

MINUTES
Special Meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Corvallis School District 509J
1555 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, OR 97330

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, 1555 SW 35th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. The secretary recorded those present as listed below.

<u>BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>EXECUTIVE STAFF PRESENT</u>
Blake Rodman, Chair Matt Donohue, Vice Chair Helen Higgins (Joined by phone) Lisa Corrigan Bill Ten Pas Anne Schuster John Turman	Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent Steve Youngblood, Assistant Superintendent Kathleen Walker, Student Services Director Kathy Rodeman, Business Director Jeanne Holmes, Human Resources Director

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Rodman led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Rodman invited audience members to introduce themselves and state their affiliation with the District.

III. MUDDY CREEK CHARTER SCHOOL REQUEST TO ADD SIXTH GRADE

Chair Rodman referenced the letter and amendment the Board received at the beginning of the meeting. (Filed as Supplemental Item #IV-18 in the Official 2008-2009 Board Minutes.) He said that the Board would hear from Muddy Creek Charter School (MCCS), discuss the presentation, and take action on the proposed amendment.

Kathleen Westly and Payton James-Amberg, both on the MCCS board of directors, presented.

A summary of the comments made by Ms. Westly:

- Staff is excellent. Five students have withdrawn within the year, but four are now back at MCCS and one will be returning. Good turnout at events and have every reason to think the school will be full next year. Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) testing is going well and there is a plan in place to fix ceiling tiles, in cooperation with the District.
- Requesting to reconfigure MCCS distribution to include 6th grade.
- Not asking for an increase in the 85 student cap, but suggesting an amendment to the contract. Makes sense to do this now.
- Small school setting is best for some schools in the District. MCCS is following Montessori theory of development. 6th grade is a sensible developmental time to offer families following this theory.
- Small school setting can help 6th graders get their feet under them before transition to larger middle school. MCCS would have transition system in place.
- At time of original proposal it was founder's vision to have 6th grade. Have nearly unanimous request from families to have 6th grade.
- Addition would help MCCS equalize grade distributions, which would reduce some stress for teachers and grade blends, and would give current and prospective families a clear understanding of grade progressions.

A summary of the comments made by Ms. James-Amberg:

- Given poor economic outlook and forced reductions it is understandable there is concern about whether the District can afford to implement the program.
- Economic forecast is why MCCS is asking for this now. Incentive start up grant money runs out in May; can be used to outfit science lab, purchase 6th grade curriculum. However, grant money will be use for fourth classroom regardless of grade distribution.
- Makes it easier to do 6th grade now. Grant proposal did include 6th grade.
- Will not change MCCS's impact on District. Number of students will not change; MCCS will be at capacity and will receive same amount of money regardless. An 85 student impact was acceptable per agreement made with the Board.

A summary of Board questions, discussion and MCCS responses:

- Why stop at 6th grade? Feel the drift toward 7th or 8th grade? (Turman)
Response: Not asking for more students or thinking that the District would allow it. There is no time frame currently for adding 7th or 8th grade. (James-Amberg)
When Inavale Elementary school had a K-8 program there was a requirement for modulars. It is a much different scenario for MCCS. Not ready to do that anytime soon. (Westly)
- Have no idea how those kids are doing. To increase a grade, how does the Board know if they are doing well or not? Is MCCS testing the kids? (Schuster)
Response: Doing OAKS testing now; kids have up to three times to retest if needed. We will not have comparison data until next year. Feedback from teacher of children being tested is

that there is a full range of kids. Some will need time and some are doing well. Teachers feel strong about results coming in now. Will not have hard test data until next year.

Chair Rodman thanked Ms. Westly and Ms. James-Amberg.

Assistant Superintendent Youngblood and Business Director Kathy Rodeman summarized the District's position.

A summary of the comments made by Dr. Youngblood:

- Ms. Westly and Dr. Youngblood have met twice. Curriculum and Staff Development Coordinator Mike Stowbridge, Ms. Rodeman and Dr. Youngblood met after that.
- Mr. Stowbridge and Dr. Youngblood raised several concerns.
- Concerned about change in state regulations for middle school. Fairly certain state will move to integrated science approach. Concerned about the lab experience at M CCS. Also concern about increase in high school math requirements and whether M CCS will be able to differentiate and prepare kids for increased rigor in high school.
- Concerned about transition kids will make; kids in 6th grade transition have supports in place. Kids transitioning from M CCS may not have same supports in place.
- Concerned that it will be a challenge to the District budget.
- Highly concerned about the lack of evidence so far about M CCS's success.
- M CCS did attempt to address the issues.
- He shared with M CCS at the time that he could not, in good faith, recommend to the Board adding 6th grade. A year from now could be different. With no evidence irresponsible to recommend.
- There might be a budget issue.

