special education students. Discussions with community advocates and parents revealed that for many, the idea of children
with learning challenges taking on the additional challenge of learning a second language seemed problematic.

Question 3: The research. It is not surprising that many people would intuitively believe that children with learning challenges would encounter even greater and more problematic challenges if required to learn, and learn in, a second language. Research over the past 25 years, however, indicates that this is not the case. We have provided a list of selected citations (see Appendix 10) that presents findings from research conducted between 1982 and 2004. Although there are some conflicting findings (see Cummins, 1984 for a critique of conflicting evidence), research evidence seems to largely converge on the consensus that children with learning challenges do as well in immersion programs as children with similar challenges do in monolingual English programs. In other words, there is no differential effect – children with learning challenges make equivalent academic progress in immersion programs to children with similar learning challenges in monolingual English programs. Additionally, children with special needs in immersion programs can become quite competent in understanding and speaking the second language, which, besides being a wonderful accomplishment in itself, can provide a tremendous boost to the confidence and self-esteem of these children. Therefore, the research strongly indicates that in general, there is no reason that special needs children whose families are supportive of an immersion program should not participate in an immersion program.

That said, the research also is clear that there is great variation among all children, and that there may be children with particular learning challenges for whom an immersion program would not be optimal. It is at this point that district special education staff with specific understandings of language acquisition and child development need to be called in to assist the school staff and the child’s family in making a program determination that will be most beneficial for the educational success of the child.

A quote from Genesee, et al. (2004, p. 212) sums up our thinking about language immersion and special education:

“Finally, it is always important to realize that dual language learning itself is not a cause of language impairment. Everything we know about children tells us that they are capable of acquiring more than one language, simultaneously or successively. Furthermore, our own work on bilingual French English children with SLI [selective language impairment] as well as Bruck’s earlier work on school children with language impairment attest to their ability to learn more than one language. This research also shows that children with SLI will be challenged in learning two languages, just as they are challenged in learning one language. Our task is to create the optimal conditions that will make this possible given the capacities that children with and without impairment have.”

Grade-level Caps

Last year the superintendent recommended, and the board approved, the removal of grade-level caps for the four alternative schools reviewed that year. The reasoning for this recommendation centered around equity and educational justification. Neighborhood schools must accommodate the children who come to their doors, often resulting in fluctuating class sizes and staffing modifications across grade levels; alternative schools with grade-level caps were significantly advantaged by predictable
and stable class sizes at each grade. We concluded that since there was no strong educational justification for retaining grade level caps for the four alternative schools we reviewed, there was no basis to support the continuance of the caps. We therefore recommended the elimination of grade-level caps for those four schools. We did not include the language immersion schools in that recommendation because we were open to the possibility that there could be a strong educational justification for grade-level caps in those schools. The Board also chose not to include Corridor because we had not yet reviewed the school, and therefore could not make a determination based on evidence.

This year we discussed grade-level caps with the immersion schools and with Corridor, and asked them to carefully consider the issue and make an educational rationale for grade-level caps if they thought it appropriate to do so. After looking closely at the data and carefully discussing it with the review committees from each school, we determined that there was not a strong enough educational rationale to justify the continuance of grade-level caps in the immersion schools or Corridor, and therefore recommend that grade-level caps be eliminated for all alternative schools.

Diversity

Criterion #5 of the Alternative School Review document asks: “To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?”

This criterion reflects a major component in the district’s goal of creating and preserving a system of schools that serves all of Eugene’s students equitably and well, and in doing so forestalls the deleterious consequences of economic, racial and ethnic resegregation that we can see so clearly in many of this nation’s cities.

Eugene has a district-wide school choice system in which children and families can attend their neighborhood school or apply to attend any other school in the district, neighborhood or alternative, if space is available at that school. The district’s challenge is to ensure that its school choice system facilitates the district’s goal of providing an excellent and equitable education for all its students, and, in concert with other city entities, contributes to preventing the resegregation of the district’s schools.

Criterion #5 speaks directly to this challenge. As we noted in the introduction to last year’s report (see Appendix 11), we believe that the Board’s strategy of 1) strengthening neighborhood schools, and 2) ensuring that alternative schools are equally accessible and welcoming to any children who would benefit from their distinctive educational programs, presents a promising blueprint for attaining the district’s goal of equitable and excellent education for all children.

Furthermore, we strongly believe that the Board’s strategy of strengthening neighborhood schools is the key to both an excellent school system and an equitable system of school choice. With a strong system of neighborhood schools, it is likely that most parents will choose to send their child to their neighborhood school unless there is a specific educational program that parents feel would best support their child’s educational success, and that program is not available in their neighborhood school. In that case, within the parameters of the district’s school choice program, parents can access the neighborhood or alternative school they believe would best meet the
educational needs of their child. With strong neighborhood schools, school choice is about meeting students’ educational needs, and it goes in both directions: just as some families and children might want to access a particular program at an alternative school, others might want to access a program offered at a different neighborhood school. This type of system, we believe, can lead to more balanced populations of students in all schools.

For the choice system described above to become a reality, however, the district needs not only strong neighborhood schools, but also alternative schools that are welcoming to any family that might desire their specific educational programs for their children, and that are ready to effectively teach those children. Criterion #5 of the alternative school review process addresses this second part of the Board’s strategy.

In each of the school assessments contained in this report we assess diversity by examining: 1) objective measures of the diversity of the school’s student population, as exemplified by the school’s racial and ethnic makeup, the percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch (SES), and the percentages of English language learners (ELL) and special education students; and 2) evidence of school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations. Based on our findings in these two areas, we have made recommendations that we believe will enable the schools to meet their obligation to welcome and to serve all children well.

In examining the measures of diversity cited above, we compare the individual school percentages with district averages across all elementary schools. This basis of comparison allows us to make relative conclusions about the level of the school’s diversity. While we believe that this is an appropriate basis of comparison for the purposes of these reviews (i.e., to assess if the schools are relatively diverse, welcoming to all families, and ready to teach diverse student populations effectively), we note that alternative schools do interact with their neighborhood schools and their regions in varying and complex ways.

We briefly explore this interaction in Corridor’s report to underline the complexity in examining diversity and how alternative schools can impact their communities. For example, approximately 86% of Corridor’s students reside in the North region. Corridor states that by providing a specific educational program for families that might otherwise choose a school outside the region, they are retaining families in the North region and thereby contributing to a more diverse student population across all schools in the North region, including the middle schools and the high school.

On the other hand, if we consider socioeconomic status for the purpose of this example, we see that Corridor (26% FRL) has a lower percentage of children living in or near poverty than any of its four surrounding neighborhood elementary schools. Approximately 26% of Corridor’s students come from the Howard attendance area (72% FRL), 19% from River Road (79% FRL), 22% from Awbrey Park (43% FRL), and 19% from Spring Creek (41% FRL).² It can be argued that this data suggests that Corridor is attracting the more affluent children from surrounding neighborhood schools and thus contributing to the concentrations of poverty in those schools.

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² See Appendices 8a and 8b for district elementary school transfer data and FRL% by school and region.
But a closer look at the data also indicates that of all of the children who transfer from North’s four neighborhood schools’ attendance areas, 26% transfer to Corridor, 18% transfer to Yujin Gakuen (the region’s other alternative school), 14% transfer to other alternative schools outside the region, 18% transfer to other neighborhood schools within the North region, 15% transfer to other neighborhood schools outside the North region, 7% transfer to district charter schools, and 2% transfer to other district alternative programs. Thus it could also be argued that this data suggests that families are choosing a wide variety of educational options throughout the district. And the data can be parsed even further to provide additional perspectives.  

We include this brief analysis here because we believe that it is relevant to the larger issue of concentrations of poverty and resegregation within the district, and we urge the district to consider this data and its implications in the strategic planning process that is now taking place.

For the purposes of this review, however, we believe that the data and recommendations we have provided in the school assessments are appropriate and will assist the alternative schools in effectively addressing issues of equity and diversity in order to meet the Board’s requirements for retaining their alternative school designation.

The Alternative School Review Criteria Assessments

The alternative school review criteria assessments for Buena Vista, Charlemagne at Fox Hollow, Yujin Gakuen, and Corridor are presented below.

In implementing the review of each school, the review team acquired district data relevant to the eight review criteria. We then requested that each school provide the team with supplemental information about selected criteria (see Appendices 1-4 for the individual school review documents). We concluded the review process with a visit to each school, as described in each school’s assessment.

You will find similar language in the four assessments that explains procedures or processes that were consistent across all four schools. We did this to assure a consistent format and to facilitate comparisons the reader may wish to make across schools.

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3 In the original version of this report, we collapsed all neighborhood schools plus the charter schools into “other neighborhood schools” (40%). Including charter schools was an oversight. In this version we report neighborhood schools at 33% (18% + 15%) and charter schools at 7%. Our conclusion based on those statistics – that it could also be argued that families are choosing a wide variety of options throughout the district – remains unchanged.
Buena Vista Criteria Assessment

Introduction
Buena Vista Elementary School is located at 1500 Queens Way, in the Sheldon region of Eugene. It serves 251 students in grades 1 through 5 in a Spanish language immersion program. Children are fully immersed in Spanish in grades 1 and 2, and beginning in grade 3 transition to a 50/50 program in which the students spend 50% of their day learning in Spanish and the other 50% of the day learning in English. The Buena Vista teaching staff consists of 10 classroom teachers, 1 facilitating teacher, 1 part-time music teacher, 3 instructional assistants, part-time library and technology support staff, and a special education team consisting of a resource teacher, a school psychologist, a speech and language specialist, and a special education instructional assistant. Buena Vista is the elementary portion of a 1-12 Spanish immersion program that continues in Monroe Middle School and Sheldon High School.

The review team visited Buena Vista on Monday, 11/6/06 from 9:45 AM to 3:30 PM. During that time we had an initial meeting with representatives from the school’s review committee and the principal; visited each of the ten classrooms, grades 1 through 5; met with parents and the staff of Meadowlark regarding Criterion 8 during lunch; and concluded the day with a follow-up meeting with Buena Vista review committee members, teachers, and the principal.

Criteria Assessment
We present data below that contributes to our determination of whether Buena Vista's program continues to meet the board requirements for alternative school designation.

Criterion 1. Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

1.a How does the alternative school’s program compare to the originally approved charter or proposal: What is Buena Vista’s purpose now?

Buena Vista’s Alternative School Review document proposes that because its students and families are citizens of a culturally diverse nation and a globally interdependent world, there is a need for more individuals to become competent in more than one language. In preparing its students to succeed in such a world, Buena Vista’s purpose, and its distinctive strategy to achieve its purpose, centers on a program that teaches students to become bi-literate in Spanish and English and to thus graduate from Buena Vista with a command of the Spanish and English languages, an in-depth understanding and appreciation for the many cultures in which Spanish is spoken, an appreciation of how customs and language in the U.S. have been influenced by many different cultures, and a recognition of the worth and contributions of all people and their cultures.

During our school visit we observed evidence of Buena Vista’s emphasis on bi-literacy in all classrooms and throughout the school. Although Buena Vista has
evolved over time, it is our understanding that Buena Vista’s current purpose is reasonably consistent with its originally approved proposal.

1.e To what extent and how do the alternative school teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

The instructional strategy specific to Buena Vista is language immersion. All students are instructed in Spanish in grades 1 through 5, with instruction in English added at grade 3. The first and second grade students spend the entire school day with a teacher immersed in Spanish. Instruction, work sheets, and conversation is mostly in Spanish; English is used only when necessary to clarify or explain a direction or activity. In grades three through five, students spend 50% of the day learning in English with an English-speaking teacher and 50% of the day learning in Spanish with a Spanish-speaking teacher.

We observed this instructional strategy being consistently implemented in all classrooms during our school visit.

1.f Does the alternative school anticipate any significant changes in its program?

Buena Vista is currently in the process of restructuring its program. Prior to last year, the school had implemented a 50/50 immersion model where all children, grades 1 through 5, spent one-half of the school day learning in Spanish with Spanish-speaking teachers and the other half of the day learning in English with English-speaking teachers.

As explained in its Alternative School Review document, during the 2002-2003 school year Buena Vista’s staff engaged in an intensive study of language acquisition research and chose what is commonly referred to as a full immersion model as the best program to accomplish its goal of preparing its students to be bi-literate by the 12th grade. In a full immersion model children in the earliest grades spend their entire school days immersed in Spanish, with English instruction usually being introduced in third or fourth grade.

The administration and staff used the 2003-2005 school years to prepare to implement the full immersion program, and last year Buena Vista’s first graders began their full immersion journey. Those students advanced into second grade full immersion classrooms this school year, and next year they will progress into third grade full immersion classrooms. The 4th and 5th grades will remain at 50% Spanish and 50% English, which is the current language ratio at these grade levels.

Discussion and Conclusion: Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

Based on the evidence presented above, we conclude that Buena Vista’s Spanish language immersion program is systematically and effectively implemented throughout the school, grades 1 through 5, and thus represents a distinctive educational strategy for achieving the board’s educational goals.
Criterion 2. To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?

We did not discern that Buena Vista’s decision-making process for governance of the school differed in significant ways from other schools in terms of its site council process. We note that Buena Vista and its co-located school, Meadowlark, hold additional combined site council meetings each month, along with combined staff and leadership meetings. As stated in their review document, the representative parties solve mutual problems, brainstorm ideas and plan combined events that will improve both schools’ quality of life for students, families and staff.

Criterion 3. To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

Enrollment: Buena Vista has shown consistently high enrollment over the past three years and maintains a long waiting list, indicating continued strong interest and high demand for the school among parents and students.

Parents and Students: Buena Vista demonstrates continued strong interest among parents though high levels of parent involvement in most aspects of the school. We observed parent volunteers in classrooms during our visit, and there is a large and effective parent organization that develops and coordinates school activities, significant fundraising efforts, and community outreach activities. Continued strong interest among students is evidenced by the high percentage of students who choose to remain in the Spanish immersion program as they enter middle school, and by the numerous former students who return to tutor in Spanish and volunteer in the classrooms.

Staff: As with all four of the schools we reviewed this year, continued strong interest by the staff was evidenced by a shared commitment to, and passion for, the school’s curriculum and students that was clear to us during our school visit. Additionally, Buena Vista’s staff demonstrated strong commitment to the school and its students by their dedication to understanding and implementing best practices, as evidenced by their recent examination of the research on immersion models and their subsequent decision to implement a full immersion model that they determined would be more efficacious for their student population.

Criterion 4. To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?

Our assessment of the data along with our school visit indicates that Buena Vista’s Spanish language immersion model enhances the district’s educational program by providing a distinctive curricular approach to teaching and learning, as explicated under Criterion 1.

Additionally, we believe that both Buena Vista’s program and the district’s educational program would be further enhanced by adding kindergarten at Buena Vista. Based on our discussions with the staffs of both Buena Vista and Meadowlark and our observations of the district’s other two language immersion schools (both of which have
kindergartens), we have concluded that the lack of a kindergarten at Buena Vista currently disadvantages both Meadowlark and Buena Vista.

Meadowlark struggles with the loss of a significant numbers of their Kindergarteners who attend Kindergarten at Meadowlark but then transfer to Buena Vista at first grade. Buena Vista, on the other hand, has to begin re-teaching many routines and aspects of their language immersion program in 1st grade. Our visits to the other two immersion schools indicated a clear educational advantage in terms of language development for children who begin the immersion program in kindergarten.

Because the principal and the staffs of both Meadowlark and Buena Vista seem to generally support the addition of Kindergarten at Buena Vista, and perhaps most importantly, because it would be best for the students’ educational development, we recommend that the district engage in discussions with Principal Blake about options for adding a Kindergarten to Buena Vista.

**Criterion 5. To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?**

**The Data**

In assessing Criterion 5, we examined the data on school demographics, including socioeconomic status (SES) as determined by children eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), race, ethnicity, English language learners (ELL), and special education.

A note about the data: the percentages for various school demographics may vary according to the timeframe from which the data was drawn. For example, enrollment figures drawn from the database in October (and the various percentages calculated from those figures) may differ from enrollment figures drawn in December. Therefore, an October FRL calculation might be 6%, but the December calculation could be 8%, depending on enrollment fluctuations. However, as long as all the data is drawn from the same timeframe, then comparisons across schools or with overall district averages will be consistent. For the purposes of this report, we will present the school demographic data from the current school year (06-07), although we examined the data for the past three years and found the trends in each category to be consistent across all three years (see appendix 5). In our comparisons to district averages, we are citing the overall averages for the district’s elementary schools. We chose to use the district average for all elementary schools for a basis of comparison rather than the average for all district schools (K-12) because the review schools are all elementary schools, and thus comparing them to other elementary schools presents a more accurate assessment of current demographic trends affecting the district.

**SES.** Socioeconomic status is a major predictor of academic achievement, and therefore the district is particularly concerned about mitigating concentrations of poverty and supporting all schools to serve more balanced populations of students. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch at Buena Vista is 20%, which is below the overall average for district elementary schools of 39%.
Race and Ethnicity. Buena Vista’s overall percentage of minority students (25%) is near the average for all district elementary schools (29%)\(^4\). The demographics by race/ethnicity are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>06-07 Demographics by race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Buena Vista</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am In/Al Nat</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Isl.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the concern relating to equity and the achievement gap in our local context centers on Black, Latino, and Native American students. Focusing on those groups, Buena Vista serves slightly higher percentages of Latino and Native American students and slightly lower percentages of Black students than the district averages for each group.

ELL. This year 1% of Buena Vista’s students are English Language Learners; the district average is 4%.

Special Education. 6.7% of Buena Vista’s students qualify for special education services; the district average is 15%. Of its special education students, 64.7% qualify for Speech and Language services only; 23.5% qualify for Learning Center services only; and 11.8% qualify for both Speech and Learning Center services.

In summary, the district data for the current school year (retrieved 12/06) indicate that Buena Visit’s student population is relatively diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, but falls well below district averages in all other demographic categories: 25% of Buena Vista’s student population are minority students (the district average is 29%); 20% qualify for free or reduced lunch (the district average is 39%); 1% are English language learners (the district average is 4%); and 6.7% receive special education services (the district average is 15%).

The School Visit

In our school visits we looked for evidence of diversity and of a school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations.

As the data suggests, we found a relatively diverse racial/ethnic mix of students at Buena Vista, but a relatively homogenous population in terms of SES and special education. Given this mixed, but relatively high SES demographic profile, we nevertheless did observe evidence of a school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations.

Buena Vista’s principal has the explicit expectation that Buena Vista can, and therefore must, serve all children well who wish to attend the school, and that expectation seems

\(^4\) Minority is defined as not “white.”
to permeate throughout the school culture. Buena Vista’s Alternative School Review document states that the administration and the staff have a commitment to work hard to “create a school environment that nurtures all children no matter their background or ability” and to “ensure that every student who enters the program remains in the program.”

To fulfill that commitment, the school has implemented a number of programs to help struggling students succeed: their Response to Intervention program helps students who are struggling academically; and their “Check In and Check Out” and First and Second Step Curriculum support students who are struggling behaviorally.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

Based on the evidence cited above, we believe that Buena Vista is well positioned to contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools. Their strong commitment to serve all children is evident in the daily operations of the school, and their programs targeted towards struggling students are in place and seem comprehensive.

As we discussed in the introduction, we believe that with a strong system of neighborhood schools, most parents will choose to send their child to their neighborhood school unless there is a specific educational program that parents believe would best support their child’s educational success, and that program is not available in their neighborhood school. In that case, within the parameters of the district’s school choice program, parents should be able to access the neighborhood or alternative school they believe would best meet the educational needs of their child, and should feel welcome and well-served by that school.

Buena Vista’s Spanish language immersion program offers this kind of specific educational choice for Eugene’s children and families, and one which we believe could be very effective in supporting high levels of teaching and learning for diverse student populations, including low-income, minority, and special education students. We have included information in Appendix 9 from Milwaukee Public Schools’ French Immersion School as an example of a district immersion program that is successfully serving a relatively diverse population of students, and we also recommend Genesee et al. (2004, p.182) for research supporting the efficacy of language immersion schools for low-SES children for whom English is the home language. As discussed in the introduction of this report, we also have included research citations (see Appendix 10) that support the contention that language immersion schools can serve special education populations as well as English-only schools, with the added benefit that the special needs students can learn a second language.

We acknowledge that Buena Vista has been restricted in some ways from reaching out to certain populations of students and families by district policies concerning recruitment and transportation. The district is aware of constraints that are external to the school and is putting initiatives in place to mitigate those constraints for all schools. Our focus here is on internal issues that may need to be addressed to successfully support diverse student populations and their families.

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5 See Appendix 10 for Genesee citation
As mentioned above, we believe Buena Vista is well positioned to support a more diverse student population. We therefore recommend that Buena Vista:

1) Work with Carmen Urbina, the district’s parent/family and community coordinator, to examine the current school culture in order to identify structural and/or informal elements that serve to welcome more diverse families and students, or conversely, that could serve to discourage some of Eugene’s students and families from attending the school;

2) Continue to pursue professional development in instructional strategies that work well with struggling students and can be implemented through differentiated instruction in the classroom, as a supplement to their Response to Intervention supports.

3) Carefully consider the research on special education and immersion programs, and work with district special education staff to ensure that they are identifying and serving their special needs children appropriately and well.

4) Reach out to and create stronger ties with community and University experts in language immersion and in special education advocacy.

We believe that Buena Vista is well on its way to having a school culture that can serve all children well, but we also recognize that effectively addressing the complex issues of diversity and equity will require a sustained and concerted effort on the part of Buena Vista’s staff and school community over time, and so we encourage the district to provide consistent support and monitoring for Buena Vista as the process unfolds.

Criterion 6. To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?

Buena Vista has full enrollment and high academic achievement. The evolving structure of its full immersion curriculum combined with strong teaching and additional instructional resources allows Buena Vista to serve its current student population effectively.

Buena Vista augments district funding through relatively substantial parent fundraising (approximately $33,000) to support .25 FTE of certified teacher time and 2.5 hours of instructional aide time for extra instruction support for students.

Note: The issue of parent fundraising to augment instruction is a complex issue in terms of equity. For example, schools with an affluent parent base can support increased instructional resources through parent fundraising, as is the case with Buena Vista and some other schools in the district, both neighborhood and alternative. Similarly, schools with very low-income populations receive substantial amounts of additional instructional resources through Title 1 and other targeted funding. Schools in the middle, where parents are not affluent enough to provide high levels of fundraising but also have incomes that exceed the level to qualify for Title 1 funding, often are the schools that face the greatest challenges in finding means to support additional instructional resources. Until the state funds public education at a level that is adequate to the great challenges and expectations that public education shoulders, we acknowledge the funding imbalances that exist and
encourage the district to continue to search for ways to equalize instructional resources for all students across the district.

Based on this data we conclude that the operation of Buena Vista does constitute an efficient use of limited district resources.

**Criterion 7.** To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?

Buena Vista consistently meets its enrollment targets and remains viable as a separate school.

**Criterion 8.** To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?

To assess Criterion 8 within the scope of this review, we will consider collocation as an element of school effectiveness (i.e. how well does the school serve its children). We asked both Buena Vista and Meadowlark to compile a list of the pros and cons of collocation from their individual perspectives, and to specifically consider how, or in what ways, collocation contributes to, or does not contribute to, creating the best educational climate for the school’s children and staff.

