

EAGLE CHARTER SCHOOL

2014 SITE VISIT



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## **Introduction**

Site visits to the State Sponsored Charter Schools are a regular and systemic examination of a charter school's administration and implementation of the charter agreement. They are one of the essential functions of the Oregon Department of Education, Office of Learning, as delegated by the State Board of Education consistent (SBE) with ORS 338.095 (2), which states, in pertinent part, "The sponsor or sponsor's designee at least annually shall visit the public charter school site and review the public charter school's compliance with the terms and provisions of the charter."

The mission of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is to "...foster excellence for every learner through innovation, collaboration, leadership and service to our education partners." With the mission and statute in mind, a Site Visit Protocol was developed to establish a framework and focus for the annual site visit to State Sponsored Charter Schools.

The purpose of the annual site visit is to gather and document evidence about the school's performance, implementation of the education and organizational program outlined in its charter, and compliance with law and regulations. The documents and observations gathered assist in assessing the extent to which the State Sponsored Charter School is faithful to the terms of its charter, educationally and fiscally sound and organizationally viable.

During the 2012-2013, the school's request to change its name was approved from Bennett Pearson Academy Charter School (BPA) to Education through Activities, Governance, Leadership and Enterprise Charter School (EAGLE).

## **Data Collection Process and Methodology**

Acting as a representative of the SBE, the ODE conducted the 2013-2014 site visits to SBE State Sponsored Charter Schools. The site visit team at EAGLE included two ODE specialists, a contracted retired educator, a principal from another SBE sponsored charter school, and a member of the SBE. In conducting the site visit, the team:

- Reviewed key background documents provided by the ODE, including the current charter agreement and the 2012-13 annual report.
- Researched other available information about the state sponsored charter schools, including relevant statutes, report and evaluations, newspaper articles and other data.
- Reviewed documentation provided by the state sponsored charter school prior to the visit.

- Arranged the site visit in coordination with State Sponsored Charter School, including identifying participants for the focus groups.
- Collected evidence of the school's compliance or performance with respect to its charter contract during the site visit.

The site visit occurred January 16, 2014, at EAGLE's facility on the campus of the Oregon School for the Deaf at 999 Locust Avenue NE Salem, Oregon. In addition to touring the facility, visiting classes, and observing students during and between classes, the Review Team interviewed representative EAGLE parents, staff, students, the school leader/principal, and board members. At the conclusion of the site visit, the team members met with the principal and staff members, shared the site visit team's initial observations, asked follow-up questions, and reviewed the site visit reporting process.

This report presents data and information gathered prior to and during the EAGLE site visit. It also provides the Review Team's observations and conclusions about EAGLE's compliance and performance as a State Sponsored Charter School.

## Background

In 2002, Cathe Pearson and Cherie Bennett joined a small group of community members interested in opening a charter school in Salem, Oregon. The two teachers found the goals and philosophy of the group did not align with their belief that children learn best when actively engaged in the learning process, and chose to pursue the project on their own. Concerned growing class sizes and focus on test scores were resulting in overwhelmed teachers, stressed students and disgruntled parents, they envisioned a small school with a prescribed number of student per class to allow teachers to provide more individualized attention, hands-on lessons fostering student interest in learning and a welcoming environment encouraging parent and community participation. They recruited like-minded board members and, with these goals in mind, set out to find curricula supporting these values and began the research required to develop a grant proposal. Through these efforts, they discovered the MicroSociety (MSI) program.

The MSI program is designed to incorporate all aspects of a traditional core-subject curriculum and allow students to apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom as they create and sustain a functioning society within school walls. Impressed with the concept and supporting research from other MSI schools, the charter developers used the MSI curriculum as the basis of the application for a Charter School Incentive Grant. BPA was awarded that grant to pursue a K-5 charter school in 2004.

BPA founders wrote and submitted charter proposal applications to the Salem-Keizer School District without success. In 2007, at the end of the time allowed for the grant, the founders reapplied for the Charter School Incentive Grant and were again awarded funds to pursue the program. After a few more submission rounds with Salem-Keizer, another denial and mediation, the Board of Directors sought sponsorship by the SBE.

