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

January 19, 2011

The Board of Directors of School District No. 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, held a regular board meeting and public hearing at 6 p.m. on January 19, 2011, at Churchill High School, 1850 Bailey Hill Road, Eugene, Oregon. Notice of the meeting was mailed to the media and posted in the Education Center on January 14, 2011, and published in The Register-Guard on January 17, 2011.

ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS:
Craig Smith, Chair
Alicia Hays, Vice Chair
Jennifer Geller
Beth Gerot
Ann Marie Levis
Jim Torrey
Mary Walston

STAFF:
Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director
Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Susan Fahey, Chief Financial Officer
Jon Lauch, Director of Facilities Management
Sara Cramer, Director of Elementary Education
Celia Feres-Johnson, Director of Human Resources
Laurie Moses, Director of Secondary Education
Larry Sullivan, Director of Educational Support Services
Larry Williams, Resource Principal, Edgewood Elementary
Kerry Delf, Communications Coordinator
Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analysis and Budget Manager
Brad New, Administrative Principal at North Eugene High School and Principal of the three Alternative High Schools

STUDENT ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS:
Lydia Tam, Churchill High School
Karen McGhehey, IHS, All Campuses

OTHERS:
Dayna Mitchell, Eugene Educators Association
Randy Harnisch, Legal Consultant on Charter Schools

MEDIA:
KRVM
REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND FLAG SALUTE

Board Chair Craig Smith called the regular meeting of the School District 4J Board of Directors to order. He led everyone present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no changes to the agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Carl Hermanns, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer sitting in for Superintendent Russell as he was out of town, indicated that there was no report at this time.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Karen McGhehey, IHS, All Campuses, reported that the IHS film festival had been held in the previous week. She said it had been a big success, attended by about 40 people, and garnering "lots of sales."

Lydia Tam, Churchill High School, related that the Martin Luther King assembly, held earlier in the day, had featured speakers, a rapper, and a presentation of Mehiska Jackson's award-winning oratory presentation from the ACT-SO competition held last spring.

ITEMS RAISED BY THE AUDIENCE

There were no items raised by the audience at this time.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Receive an Update on Potential City Tax for Schools

The Eugene City Council held a work session on January 12 to discuss the possibility of a city tax to help support Eugene and Bethel school district operations. The City Council asked that a work group consisting of representatives from the city, the two school districts, Stand for Children and the business community be convened to develop a more specific proposal for the council discussion on January 24. The council's work session discussion focused on two taxes suggested by community advocates: a restaurant tax and a city income tax. A majority of councilors were not interested in further considering a restaurant tax, so the work group will focus on income tax options. In order for the council to refer a tax measure to city voters for the May 2011 election, the council would need to take action by February 15, 2011.

Staff will provide an update regarding the status of the work group and the board will have an opportunity to ask questions or identify issues for further discussion by the work group, council, or board.

Barbara Bellamy, Chief of Staff and Communications Director, stated that she and Mr. Smith were the district's representatives on the ad hoc committee that the Eugene City Council had formed on a funding measure. She reported that the group had only met twice and its charge
was to come back with a recommendation and options for a possible revenue measure and what it should be dedicated for. She outlined what the group had come up with, which included that the tax should sunset after three to six years. They had been directed to consider, too, what would happen to the revenue measure if the state developed sustainable funding for public education.

Mr. Smith said very little had been resolved to date. He stated that they had just presented a recommendation. He felt the economic issues had not been addressed at all.

**Public Charter Schools and Eugene School District 4J**

District staff, accompanied by consultant Randy Harnisch, planned to provide a brief overview of Public Charter School Law, with a focus on the charter application process and evaluation criteria. A handout was included in the board packet, which contained additional information on responsibilities for oversight and administration of district-sponsored charter schools and a history of charter schools and School District 4J.

Caroline Passerotti, Financial Analyst and Budget Manager, stated that the proposals from the three charter school applicants were being evaluated by a charter review team consisting of Brad New, Randy Harnisch and herself. She explained that the applications were being evaluated for completeness and whether they met the criteria. She summarized the distinguishing characteristics of the three proposals that they had received.

Mr. Harnisch discussed the application process and the board's role in the process. He explained that the Oregon charter school law guaranteed two things: a process for applicants to prepare and submit an application and that school boards would follow an established process to review and evaluate the applications. He listed the seven criteria:

1. That the proposed charter school had demonstrated sustainable support by teachers, parents, students, and other community members;
2. That is had demonstrated financial stability, including the ability to have a sound financial management system in place;
3. That the school has the capability to provide comprehensive instructional programs to students;
4. That the school has the capability to provide comprehensive instructional programs to students who were low achieving;
5. The extent to which the proposal addressed the criteria required in the statute;
6. Whether the value of the public charter school was outweighed by any directly identifiable significant and adverse impact on the quality of education of students residing in the district in which the charter school will be located;
7. Whether or not there are arrangements for special education services for students with disabilities; charter school law provides that special education services remain the responsibility of the school district in which the child and his or her parents reside.

He stated that if the board approved a charter school application, it would result in the negotiation of a contract between the district and the charter school. If the board denied an application, it had to do so in writing and then the applicants had the ability to refine their application and resubmit it and if the board denied it again, the applicant could appeal the decision to the State Board of Education.

Mr. Torrey said that money was a big issue and asked if in the balancing of impact to the district whether this was a consideration. Mr. Harnisch responded that the district would absolutely consider money and any other adverse impact to the students remaining in the school district.
In response to a question from Ms. Walston, Mr. Harnisch clarified that if a child with special education needs tried to attend a charter school within the district, the charter school had to accept the application and then the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team made a determination on whether or not it was an appropriate placement. He said if they determined it was an appropriate placement, the charter school and the district's special education team would get together to figure out how to ensure the child received the appropriate services.

Mr. Smith asked what the word 'demonstrated' meant, as used in the first criterion. Mr. Harnisch replied that it was a paper application and it should include letters of support and lists of parents that had indicated an interest in the program.

In response to a follow-up question from Mr. Smith, Mr. Harnisch clarified that the applicant put together a description of what kind of program they envisioned and how they intended to provide it and part of the team's review was to read the description, evaluate it, and to determine if it was a realistic assessment: was it comprehensive, did it meet the requirements that were laid out in statute for state public education, and had they demonstrated that they could provide that.

Mr. Smith asked if a preponderance of evidence that the value of the charter school outweighed the impact to the district was required to be submitted. Mr. Harnisch responded that the drafters of the law did not provide a gauge to determine how much the charter school had to show benefit. He said outweighing could mean just barely tipping the scale in the favor of the charter school.

In response to a follow-up question from Mr. Smith, Ms. Passerotti stated that the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) stated that the charter would be in effect for no more than five years and the district policy had narrowed that to two to three years depending on fiscal and program management experience.

Mr. Smith asked what the standard of review for an appeal was. Mr. Harnisch responded that it was not so much an appeal as it was the State Board of Education reviewing the application anew.

Ms. Levis asked that they discuss further the criteria for looking at financial stability. Ms. Passerotti said in addition to reviewing the application on face value, they also considered whether it made sense. She explained that they looked at the charter school's assumptions, noting that it was often more difficult to run a school than applicants had anticipated. She stated that they evaluated the revenue assumptions to see if they relied too much on grants, fundraising, and/or other fees as a source of operation. She noted that they ask each of the charter schools to resubmit financial projections indicating that they could be financially stable using the same revenue assumptions that the district was looking at. She said when they looked at the expenditure side they looked for reasonableness, whether the applicant covered categories adequately, whether the school would pay salaries to teachers that could reasonably support them, and whether there were adequate budgets for supplies and materials. They also looked at other things such as whether the applicant understood how payroll worked and how the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) worked.

Ms. Geller asked for clarification on the district's oversight role if the district did not approve a charter and the state did. Mr. Harnisch responded that the district's oversight responsibilities were minimal. He said the oversight was largely the responsibility of the sponsor and, in the
case of the state approving a charter on appeal, this would fall to the State Board of Education. Ms. Passerotti added that the funding would still come through the district.

Mr. Smith asked if each of the schools would receive implementation or if it was a competitive process. Ms. Passerotti replied that the competition for money was only at the planning grant phase. She noted that the planning grant was for $55,000 and Coburg Elementary had not been awarded the grant at this time because they had only recently applied for it; the other two had received the planning grants. In response to a follow-up question, she said the grants were from federal money administered through the state.