For the purposes of this report, we will not present the specifics of both pro/con lists (the full lists are provided in Buena Vista’s review document, Appendix 1), but rather will present a synthesis of the information and arguments we gathered from the lists and our school visit.

Both Meadowlark and Buena Vista are strong schools and both serve their children well. They work together in many school-wide projects and have combined site council, staff, and leadership meetings once a month to work on common areas of concern. Nevertheless, there are tensions inherent in the collocation of the two schools that create some degree of stress and contention between the schools.

Similar to last years reviews for collocated neighborhood/alternative schools, the main issues seem to fall into three categories: workload issues for administration and support staff; competition for students, which in this case especially impacts the kindergarten/first grade program at Meadowlark; and an atmosphere of inequality between the schools, particularly among parents.

At Buena Vista/Meadowlark, parents and staff seems to be mostly concerned with the kindergarten issue and with the perception that Buena Vista is seen by some parents as “a better school... attended by the ‘cream of the crop’ students,” which leads to sense of privilege on one side and resentment on the other that negatively affects the educational climate of both schools.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?
Although Buena Vista and Meadowlark work together relatively well, we nevertheless heard many of the same comments and concerns that were voiced to us by last year’s collocated neighborhood/alternative schools.

While the tensions of collocation are not directly impairing the overall quality of either school – as mentioned above, both schools are serving their children well – the fact that similar stresses, to greater and lesser degrees, have been experienced in all of the neighborhood/alternative school collocations provides further evidence in support of Superintendent Russell’s recommendation to discontinue the collocation of alternative and neighborhood schools as part of the district’s longer-term planning for future school consolidations, reconfigurations and/or planning for school construction and school renovation. In the meantime, we commend Principal Blake and the staffs and school communities from both schools for their diligent efforts to optimize on the benefits of their collocation and to mitigate the negative effects of collocation on their students.
Charlemagne Criteria Assessment

Introduction
Charlemagne at Fox Hollow is located at 5055 Mahalo Drive, in the South region of Eugene. It serves 295 students in grades K through 5 in a French language immersion program in which children spend 50% of their day learning in French and the other 50% of the day learning in English. The Charlemagne teaching staff consists of 11 classroom teachers, a physical education and music teacher, a library assistant, 3 instructional assistants, and a special education team consisting of a resource teacher, a school psychologist, and a speech and language specialist. Charlemagne is the elementary portion of a K-12 French immersion program that continues in Roosevelt Middle School and South Eugene High School.

The review team visited Charlemagne on Monday, 11/13/06 from 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM. During that time we had an initial meeting with representatives from the school’s review committee and the principal; visited both the French and English classrooms in each grade level; observed students working in the special education learning center; and concluded the day with a follow-up meeting with school review committee members, teachers, and the principal.

Criteria Assessment
We present data below that contributes to our determination of whether Charlemagne’s program continues to meet the Board requirements for alternative school designation.

Criterion 1. Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

1.b To what extent and how does the alternative school or program emphasize a specific element of the district’s approved curriculum?

As represented in the Alternative School Review document submitted by Charlemagne, the school’s language immersion approach supports the district’s language and literacy goals by helping their students to “tackle the language arts standards, emphasizing language meta-cognition, inference and synthesis for comprehension, grammatical concepts, semantics, word origin, comprehension and fluency.”

We saw evidence of Charlemagne’s emphasis on language arts and literacy goals in all classrooms, with children and teachers addressing the goals in both English and French in their respective language classrooms.

1.c To what extent and how does the alternative school/program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of presentation in other schools?

While the sequence of the basic curriculum does not differ substantially from other schools, both the sequence and scope of Charlemagne’s language instruction differ significantly from all other non-immersion schools in the district. At Charlemagne,
French is introduced in Kindergarten, and throughout the grade levels the students learn the curriculum in both French and English.

1.d To what extent and how does the alternative school/program group students for instruction in some unique manner?

Charlemagne groups its students in a way that supports its 50/50 immersion approach. Each grade level is divided into two classes; each class spends one-half of the school day learning in French with a French-speaking teacher and the other half of the day learning in English with an English-speaking teacher.

1.e To what extent and how do the alternative school/program’s teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

The instructional strategy specific to Charlemagne is language immersion. Charlemagne’s Alternative School Review document states that “At Charlemagne, foreign language instruction is integrated with and embedded in content areas such as math, art, social studies and science” and that “Parallel instruction occurs in French and English, and content-driven vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, and speaking happens in two languages.”

We found evidence of this in all of the school’s classrooms.

Discussion and Conclusion: Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

Based on the evidence presented above, we conclude that Charlemagne’s French language immersion program is systematically and effectively implemented throughout the school, grades K through 5, and thus represents a distinctive educational strategy for achieving the board’s educational goals.

Criterion 2. To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?

Charlemagne’s decision-making process for governance of the school includes substantial parent, staff and administrative collaboration via site council, but does not differ in significant ways from other schools in terms of its governance structure and process.

Criterion 3. To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

Enrollment: Charlemagne has shown consistently strong enrollment over the past three years and maintains a waiting list for the school, indicating continued strong interest and high demand for the school.

Parents and Students: Charlemagne demonstrates continued strong parent interest through high levels of parent involvement in such areas as PTO, Site Council, and
Esprit de Corps (a group of parents that welcomes and provides support to new families entering the school). Parents are also active in planning and running events such as the annual Marti Gras, and participate in significant fund-raising efforts for the school. Although many parents do not themselves speak French, and do not need to do so for their children to do well at Charlemagne, Charlemagne’s review document states that the enthusiasm of the students for learning French is contagious and has led some parents to sign up for French classes for parents. Continued strong interest among students is evidenced by the high percentage of students who choose to continue in the French immersion program in middle school, and by the participation of former students who, while in high school, come back to volunteer in programs such as Camp Rigolo (a summer enrichment program run by Charlemagne alumni who are students in the high school French immersion program).

Staff: As with all four of the schools we reviewed this year, continued strong interest by the staff was evidenced by a shared commitment to, and passion for, the school’s curriculum and students that was clear to us during our school visit. Although we did not witness it during our visit, the school’s review document also references voluntary staff participation in, or support of, after-school activities such as chess club, garden club, student government, the student newspaper, the annual talent show, the cultural fair, and Camp Rigolo as indicative of strong staff support for Charlemagne’s program.

**Criterion 4. To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?**

Our assessment of the data along with our school visit indicates that Charlemagne’s French language immersion model enhances the district’s educational program by providing a distinctive curricular approach to teaching and learning, as explicated under Criterion 1.

**Criterion 5. To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?**

The Data

In assessing Criterion 5, we examined the data on school demographics, including socioeconomic status (SES) as determined by children eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), race, ethnicity, English language learners (ELL), and special education.

A note about the data: the percentages for various school demographics may vary according to the timeframe from which the data was drawn. For example, enrollment figures drawn from the database in October (and the various percentages calculated from those figures) may differ from enrollment figures drawn in December. Therefore, an October FRL calculation might be 6%, but the December calculation could be 8%, depending on enrollment fluctuations. However, as long as all the data is drawn from the same timeframe, then comparisons across schools or with overall district averages will be consistent. For the purposes of this report, we will present the school demographic data from the current school year (06-07), although we examined the data for the past three years and found the trends in each category to be consistent across all three years (see appendix 5). In our comparisons
to district averages, we are citing the overall averages for the district’s elementary schools. We chose to use the district average for all elementary schools for a basis of comparison rather than the average for all district schools (K-12) because the review schools are all elementary schools, and thus comparing them to other elementary schools presents a more accurate assessment of current demographic trends affecting the district.

**SES.** Socioeconomic status is a major predictor of academic achievement, and therefore the district is particularly concerned about mitigating concentrations of poverty and supporting all schools to serve more balanced populations of students. Charlemagne serves a low percentage of children qualifying for free or reduced lunch: 9% of Charlemagne’s students qualify for free or reduced lunch; the overall average for district elementary schools is 39%.

**Race and Ethnicity.** Charlemagne’s overall percentage of minority students (13%) is below the average for all district elementary schools (29%).

The demographics by race/ethnicity are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>06-07 Demographics by race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Charlemagne</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am In/Al Nat</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Isl.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the concern relating to equity and the achievement gap in our local context centers on Black, Latino, and Native American students. Focusing on those groups, 3% of Charlemagne’s students are Black; 1% are Latino; and 1% are Native American. These percentages fall slightly below the district average for Black students, and well below district averages for Latino and Native American students.

**ELL.** This year 1% of Charlemagne’s students are English Language Learners; the district average is 4%.

**Special Education.** 8.8% of Charlemagne’s students qualify for special education services; the district average is 15.0%. Of its special education students, 57.7% qualify for Speech & Language services only; 34.6% qualify for Learning Center services only; and 7.7% qualify for both Speech and Learning Center services.

In summary, the district data for the current school year (retrieved 12/06) indicate that Charlemagne’s student population is relatively homogeneous, with averages for the demographic categories examined above all falling well below district averages: 9% of Charlemagne’s student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch (the district average is 39%); 13% are minority students (the district average is 29%); 1% are English language learners (the district average is 4%); and 8.8% receive special education services (the district average is 15%).

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6 Minority is defined as not “white.”
The School Visit

In our school visits we looked for evidence of diversity and of a school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations.

As the data suggests, we found a relatively homogeneous student body consisting of classrooms of mostly bright, motivated children, with little evidence of diversity.

Although we saw many examples of strong teaching during our visit, including examples of effective language scaffolding so that children would be sure to understand the content of what was being said to them in their new language, we did not see examples of other instructional components or techniques that would effectively serve diverse student populations. Because Charlemagne’s current population is relatively homogeneous, it is true that there was little obvious necessity for teachers to use such instructional techniques. However, while we draw no firm conclusions from one visit, we do note that a more diverse student population would present more learning challenges, and would necessitate an expansion of the instructional practices we observed.

In terms of school culture, while the school climate we observed appeared to support the children Charlemagne currently serves with care and warmth, there were no observable indications that the school would be welcoming to students and families from backgrounds differing from the majority of current students and families.

Discussion and Conclusion: To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

While Charlemagne does provide a distinctive educational program and is clearly providing an excellent education for the children it now serves, the evidence we have gathered from the district database and from our school visit indicates that it is not contributing substantively to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools.

As we discussed in the introduction, we believe that with a strong system of neighborhood schools, most parents will choose to send their child to their neighborhood school unless there is a specific educational program that parents believe would best support their child’s educational success, and that program is not available in their neighborhood school.

Charlemagne’s language immersion program offers this kind of specific educational choice for Eugene’s children and families. However, to meet the Board’s requirements for retaining alternative school designation, Charlemagne must be welcoming to any family that might desire its specific immersion curriculum for their children, and must be ready to effectively teach those children.

Although the evidence suggests that Charlemagne may not be ready to do so immediately, we believe that Charlemagne’s French immersion program could be very effective in supporting high levels of teaching and learning for diverse student populations, including low-income, minority, and special education students. We have included information in Appendix 9 from Milwaukee Public Schools’ French Immersion
School as an example of a district immersion program that is successfully serving a relatively diverse population of students, and we also recommend Genesee et al. (2004, p.182) for research supporting the efficacy of language immersion schools for low-SES children for whom English is the home language. As discussed in the introduction of this report, we also have included research citations (see Appendix 10) that support the contention that language immersion schools can serve special education populations as well as English-only schools, with the added benefit that the special needs students can learn a second language.

We acknowledge that Charlemagne has been restricted in some ways from reaching out to certain populations of students and families by district policies concerning recruitment and transportation. The district is aware of constraints that are external to the school and is putting initiatives in place to mitigate those constraints for all schools. We focus here on internal issues that need to be addressed to successfully support diverse student populations and their families.

To serve a diverse student population well, we see the challenges to Charlemagne residing in three areas: effective instructional techniques to support diverse learners; general school culture; and community perceptions.

Instruction. During our school visit we were impressed with the strong skills of Charlemagne’s teaching staff in serving their current students. However, as stated above, we believe that a more diverse student body will require a greater range of instructional techniques than we witnessed. We therefore recommend that the school access staff development opportunities that will provide its teachers will additional tools to support diverse learning styles and needs.

Regarding special education, we recommend that Charlemagne’s teachers and special education staff examine and carefully consider the research on special education and immersion programs, and work with district special education staff to ensure that they are identifying and serving their special needs children appropriately and well.

In addressing both general and special education instructional challenges specific to their language immersion program, we also suggest that Charlemagne reach out to and create stronger ties with community and University experts in language immersion and in special education advocacy.

School Culture. While the school culture at Charlemagne is welcoming to its current student population, we are not confident that Charlemagne realizes the intricacies and challenges inherent in providing a truly supportive school culture for a more diverse population. We recommend that the school work with Carmen Urbina, the district’s parent/family and community coordinator, to come to a deeper understanding of these issue and to create and implement initiatives that will address any structural and/or informal obstacles that may be discouraging some of Eugene’s students and families from attending the school.

Community Perceptions. As with some of Eugene’s other alternative schools, we include community perceptions as a challenge because Charlemagne has provided an excellent education for many years to a very specific population demographic, but has

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7 See Appendix 10 for Genesee citation
also developed a reputation for serving only very capable and/or advantaged students. As such, there is a perception that Charlemagne discourages less capable students and/or students with certain levels of special needs from attending or remaining at Charlemagne. This has led to charges of elitism, and whether deserved or not, Charlemagne has the opportunity, and the obligation as a public school, to change that perception by fully partnering with the district to ensure the school provides equitable access and opportunity to all children in the district who might benefit from its program.

We note that during our school visit we had a productive meeting with Charlemagne’s school review committee, principal, and teachers, during which we candidly discussed our concerns about diversity at Charlemagne. The school’s review committee, staff, and site council have responded constructively and proactively to that discussion by debating the issues we discussed and proposing four initial steps to begin addressing those challenges. Their proposals include 1) contacting Carmen Urbina to visit the school and begin working with Charlemagne’s school community to create a more welcoming and supportive climate for diverse student populations; 2) setting up a community relations committee to address negative community perceptions in a positive and constructive way, and to reach out to more diverse students and families; 3) developing a mission statement that takes the issue of diversity to heart and that can be a guiding principle for the school; and 4) creating more opportunities for teachers to attend diversity-specific training.

We believe that Charlemagne’s proactive response is sincere and that addressing the challenges described above is within their reach. We also recognize that effectively addressing the complex issues of diversity and equity will require a sustained and concerted effort on the part of Charlemagne’s staff and school community over time, and so we encourage the district to provide consistent support and monitoring for Charlemagne as the process unfolds.

**Criterion 6. To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?**

Charlemagne has full enrollment and high academic achievement. The structure of its 50/50 language immersion curriculum combined with strong teaching and additional instructional resources allows Charlemagne to serve its current student population effectively.

Charlemagne augments district funding through substantial parent fundraising (approximately $65,000) to support .33FTE of certified teacher time for extra reading instruction for struggling students in the early grades and 7.75 hours of instructional aide time to assist in the early grades in French.

Note: The issue of parent fundraising to augment instruction is a complex issue in terms of equity. For example, schools with an affluent parent base can support increased instructional resources through parent fundraising, as is the case with Charlemagne and some other schools in the district, both neighborhood and alternative. Similarly, schools with very low-income populations receive substantial amounts of additional instructional resources through Title 1 and other targeted funding. Schools in the middle, where parents are not affluent enough to provide
high levels of fundraising but also have incomes that exceed the level to qualify for Title 1 funding, often are the schools that face the greatest challenges in finding means to support additional instructional resources. Until the state funds public education at a level that is adequate to the great challenges and expectations that public education shoulders, we acknowledge the funding imbalances that exist and encourage the district to search for ways to equalize instructional resources for all students across the district.

Based on this data we conclude that the operation of Charlemagne does constitute an efficient use of limited district resources, with the caveat that a more diversified student body will allow Charlemagne to continue to make the argument for efficient use of district funds in light of the district goals of increasing equity and closing the achievement gap.

**Criterion 7.** To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?

Charlemagne consistently meets its enrollment targets, and remains viable as a separate school.

**Criterion 8.** To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?

Charlemagne is not collocated with a neighborhood school. This criterion is therefore not applicable to Charlemagne, although forthcoming decisions about the location and collocation of alternatives schools as part of the district’s long-term facilities planning may affect Charlemagne at some future date.
Yujin Gakuen Criteria Assessment

Introduction
Yujin Gakuen is located at 250 Silver Lane, in the North region of Eugene. Serving 291 students in grades kindergarten through 5, Yujin Gakuen offers a bilingual, integrated curriculum where students spend 50% of their day learning in Japanese and the other 50% of the day learning in English. Grade level teaching teams consist of a Japanese teacher, an English teacher, and the technology integration specialist. The Yujin Gakuen teaching staff consists of 11 classroom teachers, 1 technology specialist, 1 physical education teacher, 2 instructional assistants, 1 kindergarten instructional assistant, and a special education team consisting of a resource teacher, a school psychologist, and a speech and language specialist. Yujin Gakuen is the elementary portion of a K-12 Japanese immersion program that continues in Kelly Middle School and North Eugene High School.

The review team visited Yujin Gakuen on Tuesday, 11/7/06 from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM. We began the day with an initial meeting with the school review committee and principal. Next we visited nine classrooms: three classrooms in which students were taught in Japanese; three classrooms in which students were taught in English; one classroom in which students performed a play in Japanese with simultaneous English translation; a computer lab utilizing both languages; and a P.E. class. We concluded the day with a follow-up meeting with school review committee members, staff and the principal.

Criteria Assessment
We present data below that contributes to our determination of whether Yujin Gakuen’s program continues to meet the Board requirements for alternative school designation.

Criterion 1. Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

1.a How does the alternative school’s program compare to the originally approved charter or proposal?

The Alternative School Review document submitted by Yujin Gakuen’s School Review Committee states: “On May 18, 1988, the School Board approved Yujin Gakuen’s proposal to be a ‘Bilingual Alternative School’ using an early immersion concept in language learning to be presented to students who were native speakers of English.” Comparing it to the present program, the report goes on to say, “The current Yujin Gakuen Mission Statement listed in our parent handbook reads, ‘To prepare students through a bilingual, bicultural, integrated curriculum to participate as citizens in an international, technological world.”

We found evidence of Yujin Gakuen’s bilingual approach in all classrooms and throughout the school, and conclude that while Yujin Gakuen continues to evolve in various ways to strengthen its language immersion curriculum and instructional approach, the school is very much aligned with its original mission and focus.
1.c To what extent and how does the alternative school/program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of presentation in other schools?

By spending half of their day learning in English and half in Japanese, Yujin Gakuen’s students are experiencing a curriculum sequence unique among non-immersion district schools. This distinction in curriculum sequencing is further supported by the way curriculum is divided between the English and Japanese portions of the day. Most instruction in mathematics, social studies, grammar, science, and technology occurs in the English portion of the day, while curriculum delivered in the Japanese portion of the day centers on a rotation through the 4J approved themes: communities, power, form, change, systems, and interactions. This approach allows students to learn important concepts and content in English while simultaneously reinforcing their comprehension and strengthening their communication skills in Japanese. Furthermore, since the Yujin Gakuen Japanese teachers are native speakers, they are able to infuse authentic Japanese cultural elements into their lessons as they address these themes.

Yujin Gakuen’s teachers describe technology as the program’s “third language” and we saw multiple examples of technology being utilized effectively to enhance student understanding of curriculum themes. Using technology in both Japanese and English, students produce projects that help them to synthesize what they are learning in their English and Japanese classrooms.

The unique organization of Yujin Gakuen’s curriculum demanded that their Japanese language teachers develop their own scope and sequence for the K-5 Japanese portion of the program. In addition to creating an integrated K-5 curriculum, it was important that the scope and sequence address the standards outlined in the Oregon Japanese Proficiency Document. To that end, Yujin Gakuen teachers worked closely with their Japanese immersion colleagues at Kelly Middle School and North Eugene High School to ensure the development of a sequential and integrated curriculum across grades.

1.d To what extent and how does the alternative school/program group students for instruction in some unique manner?

After completing a kindergarten experience conducted 90% or more in Japanese, YG students in grades 1-5 spend 50% of their day learning in Japanese and the other 50% learning in English. A Japanese teacher, an English teacher and the technology integration specialist co-teach each grade level. Therefore, following a 90% immersion experience in Kindergarten, Yujin Gakuen students learn in two languages with two homeroom teachers each day, as well as receive regular instruction in their “third language” from the technology specialist.

We observed this method of grouping students and delivering instruction in all of Yujin Gakuen’s classrooms.

1.e To what extent and how do the alternative school/program’s teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?
The instructional strategy specific to Yujin Gakuen is language immersion. Yujin Gakuen’s Alternative School Review document states: “Presenting the more difficult conceptual ideas in math, science and social studies falls mostly to the English instructional time. Through explicit instruction, experiential learning and content-based curriculum, Japanese instructors integrate these concepts to deepen students’ understanding. The technology portion of the instruction adds to the depth of understanding, allowing students to progress at their own rate and level.”

Our site visit afforded the opportunity to see this strategy in action: we observed students learning a concept in English, developing the concept further in Japanese and then completing a project using technology, which incorporated both Japanese and English.

Additionally, we note the extent of the immersion approach demonstrated in the Japanese classrooms. At all grade levels in the Japanese classrooms, beginning in kindergarten, we heard only Japanese, but also observed the teachers, particularly in the early grades, using a number of effective language scaffolding techniques to help the children understand the teacher’s meaning.

Discussion and Conclusion: Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

Based on the evidence presented above, we conclude that Yujin Gakuen’s Japanese language immersion program is systematically and effectively implemented throughout the school, grades K through 5, and thus does represent a distinctive strategy for achieving the board’s educational goals.

Criterion 2. To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?

We did not discern that Yujin Gakuen’s decision-making process for governance of the school differed in significant ways from other schools in terms of its site council process. However, we note that there does appear to be a very high level of shared commitment and cooperative, collaborative decision-making among the staff in regard to curriculum planning and implementation. We also note that the site council’s decision-making grid was recently updated with items that are specific and unique to Yujin Gakuen, such as the Japanese cultural exchange and Japanese interns’ programs.

Criterion 3. To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

Enrollment: Yujin Gakuen continues to meet its enrollment expectations and maintain a waiting list, indicating continued strong interest among parents and students. The school’s Alternative School Review document states that, “Several families, wishing a multi-lingual education for their children, have moved to the North Eugene area to take advantage of the program offered at Yujin Gakuen.”
Parents and Students: Yujin Gakuen demonstrates continued strong interest among parents and students in numerous ways. According to its Alternative School Review document, parents contribute 600-800 volunteer hours each month, participating in school governance, volunteering in the classrooms, and participating in fundraising and all-school events and activities. Parents also volunteer to house several student interns from Japan who are hosted by Yujin Gakuen for a period of one or two months each year. Students and parents participate in numerous community events such as the Asian Celebration, the Eugene Celebration, the Obon Festival, visits to retirement homes and performances at Valley River Center.

