

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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Principal favors renovation over new high school

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

Principal Erik Jespersen loves and is comfortable with the size of his high school, roughly 2,100 students, and wants every ninth through 12th grader in Keizer attending McNary.

"I think Keizer folks want Keizer kids going to a Keizer high school," he said. "I am a very strong advocate of having one high school in Keizer. I am very appreciative of the community support that we have."

But Jespersen also knows what he's dealing with—an overcrowded cafeteria, 50-year-old science labs, an "obscenely small" orchestra room and huge elective classes.

According to the Salem-Keizer School District, McNary is at 109 percent capacity and that includes six portable classrooms that were installed two at a time in 1998, 2000 and 2008. Without the portables, MHS is 19 percent over capacity.

Jespersen said McNary was given the option of adding more portables but declined because they would increase the school's parking issues. He also doesn't like the way they look.

"When you're trying to build a world class high school and you've got trailers, I don't think that feels good for students to have to walk outside," Jespersen said. "I don't think it feels good for our teachers to have to walk outside for their classes. We do need to make some improvements. We are crowded and that's not good for kids. I don't think portables is necessarily the best solution."

One thing Jespersen believes McNary can do is better maximize its space.

One example is the weight room, which is broken up into four different closed spaces. With the help of the Athletic Booster Club, Jespersen would like to knock out some walls and make it

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MORE STUDENTS MORE PROBLEMS

District needs land for MHS expansion

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

To accommodate burgeoning enrollment, McNary High School needs more room to expand, which is going to mean purchasing it from somewhere in the immediate area.

"We need a minimum of four acres," said Mike Wolfe, chief operations officer of the Salem-Keizer School District. "That would open up the opportunity for an actual addition. That's the option that the (Long Range Facilities Planning) task force is recommending for McNary."

The district is having conversations with St. Edward Catholic Church about possibly purchasing land northeast of the current facility and west of the church on River Road North. However, any deal would likely be contingent on voters approving a general obligation bond in an amount to be determined.

McNary is already over capacity, even with six portable classrooms, but projections show the school growing even more in the coming decade. Even if the district were to place more portables on the existing site, which would further complicate parking issues at the school and surrounding neighborhoods, portables do not address overcrowding in communal areas like cafeterias, libraries and auditoriums. Each of those spaces would need to be

expanded and/or rebuilt to accommodate more students.

Conceptual plans call for relocating softball
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Growing classes = less 1-on-1 instruction

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

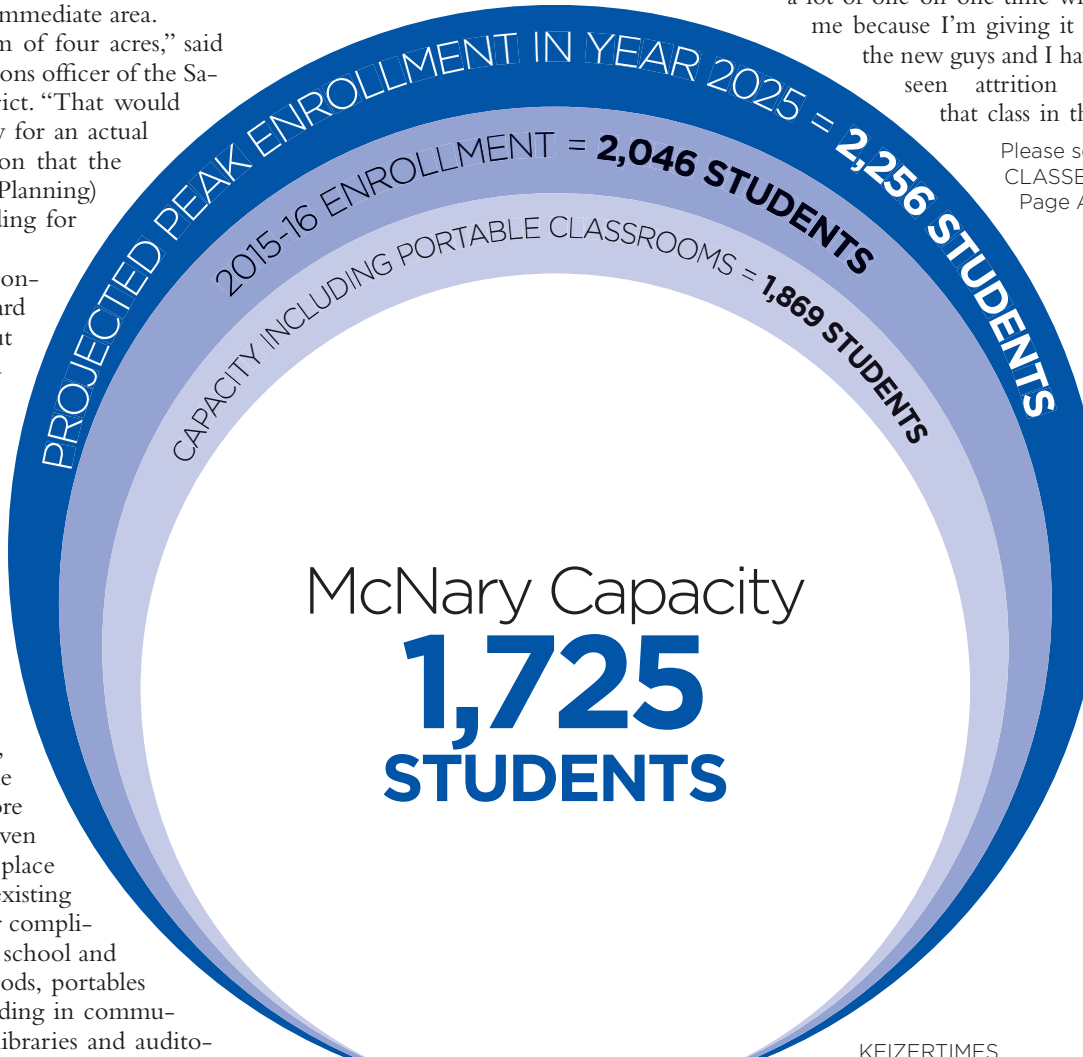
McNary drama director Dallas Myers has 44 students in his fundamentals of acting class.

But that's nothing compared to the 51 in intro to theatre last semester or his stacked technical theatre class that got so big last year that he had to sell one of his prep periods and split the class into two.

Since Myers is the only theatre teacher at McNary and can only teach for six periods, stacking his classes is common. Advanced drama directing, advanced scene works and advanced theatre arts are all in the same period, as are theatre design, regular technical theatre and advanced technical theatre.

"I teach brand new technical theatre students who have never touched a tool before along side of kids who have been in that class for four and five semesters," Myers said. "It's a real balancing act. The downside is those advanced kids don't get a lot of one-on-one time with me because I'm giving it to the new guys and I have seen attrition in that class in this

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Andrew Jackson

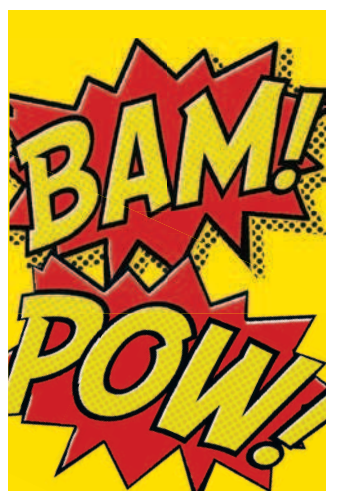
How a Keizer drug dealer ended up back on the streets
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Internet as a public utility
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Celt rappers tops MHS talent
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BATMAN!
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