

Budget Trimmed, Jobs Saved...

...FOR NOW, WITH BIGGER CUTS ANTICIPATED

The stalled economy has everyone – from government agencies and private businesses, to families and individuals – scrambling to readjust their budgets. Lincoln County School District (LCSD) is among them.

The good news, temporarily at least, is that after much input from principals, teachers, staff and local union leaders, and after numerous work sessions to fine-tune the numbers, LCSD administrators were able to find the \$1.66 million needed to make ends meet this school year. This was done without laying off teachers or staff, cutting school days, cutting any academic programs, or adversely affecting students and their education.

The bad news is that Oregon's economic picture is still so unsettled that it's possible that LCSD will receive even less money than anticipated for the rest of this school year. If that happens, additional cuts may be needed in the next few months.

MAKING ENDS MEET... The

biggest boost in reducing this year's school budget by \$1.66 million was the agreement among the district's teachers and support staff – at all schools as well as the district office – to a three-day reduction in their contract. The district's 16 school principals and assistant principals, along with seven district-level administrators and supervisors, including the superintendent, also agreed to give back pay to the district, in amounts ranging from three to six days.

"I appreciate the efforts and decision around the three-day reduction," LCSD Superintendent **Tom Rinearson** said in an email to all district staff.

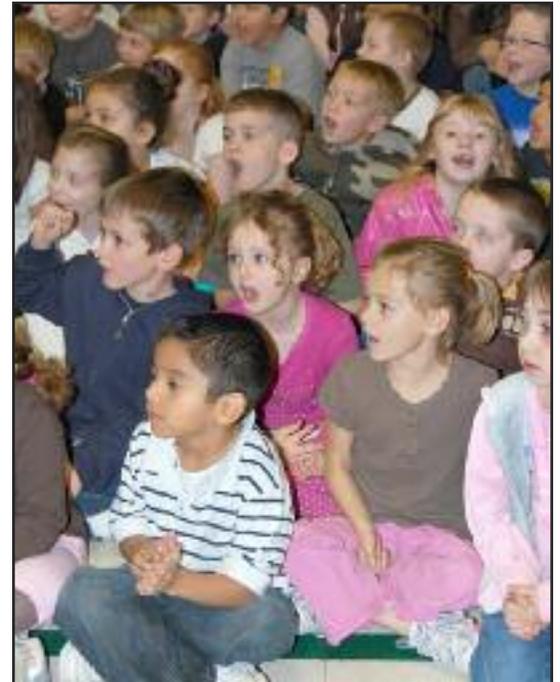
"This is the first time in my career that unions have agreed to this. It makes me proud to be part of this school district," he wrote. "I am a bit overwhelmed, and I REALLY appreciate the leadership of both unions! It is rare that labor and management can work collaboratively like this. I believe we are becoming a better organization because of it."

LCSD employs approximately 230 teachers and 300 support staff, who are represented by the Lincoln County Education Association and the Oregon School Employees Association.

Not only did their agreement result in the district meeting budget this year, it generated \$97,522 in excess funds that will be returned to the general fund to help with the inevitable and much larger budget cuts to come.

Rinearson estimates that the district will need to cut its budget for the 2009-10 school year by \$4.5 million. With other long-term and unalterable factors, such as consistently declining student enrollment and continually escalating retiree expenditures, the district's financial situation may be suffering for the next five years or more, he said.

In fact, Rinearson is anticipating that as many as 23 teaching positions and



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS: When school budgets need to be cut, the top priority is preserving quality programs for all children. Pictured above, Oceanlake Elementary School kids recite the "otter cheer" during a recent all-school assembly.

three administrative positions (referring to principals, assistant principals and/or district-level administrators) may need to be cut for the 2009-10 school year.

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Letter from Your Superintendent

Dear Lincoln County School District Residents:

We have heard a lot about "change" in our country of late, and the school district is no exception to that. Our revenue from the state of Oregon has been reduced this year (with possibly more reductions ahead), and will be further reduced in the coming school year. Because of our revenue reduction and higher costs, the way we offer services to our students will have to see some changes. *Local schools are now having conversations about what the future holds... please call your local principal and find out how you can be involved with the conversation.* This is all based on the funding our governor has proposed. However, the federal stimulus package may change some of this. This will prove to be a spring of speculation and uncertainty.

