MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES held at UpRiver School, 75 Fern Street, Fernwood, Idaho on Tuesday, July 19, 2011, at 6:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Chair Margret Gannon, Vice-Chair Christine Ashmead, Trustees Donny Masterson and Archie McGregor III

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Sandy Kennelly

STAFF PRESENT: Superintendent Joe Kren, Business Manager Danette Cordell, Board Clerk Karen Robinson, Principal Dennis Kachelmier, and UpRiver Lead Teacher Staci Truscott

OTHERS PRESENT: Brinda Baird, Summer Crosby, Pete Dirlam, B K Kachelmier, Traci Krueger, Anna Marsh, Kenneth Mitchell, Pamela Mitchell, Heidi McGreal, Cindy Newsom, Elizabeth Quigley, Gisella Quigley, Millissa Reeves, and Doug Strong

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m., at UpRiver School, 75 Fern Street, Fernwood, Idaho, by Chair Margaret Gannon.

Chair Gannon welcomed the audience, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and introduced Trustees Donny Masterson, Archie McGregor III, Christine Ashmead, and Superintendent Joe Kren.

Chair Gannon opened the meeting with the statement that the purpose of the meeting was to take public input regarding the proposal to move UpRiver 6th grade students to St. Maries Middle School. Chair Gannon also indicated that all meeting attendees will be heard and they will have the opportunity to ask questions from the administrators present at the meeting.

Superintendent Kren informed the audience that as part of the process of him assuming duties as the District’s Superintendent, the issue was brought forth to him to consider a proposal to relocate UpRiver’s 6th grade students to St. Maries Middle School for the following reasons:

- Alignment of student programs District wide, with St. Maries Middle School serving all of the District’s students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades
- Alignment of curriculum
- Transition of 6th grade students to three different teachers in preparation of transitioning at the 7th grade with the possibility of seven different teachers
- In-District Open Enrollment Requests reflect that there are a number of 6th grade families who want their students to make the transition at the 6th grade level
- Student independence, peer interaction, abilities, and student desire to increase skill levels and try new things

St. Maries Middle School Principal Dennis Kachelmier and UpRiver lead teacher Staci Truscott addressed the audience. There are a number of UpRiver students who transition to SMMS at the 6th grade level by choice, as well as those 7th grade students who transition as part of the current school configuration. At the time the 7th and 8th graders made the first transition two years ago,
the District implemented activities to make the transition as smooth as possible for students and families. Some of the pros and cons of the current proposal to re-locate the 6th grade students include:

Pros - keeping 6th grade at UpRiver School:
- Student familiarity with UpRiver School staff and students
- Having one teacher allows that teacher to be familiar with all of the student’s academic strengths and needs in all subject and content areas

Cons – keeping 6th grade at UpRiver School:
- Waiting until 7th grade to transition requires students to transition from one teacher at UpRiver School up to seven teachers/subjects at St. Maries Middle School
- Five 6th grade students remain who have not requested to make the transition at the 6th grade level, creating peer adjustment issues for both their 6th and 7th grade years

Pros – moving 6th grade to St. Maries Middle School
- Students transition to self-contained 6th grade wing, with limited number of teachers who have contact with the same student for a majority of the student’s daily classes
- Students become familiar with building flow
- Availability of student academic electives at St. Maries Middle School
- St. Maries Middle School can accommodate all UpRiver 6th grade students

Chair Gannon opened the discussion to audience members

Patrons addressing the Board regarding the re-location of the 6th grade students to St. Maries Middle School included Brinda Baird, Pete Dirlam, Traci Krueger, Anna Marsh, Kenneth Mitchell, Pamela Mitchell, Heidi McGreal, Cindy Newsom, Gisella Quigley, Millissa Reeves, and Doug Strong

