MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

December 3, 2008

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a work session at 5:30 p.m. followed by a regular board meeting at 7 p.m. on December 3, 2008 at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media, posted in the Education Center and published in The Register-Guard on December 1, 2008.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:
Charles Martinez, Jr., Chair
Yvette Webber-Davis, Vice Chair
Eric Forrest
Beth Gerot
Alicia Hays
Craig Smith
Jim Torrey

STAFF:
George Russell, Superintendent of Schools and District Clerk
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer
Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Caroline Passerottti, Financial Analysis Manager
Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement

GUESTS:
Randy Harnisch, Oregon School Boards Association
Paco Furlan, Principal, River Road/El Camino del Rio Elementary School
Kim Finch, Principal, Howard Elementary School
Jane McCleery, Teacher, Harris Elementary School
Mary Christensen, Teacher, Harris Elementary School
Susan Gusinow, Teacher, Eastside Elementary School
Eric Freeman, Teacher, Eastside Elementary School

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:
Lizzy Monroe, South Eugene High School
Linda Gai, IHS, All Campuses
Joel Iboa, Sheldon High School
Jennifer Kerfoot, North Eugene High School
Mallory Bray, Churchill High School

MEDIA:
KRVM
6:00 p.m. WORK SESSION: Conduct a Work Session on Charter School Regulations and Relationships

Superintendent George Russell opened the work session with some background on charter schools. He noted that he had asked the board some time ago to move an existing charter school in order to make room at the Willard site for Eastside, which provoked important discussions regarding the relationship between the school district, charter schools and alternative schools. Those discussions led to a recommendation regarding Eastside/Harris, which he said would be a topic discussed this evening, as well as moving the charter schools out of the Willard site by the end of the 2010 school year. He remarked that Board Member Jim Torrey had asked for more clarification regarding the board’s roles and responsibilities towards charter schools, from both legal and policy standpoints.

Superintendent Russell introduced Randy Harnisch, from the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA), who had made a presentation about charter schools at an OSBA meeting where a number of Springfield’s board members were in attendance. He also introduced Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analysis Manager, who he said would give information about the current situation with charter schools in the district.

Board Chair Charles Martinez noted that the district already had a baseline policy regarding charter schools, though a larger conversation was needed about the state climate for charter schools and especially the impact of the new virtual charter schools.

Ms. Passerotti introduced members of the charter school team, Jerry Henderson, Marilyn Nersesian, KC Clark and Brad New, as well as administrators from the charter schools - Mary Leighton from Network Charter School, Martha Collins from Village School and Cindy Bass from Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School.

Mr. Harnisch said he would focus on the legal aspects of charter schools, the history of Oregon charter schools from the past ten years, current legislative focus around charter schools and then respond to questions from the board. He commented that Oregon charter school law came into effect in 1999, and since that time many millions of taxpayer dollars had been funneled into the approximately 85 Oregon charter schools. All but two of these schools were sponsored by local school districts, with the OSBA sponsoring the two separate schools.

Mr. Harnisch noted that the law guaranteed applicants access to process, so that local applicants could be heard by school boards and school boards could apply a fairly rigid set of steps by which to decide whether or not to sponsor a charter school. He said the law had special provisions, including that any group or person could propose a charter school, prohibition of a private school converting to a public charter school, and disallowance of any connection with religious affiliation.

Mr. Harnisch also noted that charter schools were exempt from the onerous state regulations, though charter schools were still responsible for complying with most state laws and all federal laws, except for (on the state level) teacher licensure. For charter schools, only 50% of the teachers must be licensed teachers, the others needing to be registered with the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission. He clarified that though some of the teachers did not need to complete an education program, they did need to undergo the criminal history and background check process.
Another remarkable difference with charter schools, Mr. Harnisch continued, was that students could enroll in schools outside their resident district without going through the regular inter-district transfer process. He said this particular ruling was making a huge impact on the current virtual school process and that it was a significant advantage for charter schools. If more students wanted to enroll than there was room in the school, the school needed to hold an equitable lottery process. Funding for the charter schools was through the local school districts.

The process for charter school applications, Mr. Harnisch explained, contained at least 25 components which must be completed. If the application was complete, the school district had 60 days to hold a public hearing, then, within the next 30 days, the district must either approve the application or state in writing the reasons for non-approval. If approved, then within the next 90 days a charter contract must be negotiated and executed. If denied, the applicant had a period of time in which to file an appeal to the State Board of Education, which could either uphold the local district’s decision or sponsor the school themselves. He remarked that nine charter schools had gone through the appeal process with the State Board of Education, three of which were then sponsored by them, two of which are in existence at the present time.

Mr. Harnisch commented that in 2005, the state legislature fleshed out the renewal process for charter schools as well as some minimum standards. The initial term for a charter school was for no more than five years, the first renewal period was for the same period, with subsequent renewals to be for not less than five nor more than ten years.

