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James Monroe Middle School • Parent Newsletter • 2800 Bailey Lane Eugene, OR 97401 • (541)687-3254

October 2008

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Mock Election Coming October 30th

On October 30th all Monroe students will have the opportunity to vote in the 2008 Student Mock Election. In 2004 over four million students in all 50 states participated, and this year that number is expected to be even higher.

As part of their study on the Constitution and American history, eighth grade block students will be registering interested students in all three grades in preparation for a vote for president, vice president, US senator, and US representative. Voting will take place during lunch, and the secret ballots will be counted by student/teacher election officials later that day. The results will be announced on Election Day, November 4th.

While the election process will be the main focus of the curriculum in the run-up to the election, students will also have opportunities to research the candidates, the parties, and their stands on various important issues.

If you would like more information on the process, visit the following website: <http://www.lwvor.org/mockelection.htm>

Free School Transportation Services for K-12 Families

Free services provided by Smart Ways to School can help parents find carpool partners, or find other students to walk or bike to school together. We also provide the free LTD pass for students in grades 6-12. Call 682-6212 or visit <http://www.swts.ltd.org> for more info!

There is a NURSE at Monroe

Laurie Rowe is the Monroe School Nurse. She is typically at Monroe on Wednesday afternoon. She is the regional nurse in the Sheldon area and is also the nurse at 4 other schools. Please feel free to contact Laurie with any health concerns that you have regarding your student. She is available via pager, 710-3150, any school day. The school nurse is also helpful if you are struggling to get glasses or dental care.

Message from the Principal: Peter Tromba

October 1, 2008

Hello Monroe Community,
We have had an excellent start to this school year. Our focus as a staff in August and September has been on our academic program. Higher academic achievement for our students demands that the instruction we provide be rigorous and challenging, taught with relevant examples and connections to the real world. Some of our recent activities to improve relevance and rigor include:

- A Sheldon region K-12 administrators staff development day to focus on supporting teachers to develop curriculum, based on a successful model used in schools across the state and country.
- A meeting with all of the teachers, grade 6 through 12, together to learn about the new state graduation standards and then in groups to discuss how their subjects (English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Health and PE, World Languages, and the Arts) align through the grade levels.
- Staff development with the teachers at Monroe (which will continue through the year) at improving their instruction and assessment through the use of four major skills (student choice, multiple modes of learning, tiered assignments, and flexible grouping).
- Intensive training for 8 of our teachers in how to use technology to improve instruction.

High achievement also requires that our staff and students have good relationships that support scholarship and social development. For grades 6-8, ensuring that these relationships are the best they can be is difficult. We spend a considerable amount of thought working to support positive behaviors and limit negative ones. Our school-wide program is effective for Monroe, based on data and staff and student feedback. However, what is also true is that there continues to be an unacceptable amount of not so good behaviors, which include bullying and harassment.



José da Silva and I are very interested in getting the best data we can from our school as to how we can improve our approach. Both of us are graduates of the University of Oregon's Masters in Educational Leadership and we have close connections to the research being conducted there regarding school behavior programs. A University of Oregon doctoral candidate, Julia Heffernan, who is a colleague and friend of both José and me, will be doing research on our campus this year.

Ms. Heffernan is a certified teacher and school administrator who is currently working on her doctoral dissertation in education. Her dissertation focuses on issues related to bullying, harassment, and homophobia among middle school youth. Throughout the year she will be observing social interactions throughout our community in an effort to better understand problems related to bullying and homophobia. During her time at Monroe Ms. Heffernan will be in close contact with José and me to assure the safety and well-being of all students. Throughout her study student confidentiality will be maintained through the use of code numbers for note taking and later in reporting the research pseudonyms will be used to conceal the names and locations of all students involved. If you have questions or wish to have your child exempted from the observations for this project, please contact José or me at (541) 687-3254. Your decision to participate or not participate in this research will not affect your relationship with the school or school district.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact Julia Heffernan, Educational Leadership, (541) 579-4260, College of Education. If you have questions regarding your child's rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

4J Questions & answers about Ballot Measure 20-137

Local Option Levy Renewal: A message from the Eugene School Board

What is the Local Option Levy?

The Eugene School District Local Option Levy is a property tax that provides money for 4J school operations. The current levy expires in 2010; it was first approved by voters in 2000 and renewed in 2004.

