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Klamath Falls City Schools

District Newsletter
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Student Safety: Our Number One Concern
By Paul Hillyer, KFCS Superintendent

Like you, I was horrified by the Newtown, Connecticut, elementary school shooting. The terrible loss of life and the unspeakable grief this incident caused is incomprehensible. There is no way for any school to guarantee that such an event will not happen. Sadly, no institution can make this claim. However, student safety is KFCS' number one priority.

Because of this, all our schools have taken deliberate steps to keep students as safe as possible. This includes incorporating frequent safety drills in the school routine. It also includes requiring employees to wear identification badges. Another safety measure is requiring visitor sign-ins. Our close relationship with the Klamath Falls Police Department also improves the safety of our schools.

The district also has a Threat Assessment Team that takes referrals on potentially troubled students and provides help and support in working with or in placing them in alternative settings where they receive professional assistance.

Events like the Connecticut school shooting remind us of how precious life is and causes us to reflect on our efforts to keep our schools safe for all our students. Our District Safety Committee meets regularly to evaluate our ongoing strategies and make improvements as necessary to keep our schools secure. If you have any ideas you would like us to consider enhancing these efforts, please respond to this email with your thoughts. We will continue to do everything we can to provide safe environments for our students.

Other Notes:

1. The Governor's Education Budget Plan allocates \$6.15 billion for K-12 education. This is a \$.37 billion or 6% increase over the last biennium. It is projected that this increase will be enough to cover the 7% PERS increase that districts will be paying in each of the next two school years. This increase is \$972,000 per year for Klamath Falls City Schools. However, this proposal will not cover any cost increases in insurance, utilities, employee costs, or other factors.

To try and address these inflationary increases, the Governor is seeking PERS reforms. These reforms must first be passed by the legislature and then they must be supported by the courts. While the Governor's intentions are laudable in this effort, they seem like a long shot at this writing.

Current K-12 program levels in the state for the next biennium are projected to require \$6.3 billion. Unless they reach this point, districts across the state will be making deeper budget reductions. The proposed K-12 budget reduces the percentage of the state budget

allocated to education from 39% in the last biennium to 38% in the next. This is down from 43% in the 2009-10 biennium.

2. Oregon is only one of four states whose spending on education decreased last year from the year before. The other states are New Jersey, Maryland, and Oklahoma.
3. A recent international study (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study or PIRLS) found that U.S. schools are near the top in the world in fourth-grade reading achievement. They outscored all but four other nations. Fifty-six percent of U.S. students reached the "high" category.
4. Another recent study found what we all would have predicted: Students' attendance in school is critical to high test scores. In a recent statistical analysis conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, it was found that there is a strong relationship between attendance and high test scores.
5. Congratulations and thanks to Dr. Robert Sears who has been selected by the Klamath Falls Board of Education to complete the vacated seat left when Mark Halverson resigned two months ago. Dr. Sears is a Child Psychiatrist and pediatrician.
6. Our schools wish all of you a safe and enjoyable Christmas season. We hope you find the time with families and friends to be refreshing and fun. Also, may 2013 be your best year ever!

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested in KFCS news. If you are not a regular recipient of this free newsletter and would like to be, please respond to this email and let us know.