Our vision is "Quality Learning for All," and our mission is "to develop passionate learners and responsible citizens." This will not change despite the unsettled economy. We will continue to provide wonderful learning opportunities for our kids, and will make their experiences in our district the best we can.

I would like to tout our employees for the decisions they made to lessen the impact of cuts this year to our students. Rather than a layoff this school year for administrative,

classified and licensed staff, our employees voted to relinquish three or more days of pay, thus allowing us to keep programs for kids. I am proud to be superintendent in a district whose employees collaborate this way!

As all of us go through this economic struggle it is important to stay focused on the future. We must continue to see things becoming brighter. It's just like driving a car... the car goes where we look; the same holds true for our future.

I welcome your input. Please feel free to contact me by email (tom.rinearson@lincoln.k12.or.us), or phone (541-265-4403). You can also visit us on the web at www.lincoln.k12.or.us. Thanks for being a part of our district and community.

Sincerely,

Tom Rinearson,
Superintendent

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LCSD K-12 Alignment Project: IMPROVING LEARNING FOR ALL!

“I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” – *Physicist Albert Einstein*

You don’t have to be a genius like Einstein or a classroom teacher to know that his statement is true. The difficult part is making it happen.

That’s why Lincoln County School District has begun a process called K-12 Alignment to ensure that all children in the district are learning what they need to know; that all teachers are doing a great job teaching; and that everyone, students and teachers alike, know how well they are doing and what they need to do better.



WRITING WELL. Crestview Heights teacher **Robyn Medici** checks the writing skills of kindergarten students **Rian Laub**, center, and **Elijah Stiles**.

“We are so excited about all this and making it come to life,” says **Tiana Tucker**, English instructor at Newport High School and leader of the “Power Standards Teacher Team” that is guiding the K-12 Alignment effort.

“The idea comes from recent research by the big names in education reform, so we aren’t doing this from scratch,” she says. “We are taking specific ideas for management, curriculum, assessing, etc., and restructuring them to be most effective for our needs.”

The effort began during the 2007-08 school year, with a team of teachers beginning work on the three-pronged process that can be represented visually as the “Learning Triangle.”

The group of 30 language arts, science and social studies teachers represent a variety of grade levels and come from all areas of the district. The first challenge at hand was the top point of the triangle, “Curriculum.”

CURRICULUM: This point covers the courses or subjects taught in the classroom, and include the “Power Standards” of what students need to know and be able to do.

“We took the state standards, which are very comprehensive and huge, and selected the ones for us to focus on,” Tucker explains. “Our Power Standards are the critical, necessary skills needed for kids to pass from one grade to the next, to pass tests, to go to college if they so choose, go to work, and to succeed in life.”

When a student masters the Power Standards, he or she should have a solid educational foundation that will be

meaningful and helpful to one’s overall success in school and in life – not just as a way to pass a mandated standardized test. “We are teaching them how to learn,” says Tucker.

Although the Power Standards are uniform throughout the district, that doesn’t mean teaching will be constricted; teachers may continue to use their own best judgment on how best to teach a subject matter to a particular class.

ASSESSMENT: This point of the Learning Triangle deals with measuring how students are progressing, and using this information for improvement.

“This involves more than just testing,” Tucker says. “It includes informal daily progress, setting benchmarks, trying to have the same assessments from teacher to teacher, class to class, throughout the district so everyone knows what to expect.”

Tucker explains that an objective way of assessing student progress (such as grades, suspensions, etc.) helps teachers remove the personal feeling of attachment, the belief that, “I am teaching the material therefore the students must be learning.”

During this current school year, the Power Standards Teacher Team is continuing its work on curriculum, and has added the Assessment point as another focus.

One notable result from this work: This coming autumn, parents throughout the entire school district will see new report cards. While the report card will continue to use the letter grading scale, it will more comprehensively address what the grade means.

“What does a ‘B’ grade mean in this one class? Is it because my child didn’t turn in assignments, or is it because of the quality of the work? The new report card will be a better tool to help parents and students understand,” Tucker says.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: This point of the triangle concentrates on improving the learning/teaching process for both student and instructor; this involves classroom interaction between the student and teacher, as well as between students, Tucker says.

Tucker explains that even in a school filled with



READY TO READ. Teaching assistant **Jerry Paustian** helps kindergartners with reading skills. From left, **Danika Simon**, **Emily Allen**, **Senia Teel** and **Griffin Thissell**.