In response to a question by Board Member Craig Smith, Mr. Harnisch said that if a renewal was denied, the State Board would review the process that the district used to evaluate the renewal request; if the evaluation was procedurally sound, they would uphold the district’s decision. If they found the district’s evaluation to be not a good faith evaluation, the State Board could remand the decision to a local board and order the process to be reworked. Mr. Smith asked if the economic impact on the district was a factor in the initial application process, to which Mr. Harnisch answered yes, but not on the renewal application. Mr. Harnisch stressed the importance of a good contract. He said the longer the charter process continued, the more issues were being identified that needed to be addressed for good contracts.

Mr. Torrey questioned if the financial impact on a district was a veto point for an initial application. Mr. Harnisch responded that if the value of the charter school would be outweighed by directly identifiable, significant and adverse impacts on the quality of education for students residing in the school district, then it would be a valid criteria for denial. For instance, if a very innovative and high value charter school program was proposed in a district composed of very traditional programs, that high value would need to be balanced with the impact on other students in the district. The total balance for the district would need to be considered.

Board Member Beth Gerot asked about the numbers of charter schools begun in the past 10 years and the numbers that had closed. Mr. Harnisch said that 85 had been started and perhaps 15 had closed, with financial concerns being the main reason for closure. He said the benefit of having federal grant money at the beginning was a tremendous help, though it took good planning to continue without that ongoing support. He noted that some for-profit companies were managing programs in charter schools in the State of Oregon, though local school districts were still responsible for making educational and financial decisions.

Responding to a question by Ms. Gerot, Mr. Harnisch said that virtual charter schools had completely muddied the charter school water. He stated that the feature of charter school law that eliminated the requirement for inter-district transfer in conjunction with online instruction being available to serve anyone with no geographical limitations, had created a whole new
creature beyond any previous standards. He predicted that the state legislature would deal with this issue during the current legislative session. No one had envisioned at the time the charter school law was created that students could become members of school districts clear across the state through virtual charter schools. He remarked that key questions were growing around how to assure that virtual programs would meet Oregon's academic standards, that they were keyed to the state assessment system, and that they offered an appropriate and comprehensive education.

Mr. Smith asked whether certified teachers in charter schools had to be highly qualified for their positions. Mr. Harnisch responded that licensed teachers had to meet the definition of “highly qualified” from the No Child Left Behind program, and that registered teachers had to meet a state definition of “highly qualified,” which was a little different. Responding to a question from Mr. Smith concerning whether assessments had been done around whether charter schools were meeting the goals of being more innovative than public school programs and, that their concepts could be borrowed or expanded in the public school system, Mr. Harnisch remarked that quantitative studies had been done. He said there were reports of very wonderful charter schools that had created unique, creative programs that met special needs of certain students, and that his own daughter was attending a very successful middle school charter program in Salem.

Board Vice Chair Yvette Webber-Davis asked who was responsible for special education students in charter schools. Mr. Harnisch reported that special education was created in a different way for charter schools in that legal responsibility for the special ed student stayed with the student’s residential district, so that one district was legally responsible for providing a free and appropriate public education and the other district was responsible for seeing that the services were provided. This required a high degree of cooperation and coordination between the two districts and would be especially difficult in a case of a virtual school which was far from the student’s residential district.

In response to a question from Mr. Torrey regarding what responsibility the sponsoring district had in providing infrastructure for charter schools, Mr. Harnisch said the local district board had few legal requirements. The requirements include visiting the school annually, reviewing the charter school for compliance with the terms of the charter, and serving as a conduit for that percentage of state school funds. He said a carefully worded and thoughtful contract would build-in all the controls deemed necessary to provide the comfort needed to be able to sign the contract. Ms. Gerot mentioned that local districts must let a charter school know what facility spaces were available, but did not have to allow the spaces to be used.

KC Clark, Ed Support Services Administrator, responded to questions about how special education students were being handled in charter schools, saying that the local district staffed the charter schools the same for special education students as was done for the regular public schools. She noted that they served the students and then billed the resident districts. She said transportation was not provided for special education students who come into the district from other areas.

Dr. Martinez asked, regarding teacher certification for charter schools, how the balance was working out in actuality and what kinds of minimum standards were required for non-licensed teachers. Mr. Harnisch responded that a significant number of charter schools required all teachers to be licensed, and that most charter teachers overall were licensed. He noted that districts could require a certain percentage of licensed teachers through the contract.
Mr. Torrey asked if community colleges or universities could apply to have a K-12 charter school, for instance, to create a vocational school. Mr. Harnisch said they could develop and operate charter schools, but local school boards were the only entities, besides the State Board of Education, who could sponsor a charter school.