Ms. Gerot understood that the federal government had extended funding for charter schools in the past and wondered what the current practice was. Ms. Passerotti responded that there was an assimilation grant program that was continuing. She said this was an additional grant, with a variable amount based on the granting period, for charter schools that had completed implementation to allow them to promote what they had learned so that other schools could benefit from elements of their programs, whether around learning structure or operating procedures.

COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYEE GROUPS

Dayna Mitchell spoke on behalf of the Eugene Education Association (EEA). She acknowledged that it had been stated at several meetings that the board had control over only certain things in the budget, with regard to the superintendent’s recommendations and that some depended on negotiations with employee groups. She said the EEA had settled a contract in the previous year that contained a reopener provision that stated, as follows:  
“Article 2.6.2: This agreement shall remain in full force to and including June 30, 2013. Either party may reopen only Article 4.1.1 Salary, Article 4.4.4 Step Advancement, Article 6.1 directing employee insurance contribution, and Article 10.2 School Work Year.”

She stated that once the board had taken final action on the superintendent’s recommended budget and the district had received a more current financial forecast, the EEA would be prepared to start negotiations. She declared it critical that both parties understand the givens. She said that the EEA continued to encourage the board to investigate an early retirement incentive program for licensed employees. She noted that several board members had requested a cost analysis. She related that the EEA would also like the opportunity to review the cost analysis. She stated that if an employee at the other end of the salary schedule retired, the district would save the difference in salary and roll-ups between the top salary and a beginning salary for one to five years. She asked them to also keep in mind that the years of experience support that the district received from the state was a moving target, noting that it changed as districts across the state continued to experience increasing numbers of teachers choosing to retire and also did not have an impact until a year after a person retired. She also encouraged the district to continue exploring the option of a local revenue source.

Ms. Mitchell related that teachers had observed one elementary class with over 30 students and moving among the desks to monitor students was nearly impossible. She said they had also observed a high school classroom that had been built for 18 to 20 students with 36 students in it. She also related that they had heard from a parent whose child had come home from school reporting that a new student had been in class but there were not enough desks. The children in the class had allegedly been told that it was okay, there were usually one or two children absent and the child could use different desks. She found it difficult to imagine these situations with class-sizes increased by six or more additional students. She underscored that an
increase in teacher/student ratio by three to four students resulted in a larger increase in actual class size. She also asked that, when receiving information on charter schools, the district keep in mind that this was "not the appropriate time" to be considering new charter schools in the face of the need to resolve the complex budgetary issues that lay ahead. She stressed the EEA's willingness to work with the district toward a fair resolution in the contract reopener.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S SUSTAINABLE BUDGET FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALTERNATE OPTIONS, INCLUDING SCHOOL CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION PROPOSALS

Summary of Final Recommendations from January 12, 2011 Board Meeting

Financial Assumptions: The final proposed target for 2011-12 is $26 million rather than the previously revised target of $22 million. The strategy goal is to achieve a balanced approach that still included 50% ongoing or sustainable strategies through staff reductions, ratio changes, and service/program reductions of about $13 million; about 25% through use of one-time dollars from reserves or other short-term sources for about $6.5 million; and another 25% through compensation-related savings from a combination of fewer days (furloughs) and less in salary/benefits for around $6.5 million.

Strategy Options: The following recommendations represent the final recommended strategy options from the superintendent. In some cases, there were also alternate scenarios requested by the board that could be considered in lieu of the superintendent's recommendations. With the changed financial assumption, the major areas in which substantial revisions occurred were staff and program reduction; staffing ratios; closure and consolidation( reconfiguration); school/workday reduction (furloughs); and other compensation-related adjustments. The strategy options the superintendent planned to recommend, and any alternate options, are presented below:

1. Reduce Staffing/Services & Programs:

Final Recommendations

2011-12
- Reduce administrative and classified staff by 10% (62 FTE) - $3.5 million
- including restructure and consolidate Central Office departments, reduce administration
- Change staffing ratio by 4 = 84 FTE @ $7.0 million
- Eliminate or reduce teachers on special assignment and staff development specialists - $0.5 million
- Cost/Savings Target: $11 million

2012-13
- TBD

2013-14
- TBD

2. Fewer School/Work Days

Final Recommendations

2011-12
- 10-13 Furlough Days (6 less days of school) -- one per month based on work year plus one additional day
• Cost/Savings Target: $4.5 million

2012-13
• Continue 10-13 Furlough Days (6 less days of school) one per month based on work year plus one additional day
• Consider 4-day work (32 hours) and school weeks if necessary
• Cost/Savings Target: $4.5 million

2013-14
• Continue 10-13 Furlough Days (6 less days of school) one per month based on work year plus one additional day
• Continue 4-day work (32 hours) and school weeks if necessary
• Cost/Savings Target: $4.5 million

3. School Closures/Consolidations

Final Recommendations
2011-12
• Close Coburg, Crest Drive and Parker Elementary Schools in 2011
• Consolidate Meadowlark at Willagillespie
• Move Charlemagne French Immersion School K through 5th grade to Parker
• Cost/Savings Target: $1 million

2012-13
• Close Twin Oaks Elementary School
• If Bond Measure passes, consolidate Twin Oaks with McCornack after addition
• Cost/Savings Target: $0.3 million

2013-14
• Possible closure/merger of non-language alternative schools with neighborhood schools
• Cost/Savings Target: TBD

Alternate Recommendations:
2011-12
• Close Coburg, Adams Elementary Schools in 2011 (leaving Parker and Crest Drive open)
• Consolidate Meadowlark at Willagillespie
• Move Charlemagne French Immersion School K through 5th grade to Adams
• Cost/Savings Target: $0.5 million, requires additional $0.5 million of ongoing reductions to be identified

4. Shared Services/Contracting Out

Final Recommendations
2011-12
• Identify additional services that can be provided by Lane ESD
• Determine what current services can be transferred to Lane ESD
• Cost/Savings Target: $0.5 million

2012-13
• Explore service sharing options with other districts that could reduce costs
• Look at contracting out some services
• Cost/Savings Target: TBD
2013-14
- Contract out or consolidate some services with other school districts or provide through private sector
- Cost/Savings Target: TBD

5. **Material & Supplies/Services**

**Final Recommendations**

**2011-12**
- 15% reduction in materials & supplies, contracted services budget
- Centralize purchasing of materials & supplies, equipment
- Cost/Savings Target: $1.1 million

**2012-13**
- TBD

2013-14
- TBD

6. **School Instruction/Redesign**

**Final Recommendations**

**2011-12**
- Stakeholder Task Force to recommend reconfiguration to the Superintendent and Board for implementation 2012-13
- Redesign instructional delivery model for secondary schools to accommodate fewer students & less resources
- Cost/Savings Target: TBD

**2012-13**
- Revise school calendar
- Shorter summer breaks
- Consider 4-day school weeks
- Implementation of reconfiguration recommendations, if any
- Cost/Savings Target: TBD

2013-14
- TBD

7. **Non-instructional/Student Support Programs**

**Final Recommendations**

**2011-12**
- Reduce General Fund support for athletics programs and other extracurricular offerings by 25%
- Cost/Savings Target: $0.5 million

**2012-13**
- TBD

2013-14
- TBD
8. **Reserves/One-time Funds**

**Final Recommendations:**

2011-12
- Use up to $6.5 million in reserves/one-time funds to maintain and bridge to 2012-13
- Cost/Savings Target: $6.5 million

2012-13
- Use up to $3 million from sales of surplus property or lease revenue
- Cost/Savings Target: $3 million

2013-14
- GF Reserve and Contingency = 90% of Board Targets
- Cost/Savings Target: TBD

2014-15
- GF Reserve and Contingency = Board Targets

9. **Compensation/Benefits**

**Final Recommendations:**

2011-12
- Negotiate pay freeze, including no step/column increase
- Negotiate $210,000 decrease in benefits costs
- General Fund Costs/Savings Target: $1.7 million

2012-13
- Negotiate contract adjustments that minimize and contain ongoing costs to district
- GF Cost/Savings Target: TBD

2013-14
- TBD

10. **Revenue Enhancements**

**Final Recommendations:**

2011-12
- Bond Measure $130 million in May 2011 for critical needs, technology & new school (offload of General Fund = $1 million)
- Increase community use fees by 20% ($20,000)
- Lease closed schools to charters/others ($200,000)
- Revenue Target: $1.2 million General Fund

2012-13
- Sell Civic Stadium, Willard School, or other vacant facilities with 50% proceeds to the General Fund Reserve ($3 to $5 million)
- Local tax to support local schools in 2012-13 ($10 million for 3 years) - November 2011
- Revenue Target: TBD

2013-14
- Implementation of any new revenue sources to mitigate reductions
- Revenue Target: TBD

11. **Other Options**

These are other possible options that may result in savings, primarily over the long-term. Some additional analysis would be needed to determine the efficacy of these options.
Final Recommendations:
- Consider early retirement incentives
- Adopt single-platform technology systems for centralized purchasing & technical support
- Minimize site-based decision making and increase centralized direction for staffing; e.g. program staffing for student support services
- General Fund Costs/Savings Target: TBD

The superintendent will recommend approval of recommendations 1 through 10 as provided above, or as the board may determine to adopt any of the alternative options identified above or as otherwise modified upon discussion of the board.

