

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4J, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

**February 27, 2008**

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular meeting at 7 p.m. followed by a work session on February 27, 2008, at the Education Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on February 22, 2008, and published in *The Register-Guard* on February 25, 2008.

**ROLL CALL**

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

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

**STAFF:**

George Russell, Superintendent of Schools and District Clerk  
Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer  
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director  
Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management  
Laurie Moses, Director of High School Services  
Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement  
Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analysis Manager  
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer  
Ted Heid, Director of Labor Relations  
Larry Sullivan, Director of Educational Support Services  
Jim Conaghan, Assessment & Testing Coordinator  
Ben Brantley, Construction Program Manager

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Natalie Harrison, Churchill High School  
Noah Henry-Darwish, South Eugene High School  
Vivek Patel, North Eugene High School

**MEDIA:**

KRVM

**CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE**

Board Chair Charles Martinez called the meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENTS**

There were no changes to the agenda.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Superintendent George Russell reported that, thanks to Board Member Eric Forrest, he had the opportunity to spend time with the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to share information about the *Shaping 4J's Future* process and to answer questions. The previous night, he met with parents from Harris Elementary School and it had been a passionate meeting and very informative for him. He appreciated the candor of participants and emphasized that parents cared about what happened to their children and wanted the best for them, their schools, and the district. He appreciated the recommendations he heard from parents. He noted that Barb Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, had met with the parents of Charlemagne School in his stead.

## **COMMENTS FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Natalie Harrison reported that the Lancer fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network was in full swing. Last week the school had an Asian Week Assembly with speakers and performances. Curriculum Night was held the previous week for potential students and their parents. It had been very successful.

Noah Henry-Darwish reported that South Eugene High School had a pep assembly for the introduction of Mr. Axeman candidates. Student government would hear from the people who were trying out for student youth council the next day. The drama program was premiering "Boy against Girl" that weekend.

Vivek Patel said North Eugene High School was holding its small schools preview night that evening so families had the opportunity to visit each school and learn more about them before selecting a school. He described the format of the event. Mr. Patel thought it was a good way for incoming freshmen to get a sense of the school. He provided the board with a press release regarding the "Invisible Children of Uganda Night." Mr. North was in full swing, and the school was getting ready for "Tio Pepe Night" on March 20 when all the candidates would become waiters for a night and donate their tips to the Children Miracle Network.

## **ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE**

**Natalie Schmaedick**, a parent at Meadowlark Elementary School, opposed the closure of Meadowlark School because it was in conflict with the stated goals and principles of the process and would have a detrimental impact on many families. She provided statistics on free and reduced lunch students and noted their participation in after school activities. She said they would be unsafe bicycling home and would have to ride the bus after school and thus would be deprived of such activities. She said that transportation for such students was not an option in many cases.

Ms. Schmaedick emphasized that the importance of proximity to Sheldon for child care was critical for many families. Sheldon also provided student volunteers and a chance for children to swim. She believed the school would grow if given a chance, but collocation did not provide that opportunity. She said that the school was thriving and should be given the opportunity to grow without collocation.

**Misa Joo** believed that the district was taking a huge step forward by considering a Chinese immersion school. She said there was a need for Chinese speakers as it was the third most spoken language in Eugene next to Spanish, and China was a large and increasingly important

nation. She advocated for supporting such a school in the same manner as the existing Japanese immersion school. She imagined a situation where a Chinese immersion school attracted the same degree of patronage and attention as the Japanese immersion school. Local support would be significant. She called on the board to lead in the matter.

**Julie Ulm**, a parent at Coburg Elementary School, provided the board with a folder containing supporting material for the testimony her husband would provide after her. She said they were open to what the board needed from them.

**Benton Ulm**, a parent at Coburg Elementary School, provided statistics on the savings that would be realized by closing the school, attendance rates, and growing enrollment at the school in support of his contention the school should remain open. He pointed out that if Coburg students had to go to school in Eugene, they would lose access to afternoon activities if they had to walk or bike and now must ride the bus. He noted the pending construction of sewers that would serve Coburg and spur growth. A developer had contacted the City of Coburg with his plans to place 500 homes across from the school. He suggested it made more sense to keep the school open.