Staff: As with all four of the schools we reviewed this year, continued strong interest by the staff was evidenced by a shared commitment to, and passion for, the school’s curriculum and students that was clear to us during our school visit. Yujin Gakuen’s program success relies on the effective integration of its English and Japanese curriculum and instruction. Along with the excellent teaching we witnessed, the hard work and high levels of collaboration and communication among the teachers that was required to design and implement Yujin Gakuen’s integrated scope and sequence also demonstrates the staff’s continued interest and commitment to the school.

Criterion 4. To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?

Our assessment of the data along with our school visit indicates that Yujin Gakuen’s Japanese language immersion model does enhance the district’s educational program by providing a distinctive curricular approach to teaching and learning, as explicated under Criterion 1.

Criterion 5. To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

The Data

In assessing Criterion 5, we examined the data on school demographics, including socioeconomic status (SES) as determined by children eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), race, ethnicity, English language learners (ELL), and special education.

A note about the data: the percentages for various school demographics may vary according to the timeframe from which the data was drawn. For example, enrollment figures drawn from the database in October (and the various percentages calculated from those figures) may differ from enrollment figures drawn in December. Therefore, an October FRL calculation might be 6%, but the December calculation could be 8%, depending on enrollment fluctuations. However, as long as all the data is drawn from the same timeframe, then comparisons across schools or with overall district averages will be consistent. For the purposes of this report, we will present the school demographic data from the current school year (06-07), although we examined the data for the past three years and found the trends in each category to be consistent across all three years (see appendix 5). In our comparisons to district averages, we are citing the overall averages for the district’s elementary schools. We chose to use the district average for all elementary schools for a basis of
comparison rather than the average for all district schools (K-12) because the review schools are all elementary schools, and thus comparing them to other elementary schools presents a more accurate assessment of current demographic trends affecting the district.

**SES.** Socioeconomic status is a major predictor of academic achievement, and therefore the district is particularly concerned about mitigating concentrations of poverty and supporting all schools to serve more balanced populations of students. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch at Yujin Gaken is 32%, which is somewhat lower than the overall average for district elementary schools of 39%.

**Race and Ethnicity.** Yujin Gakuen’s overall percentage of minority students (32%) is slightly above the average for all district elementary schools (29%)\(^8\). The demographics by race/ethnicity are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>06-07 Demographics by race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Yujin Gakuen</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am In/Al Nat</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Isl.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yujin Gakuen’s relatively large Asian demographic (19%) is not surprising, given the school’s Japanese immersion focus. We note, however, that most of the concern relating to equity and the achievement gap in our local context centers on Black, Latino, and Native American students. Focusing on those groups, 1% of Yujin Gakuen’s students are Black; 8% are Hispanic; and 3% are Native American. These percentages match the district average for Native American students, are near the district averages for Latino students, and fall well below district averages for Black students.

**ELL.** This year 3% of Yujin Gakuen’s students are English Language Learners; the district average is 4%.

**Special Education.** 8.2% of Yujin Gakuen’s students qualify for special education services; the district average is 15%. Of its special education students, 54.2% qualify for Speech and Language services only; 37.5% qualify for Learning Center services only; and 8.3% qualify for both Speech and Learning Center services.

In summary, the district data for the current school year (retrieved 12/06) indicate that Yujin Gakuen’s student population is relatively diverse in terms of SES, race/ethnicity and ELL, and falls below district averages for special education: 32% of Yujin Gakuen’s student population qualify for free or reduced lunch (the district average is 39%); 32% are minority students (the district average is 29%); 3% are English language learners (the district average is 4%); and 8.2% receive special education services (the district average is 15%).

\(^8\) Minority is defined as not “white.”
The School Visit

In our school visits we looked for evidence of diversity and of a school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations.

The focus of Yujin Gakuen is on Japanese language and culture, and as such, there is an infusion of Japanese cultural artifacts and art throughout the building and classrooms, and there seems to be careful and consistent efforts to support all the children in their learning.

The students we observed seemed very comfortable in both the English and Japanese classroom settings, demonstrating a high level of engagement with their teachers, with their learning, and with each other. We observed excellent teaching, including many examples of effective language scaffolding so the children would be sure to understand the content of what was being said to them in their new language. The school climate throughout the building appeared nurturing and respectful.

Discussion and Conclusion: To what extent does the alternative school or programs contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

Given the increasingly diverse demographics in our district, creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for all students and families presents an important challenge to all schools. At Yujin Gakuen, as would be expected in a Japanese immersion school, examples of Japanese language, culture, and art were evident throughout the school. And, as stated above, we observed strong classroom teaching and a nurturing school environment that seemed to support the children in their learning. It was not clear to us, however, how, and to what extent, Yujin Gakuen welcomes and supports the broader diversity of cultures and families represented in their community.

Socioeconomic status (SES) and special education offer two examples of potential concerns.
1) **SES:** The percentage of low-income families at Yujin Gakuen is somewhat below district averages, and well below the percentage of low SES families in the two closest neighborhood schools. The school’s Alternative School Review document states that parents provide “600 to 800 monthly hours of parental volunteer time to support the Yujin Gakuen program.” That level of parent support is admirable, but is there an expectation for levels of volunteer time that might discourage working and/or single mothers from enrolling their children at Yujin Gakuen? Are there other elements of the school’s culture or support structures that might also discourage low-income families from attending the school?
2) **Special Education:** We note the relatively low percentage of special education students. Does this indicate any structural and/or informal impediments to welcoming and/or supporting special needs students? Or, as noted in the introduction, is it more a consequence of parent perceptions of the appropriateness of immersion programs for special needs students?

As we discussed in the introduction, we believe that with a strong system of neighborhood schools, most parents will choose to send their child to their neighborhood school unless there is a specific educational program that parents believe would best support their child’s educational success, and that program is not available
in their neighborhood school. In that case, within the parameters of the district’s school choice program, parents should be able to access the neighborhood or alternative school they believe would best meet the educational needs of their child, and should feel welcome and well-served by that school.

Yujin Gakuen’s Japanese language immersion program offers this kind of specific educational choice for Eugene’s children and families, and one which the evidence from district data and our school visit suggests can be effective in supporting high levels of teaching and learning for a diverse student population.

Given its commitment to serving all students well and its strong instructional program, we encourage Yujin Gakuen to examine its current school environment to determine if there are any internal issues such as those listed above that could be impeding optimal support for low-income families and/or students with special needs, and to thereby continue exploring ways in which it can best welcome and effectively support all students and families who may wish to access its unique educational program.

To assist the school in doing so, we recommend that Yujin Gakuen:

1) Work with Carmen Urbina, the district’s parent/family and community coordinator, to examine current school culture and procedures in order to identify structural and/or informal elements that serve to welcome more diverse families and students, or conversely, that could serve to discourage some of Eugene’s students and families from attending the school;

2) Carefully consider the research on special education and immersion programs (see Appendix 10), and work with district special education staff to ensure that the school is identifying and serving their special needs children appropriately and well.

We recognize that effectively addressing the complex issues of diversity and equity will require a sustained and concerted effort on the part of Yujin Gakuen’s staff and school community over time, and so we encourage the district to provide consistent support and monitoring for Yujin Gakuen as the process unfolds.

**Criterion 6. To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?**

Yujin Gakuen has full enrollment and high academic achievement. Offering one of three language immersion programs and the only Japanese immersion program in the District, Yujin Gakuen makes maximum use of strong teaching and additional instructional resources to serve its current student population effectively.

Yujin Gakuen augments district funding through parent fundraising (approximately $20,500) to support .13 FTE and 2 hours of instructional aide time for extra instructional support for students.

Note: The issue of parent fundraising to augment instruction is a complex issue in terms of equity. For example, schools with an affluent parent base can support increased instructional resources through parent fundraising, as is the case with some schools in our district, both neighborhood and alternative. Similarly, schools with very low-income populations receive substantial amounts of additional instructional resources through Title 1 and other targeted funding. Schools in the
middle, where parents are not affluent enough to provide high levels of fundraising but also have incomes that exceed the level to qualify for Title 1 funding, often are the schools that face the greatest challenges in finding means to support additional instructional resources. Until the state funds public education at a level that is adequate to the great challenges and expectations that public education shoulders, we acknowledge the funding imbalances that exist and encourage the district to continue to search for ways to equalize instructional resources for all students across the district.

Teaching traditional Japanese art and dance within the Japanese half of the program and sharing a building with Corridor Elementary School allows Yujin Gakuen to further maximize limited district resources.

Additionally, the innovative nature of Yujin Gakuen has attracted a number of major grants, and a variety of Japanese books, textbooks, and cultural artifacts have been donated to the school by various schools and private sources in Japan.

Based on this data we conclude that the continued operation of Yujin Gakuen does constitute an efficient use of limited district resources.

**Criterion 7.** To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?

Yujin Gakuen consistently meets its enrollment targets, and remains viable as a separate school in its current configuration as a collocated alternative school.

**Criterion 8.** To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the school with which it shares a building?

Yujin Gakuen shares a building with Corridor Elementary, which is also an alternative school. This collocation of two alternative schools is the only one of its kind in District 4J.

To assess Criterion 8 within the scope of this review, we consider collocation as an element of school effectiveness (i.e. how well does the school serve its children). We asked both Yujin Gakuen and Corridor to compile a list of the pros and cons of collocation from their individual perspectives, and to specifically consider how, or in what ways, collocation contributes to, or does not contribute to, creating the best educational climate for the school’s children and staff.

In its response to Criterion 8, Yujin Gakeun states that “Compromise and communication between programs is essential,” and notes that the two schools developed a building team of certified and classified staff that meets monthly to discuss concerns and explore avenues of sharing between the schools.

The main concerns voiced by Yujin Gakuen seem to center around:
1) *Sharing space,* for which they note “Flexibility and empathy for the changing needs of each program is essential for a successful co-location”; and
2) *Sharing an administrator*, about which they note “A building administrator that champions and celebrates both schools ensures an atmosphere of collegiality between the programs.”

A number of benefits were also listed, including: shared assemblies, performances, building-wide programs, and equipment; combined fundraisers; greater appreciation for each other’s programs; enhanced collegiality between staffs and parent groups; and the opportunity “for families to match students’ interests and learning styles with the strengths of the two programs.”

**Discussion and Conclusion:** *To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the school with which it shares a building?*

We acknowledge both school communities for their efforts in working collaboratively to maximize the benefits of their shared arrangement. The development of the *building team* to discuss concerns and explore avenues of sharing has clearly produced positive results.

In our conversations with both Yujin Gakuen and Corridor, sharing a principal was seen as a benefit *and* as a challenge, but the key seems to be a predictable, equitable division of time with an opportunity to flex when necessary. Capable leadership that can encourage and facilitate good communication and compromise is an essential component to making this arrangement work successfully. In the case of Yujin Gakuen and Corridor, having an administrator that champions and celebrates both schools seems to have enhanced the atmosphere of collegiality between the programs.

A significant difference in this collocation from that of neighborhood/alternative school collocations is that these two alternative school programs do not view themselves as competing for students. Offering two very different educational programs, with both schools attracting full enrollment, seems to have fostered greater cooperation rather than competition.

All this being true, sharing space still represents an ongoing challenge. While neither school would be regarded as large on its own, together they do stress building facilities and systems. Coordinating two schools within one building is more difficult than facilitating just one. While cooperative strategies like staggering daily schedules can clearly help, issues like parking, drop-off areas, and accommodating recess will always be challenging.

We recognize the effort required by both schools to make this arrangement succeed, and we are impressed with the results. The variables seem to be different enough from those in neighborhood/alternative school collocations to suggest that the Yujin Gakuen/Corridor collocation model (i.e., alternative/alternative) be considered as a possible model for future relocations of other alternative schools.
Corridor Criteria Assessment

Introduction
Corridor Elementary School is located at 250 Silver Lane, in the North region of Eugene. Serving 270 students in grades kindergarten through 5, Corridor offers a program that is organized around morning grade-level academic core classes and afternoon multi-age elective classes. The Corridor staff consists of 12 classroom teachers, 1 instructional assistant, and a special education team consisting of a resource teacher, a school psychologist, a speech and language specialist, and 2 instructional assistants who provide instructional support for both special education students and for general education students.

The review team visited Corridor on Wednesday, 11/08/06 from 11:00 AM to 3:15 PM. During that time we had an initial meeting with representatives from the school’s review committee and the principal; visited four morning core classrooms; five afternoon elective classrooms; and concluded the day with a follow-up meeting with Corridor review committee members, teachers, and the principal.

Criteria Assessment
We present data below that contributes to our determination of whether Corridor’s program continues to meet the Board requirements for alternative school designation.

Criterion 1. Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

1.c To what extent and how does the alternative school/program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of presentation in other schools?

Corridor organizes the school day around two “half day” schedules.

The morning is organized around grade-level classes designed to present the district’s approved curriculum in language arts, mathematics and social studies.

The afternoon classes are organized around three-week-long elective classes. Each child chooses from a menu of elective classes for each three-week period. The electives are designed to integrate with and to supplement the morning core curriculum. Most of the elective classes are multi-grade, but some are organized to reinforce a particular grade-level curriculum unit or theme, and in those cases, are open only to students from that grade level.

The combination of grade-level language arts, mathematics and social studies classes along with multiage elective classes that integrate with and supplement the core curriculum creates a curriculum sequence and order of presentation that differs from the order of presentation in other non-alternative schools.

1.d To what extent and how does the alternative school/program group students for instruction in some unique manner?

During morning core classes in reading and math, students may be grouped by performance levels to more effectively target instruction and maximize achievement.
Teachers of the same grade level work together so that these performance-level groupings can take place both within and across grade-level homerooms.

During afternoon electives, except for electives that are specifically designed to reinforce a particular grade-level unit, students choose electives according to their interests and are grouped across all grade levels. The older students regularly assist the younger students during these multiage elective classes.

Additionally, the multiage grouping for electives enhances the overall school environment. Because Corridor’s teachers each teach a variety of elective courses during the course of the year, they have the opportunity to work with all students, across all the grade levels. This creates a school environment where all the teachers and students work with and know each other well – an important component of caring, effective schools.

1.e To what extent and how do the alternative school/program’s teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

During our school visit, we observed three instructional strategies that Corridor teachers use consistently and systematically to “educate the whole child” (Corridor Review document, p. 5).

Multiage grouping for instruction. Most of the afternoon elective classes are open to students of varying age and grade. This facilitates cooperative learning, with older students helping the younger students and all students learning to work together and take responsibility for their behavior and their learning.

Student Choice. Student choice is meaningfully facilitated through the elective program. Every three weeks students choose elective courses in which they are interested. The research, as well as our own experience as teachers, suggests that meaningful student choice builds agency and engagement within and among students. As mentioned above, choosing electives also gives students the opportunity to work with teachers other than their homeroom teacher, creating a school environment where all teachers and students work with and know each other.

Hands-on, Applied Learning. Corridor’s structure supports consistent opportunities for hands-on applied learning. We saw students involved in a number of applied learning experiences, including wood shop and the use of electronics. These types of learning experiences provide children with differing learning styles and abilities an opportunity to find their talents and experience educational success in meaningful ways. Although many schools include hands-on learning experiences to various degrees, Corridor’s structure – i.e., the inclusion of three week elective cycles throughout the year -- presents children with consistent and systematic opportunities for hands-on applied learning experiences, and positions those experiences as a major component of the curriculum.

Discussion and Conclusion: Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?
Based on the evidence presented above, we conclude that Corridor’s educational program, consisting of a basic curriculum supplemented and enhanced by a systematically applied schedule of daily electives, represents a distinctive strategy for achieving the board’s educational goals.

**Criterion 2.** *To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?*

We did not discern that Corridor’s decision-making process for governance of the school differed in significant ways from other schools in terms of its site council process. However, we note that there does appear to be a very high level of shared commitment and cooperative, collaborative decision-making among the staff in regard to curriculum planning and implementation.

**Criterion 3.** *To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?*

**Enrollment:** Corridor has shown consistently strong enrollment over the past three years and there is a waiting list for the school, indicating continued strong interest and high demand for the school by students and families.

**Parents and Students:** Corridor demonstrates continued strong interest among parents through high levels of parent involvement in a variety of aspects of the school. Corridor’s Alternative School Review document states that parent volunteers contribute more than 2,500 hours each year to a number of school activities, including participating on the site council/PTO, serving on various committees, volunteering in classrooms and on field trips, and helping with the school newsletter, fundraising, and special activities and events such as the annual Holt Center musical, Career Day, and health screenings. Students evidence continued strong interest by their involvement in school governance (student council) and a number of voluntary after school projects in the community; former students regularly return to the school to assist with special events.

**Staff:** As with all four of the schools we reviewed this year, continued strong interest by the staff was evidenced by a shared commitment to, and passion for, the school’s curriculum and mission that was clear to us during our school visit. Along with the strong teaching we observed, the hard work and the high level of coordination and collaboration among the teachers that is required to create and implement their three-week elective cycles attests to the staff’s continued commitment to the school.

**Criterion 4.** *To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?*

Our assessment of the data along with our school visit indicates that Corridor’s school design enhances the district’s educational program by providing a distinctive curricular approach to teaching and learning, as explicated under Criterion 1.
 Criterion 5. To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

The Data

In assessing Criterion 5, we examined the data on school demographics, including socioeconomic status (SES) as determined by children eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), race, ethnicity, English language learners (ELL), and special education.

A note about the data: the percentages for various school demographics may vary according to the timeframe from which the data was drawn. For example, enrollment figures drawn from the database in October (and the various percentages calculated from those figures) may differ from enrollment figures drawn in December. Therefore, an October FRL calculation might be 6%, but the December calculation could be 8%, depending on enrollment fluctuations. However, as long as all the data is drawn from the same timeframe, then comparisons across schools or with overall district averages will be consistent. For the purposes of this report, we will present the school demographic data from the current school year (06-07), although we examined the data for the past three years and found the trends in each category to be consistent across all three years (see appendix 5). In our comparisons to district averages, we are citing the overall averages for the district’s elementary schools. We chose to use the district average for all elementary schools for a basis of comparison rather than the average for all district schools (K-12) because the review schools are all elementary schools, and thus comparing them to other elementary schools presents a more accurate assessment of current demographic trends affecting the district.

SES. Socioeconomic status is a major predictor of academic achievement, and therefore the district is particularly concerned about mitigating concentrations of poverty and supporting all schools to serve more balanced populations of students. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch at Corridor is 26%, which is below the overall average for district elementary schools of 39%.

Race and Ethnicity. Corridor’s overall percentage of minority students (17%) is well below the district average of 29%. The demographics by race/ethnicity are as follows:

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<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the concern relating to equity and the achievement gap in our local context centers on Black, Latino, and Native American students. Focusing on those groups, 0.4% of Corridors students are Black; 4% are Latino, and 5% are Native American. These

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9 Minority is defined as not “white.”
percentages are slightly above the district average for Native Americans, but fall well below district averages for Black and Latino students.

**ELL.** This year 0.4% of Corridor’s students are English Language Learners; the district average is 4%.

**Special Education.** 15.6% of Corridor’s students qualify for special education services; the district average is 15%. Of its special education students, 26.2% qualify for Speech and Language services only; 59.5% qualify for Learning Center services only; and 14.3% qualify for both Speech and Learning Center services.

In summary, the district data for the current school year (retrieved 12/06) indicates that Corridor’s student population is relatively homogeneous, with the exception of special education students, for whom Corridor serves slightly higher percentages than the district average: 26% of Corridor’s student population qualify for free or reduced lunch (the district average is 39%); 17% are minority students (the district average is 29%); 0.4% are English language learners (the district average is 4%); and 15.6% receive special education services (the district average is 15%).

**The School Visit**

In our school visits we looked for evidence of diversity and of a school culture and instructional practices that do, or could, support diverse student populations.

As the data suggests, we found a relatively homogeneous student body consisting of classrooms of mostly engaged and motivated children. The majority of classes we observed during our school visit were electives. Corridor’s impressive schedule of electives provides a wide variety of learning experiences that clearly could allow children with varied learning styles to participate fully and find success in learning. However, while the electives structure does provide a rich menu of opportunities for diverse learners, we did not see evidence of instructional components or techniques that would effectively serve a more diverse population with more diverse instructional needs.

Because Corridor’s current population is relatively homogeneous, it is true that there was little obvious necessity for teachers to use such instructional techniques. We did, however, observe some instances where more differentiated instruction could have been called for, and so while we draw no firm conclusions from one visit, we do note that a more diverse student population would present more learning challenges and would necessitate an expansion of the instructional practices we observed.

In terms of school culture, the school climate we observed clearly supported the children Corridor currently serves, and the teachers and children all seemed to know each other and treat each other with care and respect. We did not, however, observe any indications that the school would be welcoming to students and families from backgrounds differing from the majority of its current students and families.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?
While Corridor does provide a distinctive educational program and is clearly providing a very good education for the children it now serves, the evidence we have gathered from the district database and from our school visit indicates that the school is not contributing as substantively as it could to meeting the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools.

As we discussed in the introduction, we believe that with a strong system of neighborhood schools, most parents will choose to send their child to their neighborhood school unless there is a specific educational program that parents believe would best support their child’s educational success, and that program is not available in their neighborhood school.

Corridor’s integrated applied-learning program offers this kind of specific educational choice for Eugene’s children and families. However, to meet the Board’s requirements for retaining alternative school designation, Corridor must be welcoming to any family that might desire its specific curriculum for their children, and must be ready to effectively teach those children.

In it’s Alternative School Review document, Corridor states that “Corridor welcomes any change that would encourage and increase diversity.” We believe that Corridor is sincere in its desire to serve a diverse student population, and that the school is well positioned to do so. The combination of Corridor’s grade-level core curriculum and its multiage project-based electives could be very effective in supporting high levels of teaching and learning for diverse student populations, including low-income and minority students.

However, evidence from our school visit and discussions with the school review committee and staff indicate that there are challenges that could be impeding Corridor’s ability to reach out to and serve all students and families well. We recommend Corridor explore these challenges with the assistance of district staff in the following three areas: expanding instruction techniques, examining school culture, and addressing community perceptions.

Instruction. We understand that our school visit was only a single snap-shot of the school, but, as mentioned above, we believe that a more diverse student population with more diverse needs would require more differentiated instruction and a greater range of instructional techniques than we witnessed. Corridor’s Alternative School Review document states that their teachers are currently involved in staff development focusing on new research and strategies for at-risk learners. We recommend that Corridor continue those efforts, including an emphasis on differentiated instruction and additional strategies for English Language Learners. Regarding special education, we commend Corridor for serving a relatively high percentage of special education students, and as with all district schools, recommend that its special education team work closely with district special education staff to ensure that the school is identifying and serving their special needs children appropriately and well.

School culture. While the school culture at Corridor is welcoming and nurturing for its current student population, we encourage Corridor to explore if there are structural and/or informal practices or procedures that might impede or discourage a greater diversity of students and families from attending Corridor. We recommend that Corridor work with Carmen Urbina, the district’s parent/family and community
coordinator, to examine the current school culture in order to identify and address any elements that might discourage some of Eugene’s students and families from attending the school. We note that one structural impediment identified by Corridor’s school review committee is the lack of after school care. Although it is more an issue of school resources than school culture, the school’s review committee believes that it may discourage working parents from enrolling their children in the school.