At the January 12 meeting, the board asked that the following option from the initial scenarios be reinstated as an alternate option:

Alternative Option:
Compensation/Benefits
Option B:
- Negotiate salary reduction of 5% across the board.
- Negotiate reduction in part of PERS employer pick-up.
  - General Fund Costs/Savings Target: $4 to $6 million.

Mr. Smith reviewed the guidelines for the public hearing. He noted that spokespersons representing the schools would be provided time to speak first. Ms. Hays acted as timer.

Heather Brinton, representing Adams Elementary School Site Council, urged approval of the final recommendation. She acknowledged that no one would like it, but the district must consider the short- and long-term savings, demographics, the state of facilities, optimal school sizes, and potential impacts on the goals of equity and excellence. She averred that measured against these factors, the superintendent's recommendation made sense. She conveyed their feeling that moving the Charlemagne French Immersion School to the Adams site would only get the district "off track." She said the rationale was to encourage a more diverse population at the French immersion school, but any benefits eventually realized would be outweighed by the costs. She understood that savings, under that proposal, would be cut in half for the next year and to expand Crest Drive Elementary School would require a multi-million dollar addition. She noted that expanding Adams Elementary School would only require a parking lot expansion. She acknowledged that diversifying Charlemagne should be a priority, but doing so should not come at the expense of a "greater priority," that of ensuring that Eugene had "a vibrant network of high-performing neighborhood schools." She declared that to close Adams would be to close one of the most economically diverse schools. She noted that even though Adams had a 55% rate of participation in the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, it was one of the most successful schools. She said the alternative option would send Adams kids to five different directions, with kids with a lower socio-economic status (SES) being diverted to a school with a higher concentration of lower SES kids and kids with a higher SES being diverted to schools with a higher SES, based on boundaries. She declared that this would only further the gap between rich and poor in Eugene. She concluded by stating that the Adams building was in good condition and had the capacity for more students. She also pointed out that Adams had developed a plan three years earlier, at the direction of the district that would mesh with the priorities of the district and its attendance area. She said they had followed through and had united behind an effort to emphasize a multi-cultural education, technology, and sustainability.
She underscored that they had charted this course instead of pursuing an option to become a language immersion school because it built on the school's strength of serving all learners. She stressed that the effort had been a success and garnered grants for the school, one of which had allowed them to build the first major solar power system in 4J.

**Becky Smith** spoke on behalf of the Charlemagne French Immersion School. She thanked the board for taking comments on the current recommendation. She stated that language immersion schools were in the district because the board and district recognized that they played a significant role in the success of the schools and the community. She believed that school choice contributed to maintaining diverse neighborhoods. She recalled that alternative schools had originated as a means to provide all children access to distinctive programs that were not limited on neighborhood. She averred that these were communities founded on pedagogy and not location and, as such, were available to all families regardless of race and/or financial ability. She conveyed their belief that schools such as Charlemagne had proven successful in attracting businesses to the community. She stated that acquisition of a second language at an early age gave students essential skills and mindsets that were increasingly important for the globally connected future. She stressed that the school welcomed the opportunity to make its program more accessible and that they hoped that the move would show their commitment to serving any and all families interested in the Francophone education.

**Robert Harris**, speaking on behalf of Coburg Elementary School, commented that, having been part of the staff of Santa Clara Elementary School, he knew first-hand the lasting effects that closing a school could have on kids; it was traumatic to them both academically and socially. He said they needed to not rely on the resiliency of children to justify actions that could cause them harm. He had worked in challenged schools and struggling communities all over the country and in other countries as well. He had found a consistent pattern in the struggling systems: they lacked a strong community, effective leadership, and an evidence-based approach to instruction. He declared that this was not the case with Coburg Elementary School. He related that the steering committee charged with developing the charter school application had provided him the opportunity to review it and provide feedback. He had been "consistently impressed" by their research, their organization, and the dedication they demonstrated. He averred that the Coburg managing structure, curriculum selection, community support is not only a national exemplar of how schools should be formed and managed, but an international exemplar of it. He felt the benefits of smaller community-focused schools were numerous and well-documented. He did not believe that economies of scale benefited schools, students, or the districts they were located in. He discussed the history of Coburg Elementary, calling it a "legacy passed on from generation to generation since 1885." He said it was now a legacy that was in the board's hands and urged them to unanimously approve the charter application.

**Teri Giustina**, speaking on behalf of Crest Drive Elementary School, said she was a Lancer, having attended Churchill High School. She said communities and schools were one and the same; public schools were an integral part of community. She declared that when they worked to make a school successful, they came one step closer to the adage that it takes a village to raise a child. She observed that the struggle to craft a sustainable budget had been painful. She did not consider the discussion about a school versus a school; she thought it was about making the best decisions for the children. She believed that closing Crest Drive was the wrong decision. She said the process of comparing costs across schools and considering enrollment, choice, and boundaries had left the Crest Drive parents with bigger concerns. She asserted that there were too many unknowns in the district and it was not in the best interest of the district or the community to move "precipitously" particularly in closures that did not not meet the criteria but would limit future options. She believed that the success of the changes in the
district would be more likely assured "if the community was brought along in the decisions to be made." She described Crest Drive as a school surrounded by community, families, friends, and businesses that had supported it and nurtured it for nearly 50 years. She felt that closing the school would leave the region south of 22nd Avenue devoid of elementary schools and was concerned about closing it when the district was facing the departure of the current superintendent. She did not think it prudent to close the school in the face of the potential revenue measure and consideration of alternative and language immersion schools. She added that the board had made extraordinary progress toward a sustainable budget and asked that the board carefully weigh the budget recommendations and actual monetary savings against the costs both known and unknown.

**Patrice Cowman**, representing Meadowlark Elementary School, said they still had questions and would like to speak personally with Superintendent Russell and administrative staff. She related that some of the concerns they wanted more information about had to do with the short span of time for the consolidation of two schools, the number of Meadowlark staff that would make the move with their students, enrollment FTE and staffing plans, and the use of the Meadowlark building. They also wanted to see the supplies purchased for Meadowlark students moved with the children. She said they would have liked to have seen the Meadowlark site council involved in some of the discussions. She asked that the board give careful consideration to the types and number of changes they were asking the children to make through the next year and beyond. She indicated their willingness to help make any transition as smooth as possible for students and their families.

**Kyle Chunn** introduced his co-presenter, **Larry Whittlesey**, and explained that they were both teachers at Parker Elementary School. Mr. Whittlesey stressed that the Parker community stood to be affected greatly by the decisions the board was going to make. He conveyed that they understood that times were hard for the entire school district and tough decisions were required. They asked that the district make the changes necessary while keeping in mind the well-being of all of the students. He noted that it had been stated that the South Eugene High School region had too many elementary students in close proximity. He felt the decision had come down to moving an alternative school out of the region, making it more accessible to a greater segment of population or closing a neighborhood school. He averred that this was giving precedence to an alternative program over a successful neighborhood school that both offered a second language and integrated its Life Skills students into the classroom. He stated that Parker served a greater number of low SES and special needs students than Charlemagne; while enrollment between the two schools was comparable, students’ needs and demographics were not. He declared that this proposal did not meet the stated goal of making the alternative school more centrally located, nor did it consider the well-being of all students. He said with the proposal, the neighborhood students of Parker would be divided between two schools and some would later be split again between two middle schools. He also felt that the question of relocating Parker’s transfer students had not been addressed and further fractured the community.