Ms. Passeroti presented a summary comparison of the administration of charter schools compared with other 4J schools. She noted that the charter school team met quarterly with charter school representatives and the charter school council, as well as annually for site visits. She commented that charter schools were separate, nonprofit organizations, as well as being public schools, and were governed by an independent board of directors. Additionally, she said, they were subject to state charter school law and District Board Policy LBE. She noted that federal Title 1 funding was available similarly as for other public schools. Although state funding was provided at the statutory minimum (80% for grades K-8 and 95% for grades 9-12), 4J shared local option funds and city level proceeds for those charter school students who lived within district boundaries.

In terms of facilities, Ms. Passeroti said that charter schools were responsible for locating and paying for their facilities, and that two of the district charter schools leased facilities from the district along with custodial and maintenance services. She noted that charter schools were not required to provide meals or to participate in the federal child nutrition program, although Village School and Ridgeline contracted for federal meal programs and Network contracted with a restaurant for meals. For transportation, similar to alternative schools, bus service was not provided, though charter students could ride district buses on existing routes on a space available basis.

Responding to a question from Mr. Smith, Ms. Passeroti clarified that sharing of local option funds was not required, though the charter schools had been very supportive of the campaign for those funds and had made a strong appeal to be included. She said the general approach in terms of optional services had been that if the capacity was there and there was no additional cost, the charter schools were included, with the charter schools picking up additional costs.

Mr. Smith noted that the district was supporting the charter schools in many non-required ways that cost the district staff time. Ms. Gerot added that the tremendous amount of staff time from the district in support of the charter schools was probably the main reason for their great success, compared to some in other parts of the state. Ms. Passeroti stated that much of the heavy support from the district was given more in earlier times, and that now the charter schools operated quite independently in most regards.

Board Member Eric Forrest asked about the 20% funding allocation by the district for charter students, if the reason was to support some of the services mentioned. Mr. Harnisch responded that the district still retained a significant cost for sponsoring charter schools. Dr. Martinez added that the district’s financial support was an important factor, along with the fact that charter school performance reflected on the general performance of the district.

Because of limited time, Dr. Martinez suggested that the remaining time be spent detailing some unique positive characteristics of the relationship between the district and charter schools, as well as some comments regarding possible risks and threats moving forward involving charter school policy.

Ms. Passeroti noted that the district’s three charter schools had unique instructional programs that enhanced the philosophical offerings of the district. She clarified that Village School operated under the philosophy of Waldorf teachings, Ridgeline was based on Montessori
philosophy, and Network brought together small businesses and nonprofits to provide more hands-on educational experiences for secondary students who were not doing so well in a traditional setting. She introduced the three principals of the schools, who each expressed a sense of gratitude for very positive relationships with the district.

Ms. Passeroti noted, in terms of issues to think about for the future, that special education was a big issue with many requirements that would be difficult to implement, that facilities would be a bigger issue nationwide because charter school funds had to stretch a long way, and general economics because of the current national economic downturn.

Superintendent Russell indicated that the 4J charter schools were exemplary for the State of Oregon, and that he thought a main issue coming up was virtual charter schools. He noted that the county superintendent group had established a sub-committee chaired by Nancy Golden to look at virtual charter schools and that a draft of that committee’s report was included in the board’s meeting packet for this evening.

In response to a question from Mr. Smith about OSBA’s position on virtual charter schools, Mr. Harnisch said the OSBA’s concern was similar to what Superintendent Russell had identified, that this was an issue needing clarification, perhaps by the state legislature.

Dr. Martinez adjourned the work session and convened the regular board meeting.

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

Dr. Martinez called the meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order at 7:15 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes to the agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Russell thanked Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analysis Manager, and Randy Harnisch from the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) for their presentation on charter schools at the earlier work session, and welcomed all guests.

He noted that the governor’s proposed budget had been released on December 1, 2008, and that the overall proposed increases would not be enough to cover the roll-up costs for most or any school districts in the state. He said this meant a rough financial situation for the next school year, although local option funds would put Springfield School District in better condition than most other districts. He cautioned against panic or over-reaction, but to recognize the seriousness of the situation and be purposeful in terms of how money would be spent for the remainder of the current school year.

Superintendent Russell mentioned having met with other local superintendents and Phil Barnhart, who will be chairing the House Revenue Committee this year, focusing on how to find additional revenue sources. Mr. Barnhart had expressed his opinion that the governor’s projection was too optimistic, and anticipated March’s forecast to look worse, drawing parallels to the 2001-02 legislative session when the May state school fund payment was withheld. He predicted a very rocky next two years.
For the current school year, Superintendent Russell noted a shortfall of approximately $2 million, necessitating the curtailing of spending in many areas. He noted the City of Springfield was expecting an $8 million shortfall in their budget for the current year. He said that after the next Budget Committee meeting, more information would be forthcoming.
Dr. Martinez noted that the board was looking at various ways to help curtail spending, including careful consideration of professional development and travel costs.