In April 2011, the SBE approved sponsorship of Bennett Pearson Academy (BPA). The BPA Board then searched for a building, purchased supplies and materials, hired teachers and staff, and advertised for prospective students. BPA opened September 7, 2011, becoming one of four state-sponsored schools and the first Oregon school to implement MSI as its core program.

During BPA's first year, students studied various government structures before choosing a democratic system modeled after Oregon's, elected a governor and members of the legislature, and wrote a constitution and voting on laws. Peacekeepers mediated disagreements and wrote tickets, while offenders were given the option of hiring student lawyers to contest tickets in court. Student entrepreneurs developed business plans, hired workers, created products to sell on market days, and managed the operations of their businesses. They participated in CAFÉ and Daily Five, and studied math, social studies and science. They visited a pumpkin patch, sang holiday songs at the Capitol Rotunda, learned about butterflies at Wings of Wonder, and toured the Capitol Building.

The first graduating class saw its life stories printed and professionally bound.

BPA faced many significant challenges during its first year of operation. Those have been well documented in other reports to the SBE. For example, BPA experienced many changes within the administration and the Board of Directors and periods of financial instability. According to the school's annual report to the ODE, the work of BPA's teachers within the classroom remained consistent, and parents, students and community members rallied to support the school. Parents volunteered hundreds of hours, doing everything from helping in the classroom to cleaning bathrooms. They formed a successful parent club that organized numerous parties, book fairs and fundraisers, bringing several thousand dollars into the school in a matter of months.

During the 2012-2013 site visit, the team confirmed a stable governing board and that a qualified administrator was in place, that almost all teaching staff returned for the second year of operation, and they were using the MSI curriculum. It was noted in the 2012-2013 Annual Report that during EAGLE's second year of operation, not only did the name change and the location of the school, but EAGLE was voted "Best Charter School of the Mid-Valley" by the Statesman Journals readers and celebrated by building a float and marching in the Keizer Iris Festival Parade. The annual report noted, "We ended the year on a very positive note."

During the 2013-2014 site visit, the Review Team witnessed and heard about a number of significant changes. Besides the new charter school name, the school has continued to make adjustments in its program and priorities. The new, but stable, charter board members with the support of parents, has provided an opportunity for the board to begin strategic planning. The teaching staff, while a number in only their third or fourth year of teaching, has remained almost completely stable. The school now has a full-time principal who has charter school experience. MicroSociety appears more fully functioning in the classroom due to more professional development training, support, experience and collaboration by the teachers. Finally, data-driven analysis and discussions, especially around state scores and overall student performance, have been occurring more this year.

EAGLE serves students in grades Kindergarten through five and offers full-day Kindergarten.

### **Comment**

A part titled *Comment* is at the end of each section for consideration and possible actions.

## Mission and Vision

The Education through Activities, Governance, Leadership and Enterprise Charter School mission statement is presented in its 2012-13 Annual Report:

EAGLE Charter School is a miniature replica of the global society, bringing real-life experiences into the classroom. Hands-on activities, student-initiated ventures, and traditional coursework, combine to encourage student investment in the learning process, engage diverse needs, and ensure high academic standards.

Its vision statement is also presented there.

EAGLE strives to become a school where each classroom supports and enhances the learning process using the MicroSociety model. Student involvement is encouraged and collaboration is supported. The learning style of each student is considered and all students are welcomed and respected. Staff and students want to be at school.

MicroSociety lessons incorporate the Common Core Standards and reinforce teaching at all levels at EAGLE . Strategies to address different learning styles and higher levels of learning are incorporated across the curriculum. Learning is real and challenging using many disciplines and is seen as meaningful to students and teachers. Common Core Standards will be communicated to the students in kid friendly language and students will be able to personalize the standards. Learning opportunities will be differentiated to meet student needs and incorporate best practices.

EAGLE classrooms will have high expectations for behavior and academics, reinforced by positive reinforcement strategies. Students will be given voice and choice and will be active participants in their education. All members of the EAGLE community will act responsibly and treat each other with respect. Families, staff, and students will take an active role in building a positive and vibrant learning community.