Mr. Chunn acknowledged that changes would have to be made to meet the goal of sustainability. He said the South Eugene administrator leadership team had offered an alternative, a K through 6th grade model for the schools. He felt this had been ignored, though it met the goals stated by the district. He understood that the plan would require a lot of changes to the current plans, but he believed the students deserved "no less than the best effort" on their behalf. He believed that closing Parker in the coming year before the task force met was "arbitrary and premature." He asserted that the only goal closing Parker would achieve would be to close an elementary school in the South region. He felt it would make clear the
Amanda Deedon, provided testimony on behalf of the Twin Oaks Elementary School parents group. She averred that the 4J boundary was larger than the city of Eugene, yet the district was making decisions with far-reaching implications for many communities within its boundaries. She stated that 4J had the responsibility to educate all of the students within the district, but the current recommendations began the process of “vacating” southwest Eugene and the surrounding areas access to schools even reasonably close to their community. She felt they were working with only limited information on actual budget income and there appeared to be little involvement in the greater planning for the future of the community, such as the Envision Eugene work. She believed that external impacts, such as the water line that Veneta was extending to connect with Eugene, would lead to increased development in the southwest area of town that 4J was considering vacating. She said students would be subjected to lengthy bus rides in order to shift them into the middle of town to “schools within blocks of each other.” She understood that the board planned to place Twin Oaks students in McCornack if the bond levy passed, but it was unclear what would happen to Twin Oaks students if the bond measure did not pass. She stated that as parents they tried to provide the most stable environment for learning. She agreed with board members who had indicated support for leaving Crest Drive and Twin Oaks. She related that the “threat of closure” had “loomed” over Twin Oaks since her first child attended the school 16 years earlier. She felt this contributed to the drop in enrollment there as those who could make other arrangements for their children’s education did so due to the uncertainty. She noted that Twin Oaks had the largest library and questioned what would happen to it if the bond did not pass. She asked that they not make “knee jerk decisions” and not add to the problems; they needed to help prepare students for the future.

Marshall Peter, Chair of the Equity Committee, reaffirmed many of the things they had previously given as testimony. He said limited educational opportunities for African-American, Latino, Native American, Gay-Lesbian-Bi-Trans-Queer (GLBTQ) and other vulnerable students in the district, including lower academic achievement and disproportionate likelihood of suspension and other disciplinary sanctions and increased bullying and harassment. He declared that in times like these it was particularly important that schools take strong measures to ensure that students that were not achieving critical benchmarks receive the services and support in order to have the same access to opportunities as their peers. He related that the committee appreciated the continuing commitment of the board to using equity as a lens through which decisions were made. He listed recommendations, as follows:

- Ensure that differentiated staffing was a transparent and effective mechanism for directing increased financial and instructional resources to students who were not meeting instructional benchmarks and at risk of not meeting graduation requirements;
- Centralize decision making increasing capacity to uniformly implement equitable classroom practices and other equity initiatives including accountability for the fidelity of implementation of efforts like Individualized Progress Monitoring (IPM) and individualized positive behavior support;
- Partner with collective bargaining units to maintain the commitment to highly qualified culturally proficient and diverse staff and to the maximum extent possible minimize the negative effects that could come as a result of staffing reductions;
- Maintain the current investment in equity and diversity support systems and consolidate smaller schools into larger schools that could be balanced for race, SES, and that could leverage staffing in order to increase the ability to respond to the needs of all students;
- Maintain the current commitment to GLBTQ training and continue to invest in IIPM, IPPS, and school climate assessment and improvement activities;
- Ensure that classroom space is sufficient to accommodate increased classroom size.
Mr. Peter asked the board to consider the following questions:
- What would be the demographic compositions that would result from changing school configurations?
- Will plans increase racial and socio-economic segregation?
- Will the reductions the district was pursuing increase negative outcomes for students whose needs were not being met?
- How will the reductions made affect 4J's capacity to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student body?
He conveyed the committee's feeling of hope borne from the long-standing commitment of the district to elevating educational opportunities to students not succeeding in the current educational system. He thanked them for their courageous leadership and for all of the time the board was contributing in these "unimaginably difficult times" to making the best possible decision for the students of Eugene.

Ms. Bellamy suggested that they hear testimony from students first.

Isaac Mudlow said he was a student at Parker. He had gone to a school from Kindergarten to 2nd grade that had not worked for him. He had experienced good changes since transferring to Parker.

Isaac Wright stated that he was afraid that by closing Parker Elementary, they would ultimately end up closing Spencer Butte Middle School. He had attended Parker for six years. He was upset by the proposal to close the school. He did not think it was fair.

Josh Wright was a second grader at Parker. He did not want Parker to be closed.

Hunter Spence and Ally Parvol spoke on behalf of Adams Elementary. Ms. Parvol said Adams was their home and home to many other children. She stated that Adams had good teachers and this was why Adams students had better test scores. She believed that if they closed Adams, it would cost people their jobs and it would keep kids from a good education. Mr. Spence related that Life Skills students were included in every activity. Ms. Parvol noted that Adams had a garden. Mr. Spence said Adams had a free lunch program. Ms. Parvol averred that the board had a habit of closing schools with less money and asked that they not close schools because of this.

Meherbaan stated that Parker was a great school. He had just started there and considered it to be "awesome."

Pablo said he attended Adams Elementary School and thanked them for not closing his school.

Mr. Smith called for the rest of the testimony.

Cindy Land asked that the 4J board reject the superintendent's recommended budget. She said though Superintendent Russell's service was greatly appreciated, the district's future should be shaped by the incoming administration. She considered Superintendent Russell's solutions to be "stampeding" the community by phasing in "big box institutional learning factories" for young children that would only save $2 million. She averred that it ignored the structural deficits embedded from unsustainable agreements. She said the budget would be decided in April or May, but a committee was working to instigate up to $181 million in a tax increase. She stated that 4J was paying $19.8 million in debt service. She declared that they
needed a full proposed 350-page budget and not just a 40-page forecast. She believed that committees would be formed to oppose the estimated $130 million bond tax increase and the proposed income tax.

Denise Trepanier, parent of two 4J students, noted that she had written an email to the board and thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Torrey for responding to her. She had been inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to write because he had advocated for all equality including social and economic disparities. She averred that there was social and economic injustice in the school district and the budget crisis presented the perfect opportunity to close the gap. She supported school closures, but she did not support the superintendent's recommendation. She proposed that they close and merge all alternative schools. She believed they should integrate into neighborhood schools so that the benefit from their innovative learning strategies, balanced class sizes, and socio-economic diversity and special education was available to all. She did not think the choice model was sustainable anymore. She also asked the district to implement the effective performance management system so that ineffective teachers could be culled from the roster.

Kathryn Frost, mother of a 2nd and 5th grader at Parker and an 8th grader at the Academy of Technology and Art (ATA), came in support of her school and the district, as well as all of the 4J district families. She had thought the district had an interesting set of choices when her oldest had entered school. She had taken advantage of it by putting her son in the lottery for Parker and the Village School. She related that they had gotten into Parker. She had come to discover that school choice was a hot topic that pitted schools and friends against one another and forced programs to compete for funding. She had assumed that the district had set up the alternative program with the long-term sustainability of the program in mind. She had come to believe she was "dead wrong." She said her son had ended up transferring to Harris Elementary and she had testified before the board at a different high school in opposition to closing it several years earlier. She was frustrated by what she considered to be the poor design of the system. She did not want to be stuck arguing the merits of her school versus her friend's schools. She wanted them to look at all of the kids and all of the opportunities to provide a rigorous and colorful education to all of the kids and reconfigure the district minus the lottery system and the language immersion and alternative schools.

Sara Ohrtman, parent of three 4J students, two of whom attended Crest Drive Elementary School, urged the board to delay any closure of Crest. She asserted that he data that the proposed closure was based upon was misleading or skewed. She averred that drastic changes should be based upon irrefutable facts alone. She believed that the true financial conditions of the district were unclear as the budget projections had changed several times, union negotiations had not begun, and further taxation or bond measure support was unknown. She felt that any construction undertaken during such a dire financial time would be a mistake. She believed that in the case of Crest Drive, more money would be spent to close the school and merge with another one than would be saved. She also thought that it made no sense to close a school prior to convening a task force to consider reconfiguration. She asked that they not constrain the task force by "making irreversible decisions now." She did not think expecting to move 500 kids in the next few months was reasonable.

