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Klamath Falls City Schools

KFCS District Newsletter
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Education Pays!

By Paul Hillyer, Superintendent

Recently, I spoke with a person who has served on the Federal Reserve Board. He shared a very interesting finding from their research. There has always been a significant income gap between the higher and lower socio economic classes in America. This was no surprise. Then he went on to say that economic research shows that the difference is not caused as much by the class into which one is born as it is by education. Those who go on to four-year college degrees on average end up in the higher-income levels. While those with low levels of education, usually end up in our lowest economic classes.

He went on to say that education is the great equalizer both in the U.S. and in the world. A person who is brought up poor and goes on to a college degree is likely to move from a lower to a higher economic status. Whereas a person born to a wealthy home but who chooses not to pursue higher education is likely to spend his or her adult life in a lower socio economic status. Statistics from the Bureau of Labor published in 2009 back up this research. The average hourly wage of a high school dropout is \$10.78. This compares to the average hourly wage of \$27.63 for people who earn a four-year or higher college degree. A two-year college degree graduate averages \$18.53 per hour. A person with a high school diploma and no further training earns on average \$15.05 per hour.

Even more telling is the unemployment rate for each category: high school dropouts are unemployed at a rate of 18.2%. This compares to the unemployment rate of 4.8% for a college graduate. The high school diploma-only category has an 11.3% unemployment rate. The two-year college graduate category averages 7.0% unemployment.

Perhaps even more important than these telling statistics is the variance in options for different categories. The doors that are open to high school dropouts are few and the desirability of the jobs for which they qualify is usually low. This is especially true in our modern economy in which most unskilled jobs are automated. The likelihood of even finding a job without a high school degree is marginal. The odds of finding a desirable job without a high diploma are remote.

On the other hand, as one moves up to more educational attainment the options multiply. The life-long impact on employment and life satisfaction is highly determined by the level of education a person achieves.

Because of all the facts listed above, it is critical that we encourage our children to not only graduate from high school but to go on to a college degree. Establishing a college diploma goal with young people is extremely important. Attaining this goal leads to countless options that will not be possible for other young people who fail to pursue higher educational levels.

Other News:

1. Ponderosa Junior High is collaborating with our local Junior Achievement Program (JA) to provide an extremely important student goal-setting and consumer education experience for 8th graders. This program is called Finance Park, which will be at our Fairgrounds for Ponderosa students on May 6 and May 7. Here is a description from JA: "The program space is a structure similar to a high-end trade show exhibit, designed as a mini-city with "businesses" that correlate to 16 personal budget lines. The materials themselves have been designed to appeal to the way teens learn best.

"Students first study the JA Finance Park curriculum in the classroom. Then, they test their knowledge in the transportable simulation environment. There, students make tough, realistic budgeting decisions about everything from food, housing, and health care to transportation, utilities, and investing as they progress through the simulation. The on-site activities allow students to put into action what they have learned in the classroom."

We are looking for volunteers who would like to help the young people work through this experience. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more about this event, call JA coordinator, Deanna Wilson, at 541-884-1190. This will be an important learning experience for students that will help them set life goals and determine the education level necessary to attain them. It will also teach them valuable consumer education concepts that later will be expanded at KU. This will be an eye opening and, potentially, life-changing experience for Ponderosa student.

2. A correction on information sent in our last newsletter: elementary summer school will be at two locations: Conger for K-4 and Mills for K-8. More information on this will be coming out in March and sign up will be at conferences.
3. At upcoming April elementary conferences, teachers will be checking in with parents on the progress of their student on the goals that were jointly set last fall. Please talk to your children about this goals and hear firsthand the progress they are making.
4. Interesting facts from the graduating class of 2011-12:
 - Students who start in KFCS in their elementary years and enter KU as freshmen have an 84% graduation rate
 - Students who start in KFCS during their middle school years (6-8) and go on to KU have an 80% graduation rate
 - Students who start in KFCS during their high school years have a 52% graduation rate
 - Students who start in KFCS through alternative programs have a 28% graduation rate
5. The 2013 Winter Wings Festival will be held at OIT on February 14-17. Saturday, February 16th, most children's activities are FREE from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Come and see student artwork from area schools on display.

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.