During interviews, students, parents, staff, and board members demonstrated a general understanding of EAGLE's mission and vision. For example:

- Students volunteered that they believe the mission is to help them be responsible, to have real life experiences and to understand governance.
- Parents said EAGLE's mission is to create "good members of society," "who can apply learning to places like banks," and are "actively learning and giving input." In addition, one parent made the observation of how students understand that "Somebody grew the food, made the clothes and they understand how it happens in the world."

- Teachers said the mission is to re-create the real world in the classroom with the various “agencies/business” (created in the school) as well as in the curriculum. Staff said connecting the classroom role to job experiences they have in the MSI is also a way to integrate the MSI model and use a consistent vocabulary all day long to students.
- Board members reported the mission of EAGLE’s MSI program is to help children be a person in the society as a whole.

Though they expressed an understanding of and support for EAGLE’s MSI-centered program, those interviewed did not comment on how, as stated in EAGLE’s vision statement, the “Common Core Standards will be communicated to the students in kid friendly language and students will be able to personalize the standards.”

*Comment*

Now that EAGLE’s governance and administration is more stabilized, EAGLE has the opportunity to focus more time and effort on how, as part of its mission and vision, EAGLE’s curriculum, instruction, and assessments ensure the “Common Core Standards will be communicated to the students in kid friendly language and students will be able to personalize the standards.”

**Enrollment and Attendance**

Ethnicity and Race

EAGLE’s ethnicity and race enrollment data as of October 2012, the source is the ODE’s Student Enrollment Reports for 2012-2013 at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3225>. For the purposes of this report, EAGLE’s enrollment data are compared to Salem-Keizer School District (SKSD) because EAGLE is located in that district.

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>EAGLE</b>		<b>SKSD</b>	
Total Enrollment	121	100%	40,228	100%
Female	60	50%	19,512	49%
Male	61	50%	20,716	51%
American Indian/Alaskan N	0	0%	425	1%
Asian	1	1%	862	2%
Pacific Islander	0	0%	799	2%
Black/African American	4	3%	380	1%
Hispanic/Latino	20	17%	15,685	39%
White	91	75%	20,255	50%
Multiracial	5	4%	1,822	5%

*Comment*



EAGLE's ethnicity and race enrollment data provide EAGLE the opportunity to consider whether its enrollment reflects the surrounding area and whether EAGLE needs to monitor and adjust its marketing and outreach to area minority communities.

#### English Language Learners

EAGLE staff reported only "three or four" students are identified ELL (Russian, Spanish, and Korean language speaking students) and are being served through differentiated instruction. All teachers are trained in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). EAGLE's 2012-2013 School Report Card shows 5% of its students were ELLs. SKSD's District Report Card shows its ELL enrollment at 37% (K-3) and 32% (4-5).

#### *Comment*

Given each teacher is trained in ESOL, EAGLE has the opportunity to provide services for each of its ELL students and to include their performance data in EAGLE's analysis for its effectiveness. EAGLE also has the opportunity to describe its ELL services in its marketing outreach to parents of ELL students. It is an expectation that the school more accurately reflect the community population in which the school is located.

#### Special Education

The 2012-2013 State Report Card reported approximately 16% of EAGLE's students were identified as Students with Disabilities. The school's 2012-2013 Annual Report identified 10 special education students and 21 served during that year. The .5 FTE special education specialist noted she has 23 students, currently in 2013-2014, on her case load with a variety of issues (i.e., autistic, vision, neurological). SKSD's District 2012-2013 Report Card shows its special education enrollment at 14% (K-3) and 18% (4-5).

#### *Comment*

EAGLE staff and board members interviewed expressed concerns about the school's high percentage of students on IEPs or on behavioral IEPs. The district special education staff and EAGLE's instructional staff are collaborating to meet the needs of students, both identified and in need of early interventions. With a high percent of students identified for special education services, it is recommended for the school to evaluate and pursue professional development that will support instructional staff to meet the needs of students and provide effective early interventions for struggling students.

### **Transportation**

When asked what they would change about EAGLE, some students interviewed said it is hard for their parent(s) to get them to school every day. A few said they wanted a bus system or a change to the bus system. (Some students may be provided transportation through SKSD's usual routes; others may not. Oregon districts are not required to add or change bus routes to serve charter schools.)

