Principally Speaking…..by Suzanne Price

It’s School Choice Time!
Families in 4J have a choice of schools. 4J’s school choice policy means that families may send their children to any school in the district provided there is a place available. School choice request forms are being accepted now and must be turned in to the district office by March 23 at 5 p.m. to be considered in the school choice lottery.

New this year: You may have heard that a new state law is changing how transfers between school districts work. 4J will accept out-of-district students into some of our schools for the 2012–13 school year. The district will receive state school funds for each student. These students will be placed in schools after the regular school choice process. Transfer applications from out-of-district students are due April 1.

Immersed in technology, Howard is an excellent school and a positive choice in your child’s education. With School Choice nearly upon us, please invite friends and acquaintances to visit Howard and seriously consider joining the Howard family. Tours are available any time during the weeks of January 30 and February 27, with translations offered on Thursday and Friday of each week, respectively.

School Showcase – NEW EVENT! Chávez Elementary located at 1510 West 14th Ave.
Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Get answers about school choice
Talk to representatives from every 4J school

School Visitation Weeks ~ Call Howard to schedule a tour of our school
Monday, Jan. 30–Friday, Feb. 3; Translations available @ Howard on 2/2
Monday, Feb. 27–Friday, Mar. 2; Translations available @ Howard on 3/1
Schools offer tours, open houses and more

School Choice Information Meetings
4J Education Center, 200 North Monroe St.
Thursday, Jan. 26, 7–8 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 23, 7–8 p.m.
Get answers about the school choice process

Application Deadlines:
School choice: Friday, March 23 at 5 p.m.
Out-of-district transfers: April 1

Learn more:
www.4j.lane.edu/choice
Apple Distinguished School!
We are proud to share that we are an Apple Distinguished School. We are the only Apple school in Oregon, and one of 53 nationwide! Schools nominated by Apple for designation as an Apple Distinguished School must demonstrate Apple’s highest vision of a successful 21st century learning environment, a strong relationship with Apple, and a willingness to do outreach activities.

Howard’s Technology Mission Statement: The mission of the Howard Elementary Technology Plan is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of technology in the teaching and learning process, are prepared for using technology in the pursuit of higher education and career opportunities, and are empowered as citizens of the 21st century.

Howard Twitters: Join Now and Receive School Updates
Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest information, in this case, announcements pertinent to Howard and/or the 4j school district. Announcements (Tweets) can be received via an email address of a cell phone text. Visit our school website for information on how to join or click http://howard.4j.lane.edu/.

YEARBOOKS Have Returned to Howard!!
We are excited to announce that Howard will be publishing a Yearbook. It will be bursting with memories and complete with “All About Me” and “Autograph” pages; always a hit with the students! Yearbooks were on sale during Math Night. They will also be available to purchase during Literacy Night (3/8) and after school the week of March 12. The cost is $14.50.

Thank you to Autumn Minson (our Yearbook Advisor) and our 5th Grade Yearbook Crew: Pivi, Lili, Margret, Corissa, Hannah I., and Taliha

YOU’RE INVITED to Join Your Child for a “Love Your Heart” Valentine Day Lunch on Feb. 14!
Featured healthy heart entrees include your choice of a hand rolled bean enchiladas on a whole-wheat tortilla, strawberry yogurt parfait, and baked chicken breast over whole-wheat pasta with Italian sauce. All entrees come with milk, dessert and a Caesar salad themed offering bar. The cost is $3.50 for adults and $2.50 for younger siblings. Join us, if you can!

Lunch times are: KG 10:50; 1st 11:10; 2nd 11:40; 3rd 11:55; 4th 11:25; 5th 11:45

GIRLS RULE!!
The 5th Annual Girls Rule! happens March 17th from 9:00 – 3:00 at the Lane Community College Center for Meeting and Learning. Girls Rule is a great opportunity for girls ages 9-14 and a parent or caring adult to laugh, play and learn together. This year’s theme is No Matter the Shape, Leave Your Mark. The event features fun and interactive sessions, including Crafts, Self-Defense, Science and Nature, Dance and Movement and more! Free lunch, entertainment and prizes! For more information and to register, go to www.opheliasplace.net or call 541-284-4335. Deadline for registration is March 9th.

ATTENTION: A Message from the School Nurse
Saturday, March 3, will be the annual sealant clinic at Lane Community College for kids with limited access to dental care. Children ages 7-14 will be provided with a free exam, x-rays, sealants (if appropriate) and a fluoride varnish. A parent or guardian must be present to fill out and sign the child’s health history and authorization to treat. Kids, and their parents, need to arrive between 9:30 am – noon. LCC, local dental professionals, dental supply houses and
numerous community organizations make this event possible. For more information contact Linda Eichner at 541-590-5181 or Dr. Carlyn Cantrell at 541-687-2156.

**Fever Free:** Remember, your child must be fever free (temperature below 100 degrees) without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours, before returning to school after an illness. Your child also must remain home until 24 hours after last vomiting or diarrhea episode. Thanks for helping reduce spread of illnesses.

