



June 2013

TWO YEARS OF FOCUSED WORK: 2011-13 RESULTS LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The past two years have been both exciting and demanding for the Eugene School District. We have advanced many important initiatives—such as the bond measure and the alignment of high school schedules—that support our goals and key results and will make an impact for years to come. Given the extraordinary challenges we have been facing financially, these two measures alone will ease the impact of budget reductions, enable us to address long-term facilities issues and improve instruction to students.

Although these initiatives have grabbed the headlines and consumed a great deal of the public’s and district’s attention, we have put in place many other changes that are already garnering results, even as they lay the foundation for more significant improvements in the future. The list below briefly outlines these efforts, organized by each goal area. However, much has been done in addition to addressing our major goals. I will try to add some of that context to this report.

I. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Goal: Increase achievement for all students and close the achievement gap.

To achieve this goal we worked toward implementing the Common Core State Standards, enhancing performance on OAKS and closing the achievement gap, preparing our students to be college and career ready, and increasing graduation rates. The 2013 OAKS results and graduation rate data won’t be available until next fall. In the meantime, we have made significant progress in fully scheduling 9th graders and improving our scores on the college readiness assessments, EXPLORE and PLAN. We have also set in motion changes that prepare us well for future progress.

We have made major inroads in our work on college and career readiness, equity, and closing the achievement gap. In addition, we have completed significant work in enhancing our curriculum and instructional program to enrich learning opportunities for students.

GRADUATION RATES AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

A primary focus of both the state and the Board is to improve graduation rates and prepare students to be college and career ready.

Full Schedules for 9th Graders: There is a significant correlation between students who fail to secure sufficient credits in 9th grade and those who drop out of school. Fully scheduling 9th graders is one of the most significant interventions the district is making to improve graduation and college readiness rates. In 2011-12, only 32.6% of our high school students had a full schedule. In 2012-13, that percentage almost doubled to 63.9%.

Collaboration with EPIC to Advance College and Career Readiness: We have established a strong collaboration with Dave Conley and EPIC, the leading center in the nation supporting districts in preparing students to be college and career ready. We are utilizing their diagnostic and assessment tools and collaborating on the development of grant proposals that can significantly advance our work in this area.

A Shift in the Role of High School Counselors: To increase the effectiveness of counselors in our schools K-12, we developed a new counselor job description and organized monthly counselor meetings focused on the counselor's role in preparing students to be college and career ready.

Strategic Use of EXPLORE and PLAN: Although we administered these college readiness assessments in the past, shifting EXPLORE to 8th grade and highlighting data from both EXPLORE and PLAN have increased the attention of our teachers, counselors and administrators on college and career readiness. From 2012 to 2013, our EXPLORE results of the proportion of students on track for college and career improved from 49% to 59% in reading, from 37% to 46% in math, and from 27% to 36% in science. On the 10th grade PLAN test, the proportion of students who will be college ready without remediation increased from 30% to 35% in reading, but remained the same at 26% in math. Full scheduling of 9th graders should make a positive difference in this result over the next year or two.

Expansion of Efforts to Enhance Students' Financial Resources for College: Through an initiative of our College and Career Administrator, all our high schools have pursued engaging all seniors in completing the FAFSA (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) form to give them a better chance to access scholarship and loan resources.

Collaboration in Support of Our College and Career Ready Goals: We have been a leader in establishing a strong partnership—"ConnectEd Lane County"—with the University of Oregon, Lane Community College, Springfield Public Schools, Bethel Public Schools and other Lane County school districts. In addition, we have established a strong partnership with the three leading urban school districts—Portland, Beaverton and Salem—and are collaborating on grant proposals to support our college and career readiness programs. We have also become a member of the USDE College Access Affinity Group that will give us access to timely information about federally-supported opportunities and best practices of districts around the country. All of these steps position us well for advancing work on college and career readiness.