#### *Comment*

EAGLE is encouraged to consider whether transportation is a significant barrier to attendance or enrollment and, if it is, to consider methods of eliminating that barrier. EAGLE is encouraged to collaborate with JGEMS to see if shared transportation is appropriate.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

### Background

The Overview of Curriculum in the EAGLE 2012-2013 Annual Report stated:

“The MicroSociety program at EAGLE Charter School was designed and implemented to provide students a real world learning opportunity embedded within a traditional educational curriculum. Students at EAGLE have designed their own miniature version of the greater society within the school’s MicroSociety. In conjunction with traditional academic activities, students learn many of the skills that will serve them well into their adult years. Students are provided an opportunity daily to practice the self-discipline, strong work habits and life skills needed to be successful in the “real world.” The MicroSociety program challenges students’ skills across the content areas, with a focus on math and literacy.

Students in the EAGLE MicroSociety program have created, own and operate their own business ventures, government agencies, and bank, as well as managing the law enforcement and judicial systems. As students progress through the program, they have the opportunity to expand their experiences within the society through participation in different jobs or governmental positions. All students at EAGLE Charter School have a voice and a choice in the way the system is run. Additionally, the opportunity to learn about their rights and responsibilities as a citizen in a free society, and to develop ideas and strategies for how they can give back to their communities, provides them with a much needed learning experience that prepares them for life beyond the classroom.”

Other areas of curriculum described in the annual report included the following:

- **Social Studies:** uses *Social Studies Alive!* Which is a student-centered curriculum and meets state standards for grades K-5.
- **Science:** uses *Simply Science*, an inquiry-based program that fostered critical thinking and is based on Oregon State Standards.
- **Math:** uses *Excel Math*, chosen this year, primarily for the “spiraled curriculum and alignment with CCSS.”

- Writing: uses *Being a Writer* which integrates “writing instruction, regular community-building elements, and guided partner work to develop in students a sense of autonomy, belonging and competence.”
- Reading: uses *Daily Five* and *CAFE* which includes mini-lessons on reading skills at their level and whole group strategy lessons. CAFE is an acronym for comprehension, accuracy, fluency and expanding vocabulary.
- PE: uses *SPARK PE* curriculum which meets Oregon State Standards as well as national standards, focusing on frequency, intensity, time and type (FITT) principles besides their physical active gym time.

A PE/media specialist was hired this year who has made it possible to establish a 24-station computer lab with computer time now available to classes/students. It was reported to the Review Team that she came in on her own throughout the summer to prepare the library and computer lab so it would be ready for students in this fall.

### MSI Training and Staff Development

The teachers reported they have continued to have strong MSI training. Several teachers went to the San Antonio MSI conference this summer and learned how to build community partnerships and bring MSI into classroom instruction. The MSI on-site trainer has been at the school this year as well.

### Instruction

Staff collaboration and peer support was mentioned by the school leadership and teachers as a regular part of the school day. Teachers are aware of different standards (State and Common Core) but have chosen to focus on Common Core “as that is where we're heading in Oregon.” The school leader noted that the young teachers are enthusiastic and have high energy; he stopped by school over a school holiday recently and saw every teacher was working in his/her classroom. Beginning this year, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are switching students part of the day, with one teacher focusing on math and the other on literacy. Several teachers mentioned that they chart out math strands to see if they are missing any so they can teach and/or re-teach. *IXL Math* (students use on the computer) also gives the teachers feedback on skills they need to teach.

### Focus Group Feedback

Students, parents, staff, and board members are aware of and generally understand EAGLE’s MSI program and the overall curriculum program as well. For example:

- Students interviewed reported that MSI “helps our community around us,” “is real world like using money and paying taxes,” “we learn about government and shopping.”
- Students felt they are challenged in class, especially in math.
- Compared to other schools students have attended they believe they are learning more at EAGLE, played more at the other school (kindergarten student comment), and “didn't catch on like I do here.”
- Parents like the size of classes, real world curriculum, and hands-on experiences. Several parents said they specifically brought their child to EAGLE

because Salem-Keizer classes were too impersonal. “Here, everybody knows your child,” said several parents. They also can see the unity of the teachers and the “lack of stress on students' faces.”

