

## **Central Oregon School Districts Join Forces to Streamline Services**

### ***Superintendents Agree on Shared Services Plan to Improve Efficiencies, Reduce Costs and Protect Classrooms***

**Redmond, Ore.** — April 18, 2011 — In an effort to improve efficiencies, provide cost savings, and protect classrooms, the superintendents from the High Desert Education Service District (HDES), and the school districts in Sisters, Crook County and Redmond have agreed to implement a detailed shared services plan in the following areas:

- Special education
- Business services
- Human resource services
- Informational/Instructional technology services
- Maintenance services

The plan is based on a regional model that includes sharing services and staffing for these areas and is expected to significantly improve service while dramatically reducing costs to the districts during these critical budget times. This effort is the result of an on-going efficiency study conducted in Central Oregon to identify possible cost savings opportunities within the school districts and High Desert Education Service District. The initial study was funded last year by Chalkboard Project, a non-profit organization working to improve education in the state of Oregon. Follow-up studies have been conducted directly by the districts with input from Bend La Pine Schools. Bend La Pine, which compares in size to the other districts combined, has been a strategic partner in the shared services planning process, providing support, information and insight. Ongoing work is continuing with all of the local school districts, including Bend-La Pine, in the area of maintenance services and special education in hopes of finding some efficiencies across all five districts.

“We’ve tested the shared services model with some of the districts in the Human Resources, Business Services and Technology areas and the initial results have been dramatic and encouraging,” said Shay Mikalson, superintendent for the Redmond School District.

The regional model involves a combination of efforts including: consolidation of some positions and functions; re-assignment of certain duties; facility re-locations for specified staff members and departments; standardizing services, systems and purchases; and the reduction of contracted services.

“The district superintendents are expecting to exceed \$460,000 in savings regionally during the 2011-2012 school year, with additional savings in future years through the shared services model across these different service areas,” said Dr. Dennis Dempsey, superintendent for the High Desert Education Service District.

“Unfortunately, the changes outlined in the shared services plan may affect some of our valuable and dedicated staff members,” said Dempsey. “While it’s never easy to make decisions that impact the lives of our team members, we recognize our role as stewards of education dollars at a time when school funding is among the lowest it’s ever been. With the financial shortfall ranging from \$1.5 million in the Sisters School District to \$10 million in Redmond, we knew we had to do business differently to reduce the impact to the classroom as much as possible,” Dempsey added.

To schedule interviews with HDES or district superintendents, contact Linda Quon at (541)610-4317 or (541)617-1911.

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