Reaching Benchmarks for All 12th Graders: Over the past two years, we have mounted an intensive effort to ensure that students meet the new graduation benchmarks in reading and writing. We have created reading and writing essential skill work samples, a scoring schedule, and a district scoring cadre. Each high school has designated staff to support students to improve their reading and writing skills and we have written an essential skills reading and writing curriculum containing lesson plans and resources. Additionally, we offer a summer class for students who have not yet met the reading and, this year, writing, essential skill graduation requirements. In 2012, we had one student who failed to graduate due to not meeting the essential skill of reading. Although students must now meet both reading and writing essential skill requirements in 2013, we are confident that we will have a similar outcome.

CURRICULUM

High-quality curriculum can significantly strengthen instruction. Not only does curriculum provide the content of classroom work, it can also serve as the focus of professional development for faculty and enhance their effectiveness.

Embedded Funding for Quality Curriculum in the Bond: We strategically shaped the bond to update and enhance our curriculum in science, math, and writing. These enhancements will enable us to provide high-quality instructional experiences for students that improve their understanding and their academic performance.

Associate Director Position for Curriculum: Until this year the district had very limited support on a district level for curriculum improvement. The hiring of an Associate Director for Mathematics is a first step in providing critical leadership for a vital curricular area. The position has been instrumental in providing leadership and professional development to meet the Common Core State Standards and focus our instructional strategies on the right targets.

College Preparatory Mathematics Program Implementation: High school math teachers have moved to using the nationally recognized CPM program that focuses on deeper levels of conceptual understanding and problem solving. It aligns with and builds on our elementary and middle school curricula, creates continuity and consistency in our K-12 math program, and is well aligned with the new Common Core State Standards.

Sharing Mathematical Practices across Middle and High Schools: The Associate Director has convened regular meetings of the math leaders at the middle schools and the math department heads at the high schools to share professional practices and build collaboration and consistency across schools.

Churchill's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Program: We have added a new dimension to our high school program by establishing a STEM program at Churchill High School that is providing new opportunities for students and elevating the attractiveness of the Churchill region. By securing grants to support the purchase of engineering curriculum and equipment and by renovating the Churchill High School building, we have created the first STEM design studio in Oregon.

Program Funding for Elementary Music and Physical Education: In 2011-12, thirteen of our elementary schools did not offer music or physical education and five offered a limited amount of one subject or the other. By program staffing music and physical education teachers, we were able to equitably deliver a high-quality, nine- to twelve-week experience in both areas at all of our elementary schools. Effective scheduling of these related arts teachers also enabled elementary classroom teachers to have some much-needed school-day planning time during those weeks.

EQUITY AND CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

As a core value and a critical vehicle for ensuring the success of our students and our schools, our commitment to equity and closing the achievement gap has been an important focus of our work. Beyond our continued efforts to provide Taking It Up and CFEE training for our teachers and administrators, we have undertaken a number of significant initiatives to better serve our at-risk students.

Expansion of the AVID Program: As one of the most effective programs for supporting at-risk students in graduating high school and moving forward to post-secondary education, we have placed a great deal of energy on broadening participation in AVID. Ten of our twelve secondary schools will have implemented AVID by the fall of 2013, with the remaining two secondary schools plus two elementary schools to join AVID by fall of 2014.

Improved Options for At-Risk High School Students: The program changes at Education Options enabled it to evolve into Early College and Career Options. In addition, the move to the Lane

Community College campus has set the stage for ensuring that the students served by ECCO have the best possible opportunities to complete high school and have a strong start on a community college degree.

Assessment Center for Alternative Education Placements: We have established an assessment center for alternative education placements to ensure that students referred by their high school for placement are provided with the most appropriate and effective opportunity to be successful.

A Restructured Equity Committee: The restructuring of the Equity Committee over the past two years has not only elevated its importance but has enabled us to target our efforts on building a partnership among the district, families and the communities of disadvantage and color that can more effectively advance student performance. In addition, the superintendent has convened a group of leaders in the Latino community for several breakfast meetings to discuss ways to support the education of Latino youth.

A Pilot for Expanding Access to Language Immersion Schools: We successfully piloted a new enrollment policy for language immersion schools that shifts from a fixed enrollment cap to a more flexible cap based on enrolling a target percentage of economically disadvantaged students and English language learners. Providing preference for those two populations of students has created a more diverse student body at Buena Vista and enhanced Spanish language learning opportunities by including more native language students and families. Based on what we learn, we may be able to better promote equity in access at our other language immersion schools.