A summary of the comments made by Ms. Rodeman:

- The District currently offers a 6-8th grade project based, environmental studies program [at Lincoln K-8]. Concerned that an expansion at M CCS would affect Lincoln.
- Asked for clarification on whether or not an earlier proposal was to eliminate kindergarten.
Response: That is not correct. (Westly)
- As long as there is the same distribution from kindergarten through the ending grade there is no cost differential. If there are a higher proportion of the upper grades it would cost more money from District.

A summary of Board questions and responses:

- Verify that Lincoln will be kept open? (Corrigan)
Response: Correct. There is room for 19 to 20 students in Lincoln's 6th grade. Lincoln's program is project-based and environmental, much like M CCS. (Youngblood)

- Sounded like most students for a potential 6th grade class at M CCS would come from 5th grade. (Turman)
Response: Yes. Certainly next year would be from own 5th grade. (Westly)
- Lincoln was full in the past with no waiting list. (Turman)
Response: Have not yet been full, no waiting list. This year Lincoln almost hit enrollment target; previous two years they were under. They can have between 60-64 students. (Rodeman)
- There was some misinformation from some constituents about waiting lists at Lincoln in the past. (Chair Rodman)
- The District runs lotteries for all waiting lists; there has never been one at Lincoln K-8. 7th and 8th grades have been historically smaller classes at Lincoln. (Superintendent Tarzian)
- Of the M CCS students do we know how many would be naturally boundaried into the District? (Turman)
Response: Five are boundaried to Linus Pauling Middle School and one to Cheldelin Middle School. (Youngblood)

MOTION #26: It was moved by Director Turman and seconded by Director Schuster to approve the amendment to Muddy Creek Charter School.

The Board desired to discuss the motion before taking a vote.

A summary of Board discussion:

- Really believe in offering options, but at this time there are a lot of options for 6th graders in the District. 6th grade is a great time to transition. Have some concerns about the lack of testing, and also worried about M CCS wanting a 7th or 8th grade later. Better to make this clean and then come back in two to three years. (Corrigan)
- Since Lincoln K-8 will stay, it is a viable option for M CCS 5th graders. The lack of evidence is concerning. Seems too soon [to add 6th grade]. (Schuster)
- Original proposal was a 1st-6th grade, and that was rejected. Charter school reworked it and came back with a K-5th and that was feasible. Reiterate that at the elementary level a lot of work has been done to get schools to an affordable level for the District. When the District could pass the levy and cut classes it found that elementary class population was tight. M CCS is a little valve for that overflow. Middle schools have ample capacity, and both the 6th-8th and K-8th have room. Would like to see students boundaried to Corvallis work into those programs. Feels like Board rejected the original proposal with 6th grade and accepted the K-5 proposal because it worked better. (Chair Rodman)
- Concerns are the lack of testing and the Lincoln program. M CCS is relatively young and it was a program transferred from Inavale Elementary. M CCS has worked to get up and running, but it has not been very long. There is a natural transition from M CCS curriculum

[into Lincoln] and would be hesitant to do anything that may negatively impact Lincoln program. Lincoln creates the same alternative as a MCCS 6th grade would. (Vice Chair Donohue)

- Opposed because the transition from 5th to 6th grade is important. New friendships and groups are formed. Have seen homeschoolers come in [with difficulty]. It is socially very difficult. Alignment of curriculum is a concern, and math and science are important. Would like to have Board input on science at MCCS. Expansion does not benefit the District and the Board must look at that. Was convinced for MCCS because it offers an alternative, but not convinced 6th grade alternative is good for the District. (Ten Pas)

MOTION #26 was voted on and unanimously opposed.

Superintendent Tarzian said she would make a request of middle school staff to support the transition of MCCS students into the middle schools, regardless of the school into which they transition.

IV. BUDGET UPDATES

Business Director Rodeman presented a budget update. A packet was provided for the Board. (Filed as Supplemental Item #VII-18 in the Official 2008-09 Board Minutes.) She highlighted two graphs from the State Economist's forecast for the Board and highlighted interesting points, such as the peak-to-trough measurement and the return-to-peak measurement.

