

March 2, 2012

Klamath Falls City Schools

District Newsletter

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Did you know?

- The choir, band, and orchestra programs in the KFCS' junior and senior high schools are rated the best in the state.
- Class sizes at KU are five-to-eight students less than at the other larger high schools in the area.
- KFCS' students have 11 additional school days than County students. Opportunity to learn is a key factor in student achievement.
- KUHS has a unique relationship with OIT in which their students receive both college and high school credits through daily classes on the OIT campus.
- Seventy-seven percent of KFCS' parents gave their schools either an A or B rating in a recent phone survey.
- Ninety percent of KFCS' parents rated the school offices warm and friendly.
- Students earn high school credits through a Credit for Proficiency Program that provides job skill training and internship experiences for high school students with community partners.
- State test scores in all buildings have consistently been on the rise.
- The KUHS graduation rate is above the state average and improving.
- If a student wishes to sign up with KFCS, they should contact Dena Hubble in the Personnel Office at 1336 Avalon. Her phone number is 541-883-4702. **Grades 7-12 open enrollment is during March only.**

Getting on the Open Enrollment Railroad

Have you been hearing or reading about the new open enrollment system that KFCS has recently approved? Below is some information on it and the rationale of the board approval.

Where did this law come from? Before the 2010-11 school year, a parent in the Portland area requested to have her child accepted into the Tigard-Tualatin School District. The school district denied the request. Not willing to take "no" for an answer, the parent went to her state representative and asked that he do something about it. The result of this parent request is HB 3681 with which all school districts in the state must now comply.

The proposed law was initially re-buffed in the legislative committee to which it was assigned. Testimony largely expressed opposition to the new mandate. As a result, the Education Committee chose not to move it forward to the general body for consideration. During the last days of the session, however, the new requirement was given new life in a multi-issue compromise package from the Governor's Office. Since then Oregon districts have been forced to work with this hastily conceived order.

You may be asking what this new system is replacing. In the Klamath Basin, the City and County school districts have had a transfer agreement that has been in place for decades. Through this agreement, families have had wide freedom to transfer their students from one district to another. The following figures illustrate this free-flowing practice: Last year, 172 requests to have children enroll in a non-resident school were submitted to the City and County districts. One hundred sixty-four or 95% of these requests were granted. All requests were honored if the reason was to attend another school that had an elective course a student desired that the resident school did not offer.

The eight denied requests (five by the City School District and three by the County School District) were disallowed by the principals of high schools for specific academic reasons; they felt it was in the best learning interest of the requesting students to deny them. For example, a County principal refused a request this year by a student to move to KUHS. The student made the request because he felt he could concentrate better in science classes at the City high school compared to his resident school. The County principal did not see this as a valid reason and turned it down. Such discretion by grades 7-12 principals is no longer allowable under open enrollment.

Because the transfer policy has worked so well for many years, the KFCS' Board of Directors wanted to continue these proven procedures. They did not want to endorse a new open enrollment system that has many unanswered questions and unknown consequences. Board members did not want to go from a system in which districts could exercise limited educational control to one in which they have none.

The KFCS' Board of Directors changed direction when the Klamath County School District decided to approve open enrollment K-12 at their February, 2012, meeting. This occurred after board officers from the two districts failed to find common ground during meetings on the issue. In order to create consistency in the Basin area and to minimize enrollment loss, the KFCS' Board of Directors was compelled to approve open enrollment for grades 7-12 at their February 21st meeting. This approval was done with reluctance after a great deal of discussion. The vote was six to one.

However, the board refused to open the KFCS' elementary system to the requirements of this law. There are a number of reasons for this. First among them is the difficulty in predicting elementary school grade-by-grade enrollment in the spring for the following fall. Under the open enrollment law, the district would have to do this imprecise forecasting for elementary schools. This would happen through designating openings in each school in February for the next school year.

The board then approved unlimited applications for the 7-12 system. **Students residing in the Klamath County School District boundaries who wish to attend a KFCS junior or senior high school must make application during the month of March, 2012.** They should call the KFCS' office at 541-883-4702 or stop in to the Personnel Office at 1336 Avalon Street to pick up the requisite forms. In grades K-6, KFCS' plans to use the same transfer system as the past.

All 197 districts in the State of Oregon will anxiously monitor the ramifications of this law. The Klamath Falls City School District will make the best of an imperfect situation. During March, they will be opening the school doors of Ponderosa, Klamath Union, and Link River to all Basin students who are interested in enrolling for next year. If you know some out-of-district students who are curious about whether or not these Klamath Falls City Schools are right for them, please share the information at the top of the newsletter with them.

<http://www.viddler.com/v/d06a8a4d> Link to a This Week in Klamath County TV show on the district operational levy.

- KFCS was recently awarded a \$1.4 million seismic-improvement grant from the state of Oregon. These dollars are earmarked to improve the Mills Auditorium. The bulk of these funds will help make the auditorium structurally sound in case of an earthquake. As much as possible, the district will also make the auditorium more attractive. As part of this project, KFCS would like to re-build the 800 seats at a cost of \$55 per seat. The district plans to give people a chance to donate a seat for \$25. Donors will be recognized for

their generosity. Please call Shaw Nee at 541-883-4700 Ext 1 if you would like more information about donating a seat.