

TEACHERS OUTVOTED

The recent controversy around the common schedule in District 4J's middle and high schools is a reflection of a bigger problem in the district. The process of centralization and standardization has been going on for several years but has dramatically accelerated recently under the new superintendent.

Centralization of decision-making is gutting the site-based management system that has worked so well in Eugene in the past. The common schedule idea did not come from teachers or parents. It came from downtown, and under the guise of collaboration, teachers were used to rubber-stamp the decision already made by the superintendent. This year all middle school teachers on the common schedule task force voted against the common schedule proposal but were outvoted by the administrators on the committee.

Eugene schools have been known for creating different environments and focuses that best serve our diverse

communities. Recently this tradition has been trampled on by the district's desire to standardize everything. Standardization of curriculum, testing, school sizes and now schedules does not lead to innovation, creativity and love of learning that is so important in the educational process.

This new management model may work in the corporate world, but in education the products are not widgets but our children who are unique human beings with different needs and wants that teachers, through differentiation, try to reach. The one-size-fits-all education does not work.

This corporate top-down management model disempowers teachers, marginalizes students and parents and should be resisted by our community.

*Pete Mandrapa
Eugene*

TIME TO CONSOLIDATE

Tony Corcoran was right on the mark ("Ways and Drones" column,

3/14) when he wrote about consolidating school districts. Here in Lane County we have 16 separate districts, each with its own superintendent and its own infrastructure. Is that really necessary? I know, I know, there's the issue of local control, but really, are the needs of kids in Florence any different than the kids in Eugene, Springfield, Blue River or Cottage Grove? As we continue to search for ways to save money, now is the time to seriously consider a Lane County school district.

*Robert Young
Lowell*

GLENWOOD FRENZY

Glenwood, along with Springfield and Eugene, is soon to be part of a wealthy developers' feeding frenzy that the four pro-sprawl Lane County commissioners are seeking to subsidize with our tax dollars. They and their wealthy developer associates seem intent on inflating the student housing and hospitality industry bubbles. This outdated mode of thinking is

based on the economy rebounding back to a yearly growth rate of 3 or 4 percent. With the increased scarcity and costs of natural resources and instability of our climate that is affecting the availability of water and agricultural goods, it is simply delusional.

One example, just a half mile southwest of Glenwood is the Moon Mountain development. You may recall this controversial development, south of the Laurel Hill neighborhood, was given approval in 2003-04. Currently 90 percent of the lots are vacant, one developer has gone bankrupt and a subsequent developer is suing the city over who's paying to complete the infrastructure. How many taxpayer dollars were wasted to facilitate the new streets and utilities for this failed "green" development? How many taxpayer dollars will be wasted on subsidizing this and other "green" developments in Glenwood, Eugene and Springfield?

*Shannon Wilson
Eugene*

VIEWPOINT BY BOB WARREN

Going Ga-Ga Over Goshen?

IT'S TIME FOR HONESTY FROM LANE COUNTY

Lane County has pulled out all the stops on promoting Goshen as an up and coming industrial job center for Lane County. But before we go ga-ga over Goshen I'd like Lane County to answer a few questions. How much is it going to cost? How long is it going to take? We already know it's the public who gets to pay, but who is going to benefit? Are there other interests besides the landowners who will benefit at the public's expense?

Listening to the Lane County hype, one would expect hundreds, if not thousands, of high-wage jobs in Goshen in the near future. I only wish that were true. As a member of the Governor's Regional Solutions Team in 2011 and 2012, I participated in numerous team briefings and discussions on the Goshen project. The team was, well, less than enthusiastic about Goshen. As the regional business development officer for the Oregon Business Development Department, I visited the site several times. I doubt Lane County will be recruiting any large industrial clients to that site any time soon.

True, if the site were "shovel ready," it could be an ideal location for some kinds of industry. Distribution centers similar to the Lowe's that we helped recruit for the city of Lebanon might be a good fit. However, for a variety of reasons, it would likely not be a good location for the kind of campus industrial that Lane County has indicated it wants at the site.

But that discussion is premature. The site

is not shovel ready, nor even close to it. No one knows how many hundreds of millions of dollars it will cost, or how many decades it will take, to make Goshen viable as an industrial site. The potential cost and time frame involved are ugly realities that Lane County officials apparently don't want to know.

No environmental assessment has been done on the site. Is there any contamination from previous uses? If so, what would be the cost of remediation? How long would it take to get DEQ approval for development? No wetlands surveys have been done. Are there wetlands and, if so, where are they? How much would it cost to mitigate? To my knowledge, Lane County has avoided even talking to DEQ or the Department of State Lands about these issues.

The site has significant transportation problems. Getting off and onto I-5 is just one problem. How much that would cost and how long that would take is anyone's guess. Once a project is on the ODOT project list it takes at least seven years before it is built. Meanwhile, Lane County officials have done everything in their power to avoid doing a traffic impact study.

Rail is touted as a benefit of the site. However, campus industrial generally doesn't like rail. In fact, they avoid it. Also, vehicles must drive over the tracks to get to the site. Even if ODOT Rail and the railroad would allow it, which they will not, it's a big problem for a business concerned about the safety of employees, contractors, clients or customers crossing the rail line to access the site. All alternative access options are expensive and time consuming.

The site has no wastewater system. Lane County admits to water and wastewater issues with the site, but it has not been forthcoming about how to resolve them, how much it would cost or how long it would take to fix. Lane County officials told me at one point that they might try to recruit businesses that could operate on a septic system. While some small-scale septic is already ongoing, there has been no assessment for an industrial scale septic system. There has been no determination or even discussions about whether such a system is viable or how much it would cost, or who would maintain it.

Lane County officials also talk about a wastewater treatment facility. Such stand-alone systems are notoriously expensive to build and to maintain. Just ask the city of Coburg. Again, how much would it cost, who would pay for it and who would maintain it? Another option might be to connect to an existing wastewater system. Assuming Lane County could overcome the political and legal challenges, which existing system would they connect to? Metro? The city of Creswell? Either would require very long pipelines with associated ownership and land use issues to resolve, and of course there is the cost.

Lane County needs the jobs and I personally believe it would be good thing for Goshen to become a regional job center. The problem is how to get there from here? It's premature to be going to the Legislature seeking a state law to raise dump fees to pay for Goshen. It's the right time for a reality check from Lane County. Is it going to cost \$100 million, or more? How much more? Will it take a decade, two decades or longer? I think it's past time for a little honesty from Lane County about Goshen.

Bob Warren of Eugene retired in 2012 as regional business development officer for the Oregon Business Development Department for Lane, Benton and Linn counties. He has also served as regional coordinator for rural development for the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department, and as an advisor to Gov. Barbara Roberts and Rep. Peter DeFazio.