**Amy Harter** spoke of her children's involvement in Japanese immersion programs in the district and her own involvement at the immersion program at the University of Oregon. She thought limited language proficiency did not fit the diverse world people lived in and the community could do more to provide its children with the skills they needed to function in that world, and language was a key factor to that. She emphasized the many businesses that needed such skills and the disconnect they felt from the education system in Oregon. Those businesses could not hire who they needed in Oregon. She shared copies of the Oregon Language Road Map. She advocated for language immersion in the Churchill High School area.

**Andrew Grenville** voiced support for Ms. Harter's remarks. He spoke in support of language immersion programs in Eugene and said they meant a lot to him when his family chose the community they wanted to move to. He noted his own involvement in a French immersion program and suggested that Chinese was a very important language for the current times. As a technology entrepreneur having connections and supply relationships with Asian countries, he thought such a program would be a tremendous opportunity for district students and would make Eugene a stronger contender on the national and international stage.

**Tamara Torrence** spoke in support of the school choice system and noted the high degree of community support for school choice. She suggested the issue was how the district could avoid the unintended consequences of choice. She thought the debate had tended to scapegoat certain alternative schools for the loss of students within certain neighborhood schools. She believed the media and individuals such as Nancy Willard had fostered a misperception about what was occurring, especially in the south region. She thought it hypocritical that Alan Pittman of the Eugene Weekly wrote critically about alternative schools without mentioning the role of transfers to neighborhood or charter schools. She suggested that was because he used the choice system to send their child to a neighborhood school not his own. Ms. Torrence said it was not surprising debate about choice was centered in the south region because Adams Elementary School lost 72 percent of its boundary students to the choice system. She asked if the district knew why.

Ms. Torrence pointed out that the south region had two neighborhood schools, Edison and Crest, that accepted more transfers or nearly as many as Family School, Hillside, or Eastside, yet they were rarely mentioned in discussions of school choice. Neighborhood schools tended to draw higher percentages from Title I schools than alternative schools did. More than 82

percent of Edison transfers were from Title I schools, and 72 percent of Crest transfers were from Title I schools. By comparison, Charlemagne drew 40 percent and Eastside drew 49 percent of its students from Title I schools. Nearly all the students leaving those Title 1 schools to attend Edison and Crest were students who did not qualify for free and reduced lunches. She hoped the district asked parents why they were leaving Adams, and if a comprehensive review of the school indicated people were leaving justifiably, to seek solutions that would make people return to the school. With 130 transfers, Edison's number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches only increased by four students. Ms. Torrence said the transfers to alternative schools in the south region were largely a mixture of families from the more and less affluent parts of the region.

Ms. Torrence hoped the district asked the families why they were leaving Adams, and would attempt to seek solutions that would make families return to the school.

**Eric Torrence** felt that simplistic media reporting about the issue as a matter of alternative versus neighborhood schools was counterproductive and hid the real equity issues facing the district. He did not agree that choice had hurt all the neighborhood schools, citing Edison and Crest as examples of successful neighborhood schools, and suggesting Parker and Edgewood were also doing fine. He conceded it was true a handful of schools had been hit hard by school choice. He said the district had information about what parents valued in the school, but the board seemed to be ignoring it. Each year 300 students transferred out of the Adams boundary and that had been going on for years, and in the meantime the district had done nothing to understand why. He asked why the board did not do a review for the neighborhood schools similar to the Alternative School Review process. He suggested that the board would be "treating the symptoms without understanding the underlying disease" if it did not know why families were leaving. If the issue was perceptions, the district should address that. Mr. Torrence felt that in extreme cases limits on transfers could be warranted, but if the real problem was in the building, with staff, or other issues, that must be understood and addressed to ensure true equity in the system. Forcing children back to certain schools did nothing to fix equity.

**Katy Ruhoff**, who identified herself as a future 4J parent, also supported the establishment of a Chinese immersion school. She reminded the board of the feasibility study that had been done that demonstrated considerable interest and minimal impact on neighborhood schools. There was financial government assistance available. She quoted from the study reinforcing her points. She urged the district to establish such a school as soon as possible.

**Helen Liu** expressed interest in the establishment of a Chinese immersion school. She taught school aged children Chinese at the UO twice weekly. Many children from different walks of life attended those classes, with ages ranging from 5 to 13, and their families hoped that a Chinese immersion school would be available and that the high schools and middle schools would soon begin to offer Chinese as an elective. She emphasized that many parents were interested and asked the board to make it happen as soon as possible.