Ms. Gerot commented that the $6.39 billion figure in the governor’s budget was quite a difference from a fully implemented Quality Education Model of $8.32 billion.

**COMMENTS BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

North Eugene High School representative, Jennifer Kerfoot, remarked that she would report for all three of the small schools.

For the IDEAS school, the students had looked at the Tripod data, which showed that relationships between students and teachers had improved this last year. She said that seniors were getting pin numbers so they could apply for scholarships and to universities and junior colleges.

The Academy of Arts teachers had started a new professional development practice, working together in groups of four with one as facilitator, studying best practices in instruction to better serve all students.

Ms. Kerfoot continued, saying that the 9th and 10th graders in DECCO were in the middle of a new unit called *You Make Me Sick*. This comprehensive study allowed students to integrate technical information from their science classes with social impacts and disease in their global studies class. Through this program, students would gain skills in research, writing and public speaking and improved literacy was an important goal for the entire North Eugene campus.

At IHS, she added, seniors were working on senior projects and tackling college applications. Juniors were working on their ITGS (Information Technology in a Global Society). The sophomore and freshman classes were preparing for Pan African and Eurasian conferences. A meeting for 9th and 10th grade students and parents was held on Tuesday evening to go over transcripts and credit requirements for graduation. The entire school was working on a canned food drive.

Lizzy Monroe reported for South High School noting that they were also working on a canned food drive. She said that student government, along with North Eugene and members of the recycling program were collaborating to create a successful food drive.

Mallory Bray reported that the canned food drive was also underway at Churchill High School, where it had been extended for an extra week. A Christmas stocking drive is also underway with stockings being filled then given away.

Joel Iboa reported that Sheldon students are working on a canned food drive in cooperation with South Eugene.
ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

David Zupan identified himself as a community activist and former substitute teacher. He expressed concern for a proposal he had heard about which would no longer permit students to transfer to schools outside their boundaries. He felt this would pose a threat to the excellent high school programs by disrupting attendance patterns and disrupting relationships between the middle schools and the high schools that they fed into. Because of arbitrary boundaries, some students would be unable to attend South Eugene High School if the transfer rules changed. He said it would be unwise for students who lived within walking distance of South Eugene High School to be bussed five or six miles to Churchill High School. He asked that if transfers had to be reduced, that prudence and common sense be used in granting exemptions for clear academic, social, or environmental factors that should be considered.

Susan Curtin was unable to stay for her presentation, so David Zupan read her comments. She commented that she had lived in the same house for twenty years and had been able to choose the best schools for each of her children, considering their individual interests and needs. Her youngest daughter now was attending 8th grade at Family School at Spencer Butte, and Ms. Curtain requested that the 8th graders in this class be able to attend South Eugene High School the following year along with their peers. She noted that though she lived within the Churchill boundary, they were just one mile from South Eugene High School and three miles from Churchill. She felt that forcing a small number of the Family School students to attend a different high school than their peers would be stressful and could endanger their success in school.

Debbie Boures said that she supported the last letter that was read. She also had a Family School student and had been involved with Family School for eleven years. At the time they entered Family School, it was understood that their children would attend South Eugene High School. She added that several of the students had siblings already attending South Eugene High School, and she requested that consideration be given for those families so that their children could all attend the same high school.

COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

There were no comments by employee groups.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Receive a Report on Harris/ Eastside Consolidation Planning

Superintendent Russell commented that the recommendation for directing Eastside and Harris to develop a school consolidation plan would be heard this evening. This recommendation needed consideration by the board no later than February, 2009. A status report was to have been given in November, the timing being missed by a few days. This would be an informational report to provide the current status of this process. He noted that some guiding conditions had been identified, including that there would be one school with one administrative structure and instructional program or model, there would be one budget and one site council, and that enrollment priority would be given to students from within the Harris neighborhood boundary, then South and then all other students. Finally, both school communities would agree to engage in the conversation with equal voice, recognizing that stakes were equally high for both schools.
Wally Bryant, Harris/Eastside Principal, thanked Superintendent Russell and the board for his opportunity to be working again with students, staff and parents. He said the project was a big one, especially considering the short amount of time available to complete it. He thanked the many parents who had volunteered from both schools, as well as staff members from the two schools, for their great help. Mr. Bryant introduced four teachers who would be presenting information: Jane McCleery and Mary Christensen from Harris, and Susan Gusinow and Eric Freeman from Eastside. He distributed handouts regarding parent survey information and about the advisory committee that had been formed.

Jane McCleery said she felt that collaboration between the two schools was going well, noting the school communities had been working together with respect and enthusiasm. She reminded the board that in February 2008, Superintendent Russell had presented several possibilities for the two schools, one being the possibility of closing Harris. Talks began between the staff of the two schools, and it became obvious that the schools could work well together.

