

Graduates celebrated by school board

By Siege Schatza
IVN copy editor

On June 14, the Three Rivers School District Board of Directors held their regular session at the board office on New Hope Rd. For Zone II Board Member Susan Fischer-Maki and Zone IV Board Member Jamie Wright, it was the last, as they were both defeated in their respective elections last month by JoCo Republican Party - endorsed candidates.

I think that it's very important for our youth to stay active and doing fun stuff and meeting new people and I'm proud of Three Rivers School District for doing that," Wright said in her last Say Something Positive speech. "I also wanted to say that there's so many wonderful things happening and you can feel that at the graduations, you can feel that from speeches and I wanted to keep that momentum going and I just want to exude gratitude for the staff, the students and everyone in Three

Rivers." "This is an amazing community and amazing district and even though I wasn't able to make graduations this year I know what those celebrations feel like and so I actually want to thank the staff and from administrators - classified or certified staff - our administrative staff for everything that you have done to not only help make those graduation celebrations special but every step along the way: the high fives in the morning, being at our buildings at all hours of the day and night and weekends to make sure our doors open, thinking about safety, thinking about inclusion. Thank you for everything that you so tirelessly put into the youth and families of our community and to my fellow board members, thank you for allowing us to be here for the last year."

The other board members had high praise for the district's graduates as well, with Board Chair Jennifer

Johnstun saying, "I just thought they were wonderful spectacular events. I love seeing the looks on the faces of the youth coming across the stage." Board Member Rich Halsted added, "It's always my favorite time of year," while Board Member Jenn Searle chimed in, "You can feel the emotions of everybody at the graduations; it's pretty amazing."

Searle also wanted to honor retiring teachers and faculty, giving a special shout-out to Valley educators Laurie O'Donnell, Susie Garman and Sally Clements, all of whom had taught her children. "They were amazing and I wish them all the best."

TRSD Superintendent Dave Valenzuela used his Say Something Positive time to recognize the four district directors that make graduations possible from "behind the scenes." Casey Alderson, deputy superintendent; Jessica Durrant, K-8 curriculum director; Stephanie Allen-Heart, special services director; and Robert Saunders,

technology director. "We're talking about graduations," said Valenzuela. "We're talking about all the success that students experienced and it's because of those four people over there and the work that they do behind the scenes supporting buildings, administrators, teachers and so we wouldn't be as celebratory, we wouldn't have the results that we have without their hard work."

Moving onto his superintendent's report, Valenzuela discussed "longitudinal growth goals" which he described as "a long cumbersome spreadsheet." Some of the metrics that factor into those goals, Valenzuela said, are four-year cohort graduation, five-year cohort completion, ninth grade ontrack and third grade language arts proficiency.

Onto a different topic, "It's a very rare time in Three Rivers School District where we're actually doing sizable capital improvements, big projects that are happening and this typically doesn't happen

because of funding but we've been leveraging some of those relief dollars and we have received some grants that have allowed us to really do some amazing work," remarked the superintendent. "For instance, the Fruitdale expansion is well underway. In fact, the walls are up and the roof is on, which happened very quickly."

In Cave Junction, portable buildings near Illinois Valley High School were established in partnership with Early Head Start to accommodate the Southern Oregon Success Academy West program. "Both the portables will have bathrooms in them and water and sinks and all that good stuff because right now they don't and so they'll have a full service situation going on there. They'll piggyback with lunches from Illinois Valley High School so kids will really be able to receive all the services that they need at that one spot. We're really excited about that."

The first phase of the district-wide bathroom

renovation project has been completed, according to Valenzuela, with full completion expected before the start of the next school year.

Also, repairs to the IVHS roof are fully underway and scheduled to be done before school starts.

"First time in my career, 28 years here in this district, that we've ever had that many things going on aside from when we passed the bond in 2002," said Valenzuela.

He ended his report by addressing the outgoing board members: "I want to publicly thank Jamie and Susan for their service on the board. It can be a thankless endeavor and it takes a lot of time and a lot of commitment and I just really appreciate the work that you guys have done, the willingness to step up and serve in that role, and you will be missed."

Wright and Fischer-Maki were then presented with plaques to commemorate their tenures on the board.

Dome School receives multiple grants

In 2023 the Dome School received \$10,000 from the Four Way Community Foundation and \$4,000 from the Ford Family Foundation to help fund the purchase of a new backup generator.

The backup generator is a critical

component of the Takilma Community Building in which the Dome School operates since it also serves as an emergency shelter in the event of a natural disaster.

The Four Way Community Foundation has also provided \$2,500 to fund scholarships for Dome School students, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and Bugs R Us presentations, and art classes as well as \$1,800 for scholarships supporting students in the Dome School Summer Camp Program. The Summer Camp Program also received \$2,000 from a local anonymous donor.

The United States

Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Department of Education have generously granted nearly \$10,000 for a new commercial range for the Dome School kitchen, allowing the school to continue to prepare nutritious meals from scratch on site and use the kitchen to cater fundraising events.

Finally, the Oregon Community Foundation has generously provided \$10,000 to support teacher training and general operating costs.

These grants expand the Dome School's ability to operate, allowing it to make critical upgrades, and taking a little pressure off of the tireless community volunteers that organize and conduct

many fundraising events throughout the year. The Dome School sincerely thanks these

partner organizations for continuing to provide support to us and our community.

The Dome School is a local non-profit private alternative school that provides small classes and individual attention to students from preschool to fifth grade.

The school is able to operate because of the generous volunteer efforts of the teachers, staff, parents, board of directors, many other members of the community, and partner organizations that have provided generous grants over many years.



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The Four Way Community Foundation has also provided \$2,500 to fund scholarships for Dome School students, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and Bugs R Us presentations, and art classes as well as \$1,800 for scholarships supporting students in the Dome School Summer Camp Program. The Summer Camp Program also received \$2,000 from a local anonymous donor.



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