Community perception. From our discussions with Corridor’s school review committee, it was clear that some community perceptions currently exist that might discourage a more diverse population of students and families from attending Corridor. For example, although Corridor specifically states that they understand the difficulties faced by working parents and do not expect all parents to be able to spend a great deal of time volunteering, their Alternative School Review document does state that parents volunteer more than 2,500 hours each year, and the school acknowledges that there is still a perception in the community that parents have to volunteer. Corridor’s review committee also noted that although the Latino population has increased in their community, the proportion of Latino students the school serves has remained well below district averages, and they wondered if there were community perceptions that discourage Latino students and families from accessing the school. We recommend that Corridor work with district staff to more closely examine community perceptions such as these, in order to ensure that the school is accurately perceived by its community so that all children and families who might benefit from its program have accurate information on which to base their school choice decisions.

We note that Corridor provides a rather complex case in terms of diversity and how alternative schools best serve their communities and the district. Two examples of this complexity can be seen in Corridor’s interpretation of its transfer impact and in the school’s low percentage of Latino students.

1) Transfer impact. As Corridor points out in their Alternative School Review document, their school is the only non-language-based alternative school program in the North Region, and their applied learning/project based approach offers a choice for students with different learning styles who would struggle and/or be less engaged in more traditionally oriented schools. The document states that by providing such a choice for families that might otherwise transfer to schools out of the North region, Corridor contributes to retaining a more diverse student population in the region. The district’s transfer data supports this contention: approximately 86% of Corridor’s students reside in the North region. On the other hand, as discussed in the introduction, the students from the North region attending Corridor also come from the attendance boundaries of neighboring elementary schools with much high percentages of low-income families.

2) Regarding Corridor’s relatively low percentage of Latino students, it is not clear whether more Latino students and families do not attend Corridor because there are elements of Corridor’s school culture that are not welcoming to Latino families, or because other neighborhood schools in the community simply appeal more to those families.

In considering these scenarios, it could be argued that Corridor is in fact contributing to a more balanced regional demographic and is not competing with neighborhood schools, but rather offering a specific educational choice that parents can access if their neighborhood schools don’t offer that choice. It could also be argued that Corridor is drawing a more privileged demographic from surrounding neighborhood schools. Neither argument, however, alters the recommendations we have presented above,
which we believe will help Corridor to ensure that it provides equitable access and support to all children and families who would choose to attend the school.

As stated above, we believe that Corridor is sincere in their desire to serve a diverse student population, and that they are well positioned to do so. We also recognize that effectively addressing the complex issues of diversity and equity will require a sustained and concerted effort on the part of Corridor’s staff and school community over time, and so we encourage the district to provide consistent support and monitoring for Corridor as the process unfolds.

**Criterion 6. To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?**

Corridor has full enrollment and high academic achievement. Its integrated curriculum structure combined with creative scheduling and staffing patterns allows Corridor to serve its current student population effectively.

Corridor’s parents engage in fundraising for school events and field trips, but do not use parent fundraising for additional staffing. The school is also the recipient of a major technology grant (TILT) that is currently providing enhanced technology opportunities for students and teachers.

Based on this data we conclude that the operation of Corridor does constitute an efficient use of limited district resources.

**Criterion 7. To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?**

Corridor consistently meets its enrollment targets, and remains viable as a separate school in its current configuration as a collocated alternative school.

**Criterion 8. To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?**

Corridor shares a building with Yujin Gakuen, which is also an alternative school. This collocation of two alternative school is the only one of its kind in District 4J.

To assess Criterion 8 within the scope of this review, we consider collocation as an element of school effectiveness (i.e. how well does the school serve its children). We asked both Corridor and Yujin Gakuen to compile a list of the pros and cons of collocation from their individual perspectives, and to specifically consider how, or in what ways, collocation contributes to, or does not contribute to, creating the best educational climate for the school’s children and staff.

In its response to Criterion 8, Corridor states that “Overall, this collocation has worked very well, and any problems we have are due to the fact that we have too many people sharing too little space.” They go on to note “The challenges listed below have not
become serious problems because we have put systems in place to ensure adequate communication and positive relations.”

The main challenges voice by Corridor center around:

1) **Communication and problem solving**, for which they explain, “Being a good neighbor requires regular coordination and communication. To address this need to coordinate use of space, we have a School Building Team.”

2) **Sharing common space**, which they address through careful scheduling and advanced planning. They also note that parking is a persistent challenge.

3) **Sharing administrative and professional staff**, about which they state, “At the same time that it is important to coordinate the shared staff, it is equally important to maintain each school’s independent administration staff.” That is, while sharing a principal and various staff can work well, having separate office staff is also necessary.

A number of benefits were also listed, including shared activities such as the total building breakfast social at the beginning of the year, recycling efforts, the school garden, after school homework, chess clubs, and various special classroom events (e.g., class plays or performances). The schools also share in the Money for Minds fund raiser.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the school with which it shares a building?

We acknowledge both school communities for their efforts in working collaboratively to maximize the benefits of their shared arrangement. The development of the building team to discuss concerns and explore avenues of sharing has clearly produced positive results.

In our conversations with both Corridor and Yujin Gakuen, sharing a principal was seen as a benefit and as a challenge, but the key seems to be a predictable, equitable division of time with an opportunity to flex when necessary. Capable leadership that can encourage and facilitate good communication and compromise is an essential component to making this arrangement work successfully. In the case of Corridor and Yujin Gakuen, having an administrator that champions and celebrates both schools seems to have enhanced the atmosphere of collegiality between the programs.

A significant difference in this collocation from that of neighborhood/alternative school collocations is that these two alternative school programs do not view themselves as competing for students. Offering two very different educational programs, with both schools attracting full enrollment, seems to have fostered greater cooperation rather than competition.

All this being true, sharing space still represents an ongoing challenge. While neither school would be regarded as large on its own, together they do stress building facilities and systems. Coordinating two schools within one building is more difficult than coordinating just one. While cooperative strategies like staggering daily schedules can clearly help, issues like parking, drop-off areas, and accommodating recess will always be challenging.

We recognize the effort required by both schools to make this arrangement succeed, and we are impressed with the results. The variables seem to be different enough from
those in neighborhood/alternative school collocations to suggest that the Corridor/Yujin Gakuen collocation model (i.e., alternative/alternative) be considered as a possible model for future relocations of other alternative schools.
Appendices

Appendices are available on the Eugene School district website:  www.4j.lane.edu

2. Charlemagne at Fox Hollow Alternative School Review document
5. Demographic data
   a. Demographic data ’06-’07
   b. Demographic data ’05-’06
   c. Demographic data ’04-’05
6. Special Education data
7. Parent fundraising for instructional support
8. Transfer data
   a. Transfer data 2006-07
   b. Transfer analysis 2006-07
9. Milwaukee French Immersion School information
   From the school website: www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/mfis
   a. About Us
   b. Focus and Philosophy
   From www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/wi/other/print/1221
   c. School demographics
   From Milwaukee Public Schools Office of Audit Services
   d. School audit summary
10. Special education/language immersion citations
Buena Vista Spanish Immersion School
Alternative School Review Report

Submitted by
Buena Vista Site Council

October 30, 2006
Criterion 1

*Does the alternative school's educational program represent a distinctive strategy for achieving the Board's educational goals as defined in the Board's adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statements?*

**Part 1. Is the school “achieving the Board’s education goals as defined in the Board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values and educational philosophy statement?”**

Buena Vista takes pride in implementing the Board’s educational goals as defined in the Board’s adopted goals, beliefs, values and educational philosophy statement by helping children reach their full potential, providing equal access and opportunities, as well as working to close the achievement gap.

Buena Vista’s administration, staff and parents work diligently to help all children within the school meet their full potential. Spanish language arts and math are taught at each grade-level with the goal of preparing each student to become bi-literate by the 12th grade. We are able to provide research that suggests students who possess knowledge of more than one language are more likely to do better in all language based activities than if they were learning in only one language. Buena Vista also continues instruction in English, most of these students' primary language. This year staff is teaching a rigorous program of English language arts in grades 3-5. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, this instruction will take place in the 4th and 5th grade. Finally, the Buena Vista curriculum and teaching staff allow flexible scheduling in order to assure that students with IEP needs receive individualized instruction. Students with varied academic abilities receive a directed, culturally inclusive and flexible education, which allows students to reach their full potential.

Buena Vista supports the Board’s goal to provide equal access and opportunity to all of its students. The administration and staff understand and support the District’s two-tier lottery policy of preference to students who are from low-income families. Since the 2003-2004 school year, Buena Vista has declined to use gender balancing in student selection from the lottery. Buena Vista administration and staff support the premise that all students deserve fair access and the opportunity to attend any alternative school.

Buena Vista administration, staff and parents recognize the individual and societal advantages to closing the achievement gap. Using the Response to Intervention model, Buena Vista gives extra reading instruction to those students who are reading below grade level as identified through reading assessment data. Since the facilitating teachers and one of the instructional assistants are bi-literate, they provide intervention to those students who need support to accomplish a high level of reading skill in both Spanish and English. The administration and staff at Buena Vista commit to the philosophy that all students who enter Buena Vista graduate from Buena Vista with a command of the Spanish and English languages. Buena Vista commits available time and resources to closing the achievement gap.

**Part 2. What is the school’s purpose and does its educational program represent a distinctive strategy for achieving the Board’s educational goals?**

**Criterion 1.a**

*What is Buena Vista's purpose?*

Buena Vista’s distinctive strategy centers on a program that teaches students to become bi-literate in Spanish and develop an appreciation for cultures of Spanish-speaking nations. Americans are citizens of a globally interdependent world and a culturally diverse nation. This creates the need for more individuals to become competent in another language. Buena Vista’s goal is to educate each student to better understand, speak, read and write the Spanish language. Buena Vista’s unique teaching staff
represents many Spanish speaking countries. Therefore, students gain an in-depth understanding and appreciation for other cultures.

Specifically, the Spanish Immersion Program at Buena Vista manifests the following goals and outcomes for each student:

- To understand Spanish when spoken by a native speaker.
- To lay the foundation for speaking Spanish with near-native fluency and accuracy.
- To read developmentally-appropriate Spanish materials.
- To develop an understanding of and appreciation for the many cultures in which Spanish is spoken.
- To perform as well or better in reading, writing, speaking and math than students who are taught only in English.
- To appreciate how customs and language in the United States have been influenced by many different cultures.
- To recognize the worth and contributions of all people and their cultures.

**Criterion 1.e.**

*To what extent and how do the alternative school teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?*

Buena Vista teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy by instructing all students in Spanish. These students predominantly speak English which is their primary language. The teaching staff at each grade level includes bi-literate and bi-cultural teachers.

**Criterion 1.f.**

*Does the alternative school anticipate any significant changes in its program?*

Research indicates that many bilingual students perceive, interpret and communicate at an advanced level. Research also shows that bi-literate students comprehend English grammar better and eventually perform better on English standardized tests. Bi-literacy also contributes to a student’s verbal creativity and problem solving skills.

To best accomplish the goals of preparing all students to be bi-literate by the 12th grade, Buena Vista is in the process of restructuring its program. In the 2002-2003 school year, Buena Vista staff engaged in an intensive study of language acquisition research and chose the full immersion model as the best program for their population of students. The administration and staff used the 2003-2005 school years to create a model to implement as a full immersion program. In the 2005-2006 school year Buena Vista’s first grade began its full immersion journey. These students advanced into a second grade full immersion classroom this school year. Next year they will progress into a third grade full immersion classroom. The 4th and 5th grades will remain at 50% Spanish and 50% English, which is the current language ratio at these grade levels.

Research and case studies demonstrate that the full immersion model supports the developmental needs of 6, 7 and 8 year old students. Prior to our implementation of the full immersion program the students alternated daily between an English and a Spanish classroom at all grade levels. Now the 1st and 2nd grade students benefit from more effective time spent in a full immersion Spanish program with one primary teacher in one classroom. This will continue next year for the 3rd grade students.
Criterion 2

To what extent does the alternative school’s decision-making process for governance of the school differ from those used in other schools?

Buena Vista’s decision-making processes are similar to those of other schools. The administration follows the direction of the decision making grid, developed by staff and site council, when processing and making decisions. The co-located schools, Buena Vista and Meadowlark, hold additional combined site council, staff and leadership meetings. The representative parties solve mutual problems, brainstorm ideas and plan combined events that will improve both schools’ facility and quality of life for students, families and staff.

Criterion 3

To what extent is the alternative school able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

Buena Vista enjoys a healthy support system from its staff, parents and students. Staff is flexible in its willingness to change teaching strategies, philosophies and curriculum, as well as other areas, based on an understanding of best practices. Their commitment to a culturally rich curriculum, that also supports language development, is evident in everyday practice and showcased performances. The Buena Vista staff has a reputation for being loyal to the program and staying for many years, often until retirement.

Parent participation is one of the strongest foundations of Buena Vista. The volunteer base is energetic and focused. For example, in the 2005-2006 school year Buena Vista parents recorded over 2,600 volunteer hours. Buena Vista parents financially support the schools efforts in closing the achievement gap by providing the additional staffing necessary for student support and intervention. The parent organization is comprised of at least sixteen board members and many volunteers, who coordinate a myriad of school events, including fundraising and community outreach activities.

The District’s lottery data clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrates strong interest in the program. Buena Vista’s inexhaustible waiting list is proof of continuous support for the program. Furthermore, many former students fulfill their International High School community service requirements at Buena Vista, which demonstrates continuing student support. Buena Vista continues to have strong student support for the program as students move to middle school. For the 2006-2007 school year all but two students remained in the Spanish Immersion program as they entered 6th grade.

Criterion 4

To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the District’s educational program?

Buena Vista’s curriculum enhances the District’s educational program as demonstrated by the school’s unique purpose, its distinctive strategies and its efficient implementation of those strategies.

As previously stated, the Spanish curriculum clearly increases students’ present and future potential to become bi-literate. Interestingly, for a student who may have learning disabilities, one of the only successful paths to bi-literacy is for that child to immerse themselves in a second language at an early age. By comparison, the traditional time-line for an introduction of a second language may preclude this student from becoming bi-literate.

The culturally diverse staff educates Buena Vista students to respect and inquire about different cultures. Fiesta Cultural showcases Buena Vista’s commitment to cultural studies. Each class studies a specific country’s geography, culture, and traditions. At the end of the year, each class performs a dance
from the country it studied. The students look forward to this highlight, take pride in what they have learned and honor the unique tradition of the particular country studied.

Buena Vista values the advancement of learning outside the classroom. The staff plans the following educational trips.

- **Second grade:** Trip to Woodburn to interact with its Spanish speaking population
- **Third grade:** Walking tour of Downtown Eugene to learn more about this area’s government and history.
- **Fourth grade:** Oregon History study trip to Salem and the State Capital building.
- **Fifth grade:** Optional trip abroad to a Spanish speaking country which a parent group researches, plans, coordinates and implements.

The students have after school opportunities to experience music from different cultures. Currently, over 100 Buena Vista and Meadowlark students participate in three after school choirs, in which every student is invited to participate. The educationally designed trips and after school activities supplement a student’s learning experience and receive a tremendous amount of support from all the interested parties.

**Criterion 5**

*To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the Board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?*

The diversity of Buena Vista steadily increased over the past several years and all interested parties hope this trend will continue. This increase relates to the administration and staff’s commitment to ensure that every student who enters the program remains in the program. The following data points illustrate this trend:

- Students qualifying for free and reduced meals has increased from 16% in the 2004-2005 school year to 18% in 2005-2006 to 22.5% in 2006-2007.
- For the past 3 years, BV has maintained its Special Education population. If a student is identified as needing an IEP, that student receives services and stays in the program.

The following accomplishments contribute to the goal of increasing equity and diversity:

- Buena Vista administration, staff, students, and parents expect respect from each other and support all safety considerations. The District’s anti-harassment and discrimination policy clearly navigates these issues and the school strictly enforces this policy.
- The administration and staff implemented a school-wide behavior plan, a “Check In and Check Out” system, and First and Second Step Curriculum all of which support students who struggle behaviorally.
- The school’s participation in the Response to Intervention grant allows the staff to focus additional support on students who struggle in reading.
- The administration hires staff from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Buena Vista staff works hard to create a school environment that nurtures all children no matter their background or ability.

**Criterion 7**

*To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain a viable as a separate school?*

According to lottery and district data, Buena Vista easily meets its enrollment targets. Buena Vista caps classroom enrollment at 26 students per class with an overall enrollment of 252 students. When a student leaves in any school year, it is usually in the upper grades. Buena Vista offers the next
child on that grade level’s waiting list the open position. Often there are no students on the 4th or 5th grade waiting list. If we did not cap the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms, any time we lost a student in the upper grades we would need to replace them in the lower grades, increasing the class size to much larger than is educationally sound.

**Criterion 8**

*To what extent and in what ways does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?*

**From Buena Vista**

**Strengths of collocations for school climate**
- Diversity of students and staff
- The schools coexist very well
- Larger parent & student base
- More kids means more friends
- Parent organizations work well together as evidenced by the combined social events and combined site council meeting for the benefit of the entire school’s population
- Children learn to respect and learn from one another
- Neighborhood playmates attend both schools
- Two good schools with good families

**Limitation of collocation for school climate**
- Traffic creates frustrating and dangerous situations
- Half the school feels unfamiliar to the students who attend the other half
- Resentfulness both ways/parent strife
- Difference in socio-economic status
- Perception that Principal may favor one school over the other
- More opportunities for ML kids (i.e. Computer teacher, P.E. teacher, more I.A. time, after school programs)
- BV must use fundraising for staffing purposes (i.e. part-time reading facilitator and some I.A. time used to provide interventions for students, library and technology support)
- Perception is that BV has unlimited resources which is inaccurate

**Strengths of collocation to serve the needs of all students**
- Shared resources allow for economy of means (i.e. administration, technology, library, music, infrastructure, playground and surrounding landscape)
- Higher level of services because of shared resources
- Can choose immersion for 1 student in a family and a traditional school, Meadowlark, for another and drop off at 1 site
- A larger population of children in extra-curricular activities such as scouting and sporting events
- Funding sources from each school support both schools

**Limitations of collocation to serve the needs of all students**
- The facilities too small and crowded, limiting growth potential for both programs
- Lack of kindergarten for Buena Vista
  - Difficult for students to transition from English reading to Spanish reading in 1st grade (i.e. relearning letter names and sounds)
  - Hardship on families to switch schools from kindergarten to 1st grade
Because other language immersion programs begin in kindergarten, some families sacrifice entrance into those programs while awaiting lottery results of placement into Buena Vista.

Spanish kindergarten level curriculum must be taught in 1st grade, thereby greatly slowing the rate of academic learning at all levels.

- Separate start and end times for schools
- Sharing principal may mean Spanish focus is lost
- Shared school increases the overall building population, diminishing small school benefits
- Limited resources may create competition/negative comparison
- After-school activities funded through Meadowlark are not available to BV, who does not have the funds for after school activities
- Special Education and Speech/Language instruction are in English instead of Spanish
- Library books are predominantly English
- Most computer programs are English

From Meadowlark

**Strengths of collocation for school climate**
- ML students interact and socialize with students from different backgrounds, have larger group of friends
- Sense of cooperation between staffs is a role model for students
- Staff and parents from both schools work together when it benefits both schools
- Combined activities like Spirit week, Book Fair, PBS assemblies and reward days create a fun school climate

**Limitations of collocation for school climate**
- Difference in socioeconomic status between ML and BV creates an atmosphere of inequity;
- A sense of privilege and “have-nots” separates kids outside of school that follows them into high school
  - Parent involvement and fundraising
  - Exclusion, unhealthy competition and disrespectful attitude is evident
- Socially exclusive events for BV kids (i.e. Fancy Friday, class trip)
- Kindergarten students lose friends due to lottery
- Alternative schools in general break down the connectedness within a neighborhood that a neighborhood school can create

**Negative impact on staff:**
- Materials are paid for by one school and used by another
- Limited space can create tension when many need to use available space
- Staffs do not have same goals, which pull administration and specialists in different directions
- Difficult to establish traditions when every other year schools must trade with each other (i.e. Special person’s day, graduation, dance festival)
- Staff work load increases due to extra time and energy spent in meetings to work on communication, problem solving and planning needed to have positive staff relationships between two staffs
• BV is perceived to be a better school; more challenging, more parent involvement, attended by the “cream of the crop” students, which requires extra time and effort for ML staff to “prove” that ML is not inferior to BV
• BV taking students from ML so numbers decrease, affecting school staffing

**Negative and inaccurate perception of ML:**

- The perception that only an alternative school can meet the needs of high achieving students. This changes the natural balance of the neighborhood school so that there are fewer opportunities for our stronger students
- ML is thought of as the school you only go to if you don’t get into BV
- School report cards are compared and publicized but do not reflect the differences in student populations (i.e. students with special needs, non-English speaking students, and students living in poverty.

**Relationship between Parents:**

- Elitist, demeaning attitudes and comments by some BV parents toward ML kids, school and families during school and non-school events
- Expectations of joint events intimidating to some ML families (i.e. track meet, Jogathon)

**Loss of involved families:**

- Many actively involved neighborhood families apply to BV because it is more prestigious and easily accessible in the same building as ML, which creates a loss of those involved families. Many of these families have more resources, more time to volunteer, and more money for fundraising.

**Fundraising:**

- Separate activities create division and competition between parents/students
- BV kids earn more prizes during joint fundraisers (i.e. principal party for jog-a-thon)
- ML parent involvement and fiscal support from their families cannot compare to that of BV resulting in feelings of inadequacy (carnival vs. auction/graduations/concerts/fundraisers.) ML carnival earned $6000, vs. Auction for BV earned over $25,000.

**Strengths of collocation to serve the needs of all students**

- BV and ML parent library volunteers help support both schools’ staff and students
- ML has small school advantages, as well as large school advantages
- Better use of funds to support both programs:
  - Library is better stocked
  - Can combine some staff development
  - Computer lab is better equipped
- Better use of FTE and classified time:
  - Full time instead of part time music, and after school choirs
  - Full time Sped teacher.
  - More hours for technology support
  - More IA hours for media and library support
  - Combined RTI and SST team to meet the needs of students.

**Limitations of collocation to serve the needs of all students**

- ML has to carry extra students in their kinder, giving it very high numbers. This is because BV doesn’t have a kinder and many BV siblings, living in the ML attendance area, attend ML kinder. Also, many ML kinders apply to the lottery and are accepted into BV. If ML didn’t have extra
students in their kinder, the ML program would be severely affected from losing so many students to BV.

- Not enough space-
  - Limits ability to do academic intervention (i.e. tutoring, small group interventions)
  - Limits the growth potential of both programs
  - Creates scheduling nightmares for meetings, after school programs
- Safety issues with parking, traffic, and crosswalk
- Principal, Sped teacher and student support team split between two schools
- Some funds, such as the PE grant, go to building instead of schools, creating supply/budget issues
Alternative School Review

2006-07

Charlemagne
at Fox Hollow

School Review Committee

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Introduction

The Eugene School District 4J is currently engaged in a comprehensive effort to support all of the district’s elementary schools – neighborhood and alternative – in providing effective learning environments and equitable access and opportunity for all the district’s children and families.

As part of that effort, the Board has directed the superintendent to periodically review the District’s alternative schools to ensure that they continue to meet Board and District goals, and perform consistent with Board policy.

