

TEACHER'S UNION REJECTS FED GRANT

The Eugene Education Association (EEA) has rejected endorsement of School District 4J's federal "Race to the Top" grant application, citing "grave concerns over increased workload for teachers and specialists and because of inadequate time given to analyze the 170-page application," according to a statement emailed Oct. 1 to EEA members from EEA President Tad Shannon.

The application outlined a \$30 million, four-year proposal and was written by a consortium of the largest school districts in the state: Eugene, Salem, Beaverton and Portland. The \$30 million, if approved, would be divided between the districts and used for additional career learning and individualized education initiatives, along with professional development for teachers.

"The grant would not have added any teachers or reduced class size," wrote Shannon. "EEA only received a draft of the full application last week, despite a federal re-

quirement of buy-in by the unions representing teachers in each of the four districts and a tight Oct. 3 deadline."

Shannon said the grant would not restore any of the nine furlough days in the district. "In fact, it adds to the workload of teachers who are already stretched to the breaking point," he said.

The EEA is not alone in its objections. The Portland Teachers Association and the Beaverton Teachers Association also voted this week to not sign off on the grant, citing similar concerns about increased teacher workload and inadequate time.

Shannon said District 4J applied for a similar grant last year but was not selected. "Then, as now," he wrote, "EEA questioned the limited time given to analyze last year's proposal. However, EEA did negotiate an agreement to limit additional workload. Why then, did EEA leadership opt not to participate this time around?"

This year, he said, teachers report that stress levels have never been higher. New initiatives and mandates, including a comprehensive teacher evaluation system, the Synergy grading and attendance pro-

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— TAD SHANNON

gram, new grading policies and a district-mandated 3x5 schedule at the high schools have "pushed teachers to the brink," said Shannon.

The district claims that the grant would not add to workload, he said, but professional development, which requires teachers to be out of the classroom, is "an added stress as are intensive summer workshops and all the spin-off work that would create."

Shannon quotes an unnamed EEA Executive Board member saying this week that "Teachers are already spending their own time to get done all that is being asked. We just can't add one more thing." — *Ted Taylor*

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