- The administrator said that although MSI specifically occurs in the afternoon, the teachers “do weave it throughout the curriculum in the morning.” The teachers try to “incorporate MSI vocabulary in regular curriculum such as literacy and math.”
- Teachers interviewed believe the staff collaboration and new focus on *Excel Math* has been important.
- Board members interviewed reported that “teachers are concerned with the success of students and each child's needs are being met.”

### Observations

Morning classes engaged in traditional classroom learning activities in mathematics, reading, and writing. The Review Team observed, for example:

- a 4th-5<sup>th</sup> grade class was working on the math number of the day with various students answering the teacher's questions. Students were raising their hand and also going up to the board to write answers. In addition, throughout the lesson students were sharing how the math problem(s) could be related to real-world situations (i.e., bake sale, money, sharing or dividing food).
- in another 4th-5<sup>th</sup> grade class working in reading, students in groups were highlighting words and concepts related to persuasive strategies.
- students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade were working in small groups at a table, pairs were using flashcards to identify words, some were reading silently.
- students in both 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes were working on literacy. Some students were being selected to join a specific reading group, others were listening to a story with headphones at a listening center, and others were working with a partner sharing answers.
- in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class, small groups of four were discussing the moral of the story within the group; some were singing about the story.
- another 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class the teacher was helping individual students while other students were reading alone or with a partner.
- the kindergarten class was studying polar bears through integration of science and literacy. Activities included writing down bear traits, going around to centers relating to polar bears (i.e., habitats, science words, books).
- in several classes, teachers were using an iPod to check “on task” behavior (Eco-Cliff tracking and sharing program) which was instantly shown on the white board by each students' name; students explained to a reviewer how the system works. Later the Review Team found out that parents can go on-line to see their child's behavior in their class relating to the computer analysis; some parents check it daily.

During the afternoon, the site visit team observed students participating in all of the different “agencies//businesses” around the school. Various jobs include being a member of public works, on a newspaper, in a bank, designing and making jewelry, creating a play, creating graphs based on “agency” data collected, and being part of the

governing body. Review Team members were first asked to fill out a bank loan application, including being interviewed by a “banker.” The team member was given \$50 in EAGLE currency and was encouraged to move around the building to see the various society organizations at work. Review Team members bought items such as bracelets, hair bands, pet rocks, books, the school newspaper, and paid to see a theatrical production. At each place of “business,” money was exchanged and students provided change when necessary and also talked about their business with the adults.

## **Professional Development**

### ODE Site Visits are Not for Teacher or Administrator Evaluations

The site visit and report are not intended to be and should not be interpreted to be evaluations of individual teachers or their instruction or an evaluation of the school administrator. Those are the responsibilities of the EAGLE administrator and board.

### EAGLE’s Processes for Teacher and Administrator Evaluations

The administrator reported that he has implemented an evaluation process including observations and staff reflection. He emails his observations to teachers and then discusses them with the staff member. He noted he is “learning how to use the data and help teachers” and he is learning about tools that can help him identify what high quality instruction looks like. He encourages teachers to observe one another, and he will take a teacher's class for a bit (for example reading a story to a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class) while that teacher goes into another class. The administrator also said he has been known to hire a half-day substitute so a stronger teacher could work with a teacher who needs help. The administrator and the teachers mentioned the amount of collaboration and peer support they give one another.

### *Comment*

EAGLE’s administrator is encouraged to continue pursuing professional development around instructional leadership and staff evaluations. The school is doing a good job leveraging strengths and collaborating. Going forward, it is recommended to link professional development for staff with teacher evaluations and student outcomes.

### Federal Law, Highly Qualified to Teach

EAGLE’s has 100% of its teachers are highly qualified for their teaching assignments consistent with state and federal standards.

### Staff Licensure and Years of Experience

In EAGLE documentation, it appears that teachers' years of experience ranges from one year to ten years, with most of the teachers at four or five years of experience. All teachers, except the PE/Library Media, have an ESOL endorsement. All teachers have a license with one having a Charter School Registry endorsed (PE/Library Media). Half

of the staff has a Master's Degree.