On August 9, 2005 the Board approved the review process by which its alternative schools will be assessed. The review process consists of eight criteria that each alternative school is asked to address.

This document presents each criterion and the specific method by which your school will be asked to address that criterion. Schools may also present additional materials to answer specific criterion when so indicated (additional material).

Some sections of this document must be submitted to the superintendent’s review team prior to the team’s school visit. Those sections are clearly designated (advance submission), and can be submitted electronically to Carl Hermanns at hermanns_c@4j.lane.edu.

Additional information or suggestions by the review team for addressing an individual criterion is designated directly under the criterion by NOTE.

An electronic version of this document (Microsoft Word) will be made available to each review school. Please submit your final report as a Microsoft Word or pdf document.
Criterion 1

Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

The review team will consider Criterion 1 in two parts:

Part 1. Is the school “achieving the Board’s educational goals as defined in the board's adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?”

NOTE: For the purposes of the review, the Board goals, beliefs and values, and educational philosophy can be distilled to three main points:

1. Are we helping all children to reach their full potential?
2. Are we providing equal access and opportunity to all children of our district?
3. Are we contributing to the Board’s goal of closing the achievement gap?

The review team will assess Part 1 by examining student achievement data (03-04 and 04-05 Oregon State Assessment) and school demographics. The team will obtain this data from the district database, and will confirm its accuracy with your school review committee.

Additional Material, advance submission: Your school may submit additional material in support of its students’ academic achievement (e.g., indicators of individual growth over time, formative assessment results, etc). If you choose to submit additional material for this criterion, please limit your submission to a summary statement describing the method used to assess achievement and the overall results, not to exceed one single-spaced page. The review team will ask for specific documentation or additional explanation if necessary. Title the submission “Additional Material, Criterion 1, Part 1.”

Part 2. What is the school’s purpose, and does its educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the Board’s educational goals?

Part 2 is addressed through Criterion 1.a. through 1.e.
Criterion 1.a

How does the alternative school’s program compare to the originally approved charter or proposal?

NOTE: If a school has transformed over time, that would not be unexpected. The important question is: *what is your school’s purpose now?*

This statement of purpose is an opportunity to think deeply and specifically about the real purpose of your school, and how you are meeting that purpose.

Advance Submission: Please submit your statement of purpose in advance. The statement should be no longer that two single-spaced pages.

Statement of Purpose

Charlemagne’s purpose is to immerse students in French language and francophone cultures, developing both advanced language skills and an understanding of their place as members of a broad and diverse global community. The school offers the opportunity for high academic achievement and fosters a love of learning in an environment that supports the development of strong character and self esteem.

The school’s primary purpose of providing French language immersion is broadly endorsed by our parent community; 70% of respondents to our 2006 Parent Survey said that language immersion was the single most important reason they sent their children to Charlemagne, followed by 22% who identified academic rigor as the primary reason for choosing the program.

While we don’t have access to the original charter, the current purpose of providing foreign language immersion and cultural awareness is consistent with all the early descriptions of the program’s intent.
Criterion 1.b through 1.e

NOTE: 1.b - 1.e pertain to distinctive strategies. Your school is not expected to incorporate every strategy listed in 1.b – e, but it does need to incorporate some strategies that legitimately make it “distinctive” in order to meet the board’s standard for retaining alternative school designation.

Advance Submission: Please submit a brief explanation for each criterion that is a distinctive strategy of your school. The explanation should be no longer than one single-spaced page for each relevant criterion. The review team will ascertain the level of applicability during a school visit walk-through.

Criterion 1.b

To what extent and how does the alternative school or program emphasize a specific element of the district’s approved curriculum?

Charlemagne’s immersion approach supports the district’s language and literacy goals. We help our students to tackle the language arts standards, emphasizing language meta-cognition, inference and synthesis for comprehension, grammatical concepts, semantics, word origin, comprehension and fluency.

Our multi-cultural approach supports social studies goals, fostering understanding of different cultures, in-depth studies of a variety of countries, and celebration rather than mere acceptance of differences.

The school’s unique approach to math instruction benefits from the lateral thinking fostered by second-language development and supports the processes and strategies dimension of open-ended math problem solving. Inference and generalization have been identified as key math problem solving strategies and reasoning methods by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. In addition, two positive mathematical dispositions identified in elementary students are making sense of seemingly nonsensical situations and persistence in solving a problem (NCTM 2004, pp. 2, 4-5); both of these dispositions are enhanced by second language acquisition.

1 Small, Sheffield, Cavanaugh et al., Navigating through Problem Solving and Reasoning in Grade 2, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2004.
Criterion 1.c

To what extent and how does the alternative school/program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of presentation in other schools?

While the manner of presentation of core elementary curricula differs significantly from other schools, the sequence of presentation is similar, with the significant difference of much earlier and more intensive introduction of foreign language instruction than is typical.

Specifically, our program differs in the time at which language is learned, the environment in which it is learned and the immediate use of the skills. Typically, foreign languages are introduced at the middle and high school level. At Charlemagne, students begin learning the French language in kindergarten. This is a substantial departure from the order of foreign language presentation in other schools, but critical for effective language learning, as the optimal time for learning a second language is from age five to ten years (Dhority and Jensen 1998). In addition, some subjects, notably math and science, are taught in French. Students are required to not only learn the target language, but they are also required to use those acquired language skills to learn other core curriculum matter. This immersion approach gives an immediate purpose to learning the language. Again, this is a departure from the more typical approach in which language is learned in a much more restrictive environment and for more limited purposes.

Criterion 1.d

To what extent and how does the alternative school/program group students for instruction in some unique manner?

Charlemagne groups students in a manner that supports our partial-immersion approach and efficiently uses scarce instructional resources. Each grade level is divided into two classes, and each grade has a French teacher and an English teacher. Students spend half their day in French class and half in English, switching at lunchtime so that each teacher teaches all 52 students over the course of a day.

While this approach creates significant workload issues for teachers, who teach and evaluate the progress of 52 individual students, it creates substantial advantages for the students, creating consistency in content for all students at each grade level and allowing students to develop strong relationships with two teachers each year. The structure also fosters strong teamwork between the grade-level teacher pairs, who coordinate content to support what’s happening in each other’s classes.

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Subjects taught in French include French language (speaking, reading and writing), math and science, and sometimes art, music, physical education and social skills.
Criterion 1.e

To what extent and how do the alternative school/program’s teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

Language immersion is the unique instructional strategy at the core of our school. Researchers and practitioners alike have found that this approach leads not only to substantial acquisition of French language and greater understanding of world cultures, but also stronger English language and reasoning skills. “Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first-language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances reasoning and problem-solving skills, as well as creative-thinking skills. Learning a second language not only strengthens students’ ability to communicate, but also develops their capacity to understand and respect other cultures” (The Ontario Curriculum, 2001). “Students fluent in two languages obtain higher scores in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence testing,” according to Dion (2002). “Second language students have superior cross-cultural skills and adapt better to varying cultural contexts.”

At Charlemagne, foreign language instruction is integrated with and embedded in content areas such as math, art, social studies and science, increasing its effectiveness. According to Dhörity and Jensen (1998), “Language learning must be coherent, relevant and meaningful to maximize the process. Learning vocabulary words, for example, out of context makes little sense. Real situations and simulations do, however, make sense. What is clear is that learning without meaning is unlikely to be recalled, used or enjoyed.”

Parallel instruction occurs in French and English, and content-driven vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, and speaking happens in two languages, supporting deeper learning.

The effectiveness of Charlemagne’s program is enhanced by the employment of multiple strategies, including visual cues, music and song, to reach out to a broad range of learners. History and geography come alive through events such as the Medieval Fair and the Cultural Fair. The Science Fair makes textbook concepts take on new meaning and relevance through hands-on exploration and demonstration.

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1 The Ontario Curriculum, 2001. French As a Second Language: Extended French, Grades 4-8; French Immersion, Grades 1-8.
2 Dion, Stéphane, 2002. Speech delivered at the conference: Celebrating the Past, Reflecting on the Present, Cultivating the Future of CPF.
Criterion 1.f

*Does the alternative school/program anticipate any significant changes in its program?*

**NOTE:** This will take into account any existing initiatives and/or plans, and can be addressed through a brief written explanation and an interview with your school review committee.

**Advance Submission:** If this criterion is applicable to your school, please submit an overview of the anticipated changes, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

There are no significant changes currently planned for Charlemagne’s instructional program.
Criterion 2

*To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?*

**NOTE:** Like the distinctive strategies listed in 1.b – e, this criterion may or may not be applicable.

**Advance submission:** If this criterion is applicable to your school, please submit your governance documents with a one-paragraph summary of why and/or how your decision-making process for governance is distinctive.

Charlemagne’s decision-making process includes significant parent, staff and administrative collaboration via site council, which is typical of other schools.
Criterion 3

To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

NOTE: The review team will consider enrollment numbers, parent council participation, and teacher turnover statistics in assessing this criterion. Enrollment numbers and teacher turnover statistics will be obtained from the district database and confirmed with your school review committee.

Advance Submission: Please submit a short paragraph describing the level of participation in your parent or site council.

Additional Material: If you feel there are additional factors that help to demonstrate continued strong interest, please submit a summary of that evidence, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

Charlemagne benefits from significant interest and commitment from all three of its core constituencies: staff, parents and students.

Staff volunteer time to support programs and activities outside of the school day, including chess club, garden club, student government, the student newspaper, the annual talent show, the cultural fair, and Camp Rigolo (a summer enrichment program run by Charlemagne alumni who are students in the high school French immersion program).

Parents are very involved and volunteer to serve on PTO, Site Council, and Esprit de Corps (which welcomes new families to our community and reaches out to families in crisis). They regularly help out in classrooms, the playground, and the cafeteria.

In addition, parents are active in planning and running events such as Mardi Gras that work to build community within our school. Because we believe strongly in providing equitable access to all children, parents work hard to raise funds for the fifth grade Quebec trip so that all our students can have this rich cultural experience. Parent fundraising efforts also provide school supplies, Thanksgiving boxes and holiday presents for families who are struggling financially.

While Charlemagne parents do not need to speak French for their children to do well and many have minimal or no background in the language, the enthusiasm our students have for French is contagious; parents are signing up for parent French classes this fall.

The novelty of learning in French keeps students engaged and excited. Students remain committed to French immersion even after they leave Charlemagne, as evidenced by our retention of students matriculating on through the French immersion program at Roosevelt Middle School and South Eugene High School. Out of a class of 52 kindergarteners, between 43-46 go on to the program at Roosevelt, and 20 graduate from the French immersion program within South’s academically demanding International High School. A sign of that ongoing
engagement is how many high-school-age alumni come back and volunteer in programs such as Camp Rigolo.
Criterion 4

To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?

NOTE: The review team will address this criterion by considering your school’s purpose statement, its distinctive strategies, and the efficacy of the implementation of those strategies.

Efficacy will be assessed by examining student achievement, including an analysis of the achievement gap (both Oregon State Assessments and additional material submitted in support of academic achievement, per Criterion 1, Part 1 will be considered), and by considering student/family engagement, as evidenced by parent council participation, per Criterion 3.

Additional Material, advance submission: The review team will already have access to the basic materials needed to assess this criterion from the district database and your previous responses to Criterion 1, Part 1 and Criterion 3. However, if you have further evidence of student/family engagement that enhances the district’s educational program (e.g. before or after-school activities, unique extra-curricular activities open to all children, etc), please submit a short summary of that evidence, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

The district’s educational program is enhanced by Charlemagne’s commitment to second-language fluency, intercultural understanding, and academic excellence. Students leave our school better prepared to function in a global community that demands higher-order reasoning, strong communication skills, and cultural competence.

We provide a strong academic foundation that our children take with them to middle school and high school, making them ready to manage increased academic demands. We work with our students to help them become increasingly independent learners who can thrive in challenging environments. Our approach to homework is one example of this process.

In the early grades, homework is assigned to provide practice and engage parents in supporting children’s academic efforts. For example, first-grade weekly homework might include a math worksheet that students can work through largely on their own, a list of the French vocabulary being focused on in class that week so parents can reinforce the learning, and reading and writing assignments that parent and child work on together. All together this might add up to around an hour of work per week and late assignments are accepted, slowly easing students and their families into the discipline of homework.

In later grades the focus is on increasing student responsibility, independence, and the significant time-on-task associated with higher academic achievement. For example, fourth-grade students are expected to spend significant time every night on math, reading, writing and spelling homework, supplemented by optional “math challenge” and “ready set think”
assignments to help students stretch their reasoning and creative skills. Larger projects are assigned periodically. While parents are expected to provide the structure that allows homework success (time and a place to study, access to reference materials, etc.), the work itself is done independently so that students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and to make wise choices about how to allocate their time. Time management is much more important at this level, where students spend an hour or two each night on their weekly homework and manage large, long-term projects.

Our parent community has embraced Charlemagne’s approach to homework. A whopping 87% of respondents to our 2006 Parent Survey said that the amount of homework assigned was “just right,” while only 11% felt it was “too much.” This progressive, increasingly responsible approach enlists children and their families as active partners in students’ learning, extending the teachers’ reach beyond the classroom.
Criterion 5

To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

NOTE: The review team will address this criterion by examining school demographics, including race, ethnicity, levels of SES, ELL, mobility, and special education services. The review team will obtain this information from the district database, and will confirm its accuracy with your school review committee.

Additional Materials, Advance submission: If your school has ongoing programs or procedures that contribute to creating a welcoming and supportive school environment for children of diverse backgrounds and abilities (and for the parents of those children), please submit a brief summary of those programs and procedures, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

Fundamental to the Charlemagne curriculum is developing students’ awareness of other cultures through direct and explicit teaching of significant cultural attributes from francophone countries. Students learn the cultural values embedded in the French vocabulary and grammar that are different from students’ home culture. For example, the French language brings a different perspective to the phrase “I miss you” because “you” comes before “I,” changing the subject of the phrase and hence the focus. This in-depth focus on culture through the lens of language creates a broader respect for and interest in the range of cultures in our community and the world beyond it.

As a school community that strongly values diversity, we would like to enroll a more racially, ethnically and economically heterogeneous student body. While the overall ratio of whites to students of color (Charlemagne is 86.3% white) closely mirrors that of Eugene (85.5% white), when you split students out into racial, ethnic and economic groups, some disparities emerge. In some respects, our school is more diverse than Eugene as a whole: Asians and Pacific Islanders make up 7.8% of our student population (06-07 Charlemagne enrollment data) but only 6.0% of Eugene’s population (2005 American Community Survey, US Census). African-Americans make up 3.4% of our student body but only 1.0% of Eugene. There are two groups that are noticeably underrepresented at Charlemagne, however. Hispanics make up only 1.0% of our students and 6.3% of Eugene’s population. Economically disadvantaged students make up 7.8% of our student body while 12.2% of Eugene families have incomes below the poverty level.

Our diversity goals may get a boost from some of the district’s recent reforms, such as the strategy of weighting the school choice lottery system to promote greater access to the program for more economically diverse students. For many families, the lack of transportation to alternative schools presents an insurmountable obstacle; we hope that the district will explore ways to take away this structural barrier to the equitable exercise of school choice.
One of our key school improvement plan goals is to “provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of the school community.” While we are fortunate to have a school environment that is warm and friendly, we have been working to make our school feel more welcoming to new students and their families. In the past couple of years, our parent-led Esprit de Corps group has organized initiatives to ease the transition to kindergarten and to welcome new families and help them connect to the school community right away.

We also continue to work on ways to make our school more accessible to a broad range of learners, and to support the closing of the achievement gap. One new initiative is an after-school homework club for students in grades 2-5 who are struggling academically. We are also fortunate that we now have a special education teacher who is fluent in French, which helps her work with students who are struggling in math; she can follow their classroom math instruction in French and align her special education instruction in English accordingly.

While some concern has been expressed about the concentration of alternative programs in South Eugene, Charlemagne and the other two language immersion schools contribute favorably to equity in access by their near-perfect geographic distribution across the city. Students in all Eugene neighborhoods have reasonable proximity to a language immersion program in their own part of town.
Criterion 6

**To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?**

**NOTE:** The review team will address this criterion by examining enrollment numbers and student achievement, and by consulting with the district finance department. The review team will discuss the finance department’s evaluation with your school review committee in order to share the information and obtain the committee’s perspective.

Your school review committee does not need to submit any additional information for this criterion.

Charlemagne constitutes an efficient use of limited district resources because, in addition to delivering strong academic outcomes, we are structured in a way that maximizes teaching resources and actively seek outside funding to supplement district resources.

The way our children are grouped (two classes at each grade level, with a French teacher and English teacher both teaching all the students in their grade) stretches our teaching resources and allows us to use one set of textbooks for two classes. The deep commitment of our staff to the program means they willingly take on the extra work this structure entails. That same drive leads our teachers to actively seek grant funding to support curricular innovations.

Charlemagne parents’ willingness to actively and effectivelyfundraise allows us to stretch the dollars we get from the district. Our parents also look more broadly than just our school and joining with parents across the state in lobbying the legislature for more funding for all schools; Charlemagne parents have long been at the forefront of advocating for appropriate funding for all schools.
Criterion 7

*To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?*

**NOTE:** The review team will address this criterion as an extension of the previous criterion. Your school review committee does not need to submit any additional information for this criterion.
Criterion 8

To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?

Advance Submission: The review team will address this criterion by considering a list of the pros and cons of collocation, not to exceed two single-spaced pages, to be compiled and submitted individually by your school review committee and the collocated neighborhood school site council. Please format the list with numbers or bullet points.

NOTE: The response to this criterion will be considered along with other criteria as an element of school effectiveness (i.e. how well does the school serve its children). To best address this, the review team strongly encourages both your school review committee and the collocated neighborhood school site council to answer this question by carefully considering how, or in what ways, collocation contributes to, or does not contribute to, creating the best educational climate for your school’s children and staff.

Not applicable.
Preparation Summary list

Required documents to be submitted in advance

- **Criterion 1.a**
  - Statement of purpose: please submit your statement of purpose, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

- **Criteria 1.b through 1.e**
  - Distinctive strategies: please submit an explanation for each criterion that is a distinctive strategy of your school, not to exceed one single-spaced page for each relevant criterion.

- **Criterion 1.f**
  - Significant changes to program: *If this criterion applies to your school*, please submit an overview of the anticipated changes, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

- **Criterion 2**
  - Governance: *If this criterion applies to your school*, please submit your governance documents with a one-paragraph summary of why and/or how your decision-making process for governance is distinctive.

- **Criterion 3**
  - Evidence of continued strong interest: please submit a short paragraph describing the level of participation in your parent or site council.

- **Criterion 8**
  - Effect of collocation: please submit a list of the pros and cons of collocation, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

Additional documents that may be submitted in advance

- **Criterion 1, Part 1**
  - Additional material in support of your students’ academic achievement: please submit a summary statement describing the method used to assess achievement and the overall results, not to exceed one single-spaced page

- **Criterion 3**
  - Additional factors that help to demonstrate continued strong interest: please submit a summary of those factors, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

- **Criterion 4**
  - Additional materials in support of student/family engagement that enhances the district’s educational program (e.g. before or after-school activities, unique extracurricular activities open to all children, etc): please submit a short summary of that evidence, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

- **Criterion 5**
  - Additional materials in support of programs or procedures that contribute to creating a welcoming and supportive school environment for children of diverse backgrounds and abilities (and for the parents of those children): please submit a brief summary of those programs and procedures, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.
Alternative School Review
2006-07

Yujin Gakuen

School Review Committee

Carolynne Hopkins, Jeanne Ruiz
Nancy Imamura, Martha McMillen, Komae Mori
Amy Harter, Laura Hubbard
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**Criterion 1.a**

*How does Yujin Gakuen’s program compare to the originally approved charter?*

On May 18, 1988, the School Board approved Yujin Gakuen’s proposal to be a “Bilingual Alternative School” using an early immersion concept in language learning to be presented to students who were native speakers of English. These are the program’s goals as they were listed:

- To understand Japanese when spoken by a native speaker;
- To speak Japanese with near-native fluency and accuracy;
- To read Japanese language publications appropriate to age level of the student;
- To write in Japanese anything the student can write in English;
  - To develop and understand of and appreciation of the culture of the Japanese people;
  - To recognize the contributions of Japanese culture to American customs and languages;
  - To recognize the contributions Americans of Japanese descent are making to our country today.

The program has stayed very true to the mission first presented to the school district in 1988. The current Yujin Gakuen Mission Statement listed in our parent handbook reads, “To prepare student through a bilingual, bicultural, integrated curriculum to participate as citizens in an international, technological world.” The Japanese teachers at Yujin Gakuen have developed a scope and sequence that ensures the students’ overall academic success while developing high levels of proficiency in areas that closely align with the Eugene 4J’s adopted curriculum. The scope and sequence is used to evaluate student’s progress. Though the original speaking and reading goals were thought to be realistic, we have found that because of the intricacies of the Japanese language, students have thus far not reached the writing expectations of our original charter.

The immersion program provides students the opportunity to gain cultural and linguistic competence in Japanese. Projects such as performances, web sties, and visual presentations have been useful tools for students to understand and share with others the uniqueness of the Japanese culture, traditional arts, and way of life.

Yujin Gakuen is nationally recognized as the first K-12 Japanese Immersion program in the country. Yujin Gakuen’s program has served as a successful model for programs in Portland, Oregon, Anchorage, Alaska, Fairfax, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina.
Yujin Gakuen is also recognized as a school that teaches students proficiency in three languages: English, Japanese and technology. The inclusion of technology in the program since the original charter has enhanced the depth of understanding the students gain as they progress through grades K – 5.
Criterion 1.c

To what extent and how does Yujin Gakuen’s program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of the presentation of the other schools?

Yujin Gakuen arranges the student’s day so that one half of the time is spent in a classroom where Japanese is the language used for instruction and the other half of the time in the class where the instruction is in English. Students are presented most of the mathematics, social studies, grammar, science, and technology concepts in the English portion of the day. However, some core math, science, and social studies concepts are also taught for the first time in Japanese. Conversational skits, drills and the practice of these concepts are emphasized and reinforced during the Japanese portion of the day.

The Japanese portion of the instruction is centered on the basic theme rotation: communities, power, form, change, systems, and interactions. As students deepen their knowledge of the theme being presented, they are also increasing their ability to comprehend and communicate in Japanese. In addition, they are developing an understanding and appreciation of the Japanese culture, history and traditional arts. This deepens their understanding of the multiple ways the Japanese culture has contributed to the richness of our American culture.

Technology is also a strong component of Yujin Gakuen’s focus. In 2006, Yujin Gakuen was awarded the Technology Integrated into Learning and Teaching (TILT) grant. This grant provides training and specialized equipment that will further enrich the technology skills of our students. As teachers develop digital technology units focused on themes being taught, the students synthesize what they learn in English and Japanese through the creation of the projects.

Unlike the scope and sequence that is provided to other schools to meet state standards, the Japanese teachers have developed their own scope and sequence* for the K-5 Japanese portion of the program. This scope and sequence was developed in conjunction with the teachers at Kelly Middle School and North Eugene High School so that students can successfully complete the required standards as stated in the Oregon Japanese Proficiency Document.