A summary of the comments made by Ms. Rodeman:

A. 2008-09

- Oregon has lost 100,000 jobs, 78% of those were in the final quarter. Compares with 1980-82 recession.
- Peak-to-trough is when the recession begins to the lowest, deepest part of the recession; estimate is eight quarters (two years) to move through peak-to-trough. If it really began in December 2007 should see some relief December 2009. Return to peak is nineteen quarters.
- Waiting for information on "how bad is bad". It was almost a relief to have \$1 billion shortfall on revenue. Offsets will make the affect \$850 million to state revenue fund.
- Referred to page 2 of packet and read through the numbers. Shortfall of \$3.5 million for the District in February if there are no offsets of any kind.
- Co-chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee have a budget proposal that will target stimulus money that will offset some of the cuts to education.
- Another group, the Coalition of Public Safety, Human Services and Education, has put together a proposal trying to hold school districts harmless at the November 2008 shortfall amount.
- More information is out about the Federal Stimulus package in regard to school districts. There is \$570 million available to Oregon, with 61% needed to be used for education over

the biennium, so there are three years to spend it in. Includes universities.

- There may be supplemental funds available for Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for special education.
- All streams of funding are limited in term.
- State Stabilization Fund is to let states continue to provide services.
- Still trying to figure out what strings are attached to supplemental funds; there are already rules and regulations for what it can and cannot be used for. Waiting for information from the federal Department of Education about this funding.
- Would be reluctant to add staff for just two years, when there is an enormous infusion of money. Would be looking at options to invest in for benefits over longer period of time.
- There was a loss to state lottery money due to the recession. This year that loss is offset by administrative savings, but next year a shortfall is expected on overall lottery revenue.
- Bottom line: Figures for February 2009 [on the page 2] are new low and affects Corvallis at \$3.5 million if there is no offset from the stimulus or coalition money.

B. 2009-10

- February 2009 figure is \$7.1 to \$7.5 million. If things were allocated across the board that would be the District's share of the shortfall.
- There will be legislative changes to come.
- Several Board members were here during 2000-03, and know that information about next year's state budget will be late coming. Focus is on the May 2009 forecast now. Until then will not see any real figures to work from for the District budget.
- To make the state requirement of a budget by June 30th have asked staff to start on their budgets with the targeted \$5.8 million mark. Assumes there is some use of stimulus, education reserves or other offset for the worst of reductions.
- The last budget forum is tomorrow night. Have had mixed turnout. Information is getting out through parent meetings at schools and budget forums. Public is feeling free to offer ideas on how to approach this problem.
- In April, the Board will receive a balanced budget at the \$5.8 million mark and a rank order of reductions for where to go next. Hearings and parent meetings are creating that list.
- Hot topic: closing and reconfiguring schools. District is not likely to do that this year.
- Make sure people know that the local option levy rate of \$1.50 is a key component of the \$5.8 million.
- There has been feedback from the public about staff salary and benefits, reducing and renegotiating, and reduction of literacy coaches and staff not directly involved with students. Questions about Outdoor School are being raised. Suggestion to reduce central office positions. May hear future public testimony on this.
- Concern expressed in forums that District is not meeting the needs of counseling for students.
- Parents stepping up and asking how they can help; wondering what they can do that the District would not have to pay someone to do and coming up with creative options. The Board may hear future public testimony on this.
- Possible loss of electives at middle and high school; math ability must increase for new

graduation requirements. May mean need to have fewer electives and more math or other subjects. May hear future public testimony on this.

A summary of Board questions and discussion and staff responses:

- Those at the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) conference in the fall heard the governor say he would put graduation requirements on hold. Where are we with those graduation standards? (Chair Rodman)
Response: Oregon Department of Education (ODE) reminded the governor that it is their decision and the District has no communication from ODE that there is a slowed schedule. (Superintendent Tarzian)
It will not slow, except for the essential skills portion, which does not affect the pace. The District filled out a survey requesting a delay because of the economy; it did not help. (Youngblood)
- Regarding the grant programs, would that be through the federal stimulus package? Would we be able to use those funds to hire staff? (Schuster)
Response: Title I and IDEA grants were already received by the District; proposal would dramatically increase those particular funds. Kathleen Walker, Student Services Director, is working on it in terms of special education and how to utilize funds. (Rodeman)
- [The District's future funding] depends on how much of the stimulus and education reserves are applied.
Response: Nobody anticipated three times worse than the governor's expected budget; he will have to adjust his budget in March. (Rodeman) [Response to clarification made by Director Corrigan regarding figures in Supplemental Item #VII-18.]
- The governor said he would hold education harmless too. If the stimulus money is granted, does it then allow the District to shift money from those supplemented areas or would it make some fully funded and others starving? (Turman)
Response: The District has been reminded that there is a prohibition against shifting money. Can only supplement programs, cannot replace money already funding them. It does create a kind of feast and famine situation. (Rodeman)
- Who has the control over the federal stimulus? When will decisions be made? (Schuster)
Response: Dual control between the governor and the legislature. The legislature is trying to put together package that will get enough support to be forwarded to governor. He has said he will veto anything using education reserves; a veto could be overridden with enough votes in the legislature. (Rodeman)
- Front page of a newspaper said Oregon is unusual in that most states do hold education harmless. Oregon is one of a few states cutting days. (Chair Rodman)
Response: Can only speak to Oregon and California. California is not being held harmless