**FREE of LOW COST Medical Clinics**
Do you lack health insurance or financial resources to pay for needed shots? Please contact your local high school clinic as they are available for immunizations, illness, and well care for all 4j students and their siblings. Always take your child’s immunization records to medical appointments. Another immunization option is the clinic at the Lane County Health Department at 541-682-4041.

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR LIBRARIAN**
Oregon Battle of the Books is MARCH 3!!
Starting the first week of February, "The Official Howard Battle of the Books" begins. These six "Battles" will be held in the library during regularly scheduled library times for the students involved. Their classes will be present to support them. Parents are welcome to come and watch as well as participate as judges or coaches. We will need a Timekeeper and a Scorekeeper who can also be the official coaches for their children’s teams. Parents wishing to participate should attend at least one practice battle to become familiar with the rules and procedures. (There will be three practice battles for grades 4/5 and three practice battles for 3rd grade the last three weeks of January.) The battles will be held in round-robin competition, each team competing 2 times. Winners will be selected based on points accumulated during all the "Battles" in which a team participates. These games will determine the grade level champs.

A final Howard "Battle of the Books" will be held the last week of February (the exact day and time has not yet been set), to determine our Howard Roadrunner Champions who will represent the school at the Regional Competition. That competition will be held at North Eugene High School in March. To determine our Howard Roadrunner Champions, the two teams with the highest accumulated point totals will play each other in our gymnasium in front of the assembled 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. Parents are invited to come and watch the competition.

For date and time, or to volunteer, please R.S.V.P. the library at (541) 790-4933 and leave a message with Mr. Grush, our librarian.

**LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** If you are available to open the library 1-2 mornings a week, from 7:30-7:50, that would be wonderful! We are hoping to provide students with an opportunity to read quietly in the library a couple of mornings each week.

**THE LIBRARY WILL BE OPEN TO FAMILIES, ON PTO MEETINGS DATES, FROM 5:30-6:00!**
Come check out books for your family to enjoy together!

**Reading is Important!** Last spring, we implemented a new reading incentive program at Howard that has been a big hit with staff and students. Each month, students are challenged to meeting monthly reading goals. Those who do are entered into a drawing for a FREE book. Since the inception of the program, we have given away 48 books! Beep, beep....be your best, and be a reader!
November & December Book Winners ~ congratulations!

room 20: Antonio & Emma  
room 19: Darren & Joe  
room 18: Margret & Megann  
room 17: Niara & Hannah  
room 16: Sklyer & Judit  
room 15: Brooke & Jayda  
room 14: Marcos & Dominic  
room 13: Harlan & Ashley  
room 7: William & Laura  
room 6: Delanie & Riley  
room 4: Ryan & Esten  
room 3: Ashley & Breahna

Safe, Responsible, and Respectful!

Our goal at Howard is to create a community of learners where all members can flourish and grow. While our staff strives to foster the best environment possible, the attitudes and behaviors of the students are the true indicators of our success. Positive contributions to our school community do not go unnoticed. We do not take good behavior for granted; rather, we appreciate it very much. Positive behavior influences others in the classroom and common areas. We could not be any happier that so many of our students make wise decision each and every day.

We are proud to share that, as of January 30, 82% of our students have not received a single *Level III behavioral referral to the office. This means that 253 out of our 310 students consistently make wise choices and display positive citizenship. Furthermore, of these students, only 22 students, have received more than one Level III referral, representing our more chronic misbehaviors. In addition, only 15% of our students have received a minor referral; a level II.

We would like to celebrate and thank the vast majority of students who come to school ready to learn, interact with their friends, and work toward a productive future. So, the next time you see a Howard Elementary School student, tell the youngster he or she is doing a great job!

*Level III behavior referrals are issued for more serious offenses and are handled by the principal.

Math Night a Success

Our family Math Night, held on January 19, was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who attended and helped to make this event a success. It was wonderful seeing so many Howard families enjoy learning together. Fifty-four families attended (122 guests in all), so lots of mathematicians were in the house! Be sure to join us during our next family event, Literacy Night, on March 8!

Come One, Come All to Our Family Literacy Night!

On Thursday, March 8 (6:00-7:20), we will be hosting our annual “Howard Family Literacy Night.” Come celebrate with your child and learn about the exciting literacy activities taking place in their classroom. Families can also enjoy a Strings presentation form students in our BEST After-School Program. As an added bonus, each Howard student who attends will receive one FREE BOOK! Bur wait, that’s not all...families can visit our PTO sponsored book fair. Come join us and support reading in our school. We look forward to seeing you in March!

PTO Scholastic BOOK FAIR is Coming! Mark your calendar for the annual Howard Book Fair coming the week of March 5, and coinciding with Literacy Night. Families can look forward to purchasing great books at a reasonable price. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED. Please check out the bulletin board, in the main hallway, to sing up and help!

BE GOOD FOR A SUB WINNERS for January: Katie (rm 17), Antonio (rm 16), Justyce & Hannah (rm 13),
Persuasive Writing from the First Graders in Room 3

The students in Room 3 are learning how to write an opinion paper. Since we only have P.E. two times a week, we like to run to the fence, and back, outside our room. Here are the reasons the children gave to convince Mrs. Kirk to run more often.