The Yujin Gakuen program’s success can be traced to the close working relationship between the Japanese and English speaking teachers at each grade level. These teachers work together to plan curriculum. The materials to be presented, whether during the Japanese portion or the English portion of the student’s day, are carefully crafted to compliment and enhance student learning. With the addition of technology, students are provided tools for a rich educational experience. (To be shared with the site visitors on November 7, 2006)
Criterion 1.d

To what extent and how does Yujin Gakuen’s program group students for instruction in some unique manner?

Yujin Gakuen prepares students through a bilingual integrated curriculum to participate as citizens of the world. Students spend half their day learning in Japanese and half their day in English. A Japanese teacher, an English teacher and the technology integration specialist co-teach each grade level to meet district and state curriculum guidelines.

Instructional Grouping:

The Japanese teachers at Yujin Gakuen work with their grade level English partners to plan and integrate curriculum for optimum student learning. The school actively utilizes the talents of interns and other Japanese speaking volunteers to help support the challenges of learning Japanese. These interns, many of whom come from the top universities in Japan, and other volunteers enhance not only the traditional school day. They also support after school programs like the homework club and special events.

Certified staff team up to plan, implement and evaluate Yujin Gakuen’s program goals, curriculum, students’ learning and staff expectations. Teachers work in primary and intermediate teams to plan and implement specific instructional units and develop a cohesive school-wide curriculum. Working together as bilingual, bicultural teams, they co-teach each grade level to meet the district and state curriculum guidelines. This requires considerable clarification of assumptions, concepts and information related to instructional goals, content and strategies.

Student Grouping:

Students are taught the value of working in teams. Classroom instruction uses both independent and group learning projects. Within each grade level, students are grouped by skill level and expected to challenge themselves and each other to exceed at every level. Students present bilingual projects, plays and presentations to peers at Yujin Gakuen, other Eugene schools and sister schools in Japan. Students present and perform at numerous school and community events for parents, businesses and community members. Examples of these activities are the Eugene Celebration, the Asian Celebration, the University of Oregon Japan Night and to schools in Japan during their annual parent sponsored Japan trip.
Criterion 1.e

To what extent and how do the alternative school/program's teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

As stated previously, the aim of the Yujin Gakuen Immersion program is to develop students that understand the global perspective of issues and ideas. The bilingual approach of instruction affords the teachers a unique avenue in achieving this goal. Presenting the more difficult conceptual ideas in math, science and social studies falls mostly to the English instructional time. Through explicit instruction, experiential learning and content-based curriculum, Japanese instructors integrate these concepts to deepen students’ understanding. The technology portion of the instruction adds to the depth of understanding, allowing students to progress at their own rate and level.

The Japanese instructors collaborate with the teachers at Kelly Middle School and North Eugene High School to assure K-12 program articulation. The goal of the program is to have Yujin Gakuen students graduate with advanced level Japanese proficiency. Not all students reach this goal. Those that do are able to test into the third year university level of Japanese.
Criterion 2

To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?

As of March 2006, the Yujin Gakuen Site Council revised the school site based decision-making process. The grid was updated with input from the school’s stakeholder groups. It details the various stakeholder groups’ responsibilities in reaching decisions that affect the well being of the Yujin Gakuen program. The stakeholder groups are the Site Council, the administration, the certified staff, the YGPTO, and the students. The grid indicates whether each group is responsible to decide, recommend, consult, inform or give input on an area for consideration.

Items on this grid are very specific to Yujin Gakuen, including items such as the Japanese cultural and exchange programs and the Japanese interns’ programs.

(The Yujin Gakuen Site-based decision-making grid will be shared during the walk through.)
Criterion 3

To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

The continued strong support of the Yujin Gakuen program can be illustrated in numerous ways. Looking at the tremendous amount of volunteer time given by parents is just one measure of this involvement. Records from 2002 through 2006 indicate 600 to 800 monthly hours of parental volunteer time given to support the Yujin Gakuen program. In addition, each year Yujin Gakuen is privileged to have several student interns from Japan assist students and teachers with the Japanese portion of the curriculum. Families house these visiting interns who are here for a period of one or two months.

Teachers who work at Yujin Gakuen need to be extremely supportive of the program. Each teacher meets daily with twice the number of students that teachers in neighborhood schools do. They must present all of the instructional material in half a day. This requires many additional hours spent to prepare lessons in a concise but highly effective manner to meet all of the curriculum benchmarks. In addition, Japanese teachers must translate the material that they will present into their native language.

Both the English and Japanese teachers have high expectations of their students. Because of this, students have twice the amount of work to cover in school and homework. Parents that select to have their child involved in the Yujin Gakuen program know that they will need to be supportive in the student’s education.

Students and parents support the school’s programs and goals by taking part in numerous community events such as the Asian Celebration, the Eugene Celebration, the Obon Festival, visits to retirement homes and performances at Valley River Center.

Many of the additional programs offered by Yujin Gakuen could not exist without the support of parents sponsoring fundraising activities. The teachers and site council have written numerous grants to help finance programs. For several years, the PTO has funded additional FTE to support our technology specialist and physical education teacher. In other years, the staff has made a conscious decision to distribute the FTE to the specialist by varying their classroom caps. The PTO and staff have also raised money to support an instructional aide for the Japanese teachers. This aide offers tutoring and small group instruction during class hours. Other programs include an after school homework club, a Japanese summer school program, a Talented and Gifted program (after school enrichment program) and a before school tutoring program in language arts. These programs would not exist without the efforts of the parents, community members and a dedicated staff.
Criterion 4

To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?

When looking at the School Board’s educational goals, we feel confident that the Yujin Gakuen program continues to enhance the district’s vision. The three areas deemed of utmost importance in this review are:

Are we helping all children reach their full potential?
Are we providing equal access and opportunities to all children in our district?
Are we contributing to the Board’s goal of closing the achievement gap?

In answer to the first question, Yujin Gakuen’s approach of immersing the students daily in the three languages of English, Japanese, and technology definitely does provide the students with a variety of strategies to reach their full potential. The global focus of the instruction prepares students to become active and effective citizens of the world. By learning to appreciate the culture of others, students gain a greater appreciation of their own culture. Being able to communicate in more than one language gives students the confidence and competence to become leaders of the future. Students can be teachers to their parents, sharing their knowledge of Japanese and the Japanese culture with family members, thus empowering the student. Students are involved in many types of performances before multiple audiences, thus helping students to be comfortable when dealing with others in many varied situations.

The second Board goal will be spoken to in more depth in Criterion 5, however, the Yujin Gakuen student body’s 34% SES indicates our openness and accessibility to all families in Eugene.

As to goal three, a survey of the test scores achieved by the Yujin Gakuen students over the years is a strong testament to the role our school is playing in closing the achievement gap. For the last three years, Yujin Gakuen 3rd and 5th graders have scored in the 94-95 percentile in both reading and math. While test scores are but one indicator of student success, these scores offer evidence that our student body is performing at a high level of achievement.
Criterion 5

To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

Yujin Gakuen is located in the northwest of the district’s boundaries, an area with demographics that historically does not have proportionately equal access to alternative schools. Our school’s unique offerings attract a very diverse population. At present, our student body of 291 includes:

- 22 Hispanic students
- 4 African-American students
- 10 Native American students
- 53 students of Asian background

Different cultures are highly valued and celebrated at Yujin Gakuen. Differences in cultures are showcased in the performances and projects of the students. Native, near native Japanese speaking teachers and English speaking teachers who are multi-lingual are appealing to families. Yujin Gakuen Japanese Immersion Elementary School is known nationally and internationally. Several families, wishing a multi-lingual education for their children, have moved to the North Eugene area to take advantage of the program offered at Yujin Gakuen.

Additional evidence of the equity opportunities offered at Yujin Gakuen is obvious when looking at the free and reduced lunch statistics. As of May 2006, Yujin Gakuen’s percentage of students taking part in the free and reduced lunch program was 34.65%. The district average during the same month was 35.15%. Currently we have 86 economically disadvantaged students.
Criterion 6

*To what extent does the continued operation of Yujin Gakuen constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?*

Our school is very careful and conscious of our use of district resources. Using the partial immersion concept, teachers see twice the number of students during the day as in a typical class. Since they need only one set of educational materials, our costs per student are lowered.

There are no extra expenses or resources allocated to the development of the Japanese curriculum. The Japanese teachers create the six-themed integrated curriculum that they present to the students on their own.

The art and music program does not require a specialist, but is provided by regular staff members. Japanese traditional art and dances are taught as part of the Japanese cultural instruction.

Yujin Gakuen shares the building with Corridor Elementary School. All of the available building space is used to capacity. Some of the classified staff, including the custodian, cooks and teaching assistants, serve both programs. One administrator for both schools is an additional savings.

Yujin Gakuen has received many grants that have supplemented district funds. These include the following language grants:
- NEH National Endowment of the Humanities, multi year, $1,000,000+
- FLIP Foreign Language Incentive Program, 3 year grant
- FLAP Foreign Language Assistance Program, 3 year, $300,000 grant
- APPLE Classroom of Tomorrow Technology Bilingual Instruction Grant

The latest grant awarded to the school is the TILT (Technology Integrated into Learning and Teaching) grant. This grant will enhance the technology portion of the educational experience of the students without requiring additional funds from the district. This grant includes teacher training, COW, projectors, Smartboard, etc.

There have also been several donations to Yujin Gakuen including:
- Over 2000 library books from Japanese universities and elementary schools, with the promise of more to come.
- Textbooks from the Ministry of Education in Tokyo, Japan.
- School library books donated by Japanese citizens in response to a Kyoto newspaper article.
- Japanese traditional cultural artifacts including kimonos, fans, tea ceremony sets, calligraphy supplies, dance costumes, tatami mat, and folding screens.

Parent groups are extremely active in fundraising projects that furnish staffing, equipment, materials and programs beyond what the district provides.

The national and international fame of this program has drawn many families to Eugene School District 4J, thus enhancing the tax roles.
Criterion 7

*To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?*

Yujin Gakuen continues to struggle with the issue of the lower grades having larger classes than upper grades. It is very difficult for a student to enter an immersion program after the primary grades. If students have not learned the early primary Japanese skills, it is very challenging for students and their families to make a smooth entry into the program after the second grade. Because of this issue, the upper grade classes remain smaller than the lower grades. Yet, even with normal attrition, the enrollment targets of Yujin Gakuen are met each year. The original charter anticipated a school of 250 students in grades 1-5. Yujin Gakuen’s current enrollment of 291 in K-5, with 41 being kindergarten students, meets the original enrollment goal. The school remains viable because it meets its goals and requires no additional funding from the district.
Criterion 8

To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?

Yujin Gakuen does not share the building with a neighborhood school. However, it does share the building with another alternative school program, Corridor Elementary. These two alternative programs are the only such district programs that do share a building.

In our experience, as co-located alternative school partners, we have noted the following:

• Compromise and communication between programs in essential. (We have developed a building team of certified and classified staff from each program that meets monthly to discuss concerns and explore avenues of sharing between the schools.)

• Space should be divided by equality, not convenience. Flexibility and empathy for the changing needs of each program is essential for a successful co-location.

• Because the two programs have different focuses, compatibility, not competition, is enhanced.

• Staggered start and ending times lessen the issues of traffic control.

• Adequate parking and drop-off areas are important.

• A building administrator that champions and celebrates both schools ensures an atmosphere of collegiality between the programs.

Corridor and Yujin Gakuen have enjoyed several opportunities, such as:

• An opportunity for collegiality between staffs and parent groups.

• An opportunity for families to match students' interests and learning styles with the strengths of the two programs.

• An opportunity for sharing equipment and space between the programs.

• An opportunity to share assembly programs.

• Enjoyment and an appreciation for the uniqueness of each other's programs.
Alternative School Review
2006-07
Corridor

School Review Committee

Jeanne Ruiz
Tom Hayward   Sue Ann Hinman
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Introduction

The Eugene School District 4J is currently engaged in a comprehensive effort to support all of the district’s elementary schools – neighborhood and alternative – in providing effective learning environments and equitable access and opportunity for all the district’s children and families.

As part of that effort, the Board has directed the superintendent to periodically review the District’s alternative schools to ensure that they continue to meet Board and District goals, and perform consistent with Board policy.

On August 9, 2005 the Board approved the review process by which its alternative schools will be assessed. The review process consists of eight criteria that each alternative school is asked to address.

This document presents each criterion and the specific method by which your school will be asked to address that criterion. Schools may also present additional materials to answer specific criterion when so indicated (additional material).

Some sections of this document must be submitted to the superintendent’s review team prior to the team’s school visit. Those sections are clearly designated (advance submission), and can be submitted electronically to Carl Hermanns at hermanns_c@4j.lane.edu.

Additional information or suggestions by the review team for addressing an individual criterion is designated directly under the criterion by NOTE.

An electronic version of this document (Microsoft Word) will be made available to each review school. Please submit your final report as a Microsoft Word or pdf document.
Criterion 1

Does the alternative school/program’s educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?

The review team will consider Criterion 1 in two parts:

Part 1. Is the school “achieving the Board’s educational goals as defined in the board’s adopted goals, guiding beliefs and values, and educational philosophy statement?”

NOTE: For the purposes of the review, the Board goals, beliefs and values, and educational philosophy can be distilled to three main points:

1. Are we helping all children to reach their full potential?
2. Are we providing equal access and opportunity to all children of our district?
3. Are we contributing to the Board’s goal of closing the achievement gap?

The review team will assess Part 1 by examining student achievement data (03-04 and 04-05 Oregon State Assessment) and school demographics. The team will obtain this data from the district database, and will confirm its accuracy with your school review committee.

Additional Material, advance submission: Your school may submit additional material in support of its students’ academic achievement (e.g., indicators of individual growth over time, formative assessment results, etc). If you choose to submit additional material for this criterion, please limit your submission to a summary statement describing the method used to assess achievement and the overall results, not to exceed one single-spaced page. The review team will ask for specific documentation or additional explanation if necessary. Title the submission “Additional Material, Criterion 1, Part 1.”

Additional Material, Criterion 1, Part 1

1. Are we helping all children to reach their full potential?

Corridor’s goal is to help all children achieve and be productive members of an increasingly global society. We believe that students leave this school with a sense of self worth, a respect for all people and a zeal for lifelong learning. Corridor families, as well as educators from other 4J schools, report that our students are very well prepared for middle school, and that their experiences at Corridor continue to be of benefit into high school.

Corridor holds high expectations for ALL children, and believes every child is talented and gifted. Students will reach their highest academic potential by receiving instruction in the areas of math, reading, language arts, social studies, science and health. They also choose a part of their program ( electives), with the help and support of parents and staff.

Corridor has annual goal setting conferences in the fall. Parents, student and teacher are involved in this process. This helps students take responsibility for their own learning.
2. Are we providing equal access and opportunity to all children of our district?

Any child may enter the 4J lottery for Corridor. In fact, we were and are strong advocates for the district lottery, as opposed to the first come, first served, method that was originally used. We strive to make our school tours, enrollment procedure and orientation process welcoming for all children and parents. Corridor welcomes any change that would encourage and increase diversity, including district-provided transportation.

3. Are we contributing to the Board’s goal of closing the achievement gap?

Corridor contributes to the Board’s goal of closing the achievement gap in numerous ways. Teachers use staff development building money to learn about new research, resources and strategies recommended for low level/at risk learners through workshops such as The Learning Brain Expo, Technology for Learning Differences, Four Blocks Writing, and Guided Reading. This year, eight teachers will participate in the district-sponsored “Six Trait Writing” workshops. Upon their completion, all Corridor teaching staff will have received this training. We believe this will help articulate writing skills and thereby increase student achievement in every grade. A technology based reading support program designed to increase comprehension and fluency was purchased to assist students in primary grades. Our learning center is organized into the smallest learning groups possible to increase teacher-student interaction. Parent volunteers also provide small group practice, review and instruction on a daily basis in the primary grades to help make sure that all students receive adequate adult attention as they learn new skills.

We use a number of community resources to help us focus attention on struggling students. These resources include North Eugene High School students from leadership/early childhood classes, practicum students from teacher-prep colleges in Eugene, and senior-tutors from the local Oasis program.

Part 2. What is the school’s purpose, and does its educational program represent a “distinctive strategy” for achieving the Board’s educational goals?

Part 2 is addressed through Criterion 1.a. through 1.e.

Criterion 1.a

How does the alternative school’s program compare to the originally approved charter or proposal?

NOTE: If a school has transformed over time that would not be unexpected. The important question is: what is your school’s purpose now?

This statement of purpose is an opportunity to think deeply and specifically about the real purpose of your school, and how you are meeting that purpose.

Advance Submission: Please submit your statement of purpose in advance. The statement should be no longer that two single-spaced pages.
Statement of Purpose

Corridor’s main purpose is to educate the whole child. Students learn in different ways and at different rates. We balance a rigorous academic program, with opportunities for differentiated learning. Consistency is a key word for the Corridor program. The staff members are consistent with their behavior expectations school wide. We are consistent with our curriculum and have ongoing articulation among all grade levels.

Distinctive characteristics of Corridor School are

- the elective program,
- multi-aged grouping,
- numerous field trips and other hands on learning experiences,
- an annual musical production at the Hult Center,
- creative scheduling to maintain lower class size,
- a sense of family and community that builds self esteem and mutual respect, and
- parent involvement in their children’s education.

Corridor Elementary School is a school built on the mutual efforts of parents, students and of the whole staff. Teachers and staff work effectively and collaboratively as a team. Parents strongly support the school programs and staff. Students are willing to push themselves both academically and socially. We pride ourselves on building a cohesive family like atmosphere that helps support staff, parents, and students.

Corridor provides a unique curriculum that integrates social studies, science, language arts, math, and fine arts into thematic units. Articulation within and between grades ensures that each year’s units build on what was learned before. Here are a few examples:

**Grade 1**

*Los Dias de Espanola:* Children learn Spanish language and culture with a culminating fiesta for their families that includes language skills, music, and dance.

*Blast-off!* Children learn about the solar system and space exploration and then lead parents on a life-like enactment of travel among the planets.

**Grade 2**

*Transportation Unit:* This unit explores the evolution of travel from walking through air-travel. The highlight of this unit is a train trip to Salem and road trip to Evergreen Aviation Museum.

*Follow the Drinking Gourd:* Through mapping, story telling, and self-exploration of the meaning of “freedom,” children learn about the cultural history of slavery and emancipation in this country.

**Grade 3**

*Pioneer Day:* This is an integrated unit on Lane County history and pioneers. It culminates in Pioneer Day where students, parents, teachers, and community volunteers don pioneer clothing and try their hand at making dipped candles, writing with feather pens, weaving, and pioneer games.

*Volcanology:* Students learn about geology and the volcanic history of Oregon. This unit includes in a field trip to Central Oregon to explore the lava fields and interpretive center.

**Grade 4**

*Oregon Trail:* Students learn about emigration on the Oregon Trail by assuming a pioneer identity, keeping a travel diary of a simulated trip out west, and studying what life was like on the wagon train.
Outdoor School: 4th and 5th graders go to “outdoor school” each spring for three-days of learning that integrates natural science, writing, and cooperation. They learn how to orienteer with map and compass, conduct water quality studies, and learn about native flora and fauna. This is a highlight of the Corridor experience for all of our students.

Grade 5

Oceanography: This unit on ocean-ecosystems is explored through science, art, and literature. A two-day trip to Newport includes the Oregon Coast Aquarium, classes and squid dissection at the Hatfield Marine Science Center, tide-pooling, crab-potting, hiking the dunes, and more. It is truly a rite of passage for our 5th graders, their teachers, and the many parent-participants who make it possible.

Entomology: Students undertake an intensive study of insects and what they do in our world. Then each student artistically and accurately diagrams the lifecycle of an insect. This year’s students will be establishing a precedent at Corridor with multimedia presentations on an insect of their choice. The technology to be used was made available through the district TILT Grant.

Corridor’s units and curriculum have evolved naturally and changed over the years. There have been times of adjustment and change in the program. Yet the overwhelming sense is that Corridor has resulted in a school that is responsive to changing needs, a school full of teachers who enjoy being creative and having a say in their work, a school full of children who are excited about learning, and a school that seems well suited to the challenge of preparing children for a productive and fulfilled future.

Criterion 1.b through 1.e

NOTE: 1.b – 1.e pertain to distinctive strategies. Your school is not expected to incorporate every strategy listed in 1.b – e, but it does need to incorporate some strategies that legitimately make it “distinctive” in order to meet the board’s standard for retaining alternative school designation.

Advance Submission: Please submit a brief explanation for each criterion that is a distinctive strategy of your school. The explanation should be no longer than one single-spaced page for each relevant criterion. The review team will ascertain the level of applicability during a school visit walk-through.

Criterion 1.b

To what extent and how does the alternative school or program emphasize a specific element of the district’s approved curriculum?

(Not applicable)

Criterion 1.c

To what extent and how does the alternative school/program present the district’s approved curriculum in a sequence different from the order of presentation in other schools?
At Corridor we work cooperatively to ensure that students are meeting the challenges in today’s learning. We also allow students to make choices in their learning. Our goal is to do this in a climate that is exciting, interesting and enriching to our students.

**Schedule:** The district approved curriculum of language arts, math and social studies are taught from the start of the school day until early afternoon by homeroom teachers. Electives are generally offered from 1:00 until 2:30. The afternoon elective program not only encourages student choice and interests, but is also an example of how Corridor school presents curriculum in a sequence differing from other programs.

**Electives:** Corridor school’s structure has a long history of student choice. This is most evident in our elective program where students in grades 1–5 choose from a variety of offerings. Classes draw on teacher strengths and interests, and are frequently offered to multi-aged groups. Examples of electives include: life sciences, such as reptiles or animal habitats, art appreciation and production, tennis, woodshop, performing arts, rocketry and world cultures. Mandatory physical education is also rotated into the afternoon schedule during the electives periods.

**Integrated Units:** Our program prides itself on grade level team teaching. Teachers regularly meet to plan curriculum. We present an integrated curriculum or themed based approach during the morning time, which is often reinforced by electives that build on the themes. For our science curriculum, we purchased science kits and adapted them to fit into appropriate grade level units and curriculum.

### Criterion 1.d

*To what extent and how does the alternative school/program group students for instruction in some unique manner?*

During core classes, students may be grouped by performance levels for reading and math to maximize achievement. At Corridor we also group students across grade levels for afternoon electives. First through fifth graders choose desired electives and sign up according to space. Teachers gear their instruction to meet the needs of students at various skill levels. Older students assist younger ones when needed. Team teaching partners group students from both classes for various curriculum units. One teacher may instruct each class in science while the other presents a writing unit.

We promote a sense of community at Corridor by having all grades eat lunch and go to recess together. Kindergarten students do not participate in electives but are uniquely grouped. Both morning kindergarten sessions share rooms and teachers. Whole group and small group lessons are taught by both teachers.

Corridor students perform for the community during choir tours. A spring musical production featuring all third through fifth graders is held at the Hult Center every year. Another example of multi-grade grouping occurs when fifth graders partner with first graders for an art project to make a life-size portrait of each first grade student. This activity helps form a bond between each first grader and a fifth grade buddy, which makes students feel welcome and promotes leadership among the older students. These are just a few examples of how Corridor School fosters positive relationships among students of all grade levels.
Criterion 1.e

To what extent and how do the alternative school/program’s teachers emphasize a specific instructional strategy?