Jon Berry thought that Superintendent Russell's proposal was in response to a request for a sustainable budget. Since the original proposal, the grade reconfiguration element had been taken out of the equation and the superintendent had recommended that the board appoint several committees to look at how the district should proceed in the 2013 school year and beyond. He suggested that the board not spend money in the 2011/2012 school year that...
would reduce the options that the new superintendent, the committee and the school board would have in shaping the long-term goals for the district. He urged the board not to reduce the options by closing schools in the present year. He acknowledged that while school closures created an ongoing savings, it only amounted to $1 to $1.2 million in the next year. He understood from the information presented to the board that over $1 million would be spent in the present year for the proposed closure of four elementary schools. He believed that closing schools in the present year would not save enough money to justify moving kids in the present year. He was concerned that some kids would end up moving to a different school more than once.

**Katie Drummond** had moved to Eugene six months earlier to take a job as a director of an educational non-profit agency and that she had worked in the education field for 16 years. She had picked Parker Elementary School for her son because it was “just the right school.” She believed that maybe when the bigger 4J school picture was considered carefully, with not only dollar signs, but also with an eye toward academic outcomes, equity, and innovation, there would be a better long term sustainable solution. She questioned whether it made sense to close neighborhood schools to solve less than 5 percent of the budget before the information would be gleaned from the committee processes. It did not make sense to her to close Parker, a school with outstanding AYP ratings, dedicated teachers, an excellent principal, involved parents, and sufficient physical space. It was difficult for her to understand why some schools remained on the "chopping block" while others were not being considered for closure at all. It did not make sense to her that the district would close Parker and move Charlemagne students into the building, given that Charlemagne allegedly only had 20 more students. She wanted more explanation of how these decisions had been arrived at.

**Carrie Russo** quoted Randy Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, as saying that decision-makers were more likely to choose fads, shift course, or choose reforms that lack evidence of effectiveness than they were to adopt educational approaches that had been proven successful. She asked that the district adopt successful ideas. She asserted that the model of school closures and mass teacher firings was not working. She suggested that they look at top ranking countries to see how they made it happen. She asserted that China, Russia, Brazil, and Europe had all tried the "failed model" of alternative schools, but now they outranked this country's public schools. She said in regard to the French immersion program, she understood that Superintendent Russell had said several years earlier that it was the choice idea that kept it open. She declared that leaving an alternative school open during the budget process gave the notion that the schools were "political bombs," especially given that Parker offered a Spanish language program. She noted that Spanish was the third most spoken language in the world, while French was the fifteenth most spoken language. She wanted to see evidence-based research on what immersion school would even remain open during a mass school closure. She opined that to say that it was because it was in a vision statement written three years ago was contradictory because small neighborhood schools were also a part of that vision. She asked that they research the country's with the top performing models and that they step away from the "failing model of mass school closure."

**Lisa Christon**, parent of three children in the 4J district and a member of the Crest Drive PTA and of the Site Council at Kennedy Middle School, appreciated how difficult the decision that lay ahead was going to be. She felt that the cost of closure in the next year would significantly outweigh any potential savings to the district. She asked why they should rush into it. She added that while Crest Drive was their neighborhood school, Kennedy was not, and she wondered whether any proposals before the board would consider turning the ATA back into a traditional middle school. She believed that the Family School and ATA could easily be shifted
to the Adams Elementary School building. She had sent her kids to Kennedy Middle School because she had not wanted them to attend an experimental school. She said despite the excellent education at Kennedy, she was a parent who would send her kids happily to a neighborhood middle school.

**Emily Jerome** said she had chosen Parker because it was their neighborhood school. She stated that it was diverse; her children had friends from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. She felt the program there was excellent and was glad that her kids had the opportunity to learn Spanish. She noted that they had considered sending the kids to the French immersion school, but they had looked into the school and it felt like a private school. She had considered the superintendent's first proposal with an open mind, though it had involved moving her children out of the present building. She had understood the proposal to apply to buildings that were too big for the number of students that were housed in them and that the Parker kids were proposed to be part of a K through 3rd/4th through 8th grade model, and the French immersion school would become a K through 8th grade at the Parker site. This proposal had not gone through, but the new proposal still had them moved out of the Parker school and dispersed to several schools. She did not feel that the board had addressed the facility issue in moving a school that was only 21 people larger than Parker to the Parker site.

**Kim O’Grady** advocated for keeping Crest Drive open. She had chosen the school because her child had special needs. She believed that his success was due to the consistency there. It was hard for her to imagine what the next year would be like. She felt that if the school closed, it would add to her son’s struggles for years to come.

**Michelle Lodwig** observed that it would take courage and patience to decide that the board did not have enough answers to close all of the schools on the list. She asked the board to consider how many significant questions did not have answers yet, such as whether the closures would be consistent with the vision of the new superintendent, whether they were allowing staff and families affected to have successful transitions in the short timeframe and under the impact of the other cuts. She believed that if the district closed schools in the present, it would make it harder for voters to pass a bond measure that would be dedicated in part to school expansion. She asked if the district was really ready to commit over $1 million to the closures when they might not be consistent with decisions they would make in the next year or two about language immersion, alternative schools, and equity. She declared that the board did not have enough answers to undertake school closures in the present year; postponing closures was the prudent thing to do.

**Ian McNeely**, father of two children attending Edison Elementary School, declared that the board was elected leaders and they should lead. He urged the board to call the current fiscal crisis an emergency, help make the public understand that it is not the teachers’ fault, and take "an angry mob to Salem." He asked them to tell the city that if it enacted a temporary, progressive income tax it would be used to add back school days, hold the line on class sizes, and hire back teachers. He also asked that if the council approved putting a tax on the ballot, the board consider delaying the placement of the capital bond measure on the ballot. He declared that the first priority should be the kids in the buildings. He hoped the board would "step up" and campaign for the tax. He noted that four of the board members were up for reelection in May. He stated that he voted for people who treat high quality education as a non-negotiable public benefit no matter what the cost.

**Tara Sloan** stated that Parker Elementary was her neighborhood school and she served on the site council. She understood that balancing the budget was a complicated issue, but
questioned why they saw it as in the best interest of the district to replace Parker with Charlemagne French Immersion School. She said if her child's school closed, she wanted to be sure that there was no better alternative. She noted that the initial proposal cited economies of scale that could be achieved by the move because the Parker site could house a K through 8th grade language immersion school. Since then the grade configuration had been taken off the table. She said another reason stated for the move was to make Charlemagne more accessible, yet the move would only take the school 1.3 miles from its present site. She believed that moving it eight miles to the Adams site was the only logical thing to do since it was in both the South Eugene and Churchill High School regions. She acknowledged that this would require relocating the Adams Elementary students somewhere, but she believed that Parker was a big enough facility that it could take all of the Adams students and the Crest Drive students, too. She thought this would lead to thoughtful boundary redesign.

**Matt Ramsey** shared that his daughter, a Kindergartener at Parker Elementary, had asked him to ask the board not to close her school. He wanted the board to explain why Charlemagne would be spared and Parker closed and why immersion schools were passed over for closure. He opined that one theory would be that the district did not want to anger the economically elite. He related that some Parker parents fell they were about to be "thrown under the bus" in an effort to "appease the rich." He asked if "trickle down education for all" was the educational model that best served the community. He opined that the board's silence on this issue "was deafening."

**Donna McFarland** noted that the local option levy was for $11.6 million and said she did not know how much was used for Crest Drive. She stated that home prices were affected by the schools in place in neighborhoods. She related that 13 out of 15 realtors she had spoken to predicted property values would fall in the Crest Drive area without the school, and this would translate to less revenue for the school district. She said this would be a long-term incremental loss of up to several hundred thousand dollars per year. She asked them to carefully consider the long-term effects of decisions made.

**Josephine von Hipple** stated that her three children had attended Crest Drive and she considered it an excellent school. She noted that recently some of the students had won prizes for their writing. She said the school community had felt it needed help with writing skills and had organized writing workshops over the summer. She underscored that it was a community school that served an area buses were challenged to get to. She related that her kids walked to school, adding that kids needed to walk more. She had attended the City Club presentation on the preceding Friday and they had talked about the proposed graduated local income tax. She said they should think on the budget proposal and postpone making changes to the schools until after the tax had been placed on the ballot.

