

# Features

## In-district transfers offer opportunities

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Staff Reporter

This year, between 20 and 25 students have made an in-district transfer either from Wilsonville High School to West Linn High School or from West Linn to Wilsonville. Because both schools are in the same district, students are allowed to make this transition by completing an application at each school's administrative office and having it approved by the district. According to Roger Woehl, superintendent, in district students are allowed to transfer from one school to another as long as there is space available.

According to Andy Sommer, Wilsonville principal, the district hasn't analyzed the percentage of students who switch schools in approximately five years, but the last time they did, the transfer rate was equivalent to the size of the schools – about 40% of the transfers were to Wilsonville and about 60% were to WLHS. Almost all the transfer requests came from the Athey Creek Middle School attendance area near Tualatin where students could easily travel to either high school.

"I think students transfer (between the two schools) for various reasons. Most of the time it is a matter of where they live," Lou Bailey, WLHS principal, said. Other



reasons include the middle schools they attended, which school their friends decided to attend and convenience of parents for pick up and drop off. According to Bailey, none of the transfer students have cited sports as their specific reason for wanting to transfer.

"I moved to Wilsonville for a variety of reasons, the main being: I wanted a change, to see what another high school was like. I wanted to take AP Statistics, Psychology and Art Media which I could not do at West Linn. I wanted to go to a smaller

school and one with a variety of students," Elliot Prince, sophomore, said. "I am planning on returning next year to West Linn, because I took the classes I needed at Wilsonville and West Linn is much closer to my home." Prince attended WLHS last year, but transferred to Wilsonville for her sophomore year.

If students don't generally have specific reasons for wanting to transfer, is it improved academics they are looking for? While both schools follow the same curriculum guidelines laid out by the district, teachers are given a broad range of latitude in determining the instructional strategies they use to implement the required curriculum, according to Woehl. Even though both schools' test scores rate higher on average than the rest of the state, WLHS's overall ranking on the 2007-08 Oregon School Report Card is exceptional, while Wilsonville is rated strong.

"Both high schools are excellent and I am proud of them. They have common features that reflect the academic excellence of the entire district. Each school also has unique

characteristics that foster pride in being a Lion or Wildcat. Both schools enjoy tremendous community support and pride," Woehl said.

According to last year's School Report Card, WLHS scored 19 points higher than Wilsonville on SAT scores in critical reading. WLHS also scored eight points higher in math



and 17 points higher in writing. While 88.6% of Wilsonville's staff has a master's degree or higher, only 84% of WLHS's staff has that same level of expertise, but Wilsonville had 2% more classes taught by teachers who did not meet the federal definition of a highly qualified teacher.

The most significant statistic that sets apart

the two high schools is size. Last year, WLHS had an enrollment of 1,542 students, while Wilsonville numbered 1,009. Even though average class sizes for each school are relatively equal, (the largest difference was in Fine Arts/Prof-Tech where WLHS averaged 3.4 more students per class). Some students simply need or want a smaller academic environment.

"The two schools are quite different. The class sizes are a bit smaller in some of my classes (at Wilsonville). West Linn feels a bit more lively in atmosphere. The West Linn ASB leadership crew does more recognizable student-involving events. They do an excellent job of getting the students excited. West Linn is 6A, and Wilsonville is 5A. It has been fun and interesting to travel other places and meet kids from other schools in 5A, after already having done it one year in 6A," Prince said.

Being that West Linn-Wilsonville is one district, Woehl says he would like to see more interchange between both students and teachers from the two high schools. The administrators from the district meet twice a month during the school year and for a three day period prior to the start of the year. According to Bailey, he and Sommer communicate often about topics such as opportunities for students to make up credits and the process for AP courses.

"I would feel very comfortable talking to any administrator or teacher at West Linn High School on any issue and consider them friends, not rivals," Sommer said.

Having West Linn-Wilsonville one district gives students more opportunities both academically and socially. While both schools are nearly equal academically and co-curricularly, both have their advantages and disadvantages.

"Both schools have an exceptional academic program as well as a very positive and strong co-curricular program," Bailey said. "I think it is good for students to have two high schools in the same district where outstanding opportunities exist at either school."

## Valentine's Day provides fun for couples, friends

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Staff Reporter

Flowers, chocolate, romance. These things are staples of Valentine's Day that bring joy to some and displeasure to others. Whether you love it or hate it, are single or in a relationship, Valentine's Day can cause a lot of unnecessary stress. It doesn't have to, though. With an open mind and some simple activities, Cupid's holiday can be a blast whether you're looking for a cozy night with a significant other or a day full of fun with friends.

A classic activity for couples on Valentine's Day is going out for dinner at a nice restaurant. This is always an option, but you can also spice it up a bit. If the weather is decent, pack a romantic picnic for two. V-day is on a Saturday this year so it could even be a lunch date if that's what sounds fun. There's also the option of making dinner together, or of one person

treating the other person to a nice, homemade meal.

Gift-giving is also fairly traditional for couples on the big day, but with the economy the way it is there shouldn't have to be the expectation of a big purchase. Homemade gifts can always be fun. Or try creating a silly gift exchange: set a small price limit and come up with the goofiest romantic gifts you can find. These ideas limit stress because neither person will be expecting a huge, showy gift, and it leaves room to appreciate each other's crafty skills or senses of humor, which better reflects the value of love that

Valentine's Day is supposed to symbolize.

The love shouldn't have to stop at couples, though



February is a great time for friends to show each other they care, be it with gifts or just spending time together. If you and your friends all have a favorite activity

like shopping or laser tag, you could plan a special day to do that together. Or, if you're on a budget, you can all go to a favorite fast food restaurant and enjoy an inexpensive and satisfying treat together. It doesn't necessarily have to be a romantic or pricey activity in order to enjoy Valentine's Day.

Friends can also set up a white elephant style gift exchange to share candy or fun trinkets, whether they're purchased or homemade. This is a fun way to share something special and fun with each other without emptying wallets.

The main thing to think about when it comes to Valentine's Day is to do something special you enjoy with a person or people you care about. It doesn't have to be romantic if that's not what sounds fun. Showing people that they're cared about is important every day of the year, but celebrating a holiday dedicated to it can be really great, too.