Ballot Measure 20-137, on the Nov. 4, 2008 election ballot, would renew the levy at the same tax rate for another five years, through June 2015. If approved, the district would expect the levy to generate \$15 million-\$17 million per year, equivalent to operate two high schools for one year.

How would the levy money be spent?

The levy would maintain current school programs and staffing levels to the extent possible. Without this levy the school district would need to reduce its budget by about 10 percent, beginning in fall 2010.

How is the Local Option Levy different from a capital bond, like 4J passed in 2002?

The Local Option Levy pays for school programs and staff. By law, bond funds can only be used for new construction or improving buildings and facilities.

What would residents pay?

The average residential tax rate is projected at \$1.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value for 2010-11. No one can pay more than \$1.50 per \$1,000.

To see how much you would pay: check your 2007 tax statement to see how much you now pay for the Eugene School District Local Option Levy (look under "CURRENT TAX BY DISTRICT" for "Eugene School District LO"). If the Local Option Levy is renewed, you would continue to pay about the same amount. Or, download and use the worksheet at http://www.4j.lane.edu/local_option_2008

Each property would pay a different amount, depending on the difference between the assessed value and the real market value. Changes in the real market value and/or assessed value of property may affect the amount of your taxes.

What if the Local Option Levy fails?

The Eugene School Board could decide to submit a levy proposal to voters in a future election, in spring 2009,

fall 2009 or spring 2010. If a new levy is not approved to replace the levy that expires in June 2010, the district would have to reduce its budget by about \$15 million, beginning in the 2010-11 school year. The district's budget committee and the school board would hold public hearings before making a decision about how to reduce the budget.

How are Oregon public schools funded?

The state legislature decides how much money schools get from a combination of property taxes and state funds (largely from state income taxes). Each school district gets about the same amount per student. The state allows voters to approve a Local Option Levy to add to the funding that is set by the state. For example, the state now allocates about \$6,500 per student* annually. The Eugene School District Local Option Levy currently provides about \$700 per student.*

*calculated by extended Average Daily Membership, weighted (ADMw)

Where can I find more information?

http://www.4j.lane.edu/local_option_2008
Voting information

The deadline to register to vote in the fall election is Oct. 14, 2008. Ballots will be mailed to voters beginning Oct. 17. Ballots must be returned to Lane County Elections or a ballot drop box by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008.

Key points of Ballot Measure 20-137

Local Option Levy Renewal

A message from the Eugene School Board

- Renews the Local Option Levy at the same tax rate
- The Local Option Levy funds 10 percent of 4J's budget; enough to operate two high schools for one year
- The Local Option Levy — Ballot Measure 20-137 — will be near the end of the ballot; ballots will be mailed Oct. 17 and must be returned by Nov. 4

Eugene School District 4J | 200 North Monroe St., Eugene, OR 97402 | (541) 687-3123 | www.4j.lane.edu

Do You Like to Play Cards? *Looking for something to do after School?*

Bridge is a card game that is considered by many as the most challenging card game. Monroe will be offering a free after school bridge class for 6 weeks starting Tuesday Oct. 14. The class will be fun and geared to the absolute beginning bridge player, meeting from 3:15 PM to 4:30 PM every Tuesday for 6 weeks in the Library.

A recent study was conducted with 5th grade students of like abilities. One group was taught to play bridge as a part of their math instruction and

the other was not taught bridge. The group taught bridge gained over 20% on the standardized test scores in Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies.

Laurie Rowe is your school nurse and she has played bridge since college. She recently became accredited to teach bridge. If you have any question, feel free to email Rowe@4j.lane.edu or leave voice mail at 710-3150.

Safe Routes to School

Monroe is entering its second year of participating in the Oregon Department of Transportation "Safe Routes To School" grant. Thanks to Mrs. Betournay for writing the grant that brings

SafeRoutes
Oregon Safe Routes To School



two years of funding valuing over \$14,000 for education, enforcement, and encouragement. The second grant brings in a \$52,000 infrastructure plan that

will place a roof over the bike cage, add new bike lock-up hoops, and add two skateboard/longboard racks to our school. Due to an unusual governmental delay, the roof was not constructed this summer and it is hoped the project can be completed by summer 2009.

