



February 11, 2011

Dear Mayor Piercy and City Councilors,

We are writing to provide you with our views on the proposed City income tax to support schools in the 4J and Bethel School Districts.

We believe the proposed income tax measure could help us avert some of the drastic cuts in state school funding that we are facing for the next few years and allow us to avoid or minimize some of the reductions directly affecting classroom instruction, including cutting school days and increasing class sizes. We are gratified that supporters in the community are motivated to help maintain the quality of education for students in Eugene. While the districts can make no specific guarantees about what would be retained or not cut as a result of the tax until we know more details, what we can say is that any new revenue will make our situation better than it would have been.

There are still many unknowns about the possible implementation of such a tax and about whether the voters and taxpayers in our community have the ability to support such a tax in these times. However, the potential to mitigate the proposed teacher layoffs and move toward again providing a full year of school to all students in our community does argue for giving Eugene's voters the opportunity to determine the future of their schools and their children's education.

If the Council takes action to put a measure on the May ballot, our school districts will begin developing a "bridging" plan based on anticipated revenues starting in spring of 2012. Bridging services until funding is realized does create significant challenges and may mean that not all the goals will be reached in the first year of implementation. Any such measure should be descriptive in terms of parameters for use of potential revenue —targeting it on saving school days and maintaining or reducing class sizes— yet, allowing districts some flexibility in how they manage the resources to best achieve these goals.

Thank you for efforts on behalf of our community's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Russell".

George Russell  
Eugene 4J Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colt Gill".

Colt Gill  
Bethel Superintendent