#### Professional Development (PD) and Other Supports

As previously mentioned, teachers have been receiving MSI training and support this year. In addition, staff has received professional development/training in the following: Love and Logic, data analysis to guide instruction, easyCBM, Safe Schools, Professional Learning Communities, and *Excel Math*. A major area of professional development has been about classroom management; the staff has had training in disruptive student and crisis response. Some of the staff also attended the Oregon Charter School Conference in Portland. The staff has also benefited from Salem-Keizer School District's "Thinking Socially" training, which analyzes various social types and how to best support/deal with them. The administrator noted that "we identify what we need and find professional development." The administrator has encouraged staff to attend appropriate conferences over the summer (i.e., Education for the Future, ODE Network for Quality Training and Learning EE and CCSS Implementation, Advocate Before it is Too Late: Raising Awareness for Quality Physical Education) and the school provides tuition for college courses (i.e., Educational Research and Writing, Foundations of Literacy, Action Research).

The Board of Directors has also received support from OSBA. Members of the focus group reported they are working on a process for various systems, such as evaluating the effectiveness of the administrator and themselves as a board. They are learning how to gather data and have a calendar to guide them throughout the year. Their goal, they noted, was to have the processes in place by the end of this school year. Members also attended the Charter School Board Ethics Training at Willamette University in 2012-2013.

#### *Comment*

The EAGLE governing board is encouraged to continue pursuing appropriate development and training opportunities necessary to implement an administrator evaluation system and self-evaluative process. As the school moves forward and focuses on significant student growth, it will be critical for the board to be knowledgeable of effective school leadership practices and support decisions linked with student outcomes.

### **Student Performance Data**

#### Participation in State Assessments

EAGLE's State School Report Card shows 100% of EAGLE's students participated in the 2012-2013 Oregon Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS).

#### State School Report Card – 2012/2013

EAGLE has been rated Level 2 in Academic Achievement and Academic Growth.

EAGLE is located in the Salem-Keizer School District, but the SKSD does not sponsor

EAGLE.

**2012-13 Eagle Charter School Student Achievement:  
Percentage of Students “Met” or Exceeded” State Standards  
compared to other State Sponsored Charter Schools,  
Salem-Keizer School District and the State Average**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Eagle Charter School</b>	<b>Salem-Keizer School District</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>Reading</b> (grades 3, 4, 5)	50	64.5	71
<b>Math</b> (grades 3, 4, 5)	24.1	58.4	62.1
<b>Science</b> (grade 5)	42.9	61	68.1

For disaggregated data, please see the 2012-13 Oregon School Report Card.

The administrator agreed EAGLE students performed below state averages on the 2012-13 state assessments and far below SKSD. He reported that since OAKS math is so low, this summer staff retreat focused on math strategies to improve scores. Also *Excel Math* is aligned to Common Core.

The administrator and Board of Director members noted that this year's group of students being tested is mostly the same group. This is different than it has occurred in past assessments, as a number of students left the school, so it was hard to compare scores. The administrator and board members hope to see improved results this year. The board members noted that “they have faith the school is going in the right direction,” and are “looking forward to future comparison data.” The board included they are supporting teachers by funding needs, such as with professional development, so they believe the scores will improve.

Teachers reported they are also concerned about test scores and believe with the various on-going assessments (i.e., math/reading easyCBM, DRA, Excel Math, IXL Math) they will see improved scores. Teachers are also more involved in data analysis, following their professional development training in this area and time allocated to its analysis.

*Comment*

Student academic performance is imperative for the school and everyone (leadership, teachers, board members, and parents) should be focused on student growth. Specific targets are being discussed by the school leadership, ODE, and the SBE in relationship to the school’s future operation.

## Student Supports

### Academic Supports

As noted above, teachers are using a variety of on-going assessments. In addition to regular classroom instruction, EAGLE provides easyCBM assessments and supports for its students. Its home page at <http://www.easycbm.com> describes easyCBM as “an enhanced district assessment system designed by researchers at the University of Oregon as an integral part of an RTI (Response to Intervention) model.” It “provides school districts, administrators, and teachers with a full suite of assessment and reporting options, offering a complete solution at every tier of the RTI process.” Staff believes this is helping them “meet students where they are and know what they need.” Staff reported that they use informal assessments all the time, they collect data and make observational assessments as well.

The administrator noted that previously the issue of such a small administrative staff has been a challenge. This year the board funded an additional .5 FTE to support him and the office manager, but this person has not been hired yet. This person will be doing general office work and some recess duty when hired.