**Scott Mahady**, father of a first grader at Adams Elementary School, acknowledged that the board was faced with a difficult decision. He asked them to compare the benefits of consolidating Adams and Crest Drive versus keeping Crest Drive open. He believed consolidating two smaller schools into one larger school provided a lot of benefits to education and the opportunities to add music and the arts to the curriculum. He thought it was an equity issue as much as it was a financial issue. He felt that if they had to make a decision to consolidate, they needed to consider the impact on all students across the range of educational interests and not just math, reading, and the basics. He underscored the willingness of the Adams community to join with the Crest Drive community to build an excellent school.
Jules DeGiulio averred that the board had lost their vision. He asked them to reconsider closing schools. He feared the losses that would be felt if all of the neighborhood schools were slated for closure. He believed that the community would be diminished by the loss of its neighborhood schools. He did not think they could afford to damage the cohesion they provided. He believed this was an essential foundational element that should not be overlooked. He averred that the small schools were worth the effort and the money. He remarked that there was enough in the world that separated people from one another and asked that the district not contribute to this separation. He commented that no noise was as precious as schoolyard noise; this was a precious commodity that belonged to everyone and students should be kept in their neighborhood schools.

Stacey Harris said the public schools were for the public but because of the budget cuts it was becoming the least desirable educational option. She stated that 80 percent of the families that had children attending Howard Elementary were at or below poverty level and furlough days caused some students to miss breakfast and lunch. She said changing the student/teacher ratio would affect every school and this would affect the city as a whole.

Tasha Hennings, a Crest Drive Elementary School parent, said the decisions to be made would affect the integrity of the entire district and not just the schools that were represented at the present hearing. She likened it to a "butterfly effect." She echoed concerns that the decisions should not be made before the new superintendent was seated. She suggested that one idea would be to move Adams into the ATA facility, which was listed as having an 870 student capacity. She felt it would be a great community school. She reiterated that moving Crest Drive into Adams would cause Adams to lose its Title 1 funding.

Ali Thomson read letters from Parker Elementary School student parents. The first one related that a son could not read at the end of 2nd grade, but after moving to Parker he caught up and was reading at his grade level at the end of 4th grade. The second one called out the seeming contradiction in the superintendent's words from several years earlier in which he indicated that neighborhood schools were a priority and the proposal to close several neighborhood schools in the present. The writer thought the neighborhood schools were being closed instead of closing alternative schools and wanted to know the district's policies. There was also concern expressed about how the closures would disrupt the feeder process into the middle schools. Then Ms. Thomson gave her own testimony. She declared that if the board shut down Parker Elementary School they would be shutting down one of the most successful schools in the district.

Kirsten Haugen stated that she was parent of two district 4J students, one of which had special needs, a site council parent for a middle school and that she had started a blog called wesupporteugeneschools.org. She believed they were having the wrong debate and asking the wrong questions. She said they needed to ask how the district could do better, instead of what to close and who to lay off. She urged the board to take leadership on promoting a modest progressive short-term tax so that the district could help to avoid massive increases in class size that would be unhealthy for students in the long-term and to restore school days.

Felicia Hord had chosen to live in the Crest Drive Elementary School area because of the school. She had been following the budget proposal proceedings and she thought Crest Drive had the ability to expand and absorb students from other schools. She suggested that it might be appropriate to redraw the boundaries. She considered it reprehensible to close the only elementary school south of 22nd Avenue especially in light of the transportation issues that
trying to bus students from that area to another school presented and the costs associated with transporting them and the transition to a new school.

Betty Snowden found it hard not to have compassion after listening to some of the testimony about school closures. She related that her daughter had attended Parker Elementary School. She believed that her daughter became the woman she is today, in part, because of Parker. She recommended that there be time to gather more data and to do more research because she did not think they had enough information to make big changes in the lives of the children and their parents. She said she would like to sit down with the board, as would many of the parents, and have them show the data that they had to justify closing the schools. She did not see it. She understood that it was a budget crisis, but she did not want to see teachers laid off because that would hurt the community further and would hurt their families.

Jennifer Snelling, parent of an Adams Elementary School 1st grader, asked that the board act on the superintendent's recommendation, even if it was painful. She wanted them to be leaders and do what needed to be done for the good of the community in order to eliminate the uncertainty that has hung over all of the schools. She averred that parents, staff, and teachers needed to move on and begin to build the future, whatever it would look like. She supported the superintendent's recommendation and wanted to assure the Crest Drive community that the school had always intended to approach a consolidation as a partnership. She said they hoped as many Crest Drive teachers as possible would be able to move to Adams as a group and participate on equal footing in creating "an enhanced educational program" that brought together the best of the two schools.

Rich Desmond advocated against closing any of the neighborhood schools. He understood that if that was an option, it would be the one the board would choose. He said if there was any way it could be done, he supported doing it. He recalled that Larry Sullivan, Director of Educational Support Services, had mentioned at the previous board meeting that moving the Charlemagne French Immersion School to the Adams campus would mean that Adams' Life Skills program could not stay there. He noted that in addition to the Life Skills program, the Learning Center and the Comprehensive Learning Center would also have to move. He stated that those programs were working well for his family and many others. He reiterated that the Adams campus was one of the most accessible for students with physical disabilities and asked the board to keep this in mind as they made their decision.

Melanie William, Parker Elementary School parent, encouraged the board to delay the decision as she felt they needed more information. She commented that she had been "pleasantly surprised" to see the breakdown of numbers between Adams and Crest Drive but she had not seen the numbers for Parker and wondered why that was. She said that between Camas Ridge, Edison, and Parker Elementary the Parker building had the largest capacity. She averred that Edison was small and expensive to run and questioned leaving that school open. She had two kids attending Parker and she considered it to be a "fabulous" school. She added that the teachers had kept Spanish in the schools in spite of budget cuts, as well as physical education, art, and music.

Hilary Lord, parent of two Parker students, said she understood the situation and the need for school closures but she wanted to make sure the process was being considered with the long-term in mind. She had written a long letter to the board outlining her concerns. She recalled that the board had spent time in the previous week's meeting discussing a report and chart that highlighted the pros and cons of closing Crest Drive Elementary. She thought this had been an important process to do, but there had only been a few lines in the report on Parker. She urged
the board to please give all schools the same level of consideration. She said Parker was the only school the board was considering for closure that was being divided.

**Abraham** declared that the district did not need to close any schools. He had found some alternative funding in a document called the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. He said this report provided information used by investors to determine the state's fiscal integrity. He read aloud from the report, extrapolating from the information that there was a surplus in funding that could be allocated differently.

**Charles Hibberd** said his kids had graduated from Churchill High School and had "turned out good." He was not opposed to the teachers and had yet to meet a teacher that was not committed to the work they were doing. Nonetheless, he believed that 80 percent of the budget was mostly "controlled" by the Eugene Education Association (EEA). He felt that unions needed to make sacrifices and he was not willing to support any local tax until they did. He related that he had to cut his workers' pay because of the current economic conditions. He added that he considered furlough days to be a "day off."

**Rachael Latimer** related that she had a 4th grader at Parker Elementary School who had struggled for two years at another school. She did not think moving Charlemagne to Parker would meet the objective of increasing accessibility. She did not think the current proposal was logical and she hoped the board would look more closely for alternatives.

**Nancy Willard** understood that the district needed to close some schools but felt the question was which ones. She reiterated her belief that the district promoted inequity by allowing alternative schools. She called it a "two-tiered system of schools" and averred that it was discrimination against children with special needs. She related that she had filed a complaint in the United States Department of Education.

**Laurel McCorkle-Diaz** averred that moving Crest Drive to Adams would create a feeder issue because the new hybrid would feed all of the middle schools. She said the decision to blend schools might be purely financial but "at the end of the day" but it would cost families who live in her neighborhood. She noted that students who would be heading to Spencer Butte Middle School would make up only 10 percent of the population at Adams. She observed that the present recommendation would leave only one school in their neighborhood that would allow their children to go on to middle school with their cohort and that was the French immersion school. She urged the board to proceed with caution.

