The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular board meeting at 7 p.m., followed by a work session on May 7, 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 May 2, 2008, and published in The Register-Guard on May 5, 2008.

ROLL CALL

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

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
Ted Heid, Director of Labor Relations
Kay Mehas, Director of School Services
Laurie Moses, Director of High School Services
Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement
Sara Cramer, Principal, Cal Young Middle School
Carmen Urbina, Parent, Family and Community Coordinator

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:
Katie Melton, Sheldon 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. He noted that board member Eric Forrest was excused from the meeting.

Dr. Martinez led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

Dr. Martinez determined that board members and staff had no changes to make to the agenda.
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS

Teacher Appreciation Week and School Nurse Recognition Day

Superintendent George Russell read a proclamation setting May 4-10 as Teacher Appreciation Week. He recognized Michael Geisen of Prineville, Oregon, the National Teacher of the Year, and noted he had spent some time with Mr. Geisen at the Oregon School Board Association (OSBA) Conference and found him to be a very impressive individual. He congratulated Mr. Geisen for receiving this honor and said he was exemplary of many great teachers across the state and county.

Superintendent Russell read a proclamation recognizing May 7 as School Nurse Day and asked the community to join the board in expressing appreciation to the district’s school nurses. He acknowledged the district had to reduce the number of school nurses in the past and had worked over the last ten years to restore those numbers. He recognized the importance of good health to school achievement and thanked all the district’s school nurses and those who worked in the school health profession for their outstanding work.

2008 District ACE Awards Winners Recognition

Superintendent Russell noted several board members had the opportunity to attend the Third Annual ACE (A Champion in Education) Awards on April 29. He reported that there were double the number of nominees from past years and many, many people had attended the awards. School District 4J had many nominees. He congratulated all those nominated and noted the winners from the district, who included David Abramowitz, the district winner in the Teacher of the Year category; Kevin Bolling, the district winner for Administrator of the Year; Ruth Copely, district winner for Volunteer of the Year; and Julaine Wildish, who was recognized as the winner in the Classified Employee of the Year category. He thanked all the nominees and winners.

COMMENTS BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Katie Melton reported that Sheldon High School was holding a “Hands for Health” benefit event on May 8 at Lane Community College, sponsored partially through her Teen Advocacy Council, which promoted school-based health centers. Sheldon had a teacher appreciation week and all the leadership students made tie dye shirts for the teachers. The school was in the midst of IP and AP testing. Leadership was conducting a Unity Month with themes that attempted to unify the school.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

Charles Sheinin, 2300 Norkenzie Road, said he was the parent of a third grader attending a school that used everyday math and his family had struggled with the program not knowing it was not like other programs. He had been directed to a You Tube video on everyday math, which compared various ways of doing math computations and which had demonstrated fundamental flaws with the everyday math approach. He said his son excelled in reading and vocabulary but did not know some basic math functions. He believed the use of everyday math did not prepare children for the future. He indicated he would submit more information about the topic to the board and intended to file a complaint about instructional materials.
COMMENTS BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Merri Steele and Paul Duchin, Co-Presidents of the Eugene Educational Association (EEA), were present. Ms. Steele thanked the board for the proclamation in appreciation of teachers.

Mr. Duchin discussed the middle school trimester calendar, saying it had been the subject of long-time debate precipitated by the physical education requirements and the potential of losing elective classes in middle schools. The EEA had supported the idea of going to semesters for the purpose of work load control. However, the EEA believed that the district needed to consider an alternative to semesters for middle schools. Mr. Duchin thought things already lined up to a high degree with the semester calendar, and understood the high schools were concerned about articulation. He pointed out there were other professional development days that could be used for articulation. He acknowledged that much district time had been spent on the calendar and said he wished there was a different way to do it, but he was not sure there was.