**David Tam**, a parent and businessman who does business with China and is president of the Asian Celebration, noted the many people the celebration attracted each year because there was strong community interest in things Asian. He noted that Salem and Bend were both starting such schools and were taking advantage of the federal grant money that was available. He recalled that the idea had been raised before but was ultimately dropped. He believed now was time for a change. He needed his child to have the opportunity to attend such a school. He thought the desire for such a school was immense. He encouraged the board to review the feasibility study.

**Kay Shaver** did not want the board to forget the Chinese immersion school. She wanted her child, who was half-Chinese, to be able to learn her language and culture. The prime time for learning language was early, and the program was critical to children being able to learn Chinese proficiently. She said China was a rapidly merging superpower, and children who could speak the language would be a great asset to the community and country.

**Jen Jen Hwang-Shum**, Eugene Chinese School, said her school had 55 students aged 5 to 18 and also instructed Chinese at Lane Community College (LCC). She had taught many local high school students who wanted to learn the Chinese language and had to take classes at LCC to do so. She strongly suggested the district consider establishing a Chinese immersion school because of the importance of the language.

## **COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

Paul Duchin, Co-President of the Eugene Education Association (EEA), acknowledged the contract settlement between the district and the Eugene Association of Substitute Teachers, which was agreed to on February 14, 2008.

Merri Steele, Co-President of the EEA, recognized the “Read Across America” event. She reported that the EEA’s Public Relations Committee was working with Ms. Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, and all the schools had offered opportunities for community members to participate in the event. She encouraged board members to also participate.

Ms. Steele and Mr. Duchin read a proclamation endorsing the “Reading Across America” event, asking Superintendent Russell and Dr. Martinez to sign.

Kelly McIver, Co-President of the 4J Administrators Association, provided the board with a letter with the association’s official statement regarding the *Shaping 4J’s Future’s* process that he read into the record. The letter expressed support for the superintendent’s recommendations.

## **CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION**

### **Approve Expenditures for January, 2008**

A summary of the district’s expenditures for January 2008, totaling \$21,725,199.44 was included in the board packet.

The superintendent recommended approval of the January 2008 expenditures.

### **Approve the Purchase of School Buses**

On June 21, 2006, the board approved a one-year contract with an opportunity for four annual extensions with Western Bus Sales for the purchase of school buses. The contract is currently in its second year.

Four (4) athletic/activity trip buses are due for routine replacement within the next year. Based on the needed replacements, staff requested the purchase of three (3) additional eighty-four passenger, rear-engine trip buses and one (1) additional eighty-four passenger, rear-engine, wheelchair accessible trip bus. The base contract price for these buses was \$117,183 each. Approved options of front and rear air suspensions, seating adjustment and luggage storage

added to four buses, wheelchair modifications added to one bus, total an additional \$39,450. The complete purchase totaled \$508,182.

The net cost to the district is expected to be less with the trade-in of the retired buses, which will be dependent upon fleet needs at the time of new bus arrivals. Should the Shaping 4J's Future process result in the need for additional bus routes, access to the retiring buses may provide flexibility until a permanent solution is determined.

Transportation staff anticipated requesting further board approval for the purchase of additional special needs buses within this school year. This would also represent routine fleet replacement.

The superintendent recommended purchasing four (4) additional 84-passenger, rear-engine buses, including one with wheelchair accessibility totaling \$508,182.

### **Approve Personnel Items**

The superintendent recommended approval of the personnel items included in the packet. These cover employment, resignations, and other routine personnel matters.

**MOTION:** Board Vice Chair Beth Gerot, seconded by Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis, moved to approve the consent items.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously; 6:0.

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

There were none.

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

### **WORK SESSION: Conduct a Work Session on the Superintendent's Report and Recommendations for Shaping 4J's Future**

Superintendent Russell noted the questions asked by the board and the answers prepared by staff, copies of which had been provided to the board, and indicated the work session was part of the ongoing process. He was seeking additional ideas and direction from the board.

Superintendent Russell called attention to the questions and answers, included in the board's meeting packet. Ms. Bellamy and Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, reviewed the questions and answers, and answered questions throughout the presentation.

Board Member Alicia Hays arrived during the presentation.