Achievement Gap Study Group: To focus greater attention on the achievement gap and secure insights into how we can best address this issue, we have restructured the position of the Federal Programs Administrator to the Federal Programs and Achievement Gap Administrator. We have also initiated a process in which a team of administrators and teachers will visit schools and explore ways we can best support efforts to close the achievement gap.

Progress in Advancing Performance at Priority and Focus Schools: We provided new leadership, extensive coaching, and intensive administrative support to our Priority and Focus schools to ensure they are able to develop effective school improvement plans and make significant progress on moving out of Priority and Focus status.

Home Visitations Project: The home visitations project completed 175 home visits in the Sheldon, South and North Regions with families whose native language is not English. The goals of the visits were to make strong connections between the school and parents, get parents more involved in their child's education, and close the cultural disparity between families and the school.

EXPANDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

At a time when budget constraints have limited our ability to provide instructional supports and electives for students, we have pursued a number of initiatives that are enhancing opportunities for students.

Virtual High School: Launched through the support of the Eugene Education Foundation, our four comprehensive high schools and ECCO have offered 150 of our students the opportunity to benefit from high-quality virtual (online) courses that could not otherwise be offered in our schools. Most of these courses are rigorous, upper-level classes in science, mathematics, or world languages.

iPad Pilot: Six schools are piloting the use of iPads and interactive textbooks and instructional materials to expand student learning beyond the limits of the classroom. In one special education

classroom, iPads are enhancing the ability of students on the Autism Spectrum to be integrated effectively into regular education classrooms.

Improving Services to Life Skills Students: The transition of seven ESD Life Skills classrooms into the district will bring the teachers and staff in those classrooms, as well as their students, into a closer relationship with the host school, thereby more fully integrating these students into the life of the school and creating one cohesive faculty in support of these students.

Electronic and Video Portfolios for Students with Autism: The use of electronic and video portfolios has given a voice to students who often struggle with communication. This medium has allowed staff to assist students in developing rich mixed-media presentations (pictures, images and text), which combine to represent these students' accomplishments, visions and hopes.

Cultural Education Alliance: The district has been working with local arts and cultural organizations to launch a Cultural Education Alliance of community organizations. The purpose of the Alliance is to collaborate with the Eugene-Springfield area districts in enhancing the arts and cultural experiences of students. 4J has been hosting meetings of the Alliance since its inception this winter.

II. STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Goal: Build our staff capacity to perform at a high level.

Building the capacity of our staff entails efforts in a number of areas. The areas include expanding access to and use of data for student-level, school-level and district-level decision-making; providing a coherent professional development program to enhance teachers' skills; developing a new growth-oriented evaluation system to promote teacher effectiveness; and creating opportunities for teacher and administrator collaboration. Finally, staff capacity building includes completing our TAG compliance plan. We have made significant progress in all these areas.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

The use of data has been essential in providing appropriate interventions and accommodations for students, as well as in refining the improvement efforts of schools and the district as a whole. Over the past two years, we have significantly enhanced the quality and comprehensiveness of data for decision-making.

Replacement of the Assistant Superintendent Position with a Director of Research and Planning: The scarcity of funding makes it essential that every staffing decision serve to advance the district's goals. Although abandoning the position of Assistant Superintendent has added to the workload of directors and the superintendent, the replacement of that position with a Director of Research and Planning has provided the district with a significantly enhanced capacity for gathering, analyzing and disseminating data to guide programmatic and operational decisions.

Early Warning System to Identify Students at Risk of Not Graduating: We are in the process of creating an early warning system based on student attendance, grades and discipline reports so that we can provide supports and interventions to better ensure the success of students who may be at risk of school failure.

Critical Analyses: The Director of Research and Planning and LCOG have created important analyses to address key problem areas. They are:

- A demographic analysis of the district by elementary attendance areas;
- An analysis of the degree to which students are fully scheduled;
- The factors behind graduation outcomes and successful academic transitions from elementary to middle to high school;
- Enrollment trends analysis at both the district and school levels;
- An analysis of trends in EXPLORE and PLAN college readiness data;
- Achievement gap analysis for groups and schools;
- Data tools to identify students to be referred to summer school;
- Continuous flow of student performance data for diagnostic use by Essential Skills Coordinators and school data teams.

