

## Obie blasts absent negotiators

# Some 4-J schools reopen today, will provide 'basic education'

By Jackie Barry  
Of the Emerald

Plans to reopen all 4-J schools have been finalized, Superintendent Margaret Nichols announced Tuesday morning at a press conference.

Schools have been closed since 1,200 teachers in the district, members of the Eugene Education Association, went on strike April 8. The district said it would need 633 teachers to provide basic education for the 17,000 students in the district.

Secondary schools will reopen today with replacement teachers who began in-service training at the schools Monday. One replacement teacher who reportedly knocked down a striking teacher "is no longer with us," Nichols said Tuesday, noting it would not be fair to say the behavior of either side is violent because of the actions of one person.

She said the safety of returning students is assured. "I believe absolutely that our teachers, angry as they are, will not hurt kids. This is a dispute between adults."

Nichols also said elementary-level, self-contained special education classes will resume Thursday, and all elementary school classes will resume Friday.

School hours will be shortened for elementary students, Nichols said, and instruction will include reading, math, language arts and other activities if there is time.

Some schools have teachers who are on a different contract than the striking teachers and are required to work during the strike such as Patterson Elementary's music teacher, according to a letter sent to that school's parents.

But "it will not be the rich, varied curriculum"

riculum" 4-J students are used to, Nichols said.

Meanwhile, attorneys for both sides and negotiators attended a labor complaint hearing before the state Employment Relations Board in Salem. The complaint was filed by the 4-J District against the EEA in an effort to get the strike by teachers ruled illegal, said David Piercy, an assistant to Nichols.

Nichols said very specific laws exist detailing mandatory subjects of bargaining over which a union may strike. If the ERB determines the strike to be illegal, negotiations will have to begin anew, she said, and another strike would not be legal until the negotiations process follows the required steps.

According to Piercy, the ERB won't rule on the legality of the strike for at least a week following the hearing. He said if the strike ends before this time, the board will not rule.

At a press conference Tuesday evening at the Eugene Hilton, Mayor Brian Obie blasted bargaining teams from both sides for being in Salem instead of continuing negotiations.

"We sit here in empty rooms, while the parties sit in Salem," he said. "Both sides have lost track of what the goals are."

Obie urged parents to join him in escorting children across picket lines when schools reopen today. He said if nothing else, sending children to school would be a lesson to them in "what poor communication and large egos can produce."

State negotiator John Vale, in an interview with KMTR news Tuesday, said he has canceled other commitments so he can reconvene talks as soon as possible. During the interview, Vale said he would bring the two sides together again, "even though they're both kicking and screaming."



## Swingin' free

Not everyone's spirit was dampened by the teachers' strike Tuesday as Don Mosher shows by his thrilling ride over the bank of the Willamette River. The fun may not last, however, as classes resume today with the arrival of replacement teachers.

Photo by Sherlyn Bjorkgren

# Striking teachers express concern over violence

By Alicia Gano  
Of the Emerald

Five Eugene teachers spoke out at a Tuesday press conference at the Holiday Inn about Monday's strike-related violence at Churchill High School.

They also discussed what they perceive to be the unwillingness of the Eugene School Board and Superintendent Margaret Nichols to negotiate with the Eugene Education Association.

The teachers are concerned about violent incidents outside schools Monday between replacement and striking teachers but also are concerned with "what's going on inside the schools," said Sam Miller of Colin Kelly Middle School, who initially spoke for the group.

The quality of replacement teachers is a primary concern, he said.

"If replacements are of the caliber of the strikebreaker who knocked down our teacher yesterday at Churchill, we worry about the conditions in-

## Questions arise over quality of replacement curriculum

side our schools for our students," Miller said.

Miller was referring to an incident in which a striking Churchill teacher was struck and knocked to the ground by a replacement teacher. The striking teacher allegedly had blown a whistle into the ear of the replacement teacher prior to the assault. No charges were filed in the incident.

"Blowing a whistle is not akin to an act of violence," said Ben Shaver of Sheldon High School in response to questions about the incident.

The teachers at the press conference avoided making any statements about the potential for future violence between strikers and replacement teachers.

Mary Bauer of Willakenzie Elementary School did say, however, that the entire 4-J staff has nothing but "respect and affection for all their students"

and would pose no danger to them.

Bauer mentioned that there would be a one-and-a-half hour delay between the arrival and departure of replacement teachers and students when schools reopened.

Shaver believes there is less danger to students from their own teachers than from replacement teachers who are in a foreign environment.

In regard to curriculum concerns, Miller said if schools are reopened as planned, much of

the curriculum will consist of "filler activities such as journal writing, reading the newspaper and playing instructional games."

He added that special education services, as mandated by individualized education programs, will have to be altered.

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