Ms. Steele said two other factors affecting the middle schools were the new physical education requirements and the interesting dilemma of being highly qualified, which had an implication for the federal qualification. Mr. Duchin added that middle schools looked at many different approaches, but it appeared the easiest way was to go to trimesters. He thought that some middle schools would make the shift while others would retain semester calendars. He was supportive of the idea of allowing them to make the change and see if it worked. Ms. Steele also wanted the district to look at the elementary and high school schedules to see if they made sense and give them an opportunity, if necessary, to have a different schedule that let them meet the need for electives.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AT THIS MEETING

Approve the 2008-09 School Calendar for the Arts and Technology Academy

The 2008-09 school calendar for the Arts and Technology Academy is similar to this school year’s modified calendar, except most dates are two days earlier in the calendar year. The student school year starts on the same schedule as other district schools on the Wednesday after Labor Day, September 3, 2008, and ends on Tuesday, July 1, 2009, three weeks after all other district schools. The teacher work year begins on Monday, August 25, 2008, and ends on Wednesday, July 2, 2009. The three week winter break begins on Monday, December 15, 2008, and students resume classes on Tuesday, January 6, 2009. The two week spring break begins on Monday, March 30, 2009, and ends on Friday, April 10, 2009. Students resume classes on Tuesday, April 14, 2009.

The most significant calendar change is combining most early release days to make full days without students when teachers have a half day for progress reports, teacher planning, staff development or a combination of these activities. The proposed calendar is supported by the Eugene Education Association.

The superintendent recommended approval of the Arts and Technology Academy calendar for the 2008-09 school year, a copy of which was included in the board packet.

Ted Heid, Director of Labor Relations, was present for the item. Superintendent Russell invited questions.
MOTION: Board Vice Chair Beth Gerot, seconded by Board Member Yvette Webber-Davis, moved to approve the 2008-09 Calendar for the Arts and Technology Academy.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously; 6:0.

CONSENT GROUP – ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve Expenditures for March 2008

A summary of the district’s expenditures for March 2008, totaling $18,971,309.18 was included in the board packet. The superintendent recommended approval of the March 2008 expenditures.

Approve Ratification of CIP Contract Awards

On September 18, 2002, the Board of Directors affirmed the 1993 district policy for delegating Contract Award authority for Bond Funded CIP contracts of $500,000 or less to the superintendent, or designee, subject to subsequent ratification by the board. The designee is Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities and Transportation. Contracts in excess of $500,000 will continue to require board approval. The purpose of the board item was to summarize all CIP contract award activity requiring a formal bid or formal competitive selection and for the board to ratify those awards that have been made by authorized staff since the last ratification.

The summary sheet in the board packet identified all contracts that had been awarded as of the status date indicated in accordance with delegated authority. The summary also identified who awarded the project and will indicate board ratification data of said award as applicable.

The CIP management staff will continue to provide the board with Contract Award Status updates for ratification, pursuant to School Board Policy DI (Capital Improvement Contracts Financed by Bond Levy Funds – previously Policy 6610.5)

The superintendent recommended ratification of awards for CIP GO Bond funded projects as indicated on the summary sheet.

Grant a Public Contract Exemption for the Sole Source Procurement of Irrigation System Control Components from a Single Manufacturer

Acting in its capacity as a Local Contract Review Board, the board may grant an exemption to the competitive bidding process to award a contract for goods or services that are only available from one source (ORS 279B.075 (1)) based on written findings that (a) the efficient utilization of existing goods requires the acquisition of compatible goods or services; or (b) the goods or services required for the exchange of software or data with other public or private agencies are available from only one source.

Background

In 1991, the City of Eugene Park and Recreation Department identified a weather-based Central Computer Irrigation Control System that would reduce labor and water costs in addition...
to increased levels of irrigation service. The installation of a computer allowed for accurate central control to their largest irrigation systems by monitoring weather conditions and adjusting watering levels accordingly. By using various weather towers stationed around the city and monitoring weather patterns, the computer control is able to make central daily adjustments and water usage is noticeably reduced by 40 to 50 percent.

School District 4J joined the Larger Irrigation Water Customers Committee in 1996. The committee consists of local public agencies that include the University of Oregon, School District 52, City of Eugene, and EWEB, all of which are using the central control irrigation system. At that time, EWEB provided partial funding for 4J to purchase the hardware and software that will enable 4J to control water usage. Some components of the control system were installed at Roosevelt, Churchill, Sheldon, Gilham and Cal Young; however, complete installation was not achieved due to lack of funding.

