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Klamath Falls City Schools

District Newsletter
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K-12/KCC Partnership

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS Superintendent

Recently, both City and County school districts have signed an agreement with Klamath Community College. This agreement will allow students who are in their fifth year of high school and have not received a diploma to take the last year at KCC and receive college credit for their work. This program is paid through the funds the two districts receive from the state for these students; therefore, it is cost neutral for the school systems.

This new offering is geared to students who did not receive their high school diploma following their fourth year of high school, but had enough credits at that time to graduate. The intent of the program is to assist students that likely would not consider higher education unless they were given help in getting started. The hope is this boost will encourage these young people to receive the skills and training they need to become highly productive adult citizens.

This program exists in other areas of the state as well. Such K-12/higher education partnerships is a win for students, for the community, and for the state. Through it, many young people will discover options and opportunities they would not have found in any other way.

Other Notes

1. Some Information reported this week in the press was misleading. It had to do with EagleRidge student eligibility for KU sports. The board passed a policy last year to allow EagleRidge students to participate on Pelican sports teams. Prior to this action, these students had not been allowed to do so. They now may participate if they pay the same participation fee as KU students. Along with this, the district requires either the families or EagleRidge High School to pick up the remainder of the sport cost beyond what is covered by the activity fee.

Since sports are expensive to offer, this additional amount can be high. However, since the district must pay for this cost out of their budget, it seems reasonable to expect the EagleRidge High School budget or the EagleRidge families to pick up the cost for their students. The reasoning behind this is athletics are offered at financial sacrifice to the district. The cost of sports is about \$700 per KU student. A sacrifice in the over-all district budget must be made to provide these athletic programs. The board has set high school athletics as a priority for our students; therefore, almost \$500,000 is budgeted to provide these opportunities. This is why the district requires EagleRidge families or EagleRidge High School to reimburse the district for the costs incurred by allowing EagleRidge student sport participation.

Of course, any EagleRidge student who would choose to enroll at KU would only be responsible for the sport participation fee like other KU students.

2. Speaking of KU sports, they have some great news to report; the girls' and boys' soccer teams each finished 3rd in the conference and the football team finished 2nd. The girls' cross-country team has a strong chance of winning their first state championship. The soccer teams and the football team now go into post-season play. We encourage all of you to get out and support the Pelican athletes who have worked very hard to reach success.
3. Another clarification: There seems to be some confusion about the closing of Fairview School and the impact on class sizes. The savings from the school closure will be used to keep class sizes as small as possible. Therefore, school closure will not cause higher class sizes. In fact, the opposite is true as Fairview teachers will go to the schools where the Fairview students are assigned and help keep class sizes down in those schools.

At this time, we do not know what class sizes will be next year as the state has not yet decided the K-12 funding level for the next biennium. We do know there will be increased budget pressure, as has been reported in a prior newsletter, due to PERS increases that the state is passing on to school districts. This increase will be about \$972,000 for KFCS. So if class sizes edge upward next year, it would be due to state funding of education and not due to the closing of a school, which will actually help offset budget pressures.

4. Winter may soon arrive. This writer hopes not! However, with the coming of snow and ice comes the possibility of school cancellations. Those receiving our School Reach phone messages will be notified around 6:00 a.m. if schools are closed for the day. The district web page will be updated around 5:30 a.m. each day concerning the status of schools for the day. Finally, local media outlets will have the information to announce early in the morning. One can only hope that we will not need to worry about inclement weather interrupting our schedules.
5. Regardless of where one stands on the legalization of marijuana, a person cannot help but be concerned by the rising incidence we are seeing in both the City and County school districts of student expulsions due to bringing the substance to schools. The use of cannabis among young people in the community has taken a dramatic increase over the last two years. This is particularly troublesome in light of research that shows a strong connection between adolescent marijuana use and the development of psychosis.
6. Under the coordination of parent Alishia Huntoon, Roosevelt School is piloting volunteer-run clubs and classes after school hours. During first quarter, community members offered these options to the students: martial arts, multiple crafts, yoga, cooking and baking. Hopefully, this will be the start of a great community initiative that will be extended to all our schools and students in the future. It is a pilot program to watch with great interest.

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.