The data emanating from these analyses are shared with principals, directors, and others to inform decision-making.

Development of a New Instructional Data Site: The new 4J instructional data site combines all types of educational data (demographics, academic performance, educational interventions, and perception data) and generates many kinds of data reports in real time. We are also collaborating in the creation of the Connected Lane County data warehouse, which will combine data from all 16 districts in the Lane ESD, LCC, the University of Oregon, and several providers of educational services for children younger than five. Both of these data sites will give our teachers and administrators easier and better access to important data.

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

We have taken significant steps that will in the short and long run result in significant improvements in both delivery and quality of instruction.

A Foundational Understanding of the Common Core State Standards: With the state's adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter-Balance Assessment, it has become critical to ensure that our teachers and administrators understand the expectations of the new standards and assessment and begin to align their curriculum and instruction. Over the past year, our Directors and Staff Development Specialists have provided the professional development for teachers and administrators to build that understanding.

Teacher Effectiveness and Growth System: Through rubrics describing quality teaching that go well beyond the traditional, we have articulated a powerful and innovative vision of instruction. In addition, we have created an ongoing support system for professional improvement through an evaluation design focused on promoting professional growth for all teachers. And through a focus on high-quality professional development for principals and teachers, we are maximizing the potential of the system for promoting instructional effectiveness and professional growth.

Expansion of the Learning About Learning Program: Over the past two years the Learning About Learning (LAL) and the Learning About Elementary Learning (LEL) initiatives have contributed significantly to improving instruction by creating a professional culture that is penetrating the traditional isolation of instructional practice and building collaboration among teachers and principals across the district.

Completion of TAG Compliance: An extensive two-year TAG training process has culminated with the district's completion of the Oregon Department of Education requirement that we train all certified and administrative staff. Completion of this training ensures that our teachers are better prepared to address the needs of TAG students.

Alignment of High School Schedules: The alignment of high school schedules has the potential to provide more opportunities for students, increase student achievement by using a length of period that supports student-centered learning, make it easier to provide remediation and acceleration in critical areas, share instructional practices across schools, and provide district- and school-level efficiencies.

Alignment of Middle Schools on Trimesters: All the middle schools have moved to a trimester schedule, thereby allowing for consistent school configurations, grading terms, and course code numbering. This consistency saves time and money centrally and allows for more efficient professional development and intra-district collaboration. It also facilitates the transition of students who change schools during the year.

Proficiency-Based Learning Pilots at the Secondary Schools: We have introduced the concept of proficiency-based teaching and learning. A number of teachers, such as those at Roosevelt, have taken up the challenge to pilot this approach in their classrooms. These pilots set the stage for a more responsive approach to teaching that focuses on addressing the individual learning needs of students.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE IN SCHOOLS

Attending to the culture and climate in schools is an essential strategy in creating positive learning environments for students and positive working environments for staff. Over the past two years we have pursued a number of initiatives to further enhance the culture and climate of our schools.

Caring for Kids: Utilizing grants from the NoVo Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, eight of our elementary schools launched our Caring for Kids program that supports the social development of students and fosters a sense of caring community in classrooms and schools. We have secured another grant that will enable us to extend the program to five more schools next year.

Next Steps at North Eugene High School: After lengthy discussions between administration and faculty at North, NEHS has unified as one school, making IB courses available to all students and launching a new era that builds on the strong sense of personalization, support and community in the North region.

PERSONNEL AND LEADERSHIP

We have focused our human resources efforts to bring talented leadership and teaching to the district and to further cultivate our own leaders within the system.

Emerging Leaders Program: To cultivate the talent we have within the district, we have launched a 16-month program for faculty who want to pursue leadership positions in the district. This program combines leadership seminars taught by our directors, an experience of leadership within the district, and mentoring by exemplary leaders.

Critical Hiring Decisions: Over the past two years, we have focused on support of current administrators and teachers, as well as hiring exceptional leaders and teachers. Focusing on the quality of personnel will build a strong foundation for 4J's future.