Grant accomplishments last year includes two successful month long campaigns, incentive prizes, and T-shirts that rewarded students' effort to walk, bike, skateboard, bus, and carpool their way to school. A special thanks to Lisa Van Winkle for her connection and contributions of gift certificates that were given away as prizes to carpooling families. Monroe also enjoyed the increase in law enforcement monitoring and slower traffic in front of the school. Have you met our Guardian Radar Speed Reader that welcomes you to slow down to the 20 MPH law? Our goal again this year is to create a safe environment, reduce traffic for our students, and reward our steadily increasing volume of walkers/bikers. For those students living farther away from Monroe, we encourage parents to arrange or sign up with the carpool service offered through LTD Commuter Solutions. Extra flyers are

available in the main office.

The results of the student tally conducted in the spring revealed the following data regarding modes of travel:

| | |
|-----|--|
| 42% | Family vehicle-one student/one parent/one family |
| 7% | Walk |
| 26% | Bike |
| 12% | School Bus |
| 2% | Transit |
| 1% | Other (skateboard) |

Please help us collect data by completing the parent survey when it is sent home with your child during October. The data helps both the school and state study trends and data related to walking, biking, and alternative transportation issues. Our current data indicates we dropped single-family vehicle use by 8% and increased biking by 15-20%.

Up coming events

Wednesday, October 8th, is International Walk/Bike to School. Monroe is one of ninety-three schools across the state that has signed up to help observe this event. To join the trek to school and pick up extra prizes, join Mrs. Betournay and other Monroe staff at 8:00 AM in the church parking lot on the corner of Oakway Road and Cal Young Road.

September 22nd – October 24th

Fall Safe Routes to School Campaign

Mensaje del Director en Español the Principal's message translated into Spanish

1 de octubre de 2008

Empezamos este año escolar de una forma excelente. Durante los meses de Agosto y Septiembre, el punto de enfoque de nuestro personal ha sido el programa académico. Para que los estudiantes puedan alcanzar un logro académico de nivel alto, tienen que recibir instrucciones rigurosas y desafiantes. Las instrucciones deben de ser enseñadas con ejemplos relevantes dentro del contexto del mundo real. Algunas de nuestras actividades recientes para mejorar relevancia y rigor incluyen:

- Un día dedicado al desarrollo profesional de los administradores K-12 (del jardín de infancia hasta el último año de preparatoria). El punto de enfoque de este desarrollo profesional es apoyar a los maestros(as) para que puedan desarrollar un plan académico basado en un modelo efectivo usado en las

- Una reunión con todos los maestros (as), de grados seis a doce, juntos para aprender sobre los nuevos requisitos de graduación del estado, y luego en grupos para discutir como sus disciplinas (Inglés, Estudios Sociales, Matemáticas, Ciencias, Educación Física, Idiomas del Mundo, y Artes) están ajustadas a través de los niveles de grados escolares.

- El desarrollo profesional continuo dirigido a los maestros(as) de Monroe para mejorar sus métodos de instrucción y evaluación de estudiantes. El punto de enfoque del desarrollo profesional de los maestros utiliza cuatro habilidades principales: (preferencia del estudiante, diferentes niveles de aprendizaje, diferentes grados de tarea, y agrupamiento flexible).

- El entrenamiento intensivo en la area de tecnología dirigido a ocho de nuestros maestros(as) para mejorar sus métodos de instrucción.

La buena relación entre el personal docente y los estudiantes proporciona el éxito académico, apoya el aprendizaje, y el desarrollo social. As veces, para estudiantes de grados seis a ocho es difícil asegurar buenas relaciones. Para limitar comportamientos negativos, una gran parte de nuestro tiempo, pasamos motivando comportamientos positivos y ejemplares. Nuestro programa de comportamiento positivo es efectivo,

basado en datos estadísticos y reportes del personal y estudiantes. Sin embargo, también es verdad que tenemos una cantidad inaceptable de mala conducta. Por ejemplo, la intimidación y el acoso.

José da Silva y yo estamos muy interesados en obtener los mejores datos estadísticos posibles de nuestra escuela y usaremos resultados para mejorar la calidad del compartamiento entre los estudiantes. Ambos, José y yo, nos graduamos de la Universidad de Oregon y obtuvimos nuestra maestría en Liderazgo Educacional, y allí tenemos conexiones estrechas con programas de investigaciones sobre compartamiento en las escuelas. Una amiga de nosotros, Julia Heffernan (candidata del programa de doctorado de la Universidad de Oregon), hará una investigación en Monroe durante este año escolar.

