

No Reasonable Options

School district has created a quandary

On Nov. 29, the Eugene 4J superintendent told the Eastside alternative school that there was no longer room for it at Parker and the school would have to move. What happens next will provide a clear demonstration of whether the district really intends to abide by its mission of "equal access and opportunities for all students" or not.



Let's clearly lay out the situation about Eastside.

Segregation. Eastside is a highly segregated alternative school. The district's neighborhood elementary schools have an average of 43 percent of students on free and reduced lunch (FRL – a measure of income), and the remaining alternative schools at 21 percent FRL (2007-08 data). Only 4 percent of Eastside students are on free and reduced lunch.

When it reviewed Eastside, the Alternative School Review Committee noted: "[W]e found a relatively homogeneous student body consisting of classrooms of mostly bright, motivated children with little evidence of diversity... [W]e did observe some instances of minority children and children who appeared to have special needs who were disengaged for the duration of the lessons we observed, with no indication from the teacher of any instructional techniques aimed at engaging those children in the lesson. ... While the school culture at Eastside is welcoming to the students it has, we are not confident that Eastside realizes the intricacies and challenges inherent in providing a truly supportive school culture for diverse populations."

Co-location tensions. After the alternative school review, the board concluded that it was unwise to continue the co-location of alternative schools with neighborhood schools because of the identified tensions between the "have" school and the "have not" schools in one building. Every co-located neighborhood school noted routine denigration of its community by the alternative school community. Rather than fix the inequities, the district apparently intends to make the daily evidence of the inequities less apparent.

Its report to the district, Eastside blamed the building tensions on Parker. "[T]he recommendation that co-location should be ended because of tensions between schools – has given the strong impression that divisive behavior by those opposed to co-location will be rewarded with policy change."

School size. In the "Shaping Eugene's Future" newsletter, the district noted the most effective size for an elementary schools is 300-400 students. Eastside currently has 144 students.

So what are the options for Eastside?

Move into Harris so it can denigrate that school community. Move into Adams to take the place of Hillside in denigrating that school community. Require one of the charter schools to move from Willard. (Eventually the district will need to move Charlemagne because it will never become integrated in the south hills and the Willard building seems to be the most logical.) Revive Hillside from the dead and kick out a neighborhood school to make a place for these two elitist, segregated schools. Try to find room at Dunn, where it would be half the size of the district's stated enrollment standard.

Essentially, there are no reasonable options for Eastside that would not significantly disrupt others, violate the district's expressed guidelines or interfere with future options. In the near future, the district will announce plans for other changes that will disrupt other school communities. Will the district bend over backwards to save this too-small, highly segregated, elitist school, which its own review committee thought was unlikely to be able to change?

Listen to the district's words extolling its dedication to equality and diversity. Or watch its actions. The district's actions will express its true values.

Nancy Willard, M.S., J.D., is known in Eugene as the 1985 Eugene Celebration S.L.U.G. Queen and self-described "chief complainer" about Eugene 4J segregation and inequities. She is also director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use and a mother of three children who attend 4J schools.

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tive forest logging to protect the climate, both globally (due to forests' carbon storage and sequestration capabilities) and regionally (as logging causes desertification and drought)

To further explore the connection between forests and climate and to help bring together the climate and forest protection movements, on Saturday, Jan. 26, from 10 am to 5 pm at the UO's 177 Lawrence Hall, Cascadia's Ecosystem Advocates, Native Forest Council and GreenwashEugene.com (with 16 regional cosponsors) will present "Clearcutting the Climate," a conference of science and action. The conference features OSU scientists discussing the role of forest carbon, panels exposing timber industry climate change propaganda and the link between deforestation and desertification, and a workshop to find common ground between forest and climate advocacy. It will be videorecorded and uploaded to our website Forestclimate.org, where it will be available along with other information on the link between forests and climate change.

Attendance is free, though donations are accepted (and appreciated!). Please RSVP at conference@forestclimate.org. Call 688-2600 for more info.

*Josh Schlossberg
Eugene*

KEEP TO THE RIGHT

Regarding Christelle Munnely's letter to the editor titled "Give Us Our Lane" (11/21), she only had it part right. What she had right was that it's certainly not acceptable for a driver to say, "Get the fuck out of the road" to a bicyclist, and that where necessary, under certain conditions, the bicyclist has the right to use the full lane.

What she had wrong was that actually, the Oregon rules of the road actually DO require bicyclists — generally — to use "a teeny portion [of the road] all the way to the right." What the relevant Oregon statute (ORS 814.430) actually says is: "A person commits the offense of improper use of lanes by a bicycle if the per-

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