III. STEWARDSHIP OF DISTRICT RESOURCES

Goal: Provide prudent stewardship of district resources to best support student success, educational equity and choice.

We set our sights on achieving a sustainable budget, finding additional efficiencies, and adopting a long-range facility plan in order to direct resources to our core mission most effectively. The budget challenges we are now facing have been a setback to some of these efforts. However, we have moved forward a number of initiatives to ensure that every dollar is invested in making a difference for students by focusing on improving efficiency and maximizing the impact of our expenditures.

A Needs Index to Ensure Equitable Distribution of School Resources: Although the district has allocated funding to high-needs schools in the past, the establishment of a school needs index that encompassed key areas impacting student performance—such as the percent of economic disadvantage, the percent of traditionally underserved population, and mobility rates—is enabling the district to more effectively allocate resources to the schools and students who most need them.

Facility Plan: Given our declining local option levy, it became clear that a capital bond was the only additional resource we could ask our community to provide for school improvement. Through an extensive fourteen-month process, we were able to devise a facility plan that garnered broad popular support for the 2013 bond and bodes well for one in 2017. The facility plan and successful bond campaign will enable us to replace some of our most outdated schools and provide critical instructional materials and technology for our district.

ESD Analysis: After a thorough analysis of the discrepancy in funding to Eugene through Lane ESD, coupled with an analysis of the lack of ESD support for large urban districts statewide, we were able to secure changes in the allocation of resources at Lane ESD that will enable 4J to access an additional \$1 million in resources and provide important student services on an in-district basis.

Balanced Budget for Nutrition Services: In 2011-12, over \$300,000 in general fund resources were devoted to underwriting the nutrition services program. Through structural and contractual changes, we will now have a balanced budget in nutrition services without compromising our general fund.

Centralized Purchasing: We will soon be able to reduce costs and promote efficiencies through purchasing initiatives in the areas of copies and computers. We have moved to one central copier contract that allows schools to purchase copiers at lower costs for both equipment and service. We have also moved to providing strict guidelines for technology purchases so that we can streamline operational support.

Grant Writing: Over the past two years, the district has aggressively pursued grants to support district initiatives. Not only have we applied for numerous local, state and foundation grants, but we have also submitted competitive i3 and Race to the Top federal proposals.

Monthly Financial Reports: The Finance Office has initiated monthly financial reports that enable us to more effectively manage day-to-day financial decisions. The reports also provide greater transparency for the Board and the public on our budget.

Initiatives in Risk Management to Reduce Risk and Insurance Costs: Through the proactive work of our risk management staff, we have reduced the growth of our insurance costs. While most Oregon school districts will see a 20-35% increase in property and liability insurance premiums, our premiums will increase only 13%, resulting in \$50,000 in premium savings over earlier projections. We have also expanded our program that helps injured employees return to work, reducing lost days related to injuries by 330% this year. In addition, we were one of four Oregon school districts selected to take part in the President Obama's 2013 K-12 School Security Outreach program. We participated in a joint training with federal agencies and the Department of Homeland Security conducted comprehensive site assessments at Churchill, Kennedy, Willagillespie and Madison with a focus on building design and security issues.

Utility Savings: As a result of efforts to improve energy efficiency, primarily from the investment of bond measure proceeds, the utility budgets have kept pace with rate increases and have generated significant savings. The boiler and control upgrades to Kennedy Middle School last summer, combined with an unseasonably warm winter, resulted in a 40 to 50 percent reduction of natural gas consumption. In an effort to further curtail utility expenditures in the current year, Facilities heating technicians have been burning oil reserves purchased in prior years. The underground oil storage tanks will ultimately be removed from a number of sites.

IV. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Engage the community, staff, families, students, elected officials and other stakeholders in supporting our schools and improving educational outcomes for all 4J students.

As a shared Board and staff goal, we hoped to build stronger communications with legislators, key state educational leaders, community leaders and others to advocate for legislation in support of strategies to increase student achievement and sustainable funding for schools. In addition, we set a target of enhancing our communications with our communities of color, our post-secondary and business community, and our parents. We have made progress on these broad communication goals.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is critical in helping various constituencies understand the challenges the district faces, the successes we are achieving, and the initiatives we are pursuing.

