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August 8, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIBRARY DISTRICT RECEIVES GRANT FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHER ADVISORY GROUP

The Umatilla County Special Library District (UCSLD) has received a \$7,500 grant from Trust Management Services of Waldport, Oregon to help organize a Kindergarten teacher advisory group for the District's countywide early literacy program called Take Off. The grant project will be implemented during the current 07-08 school year.

Chris Hilderbrand, Take Off Program Director and Project Coordinator indicates that the 40 kindergarten teachers in schools across Umatilla County are ideally positioned to understand the ready to learn skills of Umatilla County children as they start school. Chris also feels that community based school readiness efforts often overlook the value of coordinating more closely with local schools and especially kindergarten teachers. The kindergarten teacher advisory group will be organized to provide the Library District Take Off program and local communities they serve with program advice and recommendations for helping children and families better understand and apply school readiness skills.

According to a statewide survey of kindergarten teachers, approximately 20% of Oregon kindergartners are not ready for school. In 2003, Oregon's Department of Education reported that 14% of third graders were not reading at grade level. Children who fall behind in first grade have a less than 13% chance of catching up to grade level. Seventy-four percent (74%) of poor readers in third grade are still poor readers in ninth grade.