We love to run to the fence! It gives you more muscles and energy. It’s good for your body. It gets your wiggles out. It helps you run faster. It gives you “abs.” Running helps you kick a football farther. It makes your legs get stronger. It makes you healthy for football, basketball, soccer and baseball. It makes your bones tough for cheerleading. Mrs. Kirk, may we please go run to the fence?

Success and Student Attendance Go Hand in Hand

As you know, there is a direct correlation between student attendance and success in school. Late arrival, early dismissal, and absences interrupt the flow of instruction for both the student and the class as a whole. We realize there are often situations for which you have no control. Unfortunately, there are many absences from school that could have been avoided. Please understand that Oregon law requires children, ages 7-16, to be in school except for illness and extenuating circumstances. As such, attendance letters are sent home if a student is absent the equivalent of 4 days during a 4 ½ week period. Please note that this threshold applies to excused/unexcused absences and tardies. Should a student’s attendance record meet the criteria above, or if there has been a history of attendance problems, we are obligated to report our concerns to the Lane County Truancy office. Their involvement is designed to ensure every child attends school on a regular basis. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the county attendance procedures, feel free to contact the school.

ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION PROGRAM! Last spring we piloted a recognition program designed to recognize and encourage excellent attendance. The pilot was a success and we are excited to continue the program this year. We will continue with our two-tiered approach. FIRST, Mr. Baker, our school counselor, generated some friendly competition between classrooms, offering a trophy to those classrooms that had the least amount of absences and/or tardies during several weeks in January. Classrooms are able to display this trophy with pride! SECOND, we track individual attendance over the course of the semester. Students will receive an award for:

GREAT attendance: students can be late/absent three times and still be recognized for great attendance. We realize some appointments and illnesses cannot be avoided.

PERFECT attendance: students who have never been late/absent a single day, during 1st semester. Wow!!

Valentine’s Day Candy Restrictions

At Howard, we continually strive to provide healthy options for your child. Valentine’s Day is no exception. We are asking families who want to include a treat with their child’s classroom valentines that you follow the 4J Wellness Guidelines. The guidelines state that candy and gum are not allowed in the classroom. For some healthy alternatives, the 4J Wellness guideline is a great resource and can be found in the school office and on both 4J’s and Howard’s websites, respectively, at www.howard.howardelementary.org and www.4j.lane.edu/nutrition/wellness/elementary.

Dismissal Plans

We need your help! Please limit calls to the office regarding your child’s afternoon pick up arrangements. When possible, sending a note or communicating with your child about after
school plans is best. Delivering messages to students interrupts learning and sometimes leaves the student a bit confused with the change in plans. Thank you for your cooperation and support!

PTO Corner ~ Get Involved!

Do you love books? Are you good with people? Are you organized and friendly? Do you love popcorn? Then PTO has the job for you! Howard Elementary PTO is looking for someone to head the Scholastic Book Fair coming up in March. This is a fun and important way to get involved in your student's school. This person will work with the PTO president and the volunteer coordinator to organize the Book Fair. This is a really FUN job. Scholastic makes putting together a Book Fair simple, the dates are March 5-8th!

If the book fair is not for you, consider Wednesday Popcorn popping. Every Wednesday, volunteers are needed to pop popcorn for our weekly fundraiser. We are trying to spread out the duties so that a person only has to pop once every two weeks, or a month. Popping is easy! All you have to do is be at the school from 7:30-10 or 11:00 to pop and bag popcorn. There will always be someone there to help you use the machine.

But wait! There's more' Morning library duty. Howard Elementary really needs someone to open the library in the morning from 7:30-7:50. This gives our students another option while waiting for school to start. This is also a very easy job. If you could be at the school for a 1/2 hour, once a week, the students and staff would really appreciate it!

If you would like to help out Howard through the PTO and volunteer for any of these opportunities please contact the Howard PTO, you can email howardelementary@gmail.com or call 541-933-5336.

Dates to Remember

February
8 Early dismissal (11:35KG/1:05)
8-9 Val-o-Gram sales by Student Council
9 Parent strategies class (6:00pm)
10 NO SCHOOL: Howard professional development day
15 Early dismissal (11:35KG/1:05)
15 Exclusion day
16 Referral Free Activity (window is 1/30-2/17)
20 NO SCHOOL: President’s Day
21 OAKS testing week; round 1 (grades 3-5)
22 Early dismissal (11:35KG/1:05)
24 Birthday lunches w/Mrs. Price
27-Mar 2 School choice week
28 Site Council (2:30)
29 PTO Meeting (1:15 in the library); NOTE date change/time

March
3 Oregon Battle of the Books @ NEHS
5-8 Book Fair
7 Early dismissal (11:35KG/1:05)
8 Literacy night (6:00)
9 NO SCHOOL: Howard professional development day
14 Early dismissal (11:35KG/1:05)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Road Runner Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Parent laptop training (8:15am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>PTO meeting (6:00pm) ~ library open to families 5:30-6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Birthday lunches w/Mrs. Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Referral free reward activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Apr 2</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Students return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>