**Susan Hudlow** said her child had a better experience at Parker Elementary because the staff and teachers there really cared about the students. She hoped the board would see the parents in support of keeping Parker open as "more than noise." She did not understand the haste in the decision and why there was only one option. She urged them to consider what the district would save in light of what it would lose and that a new superintendent would be seated soon. She believed the closures would make Eugene a less desirable place to live. She also agreed that allowing Charlemagne to take Parker's place was inequitable.

**Pam Garrison** had chosen to live in Eugene because of the school system. She now felt badly that she had brought her family here. She found it very heartbreaking to face the school closure and wanted to stress the negative effect this action was having on families.

**Stephen Wilde** questioned how Spencer Butte Middle School could continue to be sustainable without Parker Elementary to feed students into it.
Amber Thorsen considered neighborhood schools to be the backbone of the community. She related that she had chosen an alternative school for her children but had given it up. She had come to Parker Elementary and found it to be "the best school" she could imagine. She believed that the district was sustaining charter schools and prioritizing alternative schools and closing neighborhood schools just as the superintendent was about to leave. She believed this to be the opposite of sustainable. She asked the board to wait, do research, convene the task force, and find out what they really needed to do.

Jim Ayama-Clifford related that his family had switched from an alternative school to Parker because his kid was "getting beat up" and there had been no consequences for the perpetrator. They had made a lot of friends at Parker and he considered it a great school. He recalled the Santa Clara Elementary school, which had closed. He felt that it had been a legacy building and could have been passed on to the next generation for another use, but it had been demolished instead. He considered the 'for sale' sign on that site to be an epitaph for the failing policy and lack of vision on the part of the administration up until now. He urged the board not to "shut down" neighborhood schools, calling them the "lifeblood of the community."

Mandy Beall said all of the district's schools were in for big changes in the coming year even if only some of the proposed cuts were implemented; teachers would be moved to different schools and class sizes were going to increase. She echoed the sentiment that the school closures be delayed until after the task forces that were convened had come up with their recommendations. She urged the board not to close schools until the staff was confident they could still provide a quality education to all of the students. She had heard the reasons for closing schools was nearly equal to the estimated savings. She said her daughter was a Kindergartener at Crest Drive Elementary. She also wanted to know that, in the case of Crest Drive closing, her daughter would not have to then move to a different school again in the next year due to reconfiguration and other district changes.

Randall Klein was shocked by the percentage that savings from school closures were in the budget, calling it "miniscule." He likened it to a family budget and said they were saving money but causing a lot of hurt. He had heard that a lot of people had moved to Eugene because of the school system but he did not think this would continue to happen. He reiterated that it seemed that charter and alternative schools were spared. He said he had two children who went to Crest Drive Elementary and he considered it to be one of the best schools in Oregon.

Fiora Starchild-Wolf stated that all three of her children had been in the alternative schools; her youngest daughter was a student at the Village School. She did not think it was helpful to pit neighborhood and charter and alternative schools against one another. She underscored that whether a school was a neighborhood or charter school, all schools were valued by their families. She disputed the charge that alternative schools fostered elitism and noted that her family had been on food stamps when her oldest daughter had begun school. She said the Eugene program for alternative and charter schools allowed low-income families the opportunity to participate in programs, not determined only by where they lived but rather by what they wanted to choose to offer their kids.

Don St. Clair commented that the school system in Edmonton, Canada, which he alleged was the best school system in North America. He was distressed by the process the district was engaged in which seemed to pit parents from one type of school against parents from another type of school. He likened it to a "divide and conquer" mentality. He noted that his kids had
attended the Magnet Arts School, now closed, and the Village School and he and his partner were “just poor hippies.” He averred that his daughter needed a different teaching style that he did not think “giant cookie cutter mega-schools” could provide. He thought the government should start closing tax loopholes for big corporations instead of cutting money to school districts.

Mark Callahan, father of two daughters in the School District 4J, asked why there had been a priority placed on preserving alternative schools in separate buildings while closing neighborhood schools. He believed that the decisions seemed to be contradictory to the school district’s goal of being more inclusive. He considered this segregationist behavior and wrong. He asserted that integrated neighborhood schools were key to the students’ success.

Mr. Smith called for a break at 8:50 p.m., reconvening at 9 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSALS FOR COBURG COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL, COLLEGE OF KNOWLEDGE, AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

On November 15, the district received charter school proposals for Coburg Community Charter School, College of Knowledge and International School of Modern Technology. Copies of the main sections of the proposals were included in the board packet.

Under Oregon law and district board policy, the board is required to hold a public hearing on the provisions of a charter school proposal prior to determining whether to approve or deny the proposal. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment and to use that information to help determine “the demonstrated, sustainable support for the public charter school by teachers, parents, students and other community members.”

The board was scheduled to conduct a public hearing at the present meeting; receive the superintendent’s recommendations for approving or disapproving the charter school proposals on Tuesday, January 25; and take action on the proposals on Wednesday, February 2, 2011.

Mr. Smith explained that representatives of the proposals would speak first.

Molly Smith, representing the proposal from the Coburg Community Charter School, said after the Coburg Elementary School had once again been slated for closure a group of citizens formed to apply to become a charter school. She declared that the time was right for Coburg to partner with the District 4J to keep an elementary school in Coburg. She averred that the economies of scale that the district was proposing were a “friend to budget” but not a friend to communities. She said Coburg had something as important as knowledge to offer its children: community. She explained that the proposed charter school would provide a full day Kindergarten through 5th grade program, with the potential to expand up to 8th grade eventually. She stated that they planned to limit class size to 25. She related that it was their intention to make Friday a day for community service projects. She outlined the support the school had garnered, which included a number of Coburg public entities and community associations. She stated that the parent organization had raised over $100,000 thus far. She said they planned to use a proven sequence curriculum. She concluded by declaring the school to be the hub of their community. She said closure would devastate Coburg.

Sharon Dursi, director of the proposal from the College of Knowledge, explained that the school provided education to 100 at-risk students. She related that the school had Department
of Education support, both financial and philosophical, and had received positive responses in the community. She stated that they brought experience in helping the at-risk learners in Eugene. She believed that the kids the school focused on could become stellar learners. She observed that the school would seek to address issues that budget cuts would only exacerbate regarding these students. She assured the board that the College of Knowledge curriculum was designed with the new graduation requirements in mind. She averred that budget cuts were a continuing threat to academic excellence and in the face of the cuts, the College of Knowledge would offer an education that would look to the academic strengths for students and would allow for real differentiation. She said the College of Knowledge offered academic strength for their students and its rigorous idea-based curriculum stressed scientific inquiry, experimentation, critical thinking, and creative expression on and off campus. She felt that if the district wanted to engage struggling kids, it needed to find ways to engage them in a meaningful way. She believed that without a program such as the one they were offering, the achievement gap could widen. She underscored that a lot of the kids that came into their program faced serious barriers. They offered these kids a clean slate and a commitment to education and innovation. She said they had high and realistic expectations of the kids; they wanted to see them moving ahead with intellectual dexterity into their lives.

Arbrella Luvert, representing the proposal from the International School of Modern Technology, observed that we are living in challenging times, but she had learned from 30-plus years with the district that solutions would always occur. She said she had hope that there would be a time when they would not have to squabble about limited education funding. She stated that there were many kids who were "off the radar" for a long time and had a high rate of dropping out. She explained that the target audience for the proposed charter school was perhaps the most unknown group of students, a group so discouraged by public schools that they needed a chance in another setting. She pointed out that students of color were underrepresented in the advanced placement (AP) classes. She said students of color were challenged to learn because they did not have a culturally responsive environment. She said the demographics of the city were changing quickly and the schools were not able to readily adapt to them. She believed that the International School of Modern Technology would provide access to and equity for students and parents who want to return to public education. She understood that the school would be asked to operate on 80 percent of what was budgeted ordinarily for schools and that this meant the district would receive less money, but the school they were proposing would bring families back to the district who were not currently there because they were not happy with it. She added that they would be bringing 35-plus years of experience to build a school that the district could be proud of, a school that fostered high expectations of its students.

Mr. Smith opened the floor for public testimony.

Neil Van Steenbergen recalled that he had come to Eugene in 1993 after teaching high school in Long Beach, California. He listed his credentials. He noted that he had served on the Human Rights Commission and the Police Commission. He expressed his support for the International School of Modern Technology. He believed in the purpose of the program and the vision it had of technology. He saw the program as having potential for bringing students back into the district that had dropped out.

