



May 19, 2015

KFCS' District Newsletter

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

Setting Students Up for Success in School and in Life

Over the last two years, I have had the good fortune to twice visit an innovative school district on the Texas/Mexico border called PSJA (Pharr, San Juan, Alamo). This 32,000-student district has improved their high school graduation rate by more than 30% since 2007. This is true despite the fact they are located in a very high poverty area. One of the key initiatives that has made this possible is requiring all high school seniors to have a full high school schedule.

What this does is help students have more time to gain proficiencies in math and English so a very small percentage of them have to take remedial courses in college. Many students in their high schools take college math credits while still in high school so they have a jumpstart on college. Other students who need more math instruction to take college math classes after graduation, receive this help as seniors. The result is the percentage of students needing remedial college classes from the PSJA district has dropped from 65% to 15% over a few short years.

An initiative KFSC's Board of Directors is considering is doing something similar at KU. They are discussing whether to require all seniors to take math as seniors. This would reduce the percent of students needing remedial college math due to forgetting prior math learning during a year layoff from math. It would also allow more seniors to take a college-level math class and graduate from high school with college credit. Another possible advantage to the plan would be allowing seniors to take the college remedial math class, so they could take college-credit math immediately as college freshmen. Those not planning to go to college would have the option of math credit recovery or application math classes that would be useful if they work right out of high school.

Please let us know if you have any thoughts on the new possibility that the school board is considering. If this initiative is approved, it would begin for students who will be freshmen next year.

Other News:

1. The district is also initiating a new offering at Ponderosa to help set students up for success. Through the 21st Century After School Grant Program, Ponderosa will be providing after-school tutoring for students who are failing either math or English. Students who do not have a passing grade in either of these subjects at mid-quarter will be required to take part in the extra after-school support until they have a passing grade on their report cards or progress reports. This extra help will be provided to help all 6-8 grade students receive the help and support they need to be successful in high school. This will also help them accomplish their life goals.

2. KFCS is excited about the new Blue Zone Project in Klamath Falls. We are very fortunate to be selected to be the first Oregon city to be a Blue Zone community. One of the reasons Klamath Falls was chosen is the work of the Klamath Promise Initiative that was started by our district. Participation in the work will allow our district to learn from successful schools throughout the world on how to promote health, wellness and fitness in our schools. This will be exciting work.
3. **“Give-Back Day”** is Thursday, May 21st. Please join our students in thanking our community on that day through city-wide beautification projects. This is a great way for students to experience helping others. It also provides an opportunity for them to thank our city for all it does for our schools.
4. You probably have read about the recent State Supreme Court decision that overruled most of the PERS reforms that passed the legislature two years ago. This will begin affecting Oregon school district budgets during the 2017-18 school year. The 5.5% increase per employee will cost our district about \$1 million during the first year and likely will increase more each year after that.
5. About \$800,000 in facility work will be taking place this summer in our elementary schools utilizing dollars from the recently passed bond issue. This will include new roofs at Conger, Mills and Pelican, new flooring and stair coverings at Mills, Roosevelt and Pelican, bathroom updates at Pelican, Mills and Roosevelt, and heating, cooling and ventilation work at all elementary schools. Also being done this summer will be converting the pool area in the KU Field House to a wrestling room.
6. For ongoing updates on the KU bond project, please check our district web page: <http://www.kfalls.k12.or.us/>.
7. We need local bidders on our construction job as we want to give as much work as possible to local companies. Please tell any construction people you know there are tremendous opportunities for work on this project. Forward our bidding schedule to anyone you know who might be interested.
8. The KU choir took 3rd place in state last week. This despite the fact they had to leave at 2:30 in the morning to get to the competition in the northern part of the state. Just think how they would have done if they had a good night’s sleep!
9. Find out more about Ponderosa:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gluQtuJk9AI&feature=youtu.be>.
10. Special thanks to the Fairgrounds’ management for letting us use their facility for our all-school band concert in April. We could not use Pel Court for the event due to construction. They let our students use the venue free of charge!
11. A new exciting partnership has formed with KCC and KFCS for an on-campus summer experience for students that include college credit and high school math credit. Vocational college credit can be earned in computer science and health occupations through this innovative program.
12. Good luck to Pelican School’s Destination Imagination team who will be participating in the national finals in Tennessee.
13. After-School Program Extravaganza videos are now available to view on our district webpage: www.kfalls.k12.or.us.

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.