As part of the Capital Improvement Program, the following schools have been identified to receive upgraded automated irrigation control systems utilizing the irrigation allowance: South Eugene, Spencer Butte, Gilham, Awbrey Park, Corridor, Monroe, Kelly, McCormack, Howard, Madison, Cal Young, Chavez and Holt. Future purchases are anticipated for other district facilities depending on available funding. Therefore, this request was intended to apply to future purchases as well. Installations of the systems are planned for all new buildings and irrigation systems in the future. The average cost per school for each new system is $9,000.00.

The Sole Source Product to be Specified

The manufacturer of Rain Bird Maxicom Products is the Rain Bird Corporation Turf Division with an office located in West Linn, Oregon. The equipment and service is available through United Pipe and Supply, Inc., Eugene, Oregon who is the sole Rain Bird authorized distributor assigned to Oregon, Washington and Idaho,

The Reasons why the Agency is seeking the Exemption

a. The efficient utilization of existing equipment requires the acquisition of compatible goods or service. Most of the partially completed existing systems utilize the Rain Bird Maxicom time controllers, but only lack the compatible processors required to communicate with the local weather stations and the central control computer. Use of the compatible components is essential for operational and problem-free communication. Standardization of the control systems will reduce the need for stocking of replacement parts for a variety of products. The need for irrigation staff training and familiarity with a variety of systems will be minimized. The result of this standardization will reduce costs and improve response time to restore failed systems to operation. In addition, Rain Bird Authorized Center Control Distributors are required by contract to stock hardware/parts at levels to maintain any damaged system up and operating within 24 hours. The existing weather towers allow for immediate on-line capabilities. There are additional benefits resulting from the partnership with other local public agencies who are utilizing the same equipment both in the sharing of information and resources, as well as the potential for partnership in the irrigation of adjacent properties.

b. The goods or services required for the exchange of software or data with other public or private agencies are available from only one source. The software must be capable of receiving information from the established weather towers and must also be capable of communicating with the new and existing irrigation controllers. The proprietary nature of the product requires use of the compatible software for operation.
The district anticipates continued competitive pricing under this sole source agreement. Should future pricing prove to be non-competitive with the marketplace, the district reserves the right to procure future systems by means other than sole sourcing.

The superintendent recommended that under Oregon Revised Statute 279.075B (1) the board authorize a sole source exemption for the procurement of Rain Bird Maxicom central irrigation system control products that are sold and serviced by United Pipe and Supply, Inc.

**Grant a Utility Easement to City of Eugene by and through Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) at the Willagillespie School Property**

EWEB requested a 14 foot utility easement on the Willagillespie Elementary School property for development of a future underground water line as follows:
- Strip 1: the northerly 14 feet of the easterly property line, a distance of 450 feet.
- Strip 2: the easterly 14 feet, a distance of 501 feet.
- Strip 3: the southerly 14 feet of the easterly property line, a distance of 260 feet.

A copy of the proposed easement conveyance document with an exact description of the property that will be included in the easement was included in the packet along with a drawing that shows the size, configuration, and location of the easement area. The board was asked to note an existing EWEB 40 foot wide easement granted in May of 1970 in the same vicinity as Strip 1 noted above.

Staff had negotiated the current requested easement at the perimeter boundaries of the site from an original request of a 14 foot easement proposed to extend through the middle of the property. The revised location will minimize the impact of future development of the site. The district will benefit from the installation of the perimeter waterline which can be easily accessed and support future facility development of the site. Granting of the easement will have no negative impact on the district’s property.

EWEB was offering $2,350 for consideration and conveyance of the easement. This amount is 5 percent of the square foot market value (comparable properties) times the square footage area of the easement. This easement value is customary and the standard of the industry for utility easements.

The superintendent recommended granting the Utility Easement to the City of Eugene through Eugene Water and Electric Board as specified in the easement document.

**Approve Contract for Aruba Networks Equipment and Support**

Proposals to provide network equipment and support contracts for Aruba computer products at a discounted price were opened March 13, 2008. Respondents were requested to submit information regarding their company, technicians, discount pricing, product availability and references.

