

**January 25, 2013**  
**Klamath Falls City Schools**

**District Newsletter**  
**Volume 2; Issue 14**  
**Tips for Healthy Parent and Teacher Partnerships**

By KFCS Superintendent, Paul Hillyer

These district newsletters may be starting to sound like broken records as they often focus on establishing and maintaining productive working relationships between the home and the classroom. This writer apologizes if any of you see it this way. However, the greatest hope for student success in Klamath Falls is finding more and better ways for parents and teachers to work together as partners to bring about student success. Without strong unshakable home and school cooperation, students will never reach their full potential as human beings and we will all suffer because of it.

In a January 13, 2013, *New York Times* article, sixth-grade teacher, Sara Mosle, gives some suggestions for parents and teachers to strengthen the home and school bond. Here are a few of her ideas:

- Moms and dads should encourage their young people to initiate working out problems with teachers. In other words, parents should not be too quick to intervene when their children are having a school problem. They should encourage their charges to try and solve problems with teachers first before stepping in. This helps develop self-confidence in children and helps them gain problem-resolution skills that will be valuable in later life. It also helps avoid an “us vs. them” feeling between parents and teachers.
- Both teachers and parents should use emails sparingly to do substantive interchanges. Such interactions are better done through person-to-person or phone conversations. Email and text messages are effective for sharing simple information such as appointments or scheduled absences. Misunderstandings over more significant issues often occur via emails that would not happen in live conversations.
- Ms. Mosle does not recommend Cc. either the principal or administration on routine issues as it gives the impression that the parent does not feel he/she can work out disagreements with the teachers.
- She also recommends that teachers respond to parent communications promptly. Parents likewise should understand that teachers are usually too busy during the student day to respond to emails.
- Another recommendation for both parents and teachers is to build on students’ strengths. As she says, “If you have something positive to say, say it early and often.”
- Her final recommendation is to refrain from overreacting to what young people say. She encourages parents to ignore the occasional complaining from students remembering that adolescents often struggle in dealing with authority. “The teenager, being a teenager, may not rank your parenting skills very high either.”

**Other News:**

- The recent focus on school safety is very understandable and appropriate. However, to establish a bit of balance to the discussion, the following statistic is good to keep in mind:

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's School-Associated Violent Death Study found that for the 2009-10 school year "the chance of someone five to 18 years old being a victim of a homicide at school, on the way to school, or at a school-sponsored event was one in 2.5 million" (Education Week, January 22, 2013). In other words, schools are still among the safest places for children to be. In fact, they may be the safest places for youth.

- At their January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the KFCS' Board of Directors approved new elementary boundaries to commence in the 2013-14 school year. Families whose students will be attending a different school next year will be notified by mail during early February. Welcoming activities will be planned at the schools to ease the transition for students and families to their new schools.
- Also approved at the January meeting were the plans for the sixth-grade addition at Ponderosa which will be put out for bid in early February. The sixth-grade wing of Ponderosa will feature three three-classroom pods. All sixth-grade classrooms will be in close proximity to one another and to the common areas of the school including gyms, the cafeteria, and music rooms. Each three-classroom pod will be a team to which three teachers will be assigned. One of the pods for 2013-14 will be a two-classroom team as next year's sixth-grade class is smaller than sixth-grade classes in recent years.
- The Board of Directors also approved ending the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years two days early for students to allow four total days of teacher training to change curriculum and instruction to align with new federal standards called the Common Core State Standards. No resources were provided by the state to move to these comprehensive standards. Therefore, the district needed to use current calendar days for the training. The last student day for 2012-13 has moved from June 13 to June 11. The approved 2013-14 calendar is linked to our district web page:  
<http://www.kfalls.k12.or.us/resources/Files/schoolCalendars/NextYearCalendar.pdf>
- A K-6 summer-school experience is scheduled for July of 2013. K-4 will be housed at Conger and Mills. Grades 5-6 will be at Roosevelt. Any students who are not at grade level in reading or math are eligible for the extra assistance. There is no cost for the program and breakfast and lunch will also be served free of charge. More information on this will be coming home with report cards in February. Sign up will be at the April conferences.
- The next newsletter will focus on the changing requirements to high school diplomas in Oregon. Unless a strong home and school partnership is activated to meet this challenge, many of our students will fail to graduate. It is a tremendous challenge that will take overwhelming teamwork.

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.