



Howard Happenings

May/June 2013

www.howardelementary.org

School District Budget Update

School districts across Oregon are grappling with funding shortfalls. Based on current projections, Eugene School District 4J faces a budget deficit of about \$12.5 million in 2013–14.

Because 4J's mission is teaching and learning, most of the district's budget is spent to employ educators. With little else to cut, addressing a shortfall of this size must include reducing compensation costs in one or more of three ways:

- School days: Negotiating furlough days for a shorter school and work year,
- Compensation: Negotiating other wage and benefit adjustments, and/or
- People: Reducing staff and boosting class sizes.

4J had been developing a budget proposal that included spending reserves, reducing health, library and technology services, and increasing class sizes to cover more than half of the projected shortfall. The district had expected that the remaining \$6 million in cost reductions would come from negotiating furlough days and other employee compensation concessions, rather than from cutting more staff and increasing class sizes even more.

Unfortunately, the district and the Eugene Education Association have not reached a contract agreement through informal talks. The next step is to begin a formal, public bargaining process.

In the meantime, the district has to make plans based on the financial resources it can reasonably rely upon. Since there is not yet an agreement to have furlough days or other compensation adjustments, the district must prepare to cut the remaining \$6 million through other means, including reducing staff and further increasing class sizes. All 4J schools, including our own, are revising staffing plans to reflect the additional reductions.

We are all hopeful that the negotiation process will conclude speedily, with a fair agreement that will avert some of these cuts. We will keep you informed as the budget situation develops.

Howard Staffing Plan for 2013-2014

As stated in the previous article, schools across Eugene are facing budget and staffing cuts for next school year. Howard is in somewhat of a unique situation because we ended up with more students enrolling at our school this year than were expected, so for next year, the school district has given us additional staffing to accommodate the increased enrollment.

This means for next year we will be able to have straight grades, with two teachers at each grade level, kindergarten through 5th grade. We're very happy to once again have all straight grade classrooms with more manageable class sizes!

However, some cuts did have to be made. School Counselor time with Mr. Baker will sadly be one day a week less next year. Howard is also having less time being provided for Ms. Gonzalez in the Learning Center. Additionally, we saw reductions in our Comprehensive Learning Center (CLC) Educational Assistant time, which will now have two EAs instead of three.

We also have several teacher assignment changes to announce for next year. At kindergarten, Ms. Vaughan will be moving back to kindergarten to teach with Ms. Silver, taking the place of Ms. Seno, who was filling in for just this school year. Ms. Davidson at 3rd grade will be retiring at the end of the year and Ms. Zimmerman from 1st grade will be moving up to take her place with Ms. Kreider on the 3rd grade team. Additionally, at the 4/5 level, Ms. Callihan will be moving up from 2nd grade to teach 5th grade with Ms. Rock. This leaves us with a vacancy at 1st and 2nd grade for next year, so we hope to make an announcement before summer break who will be filling these positions. One final change is that our CLC teacher, Ms. Reinhardt, has been hired as a School District Behavior Consultant for next year and will be replaced by Jen Kirkwood, who is the CLC teacher at Edison Elementary School. See below for a summary of next year's teaching assignments.

Howard 2013-2014 Staffing Plan:

Kindergarten: Ms. Silver and Ms. Vaughan

1st Grade: Ms. Kirk and To Be Announced

2nd Grade: Ms. Larsen and To Be Announced

3rd Grade: Ms. Krieder and Ms. Zimmerman

4th Grade: Ms. Frank and Ms. Groshong

5th Grade: Ms. Callihan and Ms. Rock

Counselor: Mr. Baker

Title 1: Melissa Locke-Warnicke

Learning Center: Ms. Gonzalez

Comprehensive Learning Center (CLC): Ms. Kirkwood



It looks like we'll have some amazing teaching teams next year, and despite some of the cuts we've had to make, we believe this is the best plan for preserving the core mission of Howard Elementary School's technology immersion program.