Aruba products will be used to expand the wireless capabilities of the district. The district’s Technology Steering Committee may use this contract if future wireless projects are considered. Computing and Information Services (CIS) staff anticipated an initial purchase of approximately
$25,000; however, the total costs over the three-year contract period may exceed $150,000, and therefore, staff was seeking board approval.

Proposals were sent to nine vendors and advertised electronically on the State of Oregon procurement system (ORPIN). Responses were received from Pacific Star Communications and Structured Communication Systems, Inc. both of Portland, Oregon. CIS and purchasing staff reviewed the responses. Both companies proposed competitive discounts; however, Structured Communications has more Aruba-certified technicians available for district needs. This difference is reflected in the average points accumulated for each respondent. There were 140 possible points for the written proposal, points were averaged and are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Average Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Star</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The superintendent recommended contracting with Structured Communication Systems, Inc. for a period of one (1) year with the possibility of two (2) one-year extensions.

Approve Contract for Juniper Networks Equipment and Support

Proposals to provide network equipment and support contracts for Juniper computer products at a discounted price were opened February 13, 2008. Respondents were requested to submit information regarding their company, technicians, discount pricing, product availability and references.

Juniper Networks products are used to provide the district with a firewall for the computer system. Computing and Information Services (CIS) staff anticipates an initial contract purchase of approximately $100,000; however, the total costs over the three-year contract period may exceed $150,000, and therefore, we are seeking board approval. The funding for the initial purchase will be primarily bond funds, with the balance from the general fund.

Proposals were sent to eighteen vendors and advertised electronically on the State of Oregon procurement system (ORPIN). Responses were received from Qwest Communications and Verizon Business, both of Portland, Oregon. CIS and purchasing staff reviewed the responses. While both companies proposed competitive discounts, Qwest Communications’ proposal exceeded Verizon’s in the areas of number of technical staff, parts availability, and references provided. These differences were reflected in the average points accumulated for each respondent. There were 140 possible points for the written proposal, points were averaged and are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Average Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qwest</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verizon</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The superintendent recommended contracting with Qwest Communications for a period of one (1) year with the possibility of two (2) one-year extensions.
Approval of 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, Inc. for the purchase of school buses. The contract is currently in its second year.

Four (4) special needs buses are due for routine replacement within the next year. An increase in service requests for special needs buses has necessitated adding another route to provide adequate service. Based on the needed replacements and additional resources for the new route, staff has requested the purchase of five (5) forty-two passenger with three (3) wheelchair capacity, front-engine buses. The price for these buses is $106,660 each. The complete purchase will total $533,300.

The net cost to the district was 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.

The superintendent recommended purchasing five (5) forty-two passenger buses from Western Bus Sales, Inc., totaling $533,300.

Approve Contract for Charter Bus Services

Proposals to provide charter bus service for district high school and middle school students were opened December 19, 2007. Charter bus service is used when school activities require travel outside of the local area. These services are funded from general funds and various student sources. Respondents were requested to submit information regarding their company, equipment, pricing, compliance with Oregon Department of Education (ODE) requirements and references. Staff anticipates expenditures for charter bus services for this year to be approximately $185,000.

The ODE notified Oregon schools that motor coaches did not meet State safety standards for school activity buses on October 9, 2007. ODE then passed an emergency rule to allow districts to use motor coaches for student transportation on October 18, 2007. 4J Transportation staff complied with the ODE requirement for districts to apply for a variance for each of their providers. The variance applications required proof the motor coach vendors met State-established safety standards. A permanent Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) allowing districts to use motor coaches was passed on April 18, 2008. This OAR allows districts which have applied and been granted temporary variances on vendors an extension to June 22, 2008 to comply with the permanent rule, which becomes effective on June 23, 2008. Transportation staff will monitor vendor progress in compliance with the new rule.