In regard to the question he had asked about the impact of waiting, Board Member Jim Torrey said he did not believe the district had to act immediately. He did not think the board should be afraid of taking additional time to make the best choice. He was concerned that the public had not caught up to the board yet; it was aware of the implications, but the public was not, and the board needed to bring the public with it. Superintendent Russell said the timing in terms of decisions about next year were most important. There were decisions that could be put off, but

the decisions that impact the lives of students and parents next year should either be made now or delayed until next year. He did not think it realistic to ask parents to make those choices in April, May, or June.

The board discussed the issue raised by Mr. Torrey. Mr. Forrest agreed with Superintendent Russell. He said the district needed to lead on the issue. He thought the public hearings demonstrated that many people understood. He thought the district had done its job in communicating with the public, and noted the length the process had already taken. Dr. Martinez concurred with Mr. Forrest. He said the board needed to be decisive about the direction it took. Many of the recommendations would be implemented over a series of years, and the board needed to set direction now and allay the anxiety that the community felt; otherwise, it ran the risk of damaging schools.

Mr. Torrey asked which proposals should be addressed immediately. Superintendent Russell believed that the decisions that impacted parents and schools for next year should be made before spring break to give parents enough information to make the choices they needed to make. For example, if the board chose to close Harris or keep Eastside in place, that needed to be resolved soon. He said the Coburg decision might not be as critical, and the same was true about the futures of Meadowlark and Buena Vista and the subject of whether to build new schools. Decisions that impacted the lives of children and families needed to be made soon.

Mr. Forrest said that not making a decision could impact enrollment at the schools in question, which would have an adverse impact. He thought the board at least needed a direction by April. Dr. Martinez agreed. He said that the schools under discussion were receiving visits right now from parents who were making decisions about the future, and for the board not to be clear about its direction was a disservice to the community.

Mr. Forrest recalled a letter from a parent who gave tours at the school who experienced a decline in requests because of the cloud hanging over the future of the school. He thought the district owed it to the families to indicate whether it would close the neighborhood school and open a new school. As a parent, he would want that.

Dr. Webber-Davis agreed. She said the board had been given a lot of input and would be meeting weekly until the middle of March, and there were opportunities for more discussion. She questioned whether the board would hear anything new if it delayed.

Dr. Martinez said if the board did justice to the public input, the recommendations would evolve. He was eager to hear how Superintendent Russell's thinking had evolved. However, he agreed not to act was a great disservice.

Board Member Craig Smith was also inclined to proceed although he did not know what the decisions would be. He said the district had been thorough closures before, and it was distressing for parents not to know where their children would be.

Mr. Henry called attention to the notebook provided to the board, and referred the board to the section labeled "Transfers." He reviewed data regarding current and projected transfer numbers to demonstrate the impact of the 7.5 percent formula and the impact of doing nothing.

Mr. Henry reviewed selected questions and answers from the February 20 meeting.

Speaking to a question related to the lands studies that would be conducted by Eugene, Mr. Torrey noted the limited space available for community expansion and asked the impact on

district schools if any further growth took place in the southern area of the community. By way of response, Mr. Henry provided some 2001 data on students per household and anticipated that the updated data to be provided by the Lane Council of Governments would indicate the percentage had dropped. He indicated the difficulty of predicting precisely where growth would occur. Mr. Torrey suggested that staff contact the Bethel District and small school districts such as Junction City and Veneta for information about growth in those communities.

Dr. Webber-Davis recalled discussion at the Budget Committee meeting about the provision of services to students in schools that were close to qualifying for Title I status. She asked if staff had additional information about the types of services involved. Mr. Henry clarified that the district was working on strategies, staff development, and initiatives intended to help all schools, and that included schools that were not now title schools. A difficulty in that was that the district could put general fund money into non-title schools for services if the services were provided with title dollars in a title school, or otherwise the federal government believed the district was supplanting those funds. He noted that the district had many schools with between 30 and 40 percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch, schools that were not getting the title services because those dollars were intended to be focused on higher concentrations of poverty.

Responding to a question from Ms. Gerot, Mr. Henry confirmed that 40 percent of students receiving free and reduced lunches was the cut-off used by the district; the federal government used 35 percent.

Referring to the question regarding the potential for and timeline to establish a merged Eastside-Harris school, Mr. Torrey asked if such a school would be a title school. Mr. Henry did not think so, and indicated he would have staff run those numbers.