Communications with Legislators: Board members and the superintendent have been in close contact with our legislative delegation, the Governor's office, OEIB and the Department of Education throughout the year. We have been effective in making the case for additional funding for education and for reform of the ESD structure. We have also been influential in outlining key investments that the state should take to advance our educational performance. Through a series of white papers and involvement in statewide committees, we have been able to influence the direction of reform in Oregon.

Communications with the Community: To ensure that community leaders and the community in general remain aware of developments in the district, the superintendent has continued to hold small group and individual meetings with key leaders, including small group meetings sponsored by the Chamber and speeches offered for such community groups as the Downtown Rotary and the Lions Club. In addition, the superintendent has published two op eds in *The Register-Guard*.

We engaged the community in shaping our Long-Range Facilities Plan through a series of community forums and provided information to increase community awareness of the condition of

our school buildings. A voter survey also provided valuable information that helped us in crafting a successful bond measure.

The staff provided up-to-date information on current issues on the 4J website. These include the 3x5 high school schedule, the budget, our facilities planning and bond measure, and other issues. On July 1, staff will unveil a refreshed website with a new and simpler look.

Each week, the Communications staff issues news releases to our local media sharing stories from our schools and facilitating local media coverage. We have expanded postings on Facebook as another avenue to feature positive news about our schools in addition to our key communicator e-news.

Communications with the District: It is vital that the superintendent has feet-on-the-ground knowledge of what is occurring in schools so that he can address issues effectively and provide leadership grounded in the reality of classrooms and schools. Each year for the past two years, the superintendent has visited every school, visiting classrooms, meeting with the principal, and then meeting with the entire faculty. In addition, the superintendent often participates in monthly principal meetings and attends retreats and professional development with principals.

Synergy as an Enhanced Vehicle for Parent and Student Engagement: Our new student information system is user-friendly and allows much greater access for teachers and other staff to critical student performance data so that they can more effectively individualize instruction and address student needs. Synergy also provides much greater access for parents and students so that they can view assignments, grades and school information on the web and smartphones. The greater level of access enables parents and students to become more engaged and, as a result, student performance improves.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Each year we confront new dilemmas and seek ways to improve our services. Below is just a sample of some of the issues we've attempted to address throughout this past year.

Health Center Restructuring: Given new requirements for our health clinics—including medical billing, electronic records, and limited revenue sources for funding—it became clear that the district would no longer be able to support four health clinics. Staff has worked hard to learn the billing process. As a result, the district will be able to maintain two part-time clinics next year, which will give us an opportunity to determine the revenue potential of the billing process.

Churchill Dental Clinic: In addition to the STEM renovation at CHS, the dental clinic was relocated to a newly remodeled modular facility on the CHS campus. The clinic, run by the Assistance League of Eugene and operating out of this improved facility, will continue to offer dental care to students in need.

Increased Network Security: The district has initiated an “identity management” initiative to direct our approach to network security. This procedure includes more stringent passwords for students and staff, changes in departments' privacy practices, and more universal use of our district login to allow access to different servers. Over the long term, these heightened security measures will save resources and protect student and staff information.

Security Upgrades: Facilities and Risk Management have been working closely to prioritize security upgrades based upon the risk assessments performed earlier this year.

Grounds Department Relocation: The relocation of the Grounds Department from the Transportation site to the Ed Center site has increased operational efficiency by consolidating all department operations in one location.

Transportation Reorganization: The reorganization of the Transportation Department is nearly complete. Recent changes in leadership, technical support, routing and dispatch support functions, and maintenance shop reorganization will result in increased efficiencies and improved customer service.

Facilities Scheduling: A new web-based facilities scheduling system has been implemented that allows for the integration of billing for rental charges with the scheduling function. This change is resulting in improved efficiency and accuracy, plus up-to-date information access for users.

IN CLOSING

These accomplishments reflect the dedication, perseverance and collaboration of staff throughout the district. Despite the constraints and challenges caused by our financial situation, we continue to focus on improvement and find ways to leverage our resources—people, time, dollars and relationships—toward boosting success for every student and creating a system of strong and excellent schools of which our community is proud.



Sheldon Berman
Superintendent