either. (Rodeman)
California is cutting days. (Superintendent Tarzian)

- California is cutting teachers as well. The District previously talked about having to cut \$1.8 million, and is now looking at possibly \$3.5 million. It does not look like there will be any help from the governor and the reserves, and we are getting some stimulus from the federal government, but may be somewhat unusable and inflexible. Do we have any idea when the District will have federal stimulus dollars pegged and how it will fill the gap? [Is it correct that] we will not be getting a chunk to spend as the District needs but will be going through the IDEA or Title I?(Chair Donohue)
Response: The co-chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee proposed using stimulus money for not quite half of the \$3.5 million shortfall. That would leave us with \$2.1 million we would have to fill. There are three funds of money: 1) is the State Stabilization money, which would go to each state to be applied to state budget as needed; 61% must be used for education, including higher education; 2) and 3) are the [Title I and IDEA] grant funds with strings attached with limited ability and targeted money. The first pot should come through the State Funding Formula (SFF). The state may need to meet a 2006 level of distribution, though they could do more or stop at 2006 levels. Hopes that they apply it all to K-12 funding formula to the extent possible. (Rodeman)
- Who makes the decision? (Schuster)
Response: Legislature and then to governor. (Rodeman)
- Can a fragment of that money be used for this year? (Turman)
Response: It could be. (Rodeman)
Intent was to use it now. (Schuster)
- Read about money available, but Corvallis does not qualify. (Turman)
- Are we eligible for any construction money in the stimulus? (Chair Rodman)
Response: There was some construction money, but the District does not meet requirements. It has been eliminated for almost all districts. The District is not eligible for it within the stimulus package, because must meet state regulations to qualify. (Rodeman)
- Glimmer of hope; thinking about how well this year's seniors have done, and remembering they were 6th graders during the 2000 recession; look at their achievement. It is a tribute to them and their parents. Classified union leadership are reminding staff that this is when they need 150% to serve kids every day and keep the District strong. There is a team of people, including the Board, that care deeply about the kids. There is evidence that they can succeed even when faced with this. (Superintendent Tarzian)
- Extend thanks to the Corvallis Education Association and Oregon School Employees Association. Their employees always seem to buy supplies and cut days. (Ten Pas)

Director Higgins, who joined the meeting via telephone, departed the meeting at 7:32 pm.

V. SEAC (SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE) ANNUAL REPORT

Denise Cardinali and Kathy Eckert-Mason presented. (Filed as Supplemental Item #VII-19 in the Official 2008-09 Board Minutes.) They noted that they have the longest standing Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in the state and they meet every month.

Summary of Presentation:

- The annual report is on a calendar year, to make data collection complete.
- There were three goals last year: ongoing collaborative training with parents and educators, technology, and promoting disability awareness.
- Highlight: Incight Transition event, technology for book scanning, receipt of an Oregon Technology Access Program (OTAP) grant.
- Goals for 2009 include communication, planning for transition from secondary to post-secondary, and assisted technologies.
- District staff participation in SEAC workshops was encouraged.
- Commendation certificates are given. Highlighted people who worked on scanning technology, playgrounds, the District facilities department, Corvallis High School student leadership.
- Worry that commendations list is tricky, but still would rather have it and accidentally miss someone than not commend anyone at all.

VI. COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Superintendent Tarzian noted that this update was coming as a result of its place in the Strategic Plan, Goal #9. She read the goal to the Board and said staff wanted to present the drafted plan as an update. The Communication Plan was provided to the Board at the beginning of the meeting. (Filed as Supplemental Item #VII-20 in the Official 2008-09 Minutes.)

Carol Reeves, Communication Specialist, and Jeanne Holmes, Human Resources Director, presented.