Criterion 1.f

Does the alternative school/program anticipate any significant changes in its program?

NOTE: This will take into account any existing initiatives and/or plans, and can be addressed through a brief written explanation and an interview with your school review committee.

Advance Submission: If this criterion is applicable to your school, please submit an overview of the anticipated changes, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

The only significant change to the Corridor program was applying to increase the enrollment limits in the late 1980’s. This was due to the fact that low turnover among the 150 kindergarten through fifth grade students did not provide equitable opportunity for families whose applications were accepted on a first come first served basis. Corridor now participates in a lottery system (first suggested by our then-head teacher, Mike Garling) and has a student body of 265. When the District ends grade level caps, Corridor School may need to restructure to accommodate the unanticipated impacts.

Criterion 2

To what extent does the alternative school/program’s decision-making process for governance of the school or program differ from those used in other schools/programs?

NOTE: Like the distinctive strategies listed in 1.b – e, this criterion may or may not be applicable.

Advance submission: If this criterion is applicable to your school, please submit your governance documents with a one-paragraph summary of why and/or how your decision-making process for governance is distinctive.

Collegiality and shared decision making among teaching staff is a Hallmark at Corridor. Teachers’ opinions are sought on curriculum, budgetary issues, staffing, and behavior agreements or determinations, as appropriate. Everyone working at the school is expected to participate in the process, try to work toward consensus, and support policies once they are agreed upon. We operate as a group and feel that this kind of decision making process supports the idea that everyone in our school is equally important and valuable to the success of our program.

Parents have an important voice in decision-making at Corridor through site council/PTO. Parents also are encouraged to share ideas with teachers, and have helped initiate new programs such as the school’s Career Day program and last year’s Recycled Art show.
Criterion 3

To what extent is the alternative school/program able to demonstrate evidence of continued strong interest among staff, parents and students?

NOTE: The review team will consider enrollment numbers, parent council participation, and teacher turnover statistics in assessing this criterion. Enrollment numbers and teacher turnover statistics will be obtained from the district database and confirmed with your school review committee.

Advance Submission: Please submit a short paragraph describing the level of participation in your parent or site council.

Additional Material: If you feel there are additional factors that help to demonstrate continued strong interest, please submit a summary of that evidence, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

Corridor has long been known for a high level of parent participation within the school as well as on site council. Each year, volunteers log more than 2,500 hours on Corridor activities including serving on site council/PTO, as classroom assistants, on committees, and at special events.

Site Council: Parents on site council serve as liaisons between teachers, administrators, and parents to address issues of broad concern for the school. Site council is a close-working team of 4 parents and 5 teachers/staff. Any parent guardian (e.g. grandparent) can apply for a position on the site council, and the candidates are elected for 2-year terms. Site council meets monthly to ensure budget oversight, fundraising planning and implementation, coordination with other parent committees (such as the Scrip committee), consideration of new technology and other educational programs, discipline policies, and significant curriculum changes.

Volunteering: Corridor provides many opportunities for parents and other family members to be involved in the school. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate regularly as classroom volunteers with reading, math and driving on field trips. Parents also lend their talents for writing the school newsletter, fundraising, and special activities such as creating sets and costumes for the annual musical production, Career Day, health screenings, event planning (graduation and recycled art fair) and helping to run activities on Field Day and Pioneer Day, to name a few. We try to provide a variety of opportunities to accommodate parent schedules. In this way, all parents/guardians can be involved in Corridor’s programs at a level that is comfortable for them.

Parent Feedback: Corridor is interested in feedback from parents about our school. In addition to individual student conferences, parents are welcome to talk to, call, or e-mail teachers with concerns. Also, each year a parent survey asks about 20 questions concerning satisfaction with the educational and social environment at Corridor. We take the responses seriously. We have responded to parent feedback by scheduling assemblies, classroom discussions, and PTO meetings on requested topics. This year we joined with Yujin Gakuen in an after school homework club, to address requests for additional academic assistance. Corridor parents are enthusiastic supporters of our teaching staff. Last year the parents initiated a surprise week of appreciation including a luncheon, homemade gifts, and hand-made cards and signs. The teachers were truly overwhelmed by this strong showing of appreciation and support.

Student Interest: Students are given many opportunities to be involved in school governance and special programs. Our student council provides first through fifth graders a chance to participate in school government. Student council organizes school-spirit days and community service activities, and runs the student store. Students also participate in voluntary projects such as the juggling team, the green school program, or writing student-entries for the school newsletter. Many third through fifth grade
students audition for speaking parts in the spring musical. Most importantly, students demonstrate their continued interest in school and learning by doing their homework on time, and participating actively in classroom discussions and projects. We are proud of our students’ behavior when we engage in community activities and field trips, and are invited to return year after year. Alumni of Corridor often return to help with special events such as Outdoor School and Field Day, or just to visit some of their former teachers.

**Criterion 4**

*To what extent does the alternative school or program enhance the district’s educational program?*

**NOTE:** The review team will address this criterion by considering your school’s purpose statement, its distinctive strategies, and the efficacy of the implementation of those strategies.

Efficacy will be assessed by examining student achievement, including an analysis of the achievement gap (both Oregon State Assessments and additional material submitted in support of academic achievement, per Criterion 1, Part 1 will be considered), and by considering student/family engagement, as evidenced by parent council participation, per Criterion 3.

Additional Material, advance submission: The review team will already have access to the basic materials needed to assess this criterion from the district database and your previous responses to Criterion 1, Part 1 and Criterion 3. However, if you have further evidence of student/family engagement that enhances the district’s educational program (e.g. before or after-school activities, unique extra-curricular activities open to all children, etc), please submit a short summary of that evidence, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

In 1986, Corridor was selected from among 509 finalists to receive the first U.S. Department of Education Excellence in Elementary Education award. High academic achievement, strong parent support, willingness of staff to go the extra mile to provide unique opportunities in such areas as choir, juggling, theater performance and wood shop contributed to the award designation then and continues to define Corridor today.

One of Corridor School’s original goals was to enhance the District’s educational program with a program more reflective of the unique qualities of individual learners. Corridor’s program continues to be innovative and effective in achieving this goal today. For example, with support from parents, students choose part of their program, work together in multiage activities and electives, and accept responsibility for behavior and academic achievement. The elective program motivates students of many learning styles in two primary ways. They are able to choose areas of study that interest them and they are given the opportunity to work with teachers outside of their homeroom assignment. These classes include hands on activities in a project style format. In this part of the program, abilities of students are recognized that might not stand out in a traditional classroom setting. For students with varied learning styles and abilities, this provides a chance to shine and grow. Some of our students also are engaged outside of the school day through classes such as open juggling, gardening, chess club and cup stacking. All of these opportunities can make a difference for students who are challenged for whatever reason, because they can help these students remain involved and confident at school.
Criterion 5

To what extent does the alternative school or program contribute to the board’s goal of increasing equity and diversity in all schools?

NOTE: The review team will address this criterion by examining school demographics, including race, ethnicity, levels of SES, ELL, mobility, and special education services. The review team will obtain this information from the district database, and will confirm its accuracy with your school review committee.

Additional Materials, Advance submission: If your school has ongoing programs or procedures that contribute to creating a welcoming and supportive school environment for children of diverse backgrounds and abilities (and for the parents of those children), please submit a brief summary of those programs and procedures, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

Corridor provides the only non-language-based alternative school program in the North Region. We offer an important choice for students with different learning styles and families who are drawn to our emphasis on performing arts, parent involvement, the applied learning (electives) program, and Corridor’s clear expectations of behavior in our school community.

Corridor works hard to meet the special needs of students. Special education services are available and used at Corridor. There is a learning center, speech specialist, and school psychologist available to all students. Corridor also arranges extra help in reading and math for students during the school day. We participate in the OASIS reading program and use neighboring North Eugene students to tutor in math and reading. We frequently have practicum students and student teachers from local teacher preparation programs teach at Corridor.

Expectations of behavior are clear at Corridor. All students and their parents sign a detailed behavior policy each year. We actively promote positive relations among and between all grades. For example, first through fifth grade students share recess, lunch, and have elective classes together. By encouraging these positive relations and explicitly prohibiting bullying and teasing, we strive to make every student feel safe and included in school activities.

Corridor’s project-based electives are readily adaptable to the full range of scholastic abilities. Applied and hands-on learning through electives helps students to integrate what they learn and to stay interested in school. Students develop deeper, multi-year relationships with teachers, which contributes to continuity and a healthy learning environment for all students.

Corridor contributes to the equity and diversity in all schools and to the North Region of 4J. Corridor provides a valuable choice for families in this area who may otherwise transfer out of the North Region for other program options. Retaining North Region families and students of all races, ethnicity, levels of SES (low and high), ELL, gifted, and special education in the region increases equity and diversity in the middle and high school too.
Criterion 6

*To what extent does the continued operation of the alternative school or program constitute an efficient use of limited district resources?*

**NOTE:** The review team will address this criterion by examining enrollment numbers and student achievement, and by consulting with the district finance department. The review team will discuss the finance department’s evaluation with your school review committee in order to share the information and obtain the committee’s perspective.

Your school review committee does not need to submit any additional information for this criterion.

Criterion 7

*To what extent does the alternative school meet its enrollment targets and remain viable as a separate school?*

**NOTE:** The review team will address this criterion as an extension of the previous criterion. Your school review committee does not need to submit any additional information for this criterion.

Criterion 8

*To what extent, and in what ways, does the alternative school impact the neighborhood school with which it shares a building?*

Advance Submission: The review team will address this criterion by considering a list of the pros and cons of collocation, not to exceed two single-spaced pages, to be compiled and submitted individually by your school review committee and the collocated neighborhood school site council. Please format the list with numbers or bullet points.

**NOTE:** The response to this criterion will be considered along with other criteria as an element of school effectiveness (i.e. how well does the school serve its children). To best address this, the review team strongly encourages both your school review committee and the collocated neighborhood school site council to answer this question by carefully considering how, or in what ways, collocation contributes to, or does not contribute to, creating the best educational climate for your school’s children and staff.

Corridor School and Yujin Gakuen share a building and school grounds including a gym, cafeteria, playground, parking and common areas in the building such as halls and walkways. Overall, this collocation has worked very well, and any problems we have are due to the fact that we have too many people sharing too little space. We have 23 classes building wide and only one gym, one limited parking, and one shared principal. We think we do an admirable job scheduling space so everyone feels they are getting equal usage. We believe we are successful because we try to be flexible and empathetic to changing needs of others. The challenges listed below have not become serious problems because
we have put systems in place to ensure adequate communication and positive relations. Additional benefits of collocation are also listed.

Challenges with Collocation

1. **Communication and Problem-solving:** Being a good neighbor requires regular coordination and communication. To address this need to coordinate use of space, we have a *School Building Team* that is made up of one classified staff and two certified staff from each school, plus our administrator. This group meets monthly to discuss any concerns between the schools. The members report back to their respective staffs. Both schools view this team as a positive method of addressing issues promptly. It leads to a better understanding of each other’s curriculum and how it affects building use. This year with a shared principal, we worked out an administrative schedule that is amenable to both schools. We also are able to plan cooperative building wide activities as well, such as assemblies and the homework club.

2. **Sharing Common Space:** It is important to plan ahead for use of shared spaces such as the cafeteria, the gym, and the playground. A schedule is created and posted that allocates common area time. If a teacher needs to use a common area during a time when s/he is not scheduled, the request is handled through the two schools’ secretaries who then e-mail the staffs. This guarantees that everyone is kept in the loop. Recesses for both schools are scheduled separately and an effort is made to not impose on the other school’s recess time. The separate recesses are a matter of safety given the limited capacity of the play equipment and fields. Parking is a persistent challenge that requires coordination to ensure safety of the children. We have staggered the beginning and ending times of the schools to help alleviate the problem of inadequate parking during drop-off and pickups. We also promote carpooling, biking, and walking through the Smart Ways to School program, though with limited success. District-provided bus transportation would significantly reduce the parking issue.

3. **Sharing Administrative and Professional Staff:** Our schools share a psychologist, Learning Center room and staff, and the principal. Students from both schools participate together in the Learning Center. Our principal divides her time equally between the two schools. There is an understanding that the principal will adjust this time if there is a need. At the same time that it is important to coordinate the shared staff, it is equally important to maintain each school’s independent administrative staff. Corridor’s secretary is thoroughly familiar with our policies and families, and is a key contact person for teachers, parents, and the principal.

Benefits of Collocation

Corridor and Yujin Gakuen, although two separate schools, see the advantage of collaboration. We begin the school year with a total building breakfast social. We share in a recycling effort at our schools that includes paper and may in the future encompass composting, worm bins and a school garden. Both schools benefit from common opportunities such as after school homework and chess clubs. At times, we share assemblies on topics of interest to both student bodies. Last year, Corridor’s 4th grade split the cost of a pioneer day hands on activity with Yujin Gakuen’s 4th grade. Both schools invite each other to attend special classroom events, such as class plays or performances. Both schools have teams involved with a TILT grant that focuses on using laptops for literacy growth. As a building, we share in the Money for Minds fund raiser.
Preparation Summary list

Required documents to be submitted in advance

• **Criterion 1.a**
  o Statement of purpose: please submit your statement of purpose, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

• **Criteria 1.b through 1.e**
  o Distinctive strategies: please submit an explanation for each criterion that is a distinctive strategy of your school, not to exceed one single-spaced page for each relevant criterion.

• **Criterion 1.f**
  o Significant changes to program: *If this criterion applies to your school*, please submit an overview of the anticipated changes, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

• **Criterion 2**
  o Governance: *If this criterion applies to your school*, please submit your governance documents with a one-paragraph summary of why and/or how your decision-making process for governance is distinctive.

• **Criterion 3**
  o Evidence of continued strong interest: please submit a short paragraph describing the level of participation in your parent or site council.

• **Criterion 8**
  o Effect of collocation: please submit a list of the pros and cons of collocation, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

Additional documents that may be submitted in advance

• **Criterion 1, Part 1**
  o Additional material in support of your students’ academic achievement: please submit a summary statement describing the method used to assess achievement and the overall results, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

• **Criterion 3**
  o Additional factors that help to demonstrate continued strong interest: please submit a summary of those factors, not to exceed one single-spaced page.

• **Criterion 4**
  o Additional materials in support of student/family engagement that enhances the district’s educational program (e.g. before or after-school activities, unique extra-curricular activities open to all children, etc): please submit a short summary of that evidence, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.

• **Criterion 5**
  o Additional materials in support of programs or procedures that contribute to creating a welcoming and supportive school environment for children of diverse backgrounds and abilities (and for the parents of those children): please submit a brief summary of those programs and procedures, not to exceed two single-spaced pages.
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<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|     |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |
| Charlemange Elementary School | # | %         | #         | %   | #         | %         | #         | % |
| All Students       | 50 | 17%      | 49        | 17% | 295      | 100%      | 49       | 18% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 5 | 2%       | 1         | 0%  | 27       | 9%        | 9        | 3% |
| Limited English Proficient | 0 | 0%       | 1         | 0%  | 2        | 1%        | 1        | 0% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 4 | 1%       | 5         | 2%  | 22       | 7%        | 0        | 0% |
| Black              | 1 | 0%       | 3         | 1%  | 10       | 3%        | 0        | 0% |
| Hispanic           | 1 | 0%       | 0         | 0%  | 3        | 1%        | 2        | 1% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0 | 0%       | 0         | 0%  | 2        | 1%        | 1        | 0% |
| White              | 44 | 15%      | 41        | 14% | 256      | 87%       | 45       | 17% |
| Unspecified        | 0 | 0%       | 0         | 0%  | 2        | 1%        | 1        | 0% |

|     |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |
|    Corridor Elementary School  | # | %         | #         | %   | #         | %         | #         | % |
| All Students       | 49 | 18%      | 45        | 17% | 269      | 100%      | 1244     | 16% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 9 | 3%       | 13        | 5%  | 70       | 26%       | 490      | 6% |
| Limited English Proficient | 1 | 0%       | 0         | 0%  | 2        | 1%        | 1        | 0% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 0 | 0%       | 0         | 0%  | 2        | 1%        | 0        | 0% |
| Black              | 1 | 0%       | 3         | 1%  | 10       | 3%        | 0        | 0% |
| Hispanic           | 2 | 1%       | 1         | 0%  | 3        | 1%        | 2        | 1% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 1 | 0%       | 2         | 1%  | 14       | 5%        | 1        | 0% |
| White              | 45 | 17%      | 28        | 10% | 220      | 82%       | 45       | 17% |
| Unspecified        | 13 | 5%       | 13        | 5%  | 20       | 7%        | 98       | 1% |

|     |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |        | 3rd Grade | 5th Grade | All |
| Yujin Gakuen Elementary School | # | %         | #         | %   | #         | %         | #         | % |
| All Students       | 1244| 16%      | 1317      | 17% | 7795     | 100%      | 1244     | 16% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 490 | 6%      | 503        | 6%  | 3045      | 39%       | 490      | 6% |
| Limited English Proficient | 64 | 1%       | 67        | 1%  | 350      | 4%        | 64       | 1% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 77 | 1%       | 77        | 1%  | 471      | 6%        | 77       | 1% |
| Black              | 39 | 1%       | 57        | 1%  | 302      | 4%        | 39       | 1% |
| Hispanic           | 102 | 1%      | 119       | 2%  | 756      | 10%       | 102      | 1% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 47 | 1%       | 45        | 1%  | 232      | 3%        | 47       | 1% |
| White              | 881 | 11%     | 912       | 12% | 5577     | 72%       | 881      | 11% |
| Unspecified        | 98 | 1%       | 107       | 1%  | 457      | 6%        | 98       | 1% |

Demographic data: 2006-2007
(12/06 database)
## Demographic data: 2005-2006

### Buena Vista Elementary School

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<th>All Students</th>
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<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native</th>
<th>White</th>
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<td>8 3%</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>47 19%</td>
<td>9 4%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>4 2%</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
<td>5 2%</td>
<td>1 0%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>248 100%</td>
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<td>2 1%</td>
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<td>5 2%</td>
<td>30 12%</td>
<td>188 76%</td>
<td>197</td>
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### Meadowlark Elementary School

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<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native</th>
<th>White</th>
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<td>8 4%</td>
<td>5 3%</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>All</td>
<td>197 100%</td>
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<td>8 4%</td>
<td>5 3%</td>
<td>3 1%</td>
<td>14 7%</td>
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### Yujin Gakuen Elementary School

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<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native</th>
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<td>6 2%</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>41 14%</td>
<td>10 3%</td>
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<td>4 1%</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
<td>6 2%</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
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<td>101 34%</td>
<td>10 3%</td>
<td>8 3%</td>
<td>4 1%</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
<td>6 2%</td>
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### Charlemange Elementary School

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<th>Black</th>
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<tr>
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### Corridor Elementary School

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<th>American Indian/Alaskan Native</th>
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<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
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### All Elementaries

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### Corridor Elementary School

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<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buena Vista Elementary School

Meadowlark Elementary School

Charlemange Elementary School

Corridor Elementary School

Yujin Gakuen Elementary School

All Elementaries
2006-2007 Special Education data: number and percentage of IEPs

Buena Vista:

- # of students who receive Speech & Language services only: 11 (64.7%)
- # of students who receive Sp. & Language services and Learning Center services: 2 (11.8%)
- # of students who receive Learning Center services only: 4 (23.5%)
- # of students who receive Regional LC (cognitive) services: 0
- # of students who receive Regional LC (behavioral) services: 0
- # of Life Skills students (ESD): 0

Total # of IEPs: 17 / 252 total enrollment (6.7%)

Fox Hollow:

- # of students who receive Speech & Language services only: 15 (57.7%)
- # of students who receive Sp. & Language services and Learning Center services: 2 (7.7%)
- # of students who receive Learning Center services only: 9 (34.6%)
- # of students who receive Regional LC (cognitive) services: 0
- # of students who receive Regional LC (behavioral) services: 0
- # of Life Skills students (ESD): 0

Total # of IEPs: 26 / 294 total enrollment (8.8%)

Corridor:

- # of students who receive Speech & Language services only: 11 (26.2%)
- # of students who receive Sp. & Language services and Learning Center services: 6 (14.3%)
- # of students who receive Learning Center services only: 25 (59.5%)
- # of students who receive Regional LC (cognitive) services: 0
- # of students who receive Regional LC (behavioral) services: 0
- # of Life Skills students (ESD): 0

Total # of IEPs: 42 / 270 total enrollment (15.6%)

Yujin Gukeun

- # of students who receive Speech & Language services only: 13 (54.2%)
- # of students who receive Sp. & Language services and Learning Center services: 2 (8.3%)
- # of students who receive Learning Center services only: 9 (37.5%)
- # of students who receive Regional LC (cognitive) services: 0
- # of students who receive Regional LC (behavioral) services: 0
- # of Life Skills students (ESD): 0

Total # of IEPs: 24 / 291 total enrollment (8.2%)
## Fundraised Staffing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BV</th>
<th>FH</th>
<th>Corr</th>
<th>YG</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2006-07</td>
<td>.25 FTE</td>
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<td>3.5 Hrs.</td>
<td>7.75 Hrs.</td>
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<td>1.5 Hrs.</td>
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<td>.352 FTE</td>
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<td>5.25 Hrs.</td>
<td>3.75 Hrs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.1 Hrs.</td>
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Note: FTE = certified staff; hours = classified staff.
For 06-07: .1 FTE = $8,120; 1 hour = $4,990
## Elementary School Transfers and Exchange

**January 2007**

**School Boundary**
- AWBREY PARK
- HOWARD
- RIVER ROAD
- SPRING CREEK
- YUJIN

**File Produced By:**
- SQL script (EXELEM.XLE)
- EXELEM.TXT

### Transfers In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Bethel</th>
<th>Holmen</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>Crest Drive</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>Churchill</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Parkway</th>
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<td>473</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>435</td>
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<td>Exchanges</td>
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<td>104</td>
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### Transfers Out

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<th>Harris</th>
<th>Churchill</th>
<th>Parkway</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
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<td>435</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>146</td>
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<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Attending**
- Bethel
- Harris
- Churchill
- Parkway

**Other Districts**
- Spring Creek
- Howard

**Schools Transferred**
- Belair
- South

**School ATTENDED**
- North
- Sheldon
- Trans / Exchg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Belair</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Sheldon</th>
<th>Trans / Exchg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>473</td>
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</table>

### Percentages

- **Belair:**
  - 29%
  - 24%
  - 69%
  - 27%
  - 58%
  - 72%

- **South:**
  - 473
  - 435
  - 473
  - 72
  - 79

- **Sheldon:**
  - 473
  - 77
  - 4

- **Trans / Exchg:**
  - 473
  - 72
  - 29

**Schools by District**
- Belair
- South

**Transfers in**
- Belair
- Harris
- Churchill
- Parkway

**Transfers out**
- Belair
- Harris
- Churchill
- Parkway

**Schools Attended**
- North
- Sheldon
- Trans / Exchg
| Region          | 06-07 | 07-08 | 08-09 | 09-10 | 10-11 | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 | 15-16 | 16-17 | 17-18 | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total boundary  | 612   | 608   | 604   | 600   | 596   | 592   | 588   | 584   | 580   | 576   | 572   | 568   | 564   | 560   | 556   | 552   | 548   | 544   | 540   |
| Total attending | 282   | 276   | 270   | 264   | 258   | 252   | 246   | 240   | 234   | 228   | 222   | 216   | 210   | 204   | 198   | 192   | 186   | 180   | 174   |

### Problematic Areas
- **Hillside Family School**: 56% of transfers out.
- **Magnet Arts**: 3% of transfers out.
- **Eastside**: 9% of transfers out.
- **Buena Vista**: 20% of transfers out.

