



April 28, 2014

KFCS' District Newsletter

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

Is School Safety Really Important?

It seems a daily occurrence that locally, statewide, and nationally we hear about incidents of senseless violence. Last week was a good example when we had to hold one of our school buses to make sure we did not put any children in the path of a fugitive who was being pursued around town in a high-speed chase with police. Sometimes it feels like the fabric of our society is unraveling and getting more and more unpredictable. This is the reason safety enhancements are a major feature of the proposed KU remodel project. Below are some of the safety features that are included in the plan.

One is to create one main entrance for the school. This will be done by moving the main offices to a position opposite from their current location. The front entrance to the school will also be moved to that side of the school just off Monclaire Street. All visitors will then be required to come in through the front office area, check in, and receive visitors' badges before going into the rest of the school.

A second change is reducing the number of outside doors in the school. Currently there are 28. This provides many access points. The building remodel will remove underutilized sections of the building. This will decrease the number of ways to enter the school. For those entrance points that remain, an alarm system will notify the office whenever a door is left ajar to ensure all doors, except the front entrance, are secured from the outside during the day.

Another safety improvement in the building will result from reducing the square footage of the building by removing 1930's additions on the north side of the building. This is an area that is very difficult to supervise due to the many empty spaces, stairways to nowhere, and vacant rooms that are present. Eliminating those spaces dramatically reduces the areas of the school that are difficult to supervise.

Then one must think about structural safety. Currently, KU is rated in the school category of buildings most potentially dangerous in an earthquake. The remodel will correct this problem by seismically retrofitting the whole building to make it as safe as possible. The district is also applying for a \$1.5 million seismic grant to help pay some of these costs.

Finally, the bond proposal will include health and safety dollars for the elementary schools to address some of their security needs. This will be an important investment to making the K-5 schools more secure for children.

In closing, it must be said that no amount of investment can ensure buildings are absolutely safe. Unfortunately, we have seen that even the safest buildings can be vulnerable when people are determined to harm others. However, the investments in security that are proposed in the upcoming bond issue will go a long way toward improving the safety of our young people, so they can concentrate on learning.

We Have Some Questions for our Parents:

- 1. Is it important to have your children in safe schools?**
- 2. Do you want your children to have a learning environment that gives them a competitive learning advantage compared to students in other districts?**
- 3. Should the school district replace basic infrastructures such as heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems when they are worn out and failing after 85 years of good use?**
- 4. Do you want to improve the economy of Klamath Falls and increase community pride?**

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, you are invited to the very special event described below.

What: A forum for KFCS’ parents to share their desires for what a remodeled KU should include and learn from the DLR Architects current design ideas.

When: Wednesday, May 7th, at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Klamath Union High School Library

Why: To give parents information on KU remodel plans, get their ideas for what they hope these plans will include, and go on a school tour to learn more about the parts of the facility that will be included in the proposed project.

**Don’t Miss This Unique Chance to Share Your Ideas and Hopes
for the KU Remodel Project. Pass the word on!**

Other News:

1. Each month, Klamath Union High School will produce a video magazine called “**KU & YOU.**” Please click the district’s website link (www.kfalls.k12.or.us) and scroll down left-hand side for **KU & YOU Video Magazine** to access this magazine. The video magazine is a reflection of the many stories involving KU students, teachers and staff as well as the community that supports Klamath Union High School.
2. Ponderosa’s staff wants to express their appreciation to everyone who helped make McTeachers’ night so successful. The McTeachers’ night, held at the McDonalds on Avalon Street on March 18th, raised over \$1,100 for Ponderosa Middle School. Ponderosa staff had fun working behind the counter and in the lobby while raising money for their school.

3. Special thanks to EPI Center who donated five family passes a month to each site March-May for a family of four for shoes, bowling balls and pizza. They have offered the Center for all CCLC school family bowling for three hours on Monday's April 7th and May 5th exclusively for our use.
4. Klamath Union High School students presented \$5,000 in grants to local nonprofits. These students have worked hard to identify community needs and determine how best to meet those needs with limited resources. Special thanks to Terry Wagstaff and Mike Casey, the Meyer Memorial Trust and the PGE Foundation for sponsoring the class.
5. The Klamath Basin Robotics' Team, who are a KU club, won the highest award given - the Wilsonville District Chairman's Award. They also are participating in state competition.
6. The KU symphonic band traveled to Grants Pass and competed in the SOMEA District Eight band competitions. KU placed first in the 4A division and qualified for state competition in May. This marks the ninth consecutive year that KU has won district-level competition and qualified to perform at the state band contest.
7. May 23rd is KFCS' Give Back Day. Every student in our schools will spend part of the day beautifying Klamath Falls through clean up or planting. We will have a 2,900 + student army in the streets and neighborhoods helping make KFalls more attractive. They are doing this to express their appreciation for all the community does for them. We are also doing it to help our students take pride in their city. The city government is working with us on this as are the downtown merchants.