POWER STANDARDS IN PLAY. Offering all types of music instruction to all ages of students, Crestview Heights teacher **Mary Koch** finds the Power Standards helpful in keeping herself and students on track. Here, she introduces a combined K-1 grade class to the keyboard.

students, teachers and staff, a teacher can feel very isolated with little time allowed for self-improvement or constructive feedback from one’s peers.

“Class time is hurry, hurry, hurry and entirely focused on the kids,” she says. “Any free time is spent assessing the kids you had earlier and preparing for the next kids.”

“LCSD is developing a system that will **ENSURE QUALITY** learning and significantly **RAISE** the level of **ACHIEVEMENT** for all students.”

– **Sandi Williams**

Administrator for LCSD Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Generally, teachers at the elementary grade level find it easier to meet with their peers and to discuss strategies for improved teaching. **Robyn Medici** teaches a combined kindergarten-first grade class at Crestview Heights School in Waldport.

“The district is at the beginning stages of implementing the Power Standards, but what we have so far is great foundation for better things to come,” she said. “They will definitely help every teacher and student know what the expectations are, and how to meet them.”

Also, teachers are invited to attend monthly classes offering instructional strategies. Last year, 12 teachers attended the sessions and this year, 16 more are attending. “They take their good ideas back to their school and filter out the information,” Tucker says.

MAKING IT WORK: The K-12 Alignment is not a state- or federally-mandated program. Rather, it was suggested by the LCSD’s upper management, and acted upon by a group of teachers who were eager to embrace the concept.

“The idea wasn’t forced on us, and it’s exciting for us to work on it. The change is coming from within, not from the top down,” Tucker says. “There are new ideas and new research all the time, and we’re glad to explore ways to maximize each year for every student.” ♦



Students Star in Video For 'Climate Dialogue' Event

LCSD coordinated with Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport for a special event on Feb. 6 – the Oregon Climate Dialogue.

Ruth McDonald, LCSD's community curriculum and resources liaison, reports that on Feb. 5, the National Teach-In on Global Warming engaged more than a million Americans in solutions-driven dialogue.

The following day, the Climate Dialogue followup event was an opportunity for high school students to be part of a focused conversation about the critical decisions that will determine if our descendants will inherit a prosperous or an impoverished planet.

Included during the two-hour program was the "Student Voices" video produced by **Toledo High School** students and featuring youngsters from other county schools speaking about global warming: what it means to them and what they are doing to help lessen the problem.

National, state and local legislators, climate scientists and others spoke, and the students had the opportunity to ask questions.

Update: Sam Case Steals, Keeps Attendance Flag

As previously reported, the district's six elementary schools are having a friendly "Capture the Flag" competition that is designed to increase school pride and boost student attendance.

The schools chipped in to purchase the bright yellow flag which was designed by **Donna Saunders**, secretary at Taft Elementary School. Each month, the school with the best attendance percentage from the previous month wins the Attendance Flag, which then is proudly flown on their flagpole, beneath the Oregon state flag.

October Results: The competition officially kicked off with attendance

results for the month of October. **Oceanlake Elementary** in Lincoln City won the flag, with an attendance rate of 95.5 percent, closely followed by **Sam Case Elementary** in Newport, with 95.3 percent.

November Results: **Oceanlake** and **Sam Case** switched positions, with the Newport school boasting a 94.7 percent attendance rate and O'Lake at 93.9 percent.

December Results: **Sam Case** retained the flag for December, with a 93.4 percent attendance rate, followed by Lincoln City's **Taft Elementary** in second place with 91.6 percent.

The next time you drive by your neighborhood elementary school, take a look at the flagpole to see if the kids inside are attendance champs!



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT ON CLIMATE CHANGE: **Sophia Goodwin-Rice**, fourth-grader at Yaquina View Elementary in Newport, was one of the students filmed by **A.J. Brown**, senior at Toledo High School, for the "Student Voices" video. See story at left.

2nd Graders Display Art During Pushpin Show

Toledo Elementary second-graders in **Kim Eason's** class participated in the Newport Visual Arts Center's annual Pushpin Show, to resounding critical acclaim.

During the show, which ran for three weeks in December, community members young and old were invited to hang one piece of their original artwork – as long as it was able to hang with four or fewer pushpins.

"We studied Native Americans during November and the children learned how their legacy has been passed down through art and symbols," Eason explains.