Proposals were sent to four vendors and advertised electronically on the Oregon Procurement Information Network system; a state sponsored procurement web site. Responses were received from Experience Oregon, Inc. and Willamette Pass Express, LLC both of Eugene, Oregon and First Student, Inc. (Laidlaw Transit) of Walnut Creek, California. Transportation and purchasing staff reviewed the responses. First Student submitted an “Alternate” response that did not meet the minimum requirements and was not scored. While both companies meet the minimum requirements, Experience Oregon provided a better pricing schedule and a larger
variety of buses. There were 100 possible points for the written proposal, points were averaged and are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Average Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience Oregon, Inc.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willamette Pass Express, LLC</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Experience Oregon and Willamette Pass Express have a small number of buses. To ensure scheduling needs were met, staff recommended contracting with both vendors.

The superintendent recommended contracting with Experience Oregon, Inc and Willamette Pass Express, LLC upon successful completion of contracting requirements for a period of one (1) year with the possibility of four (4) one-year extensions.

**Approve Grant Application: KRVM Radio Digital Grants**

Staff from KRVM-FM submitted a $295,386 grant application to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The United States Congress has authorized and appropriated funding specifically for the transition from the use of analog to digital technology for the provision of public broadcasting services and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has allocated a portion of this appropriation to the Digital Radio Conversation Fund (DRCF). These grants provide digital upgrades of the transmission equipment for three stations (KRVM-FM, KMKR-FM and KSYD-FM) to meet current multicast digital standards. The upgrades will triple current programming capacity.

The superintendent recommended approval of the grant application. A copy of the grant description form was included in the board packet.

**Approve Grant Application: Comprehensive New Teacher Mentoring for Student and Teacher Success**

Staff from the Instruction Department submitted a $250,000 grant application to the Oregon Department of Education. The comprehensive project expands and enhances the district’s New Teacher Mentoring Program to provide intensive mentoring for new teachers by training a cadre of 5-10 new teacher mentors, as well as supplementary subject specialist mentors to help new teachers improve the teaching of their specific subjects. All new teachers will receive 90 hours contact with mentors, including classroom observations, small group meetings, joint training sessions and a blog that allows sharing of questions and concerns.

The superintendent recommended approval of the grant application. A copy of the grant description form was included in the board packet.

**Approve Personnel Items**

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

**MOTION:** Board Member Jim Torrey, seconded by Board Member Alicia Hays, moved to approve the consent items.
Ms. Gerot asked what the district was doing in regard to fuel efficiency in its new buses. Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management, responded that the district was employing a bio diesel blend in its buses. In regard to fuel economy, the district was somewhat limited by the buses being manufactured.

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

**ITEMS FOR ACTION AT A FUTURE MEETING**

**Approve the Modified Trimester Calendar**

Sara Cramer, Cal Young Middle School Principal, and Tom Henry, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, were present for the item. Mr. Henry called attention to the revised trimester calendar and noted he had included the semester calendar as well. He reviewed the changes that had been made.

Ms. Cramer said the primary reason for the changes was declining enrollment. Schools were unable to provide a full complement of electives due to declining enrollment, and attempting to do so while meeting physical education and other academic requirements was challenging. She concurred with the information provided by Mr. Duchin and Ms. Steele in regard to the challenges of the calendar.

Dr. Martinez asked who would be likely to adopt a trimester calendar. Ms. Cramer thought the trend would be toward more schools using such a calendar rather than fewer. Mr. Henry noted that two schools planned the change next year and two other schools were contemplating a change.

Responding to a question from Dr. Webber-Davis, Ms. Cramer said the courses offered in a single trimester would be elective courses. The courses would end after 12 weeks and the student would get a final grade and another 12 weeks to take a new elective. Responding to a follow-up question from Ms. Gerot, Ms. Cramer indicated the amount of instructional time dedicated to core classes would the same, only divided into three increments instead of two.

Superintendent Russell noted the board would be asked to approve the calendar at a future meeting.

Dr. Martinez asked Ms. Melton to comment. Ms. Melton thought the calendar sounded like a good idea.

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

Ms. Hays noted her attendance at the recent ACE Awards and said the event had been fun.

Superintendent Russell asked Ms. Hays to speak to the county budget situation. Ms. Hays said there would be huge reductions in public safety as well as drastic cuts in public health, including juvenile treatment programs and WIC. The county would not provide any funding to the Human Services Commission. She said the web of services in the county was being dismantled, and the county’s children were the most vulnerable to those reductions.
Speaking to Ms. Gerot, Mr. Torrey asked if the district could develop a funding proposal to take to the state legislature for juvenile youth who were not in the system, but were still the district’s responsibility.