Henry Luvert related that he had worked with School District 4J with the NAACP delegation and with the very students they were speaking of. He averred that there were a lot of disenfranchised students, and that the district was not seeing them but the proponents of the school saw them. He said the problem had been going on a long time and no one was
addressing the needs of the people who fell into the achievement gap. He stated that this was why they were developing the International School of Modern Technology; they knew how to address the students that were falling through the gap. He said how diversity would be impacted by cuts was important, because the board needed to be advised that when they made the cuts, the district was going to lose a lot of students. He observed that if the students went to a private school, the district received nothing but when a charter school formed, the district still received 20 percent of the school funding.

Kenya Luvert had attended Parker Elementary School as a child. She shared that her experience there as a black student had not been as rosy as the Parker parents had portrayed it. She stressed that she would not recommend the closure of the school, however, rather she was there to express support for the International School of Modern Technology. She stated that the school would employ teachers and staff that were culturally competent, which was something she did not necessarily get when she was a 4J student, and would have a curriculum that was inclusive and reduce the achievement gap. She noted that she was coming up on her 20th high school reunion. She worked with African American high school students and was discouraged to find out that a lot of their experiences were the same as hers 20 years ago. She found this unacceptable because she now had a four-year-old daughter. She wanted to place her in a school that addressed cultural competence and that was inclusive. She did not want another 20 years to go by with students experiencing the same things she herself had experienced.

Ev Marcel, associate director of the College of Knowledge, stated that they worked with kids who wanted to go to school but who were disenfranchised. She said there were smart kids on the street who were not going to school and they knew how to reach them. She suggested that the district look at the school as an income stream because it would bring in young people who were not currently going to school. She closed by reading her favorite quote: "some people stand in the present and look towards the future and try to figure out how things are going to be, visionaries stand in the future and look back to the present and see how they are connected to it."

Joshua Stroud said it was good to see the passionate support for Parker Elementary School. He felt they needed to keep a school if it was working. He noted that his kids attended the Yujin Gakuen School. He said his son was thriving in the program. He did not believe that charter schools were failing. He had 238 surveys of parents who were desperate to get their children into alternative school programs and some were willing to pay. He explained that these were parents who had traditionally gotten the short end of the stick. He had taken his kids out of Willamette Christian School because he could not afford it, but the option of placing them in Yujin Gakuen had presented an amazing opportunity. He related that he had grown up in Los Angeles and had attended a school that was more than 50 percent Asian. He believed he had received a rigorous education due, in part, to this. He believed that the International School of Modern Technology would provide this same type of environment for parents who could not afford to send their kids to Willamette Christian School or Marist High School.

Betty Snowden stated that a leader was one who listened to the people and the community and she felt that the people had spoken at this meeting. She said the International School of Modern Technology had her full support, but she also supported approval of the other two charter school applications. She averred that it was up to the board to put the community back together and asked them to listen, ponder, and put themselves in the place of the parents. She also asked that they remember that when people lost their jobs they no longer had an income.
Abbey Borkin said she worked with at risk youth, but she was also a fiscal conservative. She declared that making sure the young people of Eugene were well-educated was not only the right thing to do, it was the financially responsible thing to do. She stressed that it cost the community more when kids did not get to have the life they deserved to live and were not picked up somehow. She believed that the Eugene school board needed more vision because investing in youth now saved money in the future.

Jacqueline Welch spoke in support of the International School of Modern Technology. She explained that she was the mother of an eight-year-old girl who was currently enrolled in a private school. She saw many benefits of the school for students in the community. She related that she had talked to many parents who were excited about this charter school.

Fiora Starchild-Wolf said she taught at Lane Community College and her Masters in Science in Education (MS Ed) degree had focused entirely on how to bring more women and other underserved populations into stem education. She asserted that most people did not understand that all things were currently made "primarily by white males." She averred that they wanted other people involved in developing technology and science and in gaining access to the long-term jobs. She supported the International School of Modern Technology. She said they needed to open doors to those who would not see themselves in school at all.

CONSENT GROUP - ITEMS FOR ACTION

Approve a Change in Policy JECC, School Choice, for High School Students

Action Proposed
Change the school choice application deadline for high schools to March 18, 2011 at 5 p.m.

Background
The board approved a change of the school choice application deadline for the 2011-2012 school year from March 18, 2011 to April 22, 2011. This decision was based on the belief that any announcement of school closures or consolidations for 2011-2012 would be made by early February and that families would need time beyond March to make school choice decisions.

It has now become evident that high schools will not be impacted by school closure or consolidation in 2011-12. Given the time needed for students to request 2011-2012 classes and for developing a 2011-2012 master class schedule at each of our high schools, the deadline it being proposed to be changed for school choice at the high school level to the original deadline of March 18, 2011.

Discussion

Rationale
The April deadline delays the high school class registration and master scheduling process. High school staffs will have difficulty processing student class requests for 2011-20-12 and then developing their school's master schedule in a timely manner.

Options and Alternatives
An option is to leave the school choice application deadline for high schools at April 22, 2011.
Budget Resource Implications
Changing the school choice application deadline for high schools to March 18, 2011 will potentially save costs in overtime or extended day pay accrued when staff must process student request for classes and develop school master schedules on a shorter timeline.

Board and Superintendent Goals
The proposed change supports meeting student needs as fully as possible, supports staff efforts to complete necessary work, and supports school operations, including morale and overall school climate.

Recommendations
The superintendent recommends that the school choice application deadline at the high school be changed to March 18, 2011 at 5 p.m.

A copy of the proposed policy changes was included in the board packet.

MOTION:  Ms. Gerot, seconded by Ms. Levis, moved to approve the Items in the Consent Group.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS BY INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS
Ms. Geller expressed appreciation for all of the comments. She related that former board member Charles Martinez had received a Martin Luther King award at the Hult Center. She had attended the Equity Committee meeting; she thanked them for having a special meeting so that they could come and bring comments before the board again. She had attended the City Club meeting at which the possible local revenue solutions for schools were discussed. She thought they had done a good job in talking about myths in school funding; one thing that had struck her was that furlough days were not free -- they had a cost to the economy and to the children who did not have access to programs or as much food. She said the City Council would be meeting to discuss it further on January 24. She also noted that there would be a Stand for Children meeting on January 22. She believed that part of the financial challenge lay in the economy, but part of it was also attributable to long-term revenue and legal structural issues that they needed to address as a statewide community. Additionally, she asked that they mark their calendars for Presidents Day and consider joining them because many people would be in Salem on that day lobbying the officials on behalf of the schools.

Mr. Torrey observed that it hardly seemed that it had only been six months since they had initiated the sustainable budget process. He stressed that it did make a difference when members of the public sent emails and provided testimony. He appreciated that they were willing to do so.

Ms. Levis reported that the Eugene Education Fund had held a meeting earlier in the day. She said last year's budget was exceeded; the community clearly supported education. She also took note of the Equity Committee's special meeting, held earlier in the day. She felt that the board and administration lost sight of the kids whose parents do not come out to testify before the board.

Ms. Gerot commented that any time they were discussing school closures she was taken by how deeply people cared for their kids’ schools. She observed that there were no good choices
before them. She related that Springfield School District superintendent Nancy Golden, recently named Governor Kitzhaber’s education advisor, would be at the Rotary Club meeting to be held on January 25 to talk about some of the thinking around the transformation of education and other services in the community. She also noted that the Superintendent Search Committee had met on the previous day and had looked at 28 applications and had begun to look at semi-finalists.

Ms. Hays thanked everyone. She had found it incredible to see the community come out and voice their concerns, their frustration, and their anger and sorrow. She appreciated what Ms. Snowden had said. She thanked everyone for coming and providing testimony.

Mr. Smith thanked everyone. He echoed appreciation for the opportunity to listen to what people had to say and he wanted to assure everyone that they were reading their emails. He said he had been attending the City Council’s meetings on taxation and a meeting attended by State Senator Lee Beyer and State Representative Paul Holvey with the Eugene Education Association. He had found the meeting to be very informative.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Smith adjournced the meeting of the School District 4J School Board at 9:45 p.m.

_________________________   ______________________
George Russell     Craig Smith
District Clerk      Board Chair

*(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)*

*Attachments to Official Minutes:*
*T. School Choice – Policy JECC*