"The children used symbols to create a story that tells about the experience of a Native American. They drew symbols traced that with glue, covered it with tin foil, and then painted over it with an acrylic," she explains. "They turned out very nice and looked stunning in the light of the Visual Art Center. I had several compliments while I was hanging them and people were rather impressed that second graders had such talent."

The artists had the option to try to sell their artwork but Eason said she "did not put a price on ours." Priceless!

Newport Grads Make The News, Praise Schooling

Wow! Recent articles in the Newport *News-Times*, written by Kate Rowland, focused on three Newport High School alumni – **Allison Hamilton**, **Mark Osborn** and **Brent Barton** – who recently have done great things in their fields, and they are quoted praising the education they received at Newport.

Hamilton and Osborn recently helped to launch the first solar-powered highway in the country, near Tualatin; and Barton has just begun serving as the Oregon House District 51 representative.

"Newport doesn't have the resources that other schools do, nor probably will it ever," Barton is quoted saying.

"Nevertheless, it has some great, committed teachers, and perhaps that's why I feel so indebted. For a town the size of Newport, they're very lucky to have such good teachers. Some amazing graduates come out of Newport."

Hamilton, who works for the Oregon Department of Transportation, is quoted saying, "Our education at Newport High

encouraged us to push the envelope and not be satisfied with the status quo. Many of my classmates have done some impressive things. The teaching climate and atmosphere at Newport High were very encouraging to us to go beyond what our self-perceived limits were and use our imagination."

We at LCSD are proud of what we do, and are pleased when these efforts are publicly recognized!

Donate2Educate Helps People Donate to Schools

School budgets are tighter than ever. An organization called Donate2Educate has a website that allows parents, grandparents, friends and community members to donate to a specific school or cause.

When you visit donate2educate.com, you can look up a particular school's needs, from pencil sharpeners to classroom computers, and contribute. There is no minimum donation and 100 percent goes to the school.

Since its inception five years ago by a Colton woman who wanted to help her local school district, close to 2,000 donations have been made online for a total of \$274,420. Often, individuals take donations directly to the school, bypassing the website, so this number doesn't reflect the true value of what has been given.

For example, Oceanlake Elementary School received the gift of several magazine subscriptions for the kindergarten class, including a year of *National Geographic Kids*, and many people have brought food donations directly to Taft Elementary School for its "Backpack for Kids" nutrition program. ♦

SHINING THE LIGHT ON EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:



Fourteen third- through sixth-grade teachers attended a workshop hosted by the BLM Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area on Jan. 15. The teachers were invited to learn about the education programs currently offered for school visitors, learn how to align current offerings with district and state curriculum standards, and provide input to Roy Simpson, BLM education program coordinator, on new outreach programs being developed for the Lincoln County Schools, including a puppet show and traveling trunks.

Pictured outside the historic lighthouse, from left, are **Ruth McDonald**, LCSD Community Curriculum & Resource Liaison, **Lisa Moore**, fourth grade, Yaquina View; **Jay Moeller**, BLM Yaquina Head; **Kapla West**, fifth grade, Toledo Elementary; **John Meyer**, third grade, Yaquina View; **Jackie Oyola**, fourth grade, Crestview Heights; **Matt Falby**, fourth grade, Oceanlake Elementary; **Katherine Newman**, fourth/fifth grade, Eddyville Charter School.

Amy Coulter Ron Beck Brenda Brown
Jana Cowan, Vice Chairman
Jean Turner, Chairman
LCSD VISION:
Quality Learning For All
LCSD MISSION:
To Develop Passionate Learners
and Responsible Citizens

3 School Board Seats to be Filled

Interested Individuals Encouraged to Serve

Do you have an interest in helping the children and schools of your community? Three of the five seats on the Lincoln County School District Board of Directors – the School Board – are up for election on May 19, with the newly elected board members beginning their four-year term of service on July 1.

Though a board member must live in a particular zone in order to represent it, he or she is elected by all county voters. Among the board members' duties are to set policy and develop a strategic plan for the district, with the best interest of children, parents, and the community at heart.

The filing period for interested LCSD School Board candidates opens on Feb. 9 and continues through 5 p.m. on March 19.

Those interested in running for the school board must be a regis-

tered voter, live in the zone they wish to represent, and not be an employee of LCSD. Candidates must file verified signatures or a \$10 filing fee with the Lincoln County Clerk's Office.