Ms. Gerot noted that the OSBA and National School Boards Association had lobbied heavily for the retention of the safer rural schools funds, but had not spent much time discussing the future.

At the request of Dr. Martinez, Dr. Webber-Davis provided an update on the work of a committee formed by the State Board of Higher Education to study issues related to student participation and completion. Dr. Martinez noted the summary of the committee’s work included in the board’s packets.

Ms. Gerot highlighted some materials she provided to the board in the packet regarding strategies for school district leaders on change. She commended district staff member Johnny Lake for moderating a student panel at the recent conference on Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Minority Students held in Portland. She found the panel to be very inspiring. She had also attended a presentation by Evergreen School in Washington State about a dual immersion program and would be interested to hear more about a similar concept being proposed in Eugene. Ms. Gerot reported on her trip with district staff to Hillsdale High School, a small school high school, in San Mateo, California. She commended the success of that school. Ms. Gerot concluded her report by reminding the board she had been appointed to the Quality Education Commission and was participating on a best practices work group with district staff member Yvonne Curtis. She was encouraged by some of the work being done by the commission in regard to linking resources to outcomes.

Dr. Martinez welcomed new Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz.

Dr. Martinez noted the speech given by Jim Loewen, author of “Lies My Teacher Told Me,” on May 6 at the University of Oregon. He reported that Mr. Loewen was willing to return to Eugene to work with the district’s pre-service and current teachers.

**ADJOURN**

Dr. Martinez adjourned the regular meeting at 7:47 p.m.

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

**Attachments to Official Minutes:**
1. Draft 2008-09 School Calendar for Arts and Technology Academy
2. Expenditures for March 2008
3. CIP Contract Award Status Summary
4. Willagillespie Property Easement Documents
5. Grant Application Form: KRVM Radio Digital Grants
6. Grant Application Form: Comprehensive New Teacher Mentoring for Student and Teacher Success
7. Personnel Action Items
8. Draft 2008-09 Modified Trimester Calendar for Middle Schools
9. Work Session: District 4J Elementary Foreign Language Programs
10. Work Session: Chinese Immersion Program Proposal
WORK SESSION—Conduct a Work Session on Potential Chinese Immersion and Spanish Dual Language Immersion Programs

The board held a work session on the potential of establishing a Chinese Immersion Program and a Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program. Yvonne Curtis, Director of Student Achievement, and Abby Lane, English Language Learners Coordinator, provided a PowerPoint presentation with background on such programs and describing how they worked. Ms. Lane outlined an approach toward programming based on that information but tailored toward the district’s needs.

Board members asked questions clarifying the information presented.

Mr. Torrey indicated support for both programs. He wanted to know if any school in the Churchill region was interested in such a program, and hoped that was the case because he thought that region needed something “unique to grab onto.” He also wanted to hear from staff about any potential problems the district might encounter in three years, for example.

In response to Mr. Torrey’s remarks, Mr. Russell pointed out that if the board wanted both programs it would have to close a neighborhood school. The students needed for such a school would have to come from another school. Mr. Torrey asked about the potential of out-of-district children who might want to attend such a school. Superintendent Russell said that both programs were proposed to be neighborhood hybrids, which he assumed meant giving neighborhood kids the first priority. He did not think there would be much impact from out-of-district, although there might be some. He did not think 300 new students could be expected.

Responding to a question from Dr. Martinez, Ms. Lane said the Adams parent group had been given the information about the programs, and the group was considering it, but the group was not asked about its interest. Barb Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, said she was working on an Adams parents’ survey, which would be sent to all elementary and preschool parents in the boundaries of the Adams school and the survey would include a question about a Chinese Immersion School. Ms. Curtis said that staff was trying to determine what decisions needed to be made first, and the survey was intended to elicit basic information about what would attract people to Adams to grow its enrollment.

Ms. Gerot suggested if the district used the Bailey Hill building rather than Adams, it was likely to draw students from the neighboring schools to a new program, shrinking the existing school’s populations.

