



April 8, 2015

### **KFCS' District Newsletter**

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

#### **2015-17 K-12 Funding Update**

The first thing an educator notices after moving to Oregon is how many limitations schools are under due to scarce resources. School years are shorter, class sizes are larger, textbooks are older and infrastructure is often worn out and outdated. K-12 education has gone from 44.8% of the state budget in 2003 to 39.7% this year. The result has been to make Oregon schools less competitive with the rest of the nation. Everyone in our state suffers as the most critical natural resource in our state is slighted -- our children.

The legislature has made sure this trend in K-12 education continues for at least two more years when they approved the biennium school budget this week. In the most recent Oregon Department of Education estimate, KFCS will receive a \$60 per student increase for each of the next two years. This normally would not be enough to cover inflationary cost increases. Fortunately, district enrollment is up and the state is giving more funds for kindergarten. This student number increase will help KFCS cover increased costs in the next school year without cutting programs.

In the second year of the biennium, the 2016-17 school year, it will be more difficult. This is especially true because the local option levy, approximately \$1 million per year, will expire after the 2015-16 school year. Balancing the budget in that second year will be much more challenging. How this will be accomplished is still being determined. Part of the solution is using more state biennium revenue (52%) in the second year than the first (48%).

Fortunately, Klamath Falls voters over the last three years have helped the district mitigate inadequate revenue by providing the local option levy mentioned above. Also very helpful has been the increase in students the district has enrolled this year. Thirdly, the district has been successful in obtaining a number of state and federal grants, which have also helped revenue meet expenditures.

Even with these extra supports, however, local schools are not able to provide the well-rounded education the students need. Also problematic is the purchase of needed curriculum materials. This becomes even more of a concern as schools implement new state-mandated learning standards.

As the legislature was preparing to vote on the K-12 budget, each member stressed how important K-12 education is and how all support the idea of better educational outcomes for Oregon students. Unfortunately, this type of rhetoric rings hollow when the action necessary to

support these words does not follow. It is very hard to give our students a world-class education with third-world budgets. Somehow, Oregon has to do better than this.

On Friday evening, April 24<sup>th</sup>, members from the legislature's Ways and Means Committee will be in Klamath Falls for a public hearing on educational funding in the state. It will be held from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the Oregon Institute of Technology. Please attend and voice your support for Oregon schools.

**Other news:**

1. KFCS is a part of the exciting Blue Zone Project. This is a state initiative to help create a healthier, more prosperous community. Be watching for more information on this great opportunity.
2. The groundbreaking ceremony for the KU remodel project will be at noon on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, in the V parking lot on Monclaire Street. Come and be a part of this historic event!
3. Some people are wondering why the first part of the KU remodel is the Wellness Center that includes the new auxiliary gym and the remodeled Pel Court. It also includes new health classrooms, weight room, cardiac room, boys' and girls' locker rooms, elevator, and restrooms. The reason is we will have all our mechanical systems in that part of the building. We needed to have these systems installed before proceeding to the rest of the project. Mechanical systems include equipment for heating, cooling, ventilation, electricity, and technology.
4. Another important fact is that the construction will be in three phases. The first is the Wellness Center, the second is the Academic Building in the middle, and the third is the Fine Arts Center. Each area has its own budget to make sure that adequate funds are available at the end of the project for the final areas. Thus, even though the Arts Center will be completed last, money will be reserved to make sure it is effectively completed.
5. The Pelican Elementary Destination Imagination team won first place in regional competition. Bill Patterson is the coach of this team. The state contest is scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup>.
6. Statewide, the average GPA for our varsity boys' swim team was the highest average of the 4A schools. Our girls' swim team, which had a higher average than the boys, finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the 4A ranks.
7. KU finished first in the statewide OSAA Spirit Competition for the second straight year. Many thanks to Dan Stearns for videotaping and leading this effort. See their winning video attached [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFkJkCTa9Oo\\_U8zgBguvM0zgB1d5y1tVK](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFkJkCTa9Oo_U8zgBguvM0zgB1d5y1tVK).
8. The second annual Give-Back Day will be on Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. All KFCS' staff and students will be doing community improvement projects around town on that day. Ponderosa students will be doing their projects in early June due to state testing timelines.