The three seats to be filled during the May election are those now held by:

→ **Ron Beck in Zone 3**
(Newport, from Yaquina Head south to the bridge)

→ **Jana Cowan in Zone 4**
(inland areas including Eddyville, Siletz and Toledo)

→ **Jean Turner in Zone 5**
(south county including Elk City, Waldport and Yachats).

Members remaining on the board are:

→ **Amy Coulter in Zone 1**
(Lincoln City and Otis areas)

→ **Brenda Brown in Zone 2**
(Rose Lodge, Kernville and coastal areas south to, but excluding, Newport).

Need more information? Call Laurie Urquhart at 265-4403. ♦



QUALITY LEARNING. LCSD's mission of developing passionate learners starts with the youngest of children. Pictured at left, Crestview Heights kindergarten student **Suanda Rhodes** proudly shows off her work during a recent writing session.

IMPORTANT DATES TO KNOW

- Presidents' Day -- **No School**
Monday, February 16
- Spring Break -- **No School**
Beginning Monday, March 23
School resumes on Monday, March 30
- Memorial Day -- **No School**
Monday, May 25
- Last Day of School --
Wednesday, June 10

Because each of the school district's four areas has its own calendar, please visit the LCSD website for other important school dates, such as the end of each six-week term, school improvement days and parent conferences.

www.lincoln.k12.or.us

Budget Cuts Explained...

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BUT, BACK TO THIS YEAR... So far, Lincoln County Schools received \$1.38 million less revenue than was anticipated in the 2008-09 budget. This is due to state legislative budget cuts, lower teacher experience rating funds, and lower State School Funding (the State School Fund Formula is the means by which the Oregon Legislature distributes state resources to local school districts in an equitable manner).

Adding in approximately \$300,000 in increased expenditures for such items as unemployment insurance, tutoring for expelled students, Special Education costs and more, the total deficit for the

year, principals at each of the district's 11 schools came up with proposed cuts totaling approximately \$581,700. This included reducing hours and/or days worked by staff and teachers, and eliminating some teaching positions – but this proposal was scrapped in lieu of the across-the-board three-day reduction.

The remaining cuts at the school level are to field trip funds and special education supply funds, although one program was eliminated: the golf program at Toledo Junior-Senior High School.

The LCSD District Office, which provides services throughout the entire district, found ways to save \$1.053 million – or

some two-thirds of the total cuts required. This includes cuts to teacher recruitment, media (library) services, and other miscellaneous areas; lower liability and property insurance costs; and using Education Service District Funds for professional development and school improvement activities; to name a few.

some two-thirds of the total cuts required. This includes cuts to teacher recruitment, media (library) services, and other miscellaneous areas; lower liability and property insurance costs; and using Education Service District Funds for professional development and school improvement activities; to name a few.

A large influx of revenue, \$600,000, came from the district's reserve funds.

THE BUDGET PROCESS...

Budgeting is an ongoing process, Rinearson explains. Typically, he and other administrators and supervisors begin preparing the budget for the next school year in December. A proposed budget is presented to the LCSD Budget Committee in May. After several budget committee meetings and a public hearing to receive input from community members, the LCSD School Board approves the budget in June. During the school year, the budget is readjusted as needed.

"This year was different. Rather than adjustments in the hundreds or a few

thousands of dollars, we were hit with the need to make a \$1.66 million adjustment, with more and bigger cuts anticipated next year," Rinearson said.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS... Even though a short-term solution to

budgetary problems has been found, Rinearson reminds staff, "As we work through this, let's keep focused on doing the best we can for our students this year. After all, what we do is all about the kids, not about programs or staff. Each student goes through third grade, or fifth grade, or ninth grade only once – and we need to make it the best we can for them." ♦

"As we work through this, let's KEEP FOCUSED on doing the best we can for our students this year. After all, what we do is all about the KIDS, not about programs or staff."

remainder of the 2008-09 school year is \$1.66 million, at this point.

There are two ways to deal with budget deficits: reduce expenditures or raise/shift revenue, Rinearson said. The agreed-upon solution does both. During the process of readjusting the budget for the last half of this school

Watch Your Mailbox!

A special edition of "District Dialog" will be mailed to you soon, providing more information about the budget crunch, and how LCSD is preparing to meet the challenge... while optimizing learning for ALL children in our community!