Susan Gusinow, Eastside Teacher, added that it was well known from the beginning that Harris parents were passionate about wanting a neighborhood school for their children and that Eastside parents wanted a more atypical program. Through brainstorming about how the two ideals could be combined, a commitment was created to combine the schools at the Harris campus, and a transition committee was formed, including parents, teachers and classified staff. She noted that a new principal, secretary and custodian were hired.

The hiring of Wally Bryant as principal was pivotal, she reported, because he had unique talent for bringing out the best in people, he had great integrity and the ability to inspire confidence and creativity in the meetings. Ms. Gusinow continued that the board had supported the efforts by hiring two highly skilled facilitators: Mike Garling and Marilyn Clotz, who she said had been absolutely passionate about facilitating the process that needed to happen so quickly. New teachers had also been hired.

Eric Freeman, Eastside Teacher, said that general data was then collected from the parent populations through a survey, resulting in 120 surveys being returned. Three facets desired by the parents for a strong school were project-based learning, challenging curriculum, and keeping the sense of community alive and thriving. He commented that there were 67% of teachers new to the Harris campus, and that 20% were in their first year of teaching. Staff responded to the situation with great enthusiasm, he noted, feeling it was an opportunity to inject life, creativity and purpose into the school. Since there was no previous model to follow, they were creating a brand new program, which was very exciting.

Jane McCleery, Harris Teacher, reported that school started in the fall with great success. Then the work began to establish trust and community. Students participated in the national Bike and Walk to School program, the extensive school garden progressed, individual classrooms collaborated with different projects – reading buddies, singing together, a community barn dance, joint choir and marimba. The four members of the leadership team had been meeting with the facilitators once each week for two hours, she said. By October, she noted, staff were meeting bi-weekly, and some common themes and values had emerged. For project-based learning, staff had met with Michelle Swanson, a nationally renowned expert. There had also been much invaluable time to collaborate, and community connections were being made. She continued that alignment between staff and parents was occurring through meetings, with arts integration, collaboration and strong community development being important to everyone.
Ms. McCleery commented that in October some study groups were started, where some research and reading was being done together in order to make sure the needs of all the different unique learners would be served. She mentioned an exciting possible partnership with Pacific University along the idea of a professional development school. Because of the current budget crisis, she thought that embedding professional development into the daily school experience could be very effective. One idea was to put two student teachers together in one classroom so that they could observe each other and collaborate. Another idea was to partner two mentor teachers so that they could learn from each other.

Ms. Gusinow said that best practices was a continual topic in discussions, with talks happening in a number of ways, such as short meetings and walk and talk sessions. There was a sense that forming friendships among staff was important, beyond mere professional courtesy. She noted that great respect for each other was gained through getting to know each other. To make sure that parents felt a part of the process, she said that at a November PTO meeting teachers facilitated groups of parents talking together. At the end of the sessions, group ideas were summarized and prioritized and posted so that others could read what was discussed at the other groups. Having a Spanish interpreter available at these talks was very helpful, she noted, so that Spanish-speaking parents could participate fully.

Mr. Bryant remarked about parent input, that staff had been meeting with the existing site councils for each of the schools. The PTO, however, had been a combined meeting since the beginning of the school year and had enjoyed a great turnout. He said that a suggestion box had been set up in the office for parent communication. He was very excited about setting up community conversations where he and teachers would go out into homes and community meeting places, such as pizza parlors, to connect with people.

Mr. Bryant commented that an advisory committee would have its first meeting on December 17, 2008, the purpose being to review, modify and refine proposals developed by campus staff. This committee could also create proposals for the staff to consider. This committee would be composed of six parents—three from each school—two of which would be selected by the parents, six teachers, one classified staff and himself as principal. He said they would strive for consensus and where consensus was not possible, the agreement was that a 75% vote would be sufficient to move a proposal forward to the principal, and then on to Superintendent Russell to bring to the school board.

He noted that next steps included creating a mission vision and a core program, instructional configuration, and ongoing professional development.

Ms. Gusinow noted that after teaching for 31 years, she felt this merger of the two schools was the most exciting opportunity of her career, being able to help create a new school based on her professional passions. She thanked the board for presenting the opportunity.

Responding to a question from Mr. Torrey asking if new students were anticipated, Mr. Bryant said yes, that he thought there would be new students. He said the big test would be the third week in January when school visitations would begin for talking about the next year. He also noted the effort for this merger was so massive that he and the staff would be working hard for the rest of the school year and through the summer to get it going.

Dr. Martinez asked if there was a sense of consensus about the process at this point. He noted the importance of the process being staff-driven, though particularly at Eastside there was a long tradition of extensive parent involvement. He wondered how these tensions were weighed in the decision-making process. Mr. Bryant responded that the process was currently very
positive, with the advisory committee being run by parent leaders from both schools, so that there was a high degree of consensus.