Patrons cited the following reasons for maintaining the 6th grade at UpRiver School:
- Belief that 7th/8th grades should be re-located back to UpRiver School
- Community intent to maintain UpRiver School
- UpRiver’s excellent academic programs
- Success of UpRiver students following post-secondary education
- Alignment of curriculum for combination classrooms can be accomplished with a dedicated and experienced teacher
- Perception of UpRiver patrons that if they supported the District supplemental levies, all programs would remain the same
- UpRiver School’s strong ties to the financial and emotional well-being of the community
• Desires of 6th grade students to remain at UpRiver School
• Difficulties/success of students who transitioned to St. Maries Middle School as 7th/8th grade students
• Neighborhood school allows students more time at home vs. an early morning bus departure
• Close proximity of school to UpRiver families allows families to stop by the school, visit teachers, and eat breakfast/lunch with their students
• UpRiver’s positive social environment during student adolescence
• UpRiver’s low student/teacher ratio supports academic growth and more one-on-one instruction
• In-District Open Enrollment affords St. Maries students the opportunity to attend school at UpRiver School if they so request
• During the 2012-2013 school year, the number of UpRiver 6th grade students is expected to increase to approximately 15 students
• UpRiver School generates more State funding based on “rural school” classification
• Amount of time students spend on transportation between UpRiver communities and St. Maries
• Perception of increased Transportation costs
• Community pride in UpRiver School
• Desire to keep UpRiver tax dollars in the UpRiver community
• Family/Teacher communication is easily facilitated vs. making the journey to St. Maries for face-to-face teacher/parent meetings
• Difficulty for UpRiver parents who work in the UpRiver area to leave their jobs to travel to St. Maries for parent/teacher meetings, school activities, etc.
• Alleged difficulties with communication activities between St. Maries staff and UpRiver families due to distance and staff response to parent requests for information and assistance
• Increased transportation costs for parents to travel to St. Maries Middle School for activities, conferences, etc.
• Alleged transition difficulties experienced by students who have already made the transition
• Maintaining student innocence from activities not normally exposed to by older student population
• UpRiver patrons volunteer for music and art programs
• Difficulty of teaching two complete different curriculums at UpRiver School supports the re-location of the 6th grade to St. Maries Middle School

Chair Gannon addressed the audience members related to the fact that the dollars generated by the District’s Supplemental Levies support all schools and all students, regardless of where the student attends school.

Superintendent Kren clarified that the Board and District administrators all recognize that UpRiver staff members do an excellent job of providing a well-rounded education for their
students, as well as meeting the needs of families. Further, that it is Superintendent Kren’s recommendation that the 6th grade students be relocated to St. Maries Middle School, however, the Board will listen to all comments and public input and they will make the final decision. The Board will schedule another Board meeting to consider the proposal at such time as all Board members can be seated to consider the proposal and reach a decision.

A discussion was held related to the difference in the 5th and 6th grade Math curriculum, and the difficulties that can be experienced by one teacher charged with planning and teaching the two different curriculums, as well as the rapidly advancing education technology requirements.

A brief discussion was held regarding the possibility of not having a combined 5/6 classroom, but rather combining classes at the lower primary levels, as well as moving the UpRiver part-time kindergarten teacher to help in the 5/6 combination classroom for part of the day, or the placement of a classroom instructional assistant for the combination class. Chair Gannon and Superintendent Kren confirmed that all of those options are being considered by the administration.

A brief discussion was held related to re-locating the 6th graders this year due to the small number of students and returning them to UpRiver next year when the enrollment for 5/6 grade is projected to increase. Superintendent Kren indicated that the final decision rests with the Board, and whatever the Board decides, the District administration will support that and do their best to implement the approved program.

Trustee Masterson shared that the Board represents all of the students in the District, and as Trustees, they care and support every student in the District, whether that are UpRiver students or St. Maries students.

Trustee McGregor indicated that he is interested in following the trends related to why parents make the request for their students to transfer from UpRiver School to St. Maries’ schools at the 6th grade level. The audience members shared that families and students make the request because of sports opportunities, as well as other reasons such as parents working in town, extra-curricular offerings at St. Maries Middle School, social opportunities, etc.

Patron Doug Strong shared a written document addressed to the Board of Trustees, the original of which will be filed with the records of the meeting.

Chair Margaret Gannon and Superintendent Kren confirmed that the Board has taken all of the comments and recommendations under advisement. Further, that the Board will meet in a special meeting at a later date to consider the proposal.

There being no further business for which the meeting was called, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m., Tuesday, July 19, 2011. /s/ MARGARET R. GANNON
Margaret Gannon, Board Chair

/s/ KAREN M. ROBINSON
Karen M. Robinson, Board Clerk