Dr. Martinez questioned how the board could move forward without information about which neighborhood school community would be amenable to such a program. He did not want to thrust such a program upon a community. He said that Superintendent Russell raised a good point about the potential closure of a neighborhood school, which then led to the question, which one would the district close. Superintendent Russell pointed out that the district did not have to close a school right away, but even so, starting with two kindergarten classes totaling 50 kids and building on that would have an eventual impact on existing schools. Superintendent Russell recalled that the board’s discussion of siting such a school in the Churchill region was about keeping students in the area with the goal of stabilizing the region.

Mr. Henry pointed out that converting River Road and Adams would have a lesser impact although it would likely result in a school closure; starting a new program at Bailey Hill and River Road would have a greater impact on existing neighborhood schools. The conversion model
had a slower and less dramatic impact, but did not avoid the fact there were only so many students.

Board Member Craig Smith asked if students whose parents did not want them to go to the dual immersion school in their neighborhood school catchment area would be provided transportation to another school. Ms. Curtis said that staff had not discussed that issue. Staff first considered what it would take to make a dual immersion program at River Road viable, and acknowledged the lack of native language Spanish speakers in that area to make it a sustainable program over time, which would require the district to draw from both the North and Churchill regions and possibly district-wide. Some children might go to Howard instead, making transportation less of an issue. Ms. Lane said she had thought about a regional transportation system in the North region for those Spanish speaking children who wished to attend the school, but had not thought beyond that. Superintendent Russell suggested two schools could be paired and the boundaries drawn together; a student who did not choose to go to River Road could go to Howard as the neighborhood school option.

Dr. Webber-Davis noted that dual immersion students generally entered IHS and IB programs and suggested the likely outcome of adding immersion programs would be an increase in enrollment in those programs at North and Churchill. She asked the impact of that over the long-term and the district's capacity to accommodate that increase. Ms. Curtis said staff had not looked at HIS, but she knew there was interest at Churchill High School and Kennedy Middle School in the Chinese immersion program. She did not think the school had studied the impact of adding the program. Ms. Lane said that both Kelly Middle School and North Eugene High School expressed interest in the Spanish immersion program and wanted to see how it fit with the school’s other programming. Dr. Webber-Davis wanted more information about how adding those programs would “play out” over the long-term.

Mr. Henry indicated staff could attempt to project some attendance figures, but he believed that there was a potential that campus enrollment could be enhanced by the new programming; he added that the programming could be stand-alone or an enhancement of another program, not necessarily at IHS.

In response to a follow-up question from Dr. Webber-Davis, Ms. Curtis briefly discussed what level of FTE might be required to staff a Chinese immersion program. Mr. Henry said that staff would need to investigate staffing levels to a greater degree.

Ms. Gerot spoke of the success enjoyed by students in the Evergreen High School immersion program and noted that high school was the designated Spanish ELL school for its district, which helped control costs as all Spanish-speaking students go to that school. Transportation was provided. Ms. Curtis said that staff had discussed making River Road the ELL Cluster for the North region, but she questioned the equitability of that if students did not want to be part of the program. However, she acknowledged schools did that, and if the district concluded it was the best model for the students, it was something to consider. Ms. Lane noted the question of access for students outside the North region, which hinged on transportation.

Ms. Gerot asked if staff had considered the resource issues involved. Ms. Curtis said she had investigated resources for staff development, and there was some existing district funding available for that from past grants. She believed there were additional grant resources available to the district, as well as some federal funding. She said more staffing would require more grant writing.
Dr. Martinez was conceptually supportive of both proposals. He thought they were the types of programs the district should be offering. He believed the community support was in place. He acknowledged the two proposals were different, as one particularly provided access to a language other than English as well as highly important, effective instruction for students who needed English language development. He said the issues were complex and the financial impact must be projected and analyzed. He was unsure how to provide the programs as he feared clustering would be both useful and efficacious, but would potentially limit the choices of some students and segregate them. Dr. Martinez was concerned that both proposals included a recommendation that students with no language proficiency could only enter the programs through the middle of first grade as it was not consistent with current district practice and might not be necessary. He thought parents should make that choice with guidance from instructional staff.