Dr. Webber-Davis asked how things were working with the high percentage (19%) of teachers being new. Mr. Bryant responded that the new teachers brought great energy and enthusiasm to the table, and that veteran teachers were partnering with the newer teachers to help the process, creating a unique situation where staff members were reaching out to each other in a much greater way than in a more normal situation.

Dr. Martinez commented that it was encouraging to see the energy, enthusiasm and focus coming together with this merger project, as the board had known that a risk was being undertaken to initiate such a project. He encouraged the staff and parents to keep up the good work.

**Receive an Update Regarding an Intergovernmental Agreement with Coburg**

Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer, reported that a series of meetings was underway with representatives from the City of Coburg to craft the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that addressed the costs associated with continuing to operate Coburg School. He noted that financial analyses had been produced and examined, comparing Coburg’s costs with two other small schools, as well as the net savings that would accrue if Coburg Elementary School was closed. Various in-kind activities were being explored that might help offset the costs, such as the City of Coburg taking over some grounds maintenance or part of the utilities at the school.

Mr. Hermanns said that through these meetings, the very difficult financial situation of the City of Coburg, as well as current financial challenges of the district, were being considered. He noted that an IGA draft was intended to be ready for the Superintendent by January 2009.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING**

**Approve the Addition of a Kindergarten Program to Family School**

The parents and staff of Family School Alternative School have proposed the addition of a kindergarten program beginning in the fall of 2009. The addition of kindergarten would coincide with Family School’s move to the Jefferson building, which it will share with the K-8 Arts and Technology Academy.

In considering this proposal, staff examined the impact of the addition of a kindergarten program at Family School on other nearby elementary schools, and it has been determined that it would not have a significant impact on the other schools. The pattern over the past three years indicates that the more serious impact has occurred when the co-located neighborhood school loses its kindergarten students to Family School at first grade. This is consistent with findings in the elementary alternative school review report.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) reviewed the proposal and supports the addition of a kindergarten program to Family School. It was also discussed with the elementary principals, the Churchill region principals, the region’s K-12 Learning Community, and ATA, all of whom support the proposal.
There will be no additional costs, except the addition of a .5 kindergarten teacher for the first year; in subsequent years, staffing will be allocated per the usual staffing ratios.

Superintendent Russell noted that this issue had been thoroughly covered at the last board meeting, asking if there were any questions about it at this time.

**MOTION:** Mr. Torrey, seconded by Mr. Smith, moved to approve the addition of a kindergarten program to Family School.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

**Vote on Oregon School Boards Association Officers and Resolutions**

Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, explained that the vote was a little more complicated than expected, noting there were three officers and three resolutions to vote for. As a larger Oregon district, two votes could be cast individually, but she said that Board Leadership suggested the first vote be to agree to not split votes, casting all votes from the majority vote of the entire board.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gerot, seconded by Ms. Webber-Davis, moved that the board vote individually on each office and each resolution, agreeing that the two votes ascribed to the 4J Board by OSBA be cast in support of the candidate or resolution getting the majority support.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

- The second vote, Ms. Bellamy noted, was for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, voting either for Dave Krumbein or Bobbie Regan. The board voted to support Bobbie Reagan.
- For Vice President the board voted to support the only candidate, Scott Pillar.
- For President-Elect, the board voted to support Beth Gerot, who was the only candidate.
- For Resolution #1, amending the OSBA constitution to make housekeeping changes in the language so that everything fell in line with the governance changes, the board voted to support the resolution.
- For Resolution #2, amending the OSBA constitution to guide the board’s access to the endowment fund created when the OSBA Health Insurance Trust was terminated and which defines rules for accessing the endowment principal, the board voted to support the resolution, with Mr. Smith abstaining.
- For Resolution #3, to adopt the 2009 OSBA Legislative Priorities and Policies, which the Legislative Policy Committee had been developing over the past few months, the board voted to support the resolution.

Ms. Gerot clarified that two changes had occurred in the voting process, one being that voting now happened at the local level instead of at the state convention, and the second being that the vote was cast by boards rather than individual board members.
CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Memorandums of Agreement with the Eugene Education Association

The district and the Eugene Education Association (EEA) have negotiated three Memorandums of Agreement.

- **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Regarding Special Assignment.** The purpose of this agreement is to make clear that when a bargaining unit member is given a special assignment with the district for up to a year, he/she is to be returned to the same site he/she had at the time of assignment, with the understanding that the employee’s schedule may be adjusted based on the needs of the program. This proposed MOA supports the district’s goal of effective staffing for special assignments by providing employees who accept such assignments with the same right to remain in the building as they would have had but for the special assignment.