### Analysis by Region

#### Holt
- 62% of transfers to region alts.
- 38% of transfers to all alts.

#### Gilham
- 52% of transfers to region alts.
- 48% of transfers to all alts.

#### Coburn
- 46% of transfers to region alts.
- 54% of transfers to all alts.

#### Hillside
- 56% of transfers to region alts.
- 44% of transfers to all alts.

#### Family School
- 56% of transfers to region alts.
- 44% of transfers to all alts.

#### Magnet Arts
- 3% of transfers to region alts.
- 97% of transfers to all alts.

#### Eastside
- 9% of transfers to region alts.
- 91% of transfers to all alts.

#### Buena Vista
- 20% of transfers to region alts.
- 80% of transfers to all alts.

### Percentage of Transfers to Region Alts.

#### Total Boundary
- 53.90% of transfers to region alts.

#### Total Attending
- 53.90% of transfers to region alts.
The Milwaukee French Immersion program began in 1978 as a part of court-ordered desegregation. Anthony Gradisnik, Curriculum Specialist for Foreign Languages at that time, had the foresight to research and develop the immersion schools as an alternative to forced busing. He had heard about the success of the Canadian immersion programs and wanted to duplicate this model of foreign language instruction.

Originally, the French program was housed at 68th Street School, along with the German Immersion program. In 1980, the two programs were moved to 82nd Street School, which remains the home of Milwaukee German Immersion. At that time, though, the school was known as 82nd Street Multi-Language School. By 1985, both the German and French programs were growing and needed more space. That, combined with an effort to maintain the integrity of the language within each program, resulted in moving the French program to South 88th Street and establishing for the first time the Milwaukee French Immersion School (MFIS). This move allowed both programs to expand and accommodate more students.

Initially, there was one class at each grade level. The move to 88th Street allowed the program to grow at the entry-level grades to include 50 seats at K4, 75 seats at K5, and 75 seats at 1st grade. Those students then moved into 2nd - 5th grade. Due to normal attrition rates, there were typically two classes at each level in grades 2 - 5, often with a 4/5 grade combination class. When SAGE (Student Achievement Guarantee in Education), a program to reduce class size, was introduced in the 2000-2001 school year, 60 seats were available at the K5 and 1st grade levels, due to the student-teacher ratio of 15:1.

MFIS has maintained high standards of academic excellence since the program’s founding over 25 years ago. However, the remote location of the school on the far southwest side of Milwaukee, along with increased costs of transportation, have made it imperative to move to a more centralized location. Beginning in the fall of 2004, the Milwaukee French Immersion School will be located at 2360 N. 52nd Street, in the building that formerly housed Steuben Middle School.

The relocation of the French Immersion program will allow for expansion at the entry levels, making 75 seats available at K4, K5 and 1st grade levels. In addition, students in K5 - 3rd grade will be in classrooms limited to 15 pupils per teacher, as opposed to 30 students in a classroom with two teachers. These smaller classes have proven to be very successful and instrumental in improving student achievement in all areas, including the acquisition of the language itself.

The parents, students and staff of the Milwaukee French Immersion School have continually demonstrated their commitment to this unique program. Many of the staff members have sent or currently send their children to MFIS because of the caring atmosphere and excellent educational program that’s offered. Former students continue to visit and contact the school and keep the staff informed of their successes. Moreover, perhaps the greatest testimonial to our program’s success has been the return of former students to actually join our staff, or sending their own children to the Milwaukee French Immersion School as they have become parents.
Focus And Philosophy

Milwaukee French Immersion School

The Milwaukee French Immersion School is a city-wide school which serves a multicultural student population. Students are immersed in the French language beginning in four-year-old kindergarten and continue to receive most academic instruction in French through grade five. Formal English instruction begins in grade two when English reading and language arts are introduced. The amount of English instruction is gradually increased in grades three through five with students spending approximately forty-five to ninety minutes per day in English instruction. The Milwaukee Public School curriculum is followed to a great extent, with modifications being made according to the availability of materials. Many teaching materials are developed and/or translated by staff members so that they are tailored to the needs of the students. The ultimate goal of the school is to afford children with the opportunity to become bilingual in a very natural way as well as to provide them with a high-quality, diverse education.

Description of Teachers

Milwaukee French Immersion School teachers are certified in elementary education and are also fluent in spoken and written French. The underlying philosophy of the teachers is that children acquire a second language most readily at a young age and are taught using natural language acquisition methods. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of educational opportunities for continued professional growth and development. All teachers participate in curriculum development opportunities in order to continually modify the materials and curriculum to best meet the needs of children in their classes.
Milwaukee French Immersion

Grades: K-5  
Type: public  
Enrollment: 342  
2360 N 52nd St  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
Milwaukee County  
Phone: (414) 604-7500  
District: Milwaukee

Teachers

Student-Teacher Ratio

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<tr>
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<th>State Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students per FTE teacher</td>
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<td>15</td>
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Source: NCES, 2003-2004

More about student-teacher ratio

Compare with teacher information from nearby schools

Students

Student Ethnicity

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<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
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<td>1%</td>
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Source: NCES, 2003-2004

More about student ethnicity

Student Subgroups

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<tr>
<td>Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch program</td>
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<td>Migrant students</td>
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Source: NCES, 2003-2004

More about student subgroups
Compare with student information from nearby schools
Background: Milwaukee French Immersion School (French Immersion), located at 3575 South 88 Street, serves students in four-year-old kindergarten through grade five. French Immersion is situated in a primarily residential area, with an enrollment mix of Caucasian (62%), African American (32%), and Other (6%). The ultimate goal of the school is to afford children the opportunity to become bilingual in a natural way, as well as to provide them with a high-quality, diverse education. To assist in achieving the goal, students are immersed in the French language beginning in four-year-old-kindergarten and continue to receive most academic instruction in French through grade five.

School Governance Council: During the 2001-02 school year, French Immersion’s school council met the majority of the requirements of Board Administrative Policy 9.11, School Governance Councils. The council was involved in discussions concerning the school’s curriculum, budget, Educational Plan, and accountability measures. However, with only six parents on a twelve member council, the 51% parental membership requirement was not met.

School Performance: French Immersion’s Grade 4 academic performance on the 2000-01 Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) was above the district elementary school average on all five sub-tests and above the state average on three sub-tests. In addition, performance on the WKCE increased in reading and social studies from 1999-00 to 2000-01. French Immersion’s academic performance on the Grade 3 2000-01 Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT) was also above the district average.

In general, performance measures reported for the school appear to be accurate. Specifically, the review of the system-wide Accountability Report measures found that Grade 4 WKCE scores and the Grade 3 WRCT results were accurately reported. In addition, student participation in each test was representative of the school’s overall performance. Audit testing also found that French Immersion followed up on absent and habitual truant students in accordance with Wisconsin state statute.

Educational Plan: French Immersion’s 2001-2004 Educational Plan was reviewed by the Educational Plan Review Team. The plan was returned to the school for revisions of the needs assessment, funding sources, and a limited number of action plans. French Immersion adequately revised their Educational Plan to address the issues noted.

Financial and Compliance: Overall, French Immersion has operated within district budget allocations and guidelines, complied with district financial standards and administrative procedures, and appropriately used operational, categorical, and student activity funds. School expenditures and surpluses reported in the school’s operations, categorical, and student activity fund financial reports for the seven months ended January 31, 2002, fairly present, in all material respects, the financial activities of the school. Although French Immersion complied with the majority of the district’s financial standards and administrative procedures, controls can be enhanced in contract and student activity fund management.
Special Education and Language immersion programs: Selected Research Citations


Introduction to the 2005-2006 Alternative School Review
Report to the Superintendent

Introduction

The Eugene School District 4J is currently engaged in a comprehensive effort to support all of the district’s elementary schools – neighborhood and alternative – in providing effective learning environments and equitable access and opportunity for all the district’s children and families.

As one component of that effort, the Board has directed the superintendent to periodically review the District’s alternative schools to ensure that they continue to meet Board and District goals, and perform consistent with Board policy.

On August 9, 2005 the Board approved the review process by which its alternative schools will be assessed. The review process defines eight criteria that each alternative school is asked to address. Four schools were chosen for review during the fall of 2005: Eastside, Family School, Hillside, and Magnet Arts.

The superintendent appointed a review team consisting of Carl Hermanns, Jerry Henderson, Kay Mehas, and Ray Gross to conduct the alternative school reviews. This report presents the findings of the team for each of the four schools.

Prior to presenting the criteria assessments for each school, we would like to briefly outline some of the factors that have informed and guided our thinking as we proceeded with the review process.

The Research Context

In the fall of 2004, the superintendent made a speech at City Club that presented a compelling picture of the increasing concentrations of poverty found in some of 4J’s schools. He outlined the dangers to the school system and ultimately to the Eugene community at large if that trend continues unabated, and argued for purposeful action to forestall the economic and racial/ethnic resegregation that is taking place in so many other cities around the country. In concert with the ongoing Access and Options initiative, Superintendent Russell contended that the District and community need to work together to ensure that 4J’s schools educate all of Eugene’s children well by addressing systemic inequities and strengthening all of its schools, both neighborhood and alternative.

The superintendent’s subsequent recommendations to the Board and the Board’s approval of 15 strategies to reform and strengthen 4J’s school choice program provided a blueprint for action. There is a substantial body of research that supports the path the superintendent and Board have outlined. We found literature on three topics that are particularly salient to the school review process: the relationship between SES and academic achievement; equity and access in school choice; and civil society theory (see Appendix 8 for selected references).

SES. Given the increasing concentrations of poverty in some of 4J’s schools, the research documenting the effect of socioeconomic status (SES) on academic achievement is extremely relevant to 4J’s reform efforts (Appendix 8: SES). The research shows the deleterious effects of high concentrations of poverty on academic achievement, and the positive effects on the academic achievement of all children in schools with more balanced SES populations. In
schools in which the percentage of children qualifying for free or reduced lunch (a proxy for poverty) does not exceed 40 to 60 percent, students of lower SES achieve higher levels of academic success without any adverse effect on the academic achievement of their more advantaged peers.

In light of the district’s goal of closing the achievement gap, this research is germane to the alternative school review process, and informed our thinking as we examined the demographics of each review school’s student population.

**Equity and Access.** There are numerous studies about school choice and equity that illuminate both the risks and benefits of school choice (Appendix 8: School Choice). Our synthesis of the research provided a list of risks and recommendations to mitigate those risks that are relevant to the school choice reform process 4J has embarked upon.

1. Risks of choice include:
   a. Increased segregation and/or social stratification;
   b. The avoidance of low income, special needs, and non-English speaking students by some choice schools; and
   c. Neglecting the general upgrading of all schools.

2. Recommendations from the research include:
   a. Families must have quality options (i.e. a variety of strong school choices, including neighborhood schools, within each region).
   b. Enhance the quality of underchosen schools (this expands range of options and enhances overall academic quality of the system).
   c. Assure good information about all schools, and good dissemination of the information.
   d. Assure that admissions processes are fair and open.
   e. Include SES guidelines
   f. Target choice to poor or disadvantaged students.
   g. Weight per pupil funding in favor of low-income students and students with disabilities or other special learning needs. Have the funds follow the child.
   h. Provide some degree of transportation.
   i. Buffer neighborhood schools from very rapid or unpredictable changes in revenue or staffing.
   j. To avoid segregation and make the concept of equitable choice real, all schools must offer both integration and quality instruction.

We note that all of the studies we read emphasized the need to improve all schools, and specifically neighborhood schools and underchosen and/or struggling schools, as a main component of a successful school choice plan.

These findings align with the district’s concerns about equity as expressed in the Schools of the Future report and the Superintendent’s Response to the Report and Recommendations of the Access and Options committee. We considered the risks and recommendations outlined above as we examined the data and visited each school.

**Civil Society.** Civil society theory proposes a space in which citizens engage in reasoned discussion and debate to come to a common understanding about problems facing their community, leading to action that rises above social divisions and private interests and embraces the common good. While contemporary public discussion can often degenerate into divisive and demeaning rhetoric resulting in unyielding positions, civil society theory argues for rational public debate that considers all sides and is grounded in some minimal consensus.
about the nature of the problem being debated. Such discussion does not attempt to impose solutions through force of personality or strident attack, but rather encourages a vigorous exchange of competing ideas and values, leading to some level of consensus and mutual obligation to construct solutions that redound to the common good of the community (Appendix 8: Eberly).

While civil society theory did not inform the technical part of our review process, it did guide us as we gathered information and deliberated over findings. In the process of crafting our criterion assessments of each school, we have worked to hear and understand the opinions and concerns of all constituents and to weigh them appropriately in the context of good educational outcomes for all students and families of 4J.

The Local Context

The benefits and risks of school choice are well documented, as noted above under the Research Context, and various communities have tried different approaches to create equitable choice programs that maximize the benefits and minimize the risks. Some have been more successful than others; all face different challenges, and all are explicitly tied to their local circumstances.

Research on school reform clearly demonstrates that understanding and adapting reform initiatives to the local context is essential; variability in the success of reform efforts due to local circumstances has been consistently documented since the 1960s (Appendix 8: Datnow)

Although we have carefully examined examples of school choice in other cities as potential models, this research indicates that it would be a mistake to believe that those models could, or should, be implemented here without consideration of, and adaptation to, our own local circumstances.

As we approached the alternative school reviews, we found it helpful to consider a number of factors that contribute to Eugene’s unique local circumstances: the history of Eugene’s school choice program; the problematic issues concerning the school choice program that have been voiced by various community and school members; and the strategies that the Board has approved to implement the superintendent’s recommendations.

History. In Eugene, the district adopted an alternative school policy (IGBH) in 1973. The policy states: “The Board of Directors recognizes that the educational goals of School District 4J can best be attained through educational programs as diverse as students’ needs within a pluralistic society. Therefore, the board endorses the development of a variety of alternative schools through the cooperative efforts of educators, parents, students, and/or community resources.”

Almost thirty years later the Schools of the Future report noted that while school choice is valued in Eugene, a “disparity exists between the socioeconomic level of students who are enrolled in alternative schools and those in neighborhood schools.” That report, delivered to the Board in 2000, went on to express concerns about equity and recommended that the district determine what was standing in the way of fairness and then develop solutions.

During their November 2001 work session the Board agreed that “the current model of school choice does not adequately address the issue of equity between schools and access for all students to participate in school choice,” listed a number of problems associated with the
current system, and concluded “the combination of the equity and access issues listed above creates the perception of a "two tier" system for both schools and students that needs to be addressed.”

Last year’s extensive Access and Options process provided a great deal of information about school choice in Eugene, culminating with the superintendent’s report and recommendations to the Board and the Board’s adoption of 15 of the superintendent’s recommendations on March 9, 2005. The recommendations focus on strategies to improve equity and achievement across all of Eugene’s elementary schools, and align with the Board’s goals of closing the achievement gap and ensuring that all 4J students have equal access to educational options appropriate to their needs, abilities and interests.

**Issues.** Throughout the course of the school review process, a number of issues were voiced by community and school constituents. While many of these issues are outside the scope of the review process, the review team felt that it was important to reflect upon all of the concerns that were expressed to us, address those that lay within our authority to address as part of the review process, and bring issues beyond our purview to the district’s attention. The majority of concerns focused on two issues: collocation of alternative and neighborhood schools; and inequities between alternative and neighborhood schools due to mobility, diverse student populations, special education placement, and grade-level caps.

**Collocation.** Many of the problems related to the collocation of alternative and neighborhood schools were brought to the superintendent’s attention during last year’s Access and Options process. In his recommendations to the Board last February, the Superintendent summarized the effects of collocation as follows: “Staff and parents have indicated that neighborhood/alternative co-located schools can be difficult to manage; have workload issues for staff and principals; create friction between staffs, parents, and kids. Most of the friction seems to center around perceived elitism, disparate class sizes, increased teaching and learning challenges due to significantly higher mobility and/or SPED rates in the neighborhood school, and loss of neighborhood students to alternative schools.”

The review process further examined the effects of collocation in its 8th criterion, and we witnessed some of the issues cited above during our school visits. While it is beyond the scope of this review to recommend remedies for problematic collocation situations that include facility changes, we have presented specific conclusions about the effects of collocation on the educational environment for the schools’ students and staffs. Within those parameters, we have suggested short-term solutions to aspects of collocation that can be immediately addressed. We expect that the district’s forthcoming collocation process (see Longer-Term Strategies, below) will result in appropriate overall facilities remedies.

We note that there was considerable impatience with the Board’s decision to position collocation as a longer-term strategy rather than dealing with it immediately. It was explained to us that any movement of schools is a complex proposition that has to be tied to larger district facilities planning, and therefore is by necessity a longer-term strategy.

**Inequities due to mobility, diverse student populations, special education placement, and grade-level caps.** A primary goal of the Board is to ensure that the district’s approach to school choice contributes to student achievement and closing the achievement gap, and allows all students to have equal access to education options appropriate to their needs, abilities and interests. The issues of mobility, diversity, special education and caps all
pertain to equity and achievement, and we therefore have examined all of these issues as part of the review process. Additionally, specific strategies to remedy challenges due to mobility and special education placement are included in intermediate strategies to be implemented during the next school year.

Grade-level caps, which have created significant equity concerns between alternative and neighborhood schools, are particularly contentious and were a central issue in many of the conversations we had with school and community constituents during the review process. In response, we have carefully examined the issue and present specific recommendations to the district regarding grade-level caps (see Eastside and Hillside criteria assessments).

**Strategies.** On March 9, 2005 the Board adopted 15 strategies: 5 short-term strategies to be implemented in the current school year; 6 intermediate-term strategies to be implemented during the next school year (06-07); and 4 longer-term strategies to be implemented after the 06-07 school year. We summarize these strategies below in order to situate the alternative school review process as one part of a larger overall initiative to improve educational opportunities for all of Eugene’s students and families.

**Short-term strategies.** Of the five short-term strategies, three deal directly with strengthening neighborhood schools; the fourth creates a Parent, Family and Community Coordinator position. The district has allocated significant monetary and staff resources to the three strategies to strengthen neighborhood schools, and these initiatives are currently being implemented. The Parent, Family and Community Coordinator has been hired and is actively working with schools and families throughout the district. We note that these four initiatives directly align with recommendations described in the research on equity in school choice (see The Research Context above, p.3).

The fifth short-term strategy is the alternative school review process. The purpose of the review process is to assess whether the alternative schools are meeting Board and district goals and performing in a manner that is consistent with Board policy and expectations. The review team’s conclusions are presented in this report.

**Intermediate-term strategies.** The six intermediate-term strategies include the creation of an alternative school lottery preference for low SES applicants; the appointment of a committee to redraw neighborhood school boundaries to manage school sizes, curtail growth of very large schools and sustain enrollment of smaller schools; the elimination of gender-based caps; initiatives to address inter-district mobility; initiatives to address in-district mobility; and the reassessment of the current placement of special education programs.

The lottery preference aligns with the recommendations listed above under the Research Context (p.3). The other five strategies address issues related to equity and student achievement that have been voiced by various school and community constituencies, i.e. special education placement, high mobility in neighborhood schools, school size issues, and caps. We note that the intermediate-term strategy on caps calls only for the elimination of gender caps. We recommended that the district revisit the issue of grade-level caps.

**Longer-term strategies.** The four longer-term strategies all address collocation. The first proposes eliminating the collocation of alternative and neighborhood schools; the second proposes merging collocated schools; the third proposes the collocation of alternative
schools with alternative schools; and the fourth proposes the relocation of some alternative schools to other regions throughout the district. The implementation of collocation strategies will be part of overall school facilities planning, i.e. future school consolidations/reconfigurations and/or plans for new school construction or school renovation.

**Additional strategies.** Although no Board action was requested on March 9, the district is also pursuing strategies that will engage the city in looking at housing and economic development policies to mitigate increasing concentrations of poverty in Eugene; ensure that special education students are served well and equitably by all schools; and address the relationship between the Eugene Education Fund and parent fundraising.

**School Choice in Eugene**

School reform and school choice research indicates that while we can learn from school choice initiatives in other cities, the district must craft a school choice program that builds on its own unique strengths while rigorously addressing the systemic inequities that have developed over the years.

In examining the projected demographics for Eugene over the next fifteen years, the superintendent has concluded that it is imperative that the district act aggressively to address the current inequities in our school choice system and strengthen all schools, both neighborhood and alternative. By doing so, 4J can construct a system that will educate all of Eugene’s children well and forestall the deleterious consequences of economic, racial and ethnic resegregation that we can see so clearly in many of this nation’s cities.

The majority of Eugene’s citizens share the superintendent’s basic commitment to excellent and equitable education for all of Eugene’s children. The question is, how can the district best realize that shared vision?

Some voices advocate the immediate closure of alternative schools they perceive as being inequitable; others advocate dismantling the current school choice system and implementing a controlled choice program to balance SES across the district; still others advocate leaving the system as it is.

Leaving the system as it is cannot be an option; the Board had mandated that current inequities be addressed.

Is immediately closing alternative schools that are not equitably serving all Eugene’s children the best answer? What if that school’s educational program is distinctive, is currently serving some children very well, and could effectively support the specific learning styles of a diverse group of children? Would not immediate closure summarily foreclose a potentially valuable educational option?

Could controlled choice work in Eugene? If implemented well, controlled choice would help to balance the SES across schools but would also involve a complicated student assignment system and busing. If history and the experience of other districts is a guide, it could also foster continuous contention.

The blueprint for school choice reform that is outlined in the strategies approved by the Board on 3/9/05 presents another option. If implemented effectively, in aggregate it will:
1. Ensure that alternative schools that are already working well for some kids are accessible and welcoming to all children who would benefit from their distinctive educational strategies;

2. Merge, or close, alternative schools that do not offer distinctive educational strategies or do not develop the capacity to effectively serve all children;

3. Level the playing field between alternative and neighborhood schools by removing benefits to alternative schools that serve no justifiable educational purpose and by addressing issues of mobility and special education placement; and

4. Strengthen neighborhood schools, so that all things being equal, parents would choose to put their kids in their neighborhood school. With strong and vibrant neighborhood schools, most parents would choose a neighborhood or alternative school outside their own neighborhood only when it is clear that their child would be more successful in the educational program the other school offers.

This model, embodied in the district’s current Access and Options strategies, recognizes Eugene’s unique local context and both builds on 4J’s strengths and addresses its weaknesses in a deliberate manner. It strives to create a true choice program that could serve all children well while strengthening the district and community as a whole.

The district has allocated significant resources – over $2 million over the next two years – to strengthening neighborhood schools, an initiative that the research shows is imperative for strong and equitable school choice programs. We hope that our efforts in providing an objective and comprehensive alternative school review will provide another component for effectively addressing issues of educational equity and excellence in 4J, and thereby constructively contribute to the district’s efforts to help all of Eugene’s children find educational success.