Summary of comments made by Ms. Holmes:

- Requisites for Communication Specialist in order to target specific goals. Goals include: working with the newspaper, work on the website, communication of key topics, updating the community, relationship with media contacts, and working on the communication plan. Ms. Reeves has done a wonderful job communicating budget issues.
- The District is preparing for the next levy. People like to support something successful and the last levy was built on success stories. The work Ms. Reeves is doing is to build trust and accountability about the current Local Option Levy money and where it is spent.

Summary of comments made by Ms. Reeves:

- Have refined an earlier draft of the communication plan and added to it based her three months of experience of last three months to be specific about what this position could offer.
- Highlighted elements of communication with and through the local media. Includes press releases, monthly news bulletins sent to the Gazette Times (GT) before the beginning of the month.
- Twenty-five stories have been published in the GT regarding schools or students; 19 have been on the front page. Eighteen were general district briefs or editorials, and eight were on front page. A total of 43 stories since November have been published, with 27 on front page.
- Highlighted elements of communication inside District. Recently quite a bit on budget issues, calendar and school start dates surveys. Information is distributed to schools for newsletters, list serves and take-home flyers.
- Idea to pursue: setting up District-wide parent list-serve, as parents are not hearing what is going on at other schools.
- Has helped put together letters to parents at schools regarding sensitive issues.
- Has made changes to District website. It is a big project; receiving help from other staff.
- ‘Corvallis Schools’ brochure for spring may need some updates to point out distinctive elements of each school.
- Will develop a “brag sheet” about the District. Showed examples from other districts.
- Highlighted key communicators list serve and breakfasts, which have been successful.
- Updated Spanish page on District website; mistranslation was a previous problem.
- Has helped preparation for Executive Team presentations with others staff.
- Beginning to develop communication strategy for seeking renewal of the levy. Think Communication Specialist could take some burden off other staff.

Summary of comments made by Superintendent Tarzian:

- Express appreciation to Ms. Reeves. She is a half time communication specialist, but puts in twice that. Her support to the District has been profound and her connection with the GT is invaluable.
- Quarterly insert for the GT will be made this year, coming out of superintendent’s budget, and there will be two next year.
- 75% of District patrons do not have kids in the schools right now. Usually first contact and building of trust is through parents at schools, so finding ways to communicate outside that is essential.
- As a community Corvallis needs this level of communication and makes the position unique and necessary.
- Looked at other comparable districts. Seven staff an all-year public relations person. Four do not. The City of Corvallis also staffs a full time PR person.
- Ms. Reeves is far exceeding goals, and it is internally and externally noted.
- May expand Communications Plan or on the website to make it clear to broader public.

A summary of Board questions and discussion and staff responses:

Discussion occurred within the Board about in-house printing for “brag sheet”, mailers to the community and a possible realtor card.

- A section in front of the budget document had similar information; budget is less likely to be read by community. (Chair Rodman)
- Hopes to be an asset this year to help edit budget document to be more community friendly. (Reeves)
- Noted huge increase in GT coverage. (Schuster)
- Make communication plan more public friendly if it will be for public release. Differentiating between schools needs to be done carefully in regard to transfers. Suggested a translation service he is familiar with; will give contact to staff. It has an almost immediate turnaround time. (Ten Pas)
- Knows Ms. Reeves’ work is making a difference. Part of the job that is underappreciated is internal communication. Everyone has better understanding because of what is being put out there. Will benefit the District. Trust is lost when keep people in the dark. Trust is bred when give information, good or bad. (Chair Rodman)
- Likes the comprehensive plan. Would reinforce creating a framework for communicating with the community. Thinking of the visioning statement; use that common language because it was created with the community. Commended large quantity of positive news articles. (Vice Chair Donohue)
- Vice Chair Donohue’s point is good. We have used visioning process and will keep doing so. (Holmes)
- Echo Director Schuster’s commendation. Would like a list serve subscription area on website where parents can pick a list they want to be a part of. Would be overwhelming to get newsletter from every school. News distribution is not a standard process across schools. (Corrigan)
- Some schools have secretaries disseminate news and some have parents do it. The newly added community relations tab on the website may be good place to add list serve subscription. (Reeves)
- A general district list serve may be good for general announcements that affect the whole district. (Schuster)
- Ms. Reeves came on when District needed communication officer most and when it is the hardest to provide it. (Chair Rodman)

There being no further business before the Board, Chair Rodman adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Blake Rodman, Chair

Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

Prepared By: Kaela Schamp

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