- **Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Internal Assessment Component of IB program.** The International Baccalaureate program has an internal assessment component. The purpose of the agreement is to recognize and compensate, for two years (i.e., until the expiration of the current collective bargaining agreement), the work required for completing required IB internal assessments. The financial impact of the proposed agreement during the first year is $23,340; during the second year, the financial impact is approximately $24,100.

- **Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Compensation for Credit Based on Proficiency (CBOP) responsibilities.** In 2007-08, the district agreed to compensate teachers with responsibility for a pilot program by which high school students receive credit based on proficiency. The proposed MOA would extend the terms of that agreement, with minor changes, through the 2009-10 school year, with the result that teacher mentors would continue to be compensated for CBOP coordination and oversight responsibilities. Staff used past utilization rates to estimate a financial impact of $12,650 through the 2009-10 school year. Were the program to be fully utilized, the estimated financial impact for 2008-09 is $61,850 and $63,861 for 2009-10.

The superintendent recommended approval of the three memorandums.

Approve Resolution Adopting District Tax Sheltered Annuity 403(b) Plan

New Treasury Department regulations covering 403(b) programs (program) go into effect January 1, 2009. As a sponsor of a program, the district is addressing a number of issues to comply with the regulations including, but not limited to, universal availability notification, exchanges and transfers, timing of contributions, and post-termination deferrals. After December 31, programs that don’t comply could lose their tax-advantaged status.

The regulations require that a 403(b) program have a written plan document. The plan document must outline the responsibilities of the employer, the annuity contract issuer(s), other service providers, and participating employees regarding: eligibility, benefits, applicable contribution limits, available contract descriptions, hardship withdrawals, and the time and form under which distributions may be made.
District staff has been working closely with our third party administrator, Carruth Compliance Consulting (CCC) to develop the district’s plan. The plan was reviewed by district counsel and will be submitted to the Treasury Department for final approval.

The superintendent recommended approval of the resolution adopting the district’s 403(b) Plan Document.

**Approve Grant Application: Twin Oaks Mobile Lab Grant**

Staff from Twin Oaks Elementary School submitted a $25,599 grant application to the Invitrogen Corporation. The project involves the purchase of an Apple Mobile Learning Lab to enhance the school’s science education program. All Twin Oaks students will use these computers to learn about careers in science and to support existing science curriculum.

The superintendent recommended approval of the grant application.

**MOTION:** Ms. Gerot, seconded by Mr. Smith, moved to approve the consent items as presented.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

**ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING**

**Approve Superintendent’s Recommendation on Proposal for Spanish Dual Immersion at River Road/Camino del Rio and Technology Immersion at Howard Elementary Schools**

At the June 4, 2008 board meeting, the board directed staff to work with appropriate stakeholders to develop a proposal by December 2008 to establish a neighborhood cluster that includes Howard Elementary School to support a Spanish dual-immersion school at River Road/Camino del Rio. The proposal would be for an expansion and modification of the neighborhood school consistent with the “academy school” direction to redesign the school with a particular focus, and could include a proposal for transportation within the neighborhood cluster. The proposal was to include strategies to manage enrollment between the two schools and ensure that both schools have sufficient resources to offer strong programs and to address a diversity of student needs.

A district facilitator engaged staff members from both Howard and River Road schools in designing this proposal between May and November. A leadership team that included the two principals and teachers from both schools wrote the proposal and obtained consensus from the staff at each school. Additionally, the proposal was shared with the Superintendent’s Staff and the North Region K-12 administration team. On November 18, the two principals shared their proposal with the Elementary Principals’ team.

At the board meeting on November 19, the principals from River Road/Camino del Rio and Howard presented their proposal to the board. The goals of the two schools working together in collaboration are to:

- Provide two strong immersion programs in the North Region;
- Continue the tradition of choice for all families; and
- Establish two blue-ribbon schools right next to each other in the North Region, allowing for more collaboration and partnership opportunities.
The specific goals related to the two-school partnership are to:

a. Stabilize the population at both sites and in the North Region;
b. Begin an effective dual immersion program for native Spanish-speaking students at River Road/Camino del Rio; and
c. Expand the cutting-edge technology immersion program at Howard Elementary School.

As part of the proposal, the following criteria were defined for each of the schools:

- **River Road/Camino del Rio Spanish Dual Immersion**
  a. Program will include an equal number of native and non-native English Speakers (goal);
  b. Language majority and minority students will be grouped together; and
  c. Core academic instruction will be provided to students in both languages – English and Spanish.

- **Howard Technology Immersion**
  a. Close the digital divide for students and families in poverty;
  b. Continue to be a national leader in integrating technology as an instructional tool through project based learning; and
  c. Foster continued professional development that allows for creativity and design in classroom instruction.