Mr. Forrest said he was very interested in seeing what such a merger might look like, and how the board could facilitate that.

Ms. Hays was committed to not extending the time that Parker and Eastside were collocated. She was also curious to see what a merger would look like, and suggested benchmarks were needed to gauge success. The e-mails she was receiving indicated considerable confusion about what such a merger would look like. Superintendent Russell said that no one could say what such a merger looked like. The district could set parameters and expectations but he did not think he could sit down with Mr. Henry and make that decision. Ms. Hays emphasized the importance of a clear process where all the players were clearly identified, with a clear and shared understanding of how success and failure would be measured.

Mr. Smith thought the merger problematic because Harris would not be moved for a year, creating uncertainty for the Harris parents.

Dr. Martinez agreed with Mr. Smith, saying that was why he thought the process was so important. He also thought it would be useful for the district to be involved in a discussion of the parameters for such a merger.

Mr. Forrest said neighborhood schools did not have the opportunity to be reviewed, and when the district heard from the Harris families it was clear they thought they had provided all the things the district looked for in the alternative school review. He hoped that the board agreed to review four or five elementary schools each year so each school could talk to the board about its communities, its goals, and its programs. He believed that there would be a follow-up process and the board would have to continue to examine the district.

Mr. Smith believed the district needed to take capacity out of the system, and the merger would not accomplish that goal.

Dr. Martinez suggested an element of the analysis of a potential merger would be the impact on enrollment. For example, how many Harris parents would chose to have their students stay at Parker if the two schools were merged. While it might not address capacity, it did address consolidation.

Mr. Henry confirmed that currently, a merger of Harris and Eastside would not result in a title school, although that could change with changing demographics.

Superintendent Russell asked if the board's goal was to have more title schools. He hoped not. He reminded the board that all such schools must demonstrate complete proficiency by 2010. He did not think the goal should be to create more title schools but rather to address the needs of all students and create a better balance across all schools.

Speaking to the question of whether the district had considered relocating Buena Vista, Ms. Gerot said she wanted to respond to the many e-mails the board had received by having a discussion of a neighborhood school for Meadowlark.

Mr. Forrest suggested the board might want to find a new home for Buena Vista and keep Meadowlark in place. The board could broaden its thinking by considering other options for Buena Vista, such as moving it to Monroe, building a new middle school for Monroe, moving Monroe to Sheldon, finding other services to move to Sheldon, and building a new high school. He pointed out that Sheldon was over-capacity compared to other district high schools. He suggested the first decision facing the board was what to do with Meadowlark; then it could determine what to do about Buena Vista.

Dr. Webber-Davis agreed with Mr. Forrest that the board should have such a discussion but she was worried about building capacity for Meadowlark as a standalone program. She wondered about the implications of that and the potential of a boundary shift for Meadowlark.

Mr. Torrey suggested that there were creative approaches to Meadowlark that included a new emergent school on the grounds of the existing school. Superintendent Russell assumed that two such schools would need a principal, an administrator, and two different support groups.

Dr. Martinez suggested that the district would not necessarily need two full-time equivalent (FTE) employees to serve as principals, although he acknowledged the need for two administrators. He was very supportive of the concept voiced by Mr. Torrey, although he acknowledged his initial concern about building a new school for an alternative program. He wanted to reinforce from the feedback the board received and his own experience with Meadowlark and Coburg that the schools involved were genuine community schools in terms of access and location, and moving them as far away from a community environment as was proposed made no sense to him. He wanted to pursue the idea. Superintendent Russell promised a recommendation. He asked if the board was willing to build a school for the French immersion program if it was willing to build a new school for Buena Vista, as he anticipated that would be the next request.

Ms. Hays questioned if there was an opportunity that existed in the move of Charlemagne and Buena Vista. Superintendent Russell indicated the district did have some available facilities.

At the request of Dr. Martinez, BJ Blake, Principal of Meadowlark and Buena Vista, provided data on the capacity that existed at Meadowlark school; the data indicated the school was very crowded and lacked room for new students.