Sra. Heffernan tiene su certificado de maestra y su certificado de administradora de escuela. Actualmente, está escribiendo su disertación doctoral en educación. Su disertación enfoca temas relacionados a intimidación, el acoso y la homofobia. Durante su tiempo en Monroe Sra. Heffernan estará en contacto frecuente con José y yo para asegurarnos la seguridad y el bien-estar de todos los estudiantes. Desde su inicio hasta el fin del estudio la confidencialidad de los estudiantes será mantenida por medio de números de identificación usados por la investigadora. Durante la presentación de la investigación, pseudónimos serán usados de ocultar a los nombres de los/as participantes y donde ellos(as) están situados. Si tienen preguntas o quieren que su hijo/a este exento de las observaciones para este proyecto, por favor llamenos por teléfono (541)687-3254. Su decisión de participar o no, no irá afectar su relación con la escuela o el distrito.

Si tienen alguna pregunta sobre la investigación, por favor entren en contacto con Julia Heffernan, Liderazgo Educacional (541)579-4260, el Colegio de Educación. Si tienen preguntas sobre los derechos de su hijo/a como un sujeto de investigación, entren en contacto con la Oficina para la Protección de Sujetos Humanos, Universidad de Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Monroe Parent Organization News

The MPO had a great first meeting with about 60 people in attendance! Peter talked about the new HS graduation requirements, among them that students will need 3 credits of HS math, with Algebra I being the lowest credit that will satisfy that requirement. We have written a letter requesting that our middle school students be given high school credit if they've completed Algebra I successfully. As it stands, high schools do not acknowledge this course for middle school students. If we don't get this changed, our students that complete Algebra I in middle school will have to take through Pre-Calculus. Come to the Oct. 7 meeting to read the letter and sign it before we mail it to the school board, high school principals, and the superintendant among others.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 7 in the cafeteria. The topic of discussion will be *Bullying and Cyber bullying*, how that is affecting our students and what we can do. Come hear Annelise Heitman, our guest

speaker, along with our own Anne Tomlanovich discuss this timely topic! Learn how to create your own MySpace/Facebook page, find out what "spoofing" is, and how you can monitor your child's' internet interactions.

Monday, Nov. 3 we will meet, again in the cafeteria, and nationally known speaker Michael Leeds will lead a session on *Drug and Alcohol Prevention*. Please bring your middle schoolers to this great session. Michael Leeds is an engaging speaker who really connects with the kids. This is a wonderful opportunity.

BINGO is coming in November! This will be a fun evening of playing with friends, enjoying refreshments and perhaps even winning a prize! Watch for further news on this!

If you're not receiving updates and would like to, email Kristina Padgett, and she'll keep you on top of what's going on at Monroe! kvpadgett@comcast.net

Here is a great volunteer opportunity

Want to make a positive difference in a child's life? Become a MENTOR!

Volunteers are needed to meet once a week with a middle school student who needs a positive role model and someone who will be there for them throughout the school year, as well as participate in a few fun activities over the summer. Mentors meet during the student's lunch period at all 4j middle schools. Quality training is provided for mentors throughout the year.

Please call Rob Stein, Eugene School District 4j

Mentor Program Coordinator at 954-7535 or email him at stein_r@4j.lane.edu.

ORIENTATION MEETING held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month (except for November) from 4:30-5:30 pm at Kelly Middle School.

Please RSVP – 954-7535.

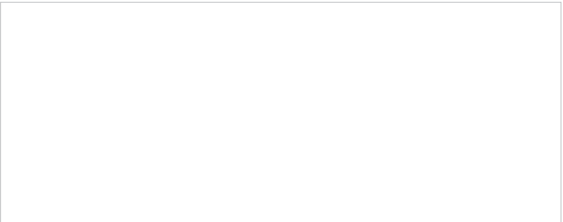
Help make a difference in the life of a child!

**PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES ON NOVEMBER 6TH.
MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 6TH, FROM 4 P.M. TO 8 P.M.
INFORMATION REGARDING THESE CONFERENCES WILL BE
MAILED HOME IN OCTOBER.**

WE WILL ALSO BE HAVING CONFERENCES DURING THE WINTER TRIMESTER (DATE TO BE DETERMINED).
AS COMPENSATION FOR THESE TWO NIGHTS, THERE WILL BE NO SCHOOL MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH.

James Monroe Middle School
2800 Bailey Lane
Eugene, OR 97401-5296
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