The proposal envisions two catchment zones for the two schools that are .7 mile apart and would include transportation to either school within the partnered catchments. Because Howard starts schools at 7:55 a.m. and River Road/Camino del Rio starts at 8:15 a.m., it’s projected that there would be sufficient time to enable two transportation drops. The projected first year additional costs for transportation are minimal. There may be no increase in the first year or one additional bus may be needed at a cost of $13,000. However, additional transportation costs could be incurred in the future as most students attending Howard and River Road/Camino del Rio are bussed. Additionally, both River Road/Camino del Rio and Howard currently receive 'academy school' funds of about $30,000 for the 2008-09 school year, which I am recommending be continued for at least the start-up year, and if possible, through the entire 5-year transition process. (See caveat to this recommendation below).

The implementation would begin with kindergarten and first graders in the 2009-10 school year, with students within the two schools' boundaries able to choose either language immersion at River Road/Camino del Rio or technology immersion at Howard. To help ensure a viable language immersion program at River Road/Camino del Rio, native Spanish speaking students would be given priority to attend a River Road/Camino del Rio classroom at K and 1. River Road/Camino del Rio expects to start with three kindergartens and one or two first grades. Other grade levels would convert one grade at a time over the ensuing school years. Entry into both schools would be managed through a modified neighborhood hybrid enrollment process.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation:**
The superintendent will recommend approval of the proposal for the clustered pairing of River Road/Camino del Rio as a two-way Spanish Immersion School and Howard Elementary as a Technology Immersion School serving the combined attendance areas of both schools.

**Caveat:** I make this recommendation with the knowledge that the current economic situation in Oregon and the nation portends of potentially serious budget reductions for 4J over the next couple of years or more. Thus, while continuation of academy school funding could assist the schools in meeting their goals given existing circumstances, I am concerned that potential
Superintendent Russell noted that at the last meeting board members received word from the principals of the two schools, responding to the board’s request that they develop a proposal for a combined approach for supporting the establishment of the two immersion programs. He recommended that the board approve the establishment of those two schools based on the proposal. As part of the proposal, he said he would be asking to include in next year’s budget continuation of $30,000 academy funding for each of those schools as part of their startup support.

Mr. Forrest commented that he was excited to see these opportunities coming to fruition for the children in these areas.

Mr. Torrey mentioned that he hoped the principals would be looking seriously at developing a list of desirable equipment and new technologies to have available in the event that Congress decided to make funds available for programs such as these.

Responding to a question by Dr. Martinez regarding the hybrid enrollment process, Kim Finch said they had spoken at length with Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, and Eliza Drummond, Instructional Analyst and Operations, regarding the process. Mr. Henry said a lottery would be used to determine which students would be allowed to attend the programs. He said there was a board policy saying attendance area priorities could be established for schools, so that students in the two school boundary areas would have priority over all other students to attend the other of the two schools. A priority list would also be established for Spanish-speaking students, he noted, as it was important to have a balance of English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students at the River Road program. He said enrollment caps would be set and waiting lists would be created to ensure the balance needed.

Dr. Martinez asked if existing board policies allowed for a priority for Spanish-speaking students, noting that these decisions would determine a lot about the demographics of the schools. His concern was about having this issue under-specified in existing policy. Mr. Henry offered to outline before the next board meeting how the process would work, and that it might be necessary to create a priority for Spanish-speaking students in board policy.

**COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Torrey reported he had heard that the Baker School District was going to move to a four-day school week. He expressed interest in learning how that decision was reached. Dr. Martinez noted a big challenge with the idea of a shorter school week was the already very complex schedule at the high schools.

Mr. Iboa voiced his opinion that a shortened school week would create chaos at IHS.

Board Member Alicia Hays asked what the possible benefits would be for a shortened school week. Mr. Torrey surmised that fuel savings would be one benefit. He said he was looking for creative ways to deal with economic realities without compromising the educational program at
4J. He felt that a shortened school week would save dollars, though it could possibly create more problems than the dollars saved would be worth.

Ms. Gerot shared a couple of articles written by Dave Conner, which she felt might be helpful in talks about high school graduation requirements.

Dr. Martinez reported having attended the 4J Equity Committee meeting, where a vigorous conversation was held on a variety of topics, including the committee’s report to the board. He said there was a decision to alter the structure of that report to engage the board more directly with the Equity Committee rather than just offering a data presentation as had happened in the past.

**ADJOURN**

Dr. Martinez adjourned the regular meeting at 8:45 p.m.

_____________________________   _____________________________
George Russell     Charles Martinez, Jr.
District Clerk      Board Chair

(Recorded by Judy Burton)

**Attachments to Official Minutes:**
1. Harris/Eastside Merger Advisory Committee & Parent Survey
2. Three Memorandums of Agreement with the Eugene Education Association
3. Resolution Adopting a 403(b) Plan Document and Draft Plan Document
4. Grant Application Description Form: Twin Oaks Mobile Lab Grant
5. Annual Charter School Reviews for Network Charter School, Ridgeline Montessori, and Village School