Dr. Webber-Davis put forward the idea that Buena Vista and another language school could be located together, but it concerned her that there was only one alternative school in the Sheldon region, unlike other regions. She thought the addition of another such school would have an extraordinary effect on opportunities for choice in the region. She said she did not know if the district intended to consider that, but she wished to acknowledge that the Sheldon region also needed alternative programs. Superintendent Russell determined from Dr. Webber-Davis that she was possibly suggesting the collocation of two alternative schools, or an increase in capacity at Buena Vista. She did not want to leave the region without choice.

The board discussed processes outlined by Mr. Henry that would allow Coburg to move to another district or form its own district. Ms. Gerot questioned the implications of Coburg being a K-8 district in terms of student numbers and in terms of its effect on the Sheldon region. Mr. Henry speculated that if Coburg became a K-8 school it would add about 75 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. He added that there were Oregon schools that small, but it was difficult to offer a complete range of middle school programs with so few students.

Mr. Smith indicated he asked the question to see if there was a way to retain the unique nature of Coburg school while shifting financial responsibility for it to another party. He determined from Mr. Henry there was no current financial arrangement between the district and Coburg, but that since 2001 Coburg had paid the district \$130,000, and he thought Coburg would be open to discussion.

Mr. Smith wanted a better understanding of how Coburg's school community volunteer program worked. Mr. Henry indicated staff would provide more information.

Mr. Torrey reiterated his comments about building a new Meadowlark and suggested that the district could retain Coburg until it saw how things worked out.

Dr. Martinez called for a brief recess. Following the recess, Superintendent Russell and Mr. Henry continued to respond to questions previously asked by the board.

Superintendent Russell invited questions and comments.

Mr. Forrest said that he understood how staff had arrived at the recommendations it had. He said the board did not want to close any schools, but based on what was happening in the district, it must be strategic with its resources. For that reason, it must consider all options. Dr. Martinez agreed.

Speaking to the question of why staff did not recommend elimination of the alternative schools, Dr. Martinez said the neighborhood schools had not gone through the same level of public review as the alternative schools had, and the idea that they were in jeopardy and the alternative schools were not was not fair. He emphasized the value of choice to the district and did not think the board had compromised that value. However, Dr. Martinez thought the board needed to consider all of the options that were on the table.

Responding to a question from Mr. Torrey about how the district could provide choice to parents without sufficient means to participate now at all school levels, particularly in regard to transportation, Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management, estimated a cost of \$300,000

annually for transportation. Superintendent Russell said that the district was looking at a regional transportation system. However, he did not believe that having alternative schools so far removed from the central core with the bulk of students needing access to choices was a good approach. It had not worked elsewhere, and he did not think it would work in Eugene. He suggested that instead, the alternative schools be centrally located for maximum access in the neighborhoods that people called home.

Mr. Torrey suggested the potential of evaluating one neighborhood school in the four high school catchments each year.

Mr. Torrey believed that currently, there was a perception that south Eugene had all the choice opportunities and one must reach that area to take advantage of those programs. He asked what the board could do to locate schools centrally enough to provide more regions with access. Ms. Gerot said the question then became how many people would actually be able to take advantage of that opportunity.

Mr. Henry observed that it had been staff's vision that the recommendations would reflect four high schools that offered a broad range of choices with strong, vibrant feeder schools, or what he termed a "regional choice program." He recommended the board keep that vision in the forefront of its thinking and fill in the details around the issues of transportation and the potential of another language immersion program.

Ms. Hays expressed concern about moving Buena Vista to Kinney Loop because it was not centrally located.

Mr. Forrest pointed out that the district also offered choice through its neighborhood schools, which experienced large transfer numbers. It appeared to him that about 1,700 students chose alternative or charter schools, while another 1,000 chose neighborhood schools. He said in discussion of the south region, the board should remember there was choice occurring outside the alternative schools. The same was not true in the North Eugene or Sheldon high school areas.

The board briefly discussed the process it would use in decision making.

## **ADJOURN**

Dr. Martinez adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

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George Russell  
District Clerk

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Charles Martinez, Jr.  
Board Chair

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)

### **Attachments to Official Minutes:**

1. Letter from 4J Administrators Association Regarding *Shaping 4J's Future* Process
2. Expenditures for January 2008
3. Personnel Action Items
4. Responses to Board Questions Raised at the February 13, 2008 Board Meeting
5. Responses to Board Questions Raised at the Conclusion of the February 20, 2008 Public Hearing
6. Middle School and High School Projections