Students reported they ask for and get assistance when they need it. They said they can ask teachers, the principal, or other students for help.

Regarding student support, parents reported the following:

- “I’m confident when my child comes home, he can say what he has learned.”
- “Small classes have helped.”
- “My child missed being at school every weekend. He is writing words, pointing out words.”
- “Great environment. Allows students to be themselves.”
- “Weekly reports are provided.”
- “My 5<sup>th</sup> grader has been with the same teacher for two years so the teacher can really say how he improves. My kindergartener was behind and doesn’t like to be corrected, but I see his reading has come way up.”
- “His teacher works him so well and can be specific to say ‘great on this or work on this.’ Even the principal can say how he is doing.”
- “My child needed speech therapy and would have been lost in a bigger school. Here I feel welcome and heard as a parent. I also volunteer a lot and know what is going on.”
- “My child is in his fourth school. Here they are willing to listen to what he needs. We are glad we came here.”

A 0.50 FTE learning specialist and a 0.50 FTE instructional assistant, both employed by Salem-Keizer School District, provide additional academic supports for students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The learning specialist said she has strong collaboration with teachers and there is no LRC stigma. She noted that students on



IEPs benefit from “small group work with teachers, individual support by teachers and is seeing their participation improving.” Teachers also shared a number of successes with students on IEPs during the focus group. The learning specialist noted that students “know protocol” and can get started working on their own until she can get to them. She monitors students on an individual basis using various tools such as an IRI. She also has a social skills group to help them be a student; some students have been home schooled so taking ownership of themselves as a student has been important. With 23 students on her case load (mentioned above) and the diversity of special needs, she believes that the part-time position is not enough to provide all the services and complete all the paperwork.

When discussing students with diverse languages and culture, the teachers mentioned that they have encouraged different cultures to be brought into the classroom. For instance, the Russian-speaking students have been teaching the other students the Russian numbers. Several classes have pen pals in Kenya and Egypt because teachers know other teachers in those countries; one group is even using an internet pen pal site. Because the school is on the Deaf School campus, deaf students come to classes regularly and teach sign language.

#### School Safety and Social, Emotional and Other Supports

Students agreed that teachers have a sense of humor, are fair but strict, create fun activities and students can count on their teachers. All students described EAGLE as a safe place to be. They said, for example, they feel safe because:

- “I can trust about everyone in the whole school.”
- “The campus feeling with all the other schools.”
- “Teacher, principal, office person, lots of grown-ups. They all know my name.”
- “We practice lockdowns and emergency.”
- “Everybody knows everybody.”
- “I really love this school.”

When asked about student behavior, students mentioned the computer system the teacher has to monitor behavior in the classroom which is projected on the white board during class. If they misbehave, students reported they have a “take a break chair” (kindergarten student), have a buddy room, may go to the office, talk to the principal and may even be sent home.

When asked if students could change anything in their school, several students mentioned a different lunch time as it is too early or their stomach hurts during recess after lunch. Several mentioned the old wooden floor in the gym is a problem. They would like more after school activities like art (they mentioned after school now they have Running Club and Battle of the Books). Finally, they mentioned they would like “yummier food.”

Parents reported EAGLE is a safe place for their children not only as a school but because students feel safe to “make guesses in class.” They especially feel there is a strong sense of community at EAGLE. Parents believe teachers have been able to take on more because other issues have been “taken off their plate.” Parents like the extracurricular activity such as the Running Club (staff and students have a 100 mile goal they are working on after school together). Parents feel comfortable being in the building and volunteering which allows them to see what is going on. They see teachers incorporating all the students (especially true during the multi-age integrated students in the MSI programs in the afternoon), and they watch students playing together outside.

Parents did mention their concern with 5<sup>th</sup> grade students transitioning to middle school. They hope plans are being made to make that a smooth transition.

Another support EAGLE has fostered is the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation partnership as noted in the annual report. The foundation provides school enrichment onsite before and after and during district furlough days when EAGLE is not in session and district facilities are closed. Another cooperative and successful relationship mentioned in the annual report is the lunch program EAGLE has contracted with OSD Nutrition Services. Up to 90 of the school’s students are provided cafeteria lunches.