Ms. Lane emphasized the general nature of the recommendations, which was drawn from her research, and indicated her concurrence with the remarks of Dr. Martinez. She said staff could research the support given to students who entered past first grade.

Dr. Martinez wanted to know more about the students who were likely to enter the programs.

Mr. Torrey wanted the board to make the proposals work. He thought the board would be suppressing choice otherwise. He acknowledged the potential loss of a school, but suggested the market made that decision in regard to an area. Superintendent Russell suggested Mr. Torrey’s remarks spoke to the fundamental question of whether the district would be one of choice with some neighborhood schools, or a district of neighborhood schools with some choice. He thought either decision would be right, but must be consciously made. He pointed out that adding two more schools of choice meant that half the district’s elementary schools would be schools of choice.

Mr. Torrey thought a coalition school composed of Howard and River Road elementary schools made sense. He thought the area in question was underserved. In the case of Churchill, unless the district did something dramatic, he thought it would be letting that region down.

Dr. Martinez thought the district was a district of choice because its neighborhood schools were also schools of choice. He thought the core question facing the board was what the district was willing to give up so it could accommodate the two proposals. In response to Mr. Torrey’s comments, Dr. Martinez suggested that it was hard for the market to decide about the fate of schools given that the decisions of the board determined whether schools continued to exist. He pointed out the board had made compromises in recognition of community sentiment during the Shaping 4J’s Future process, and in the future, the board would not be considering merely market viability, but the level of importance of a school to its community in the face of declining enrollment.

Ms. Hays observed that one could call the district a district of choice, but many people did not have choice because of a lack of transportation access and the time needed to get a child to a school outside one’s neighborhood. She agreed with Superintendent Russell that the district would have to lose a school, and she guaranteed that a school with lower socio-economic status would be the one to close as the market created by the system of choice would decide. She also agreed with the superintendent that the district had to acknowledge what sort of district it was and called for board discussion of that issue. She was interested in the dual immersion programs in particular as they related to ELL students, but wanted the board to be conscious of the impacts of its choices.
Responding to a question from Dr. Webber-Davis, Ms. Lane said she would not recommend that the district offer the dual Spanish immersion program as anything but a choice to Spanish speaking families and their children. She said that River Road staff had done outreach to parents gauging their interest in such a program. Ms. Lane said she worked with Spanish speaking parents all the time and had to emphasize to them it was okay to speak and read Spanish to their children, and she thought parent education was also an important element of such a school. She thought if the district was to open the school in the North region, it would not be hard to attract students living in that area, but she believed it would require outreach and meetings with parents to attract students from other regions. She thought a fairly balanced mix of Spanish speaking and English speaking children was critical.

In response to a question from Dr. Martinez about whether such a program would be housed in a neighborhood school, Ms. Lane emphasized River Road's interest in further investigation of the Spanish immersion program. She said no school had yet stepped up to express interest in the Chinese immersion school.

Dr. Martinez emphasized the board's sincere interest in the topic while also emphasizing the number of questions that continued to exist.

Ms. Lane asked the board to consider the issue of transportation as it related to the proposals and raised the potential of a pilot program for the North region. Superintendent Russell agreed that transportation was a huge issue and staff had done some study of the issue. He thought the community was under-estimating the costs of increasing transportation options for students because the addition of more buses required more staff and more space.

Mr. Smith thought the transportation issues for the two schools were probably different.

Mr. Smith asked if the support being proposed was over and above what occurred for other district language immersion programs. Ms. Curtis said that some of the support was in place, but if the district wanted to retain a diverse population and did not want students to drop out at the first sign of adversity, she anticipated it would mean the program would need more support. Mr. Smith suggested the equity argument could be reversed and the board asked why it would add more support to such programs, particularly for transportation for Chinese immersion students.

Mr. Torrey expressed concern about coming up with a program that might enhance the divide that existed between some alternative and neighborhood schools. However, he thought the dual immersion program was also an opportunity to help students who might otherwise struggle to meet the district’s graduation requirements.

Dr. Martinez determined board members had no further comments, and adjourned the work session at 9:23 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)