The 2012-2013 Annual Report also listed a variety of parent organized and/or assisted activities such as harvest and winter party, Oregon Garden field trip (grades 4-5), Oregon Zoo field trip (grades K-2), Scholastic book fair, all school jog-a-thon, kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade promotion ceremonies, and a school field day.

#### *Comment*

EAGLE is encouraged to continue fostering collaborative community partnerships and successful contracts like those with OSD and SKEF. The school leadership, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, and school board are encouraged to develop a middle school transition program to support those 5<sup>th</sup> grade students leaving the small school and moving into larger middle schools.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is a relatively new board with all new board members since the school opened. The two members who met with the Review Team each had 15 months experience on the board. One of those interviewed has judicial system background and the other owns an in-home day care. Both have children in the school.

The Board of Directors interviewed made the following comments:

- “We have had to learn what a board means.”
- “We are concerned about test scores but think the teachers have taken this over.”
- “We work with teachers to get what they need.”

- “We feel the school is a solid community as we go into renewal.”
- “We are a stable board, staff, and finances which are all important to the board.”
- “We have been working with OSBA to create a strategic plan. We use their Policy Handbook now.”
- “We want to create processes, such as evaluating the board.”
- “We are working to resolve any legal matters.”
- “With IEP students, we have no aids, no counselor—limited resources. Love and Logic training for staff has made a difference. Many behavioral problem students have left the school.”
- “A new school has to get its bearings.”

With a five-member board with specific roles (chair, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and member(s) at large); currently, two do not have children at the school. They are striving to have a diverse board and really want community members, especially who do not have children at the school. Those on the focus group said how they have “struggled in attracting a diverse enrollment” especially with the lottery system.

In terms of recruiting new members to the board, those interviewed said they send out letters, have joined the Chamber of Commerce, put an ad in the Statesman Journal and flyers in the community. Getting the school known in the community has also been a priority. Recently, one new way has been with two students' work selected and featured in the Statesman newspaper. Also, they built a float and marched in the Keizer Iris Days Parade last spring.

The parent focus group reported that they have seen the board grow. Parents would like to see someone who has no children in the school be on the board. They would also like to see more diversity on the board.

### *Comment*

The Board is encouraged to continue its efforts in recruiting diverse board members from the community. The steps taken to develop strong board policies and forward thinking strategic planning is a strength and should also be continued. As the board looks forward, it will be important to recruit members who bring executive level experience to support improvement efforts and evaluative work.

## **Summary**

EAGLE has become a more stable school with its building on the Oregon School for the Deaf campus, a stable teaching staff, a new Board of Directors, and professional development in place to address the low State test scores. Through observations, it is apparent that students have respectful interactions with teachers and are able to articulate work and learning.

Board members interviewed said they believe the strengths of the school are its familiarity, small and diverse population. Parents reported EAGLE's successes include the strong sense of community, the enthusiastic and committed teachers, and increased accountability from the staff for student success. The board, parents and students all mentioned that having everyone know everyone in the school is valued highly by all of them.

Board members acknowledged objective measures of EAGLE's effectiveness are not in place. They reported their goal is to have the measures done by the end of this school year. They are pleased they have OSBA to support them. Even though they believe they have diversity in the school's student population, they realize they do not have enough nor do they have enough diversity in the staff. The board is concerned about State test scores, but believe staff has been getting training and is focused more on assessments this year.

The administrator reported EAGLE is providing more professional development, especially in data analysis and math. He also noted that every month all four school administrators on the Oregon School for the Deaf campus sit down together. The Review Team agreed this is an excellent opportunity and was pleased they are all collaborating.

Teachers interviewed discussed the fact that the school has been "in crisis mode for two years" and now feel they are a school. They are concerned about test scores but believe professional development and data analysis has helped. They still want to incorporate more MSI into the regular curriculum. A strength teachers obviously feel proud about is that "Staff has a heart for the students."

#### *Comment*

As it starts anew, EAGLE has an opportunity to set metrics for its effectiveness that are consistent with its charter agreement and with its mission and vision. As part of school improvement planning, EAGLE is encouraged to set school-wide SMART goals. If it has not done so, EAGLE might consider using a consistent goal-setting template or other tool to guide goal setting.