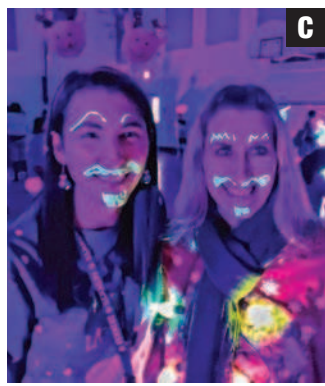


Great behavior pays off at Kennedy



Kennedy Elementary School students' best behavior paid off in a big way the week before Christmas break. Ninety-five percent of the student body earned a glow-in-the-dark party as part of the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. It ended up being so many students that the party had to be divided up over three days. Students that didn't make the cut this time around get a clean slate when they return in January.

A: Priscilla Cervantes, Yaretzi Sotelo Ochoa, and Zion Ortiz.
 B: Shane Atkins.
 C: Jessica Hall and Marcee Tatum.
 D: Kate Higgins.
 E: Jazlin Jimenez and Alana Baldwin.
 F: Jesus Cortez.

Photos by Matt Rawlings and submitted by Jesse Leonard.

SCHOOL, continued from Page A1

Govus echoed the sentiments offered by Romero. "Principal Romero did the right thing by engaging the threat assessment team and immediately investigating so disciplinary consequences could be administered," Govus said. "Dealing with situations like these are not easy, and she moved quickly to ensure her students were safe."

However, Govus did acknowledge that the situation could have been handled in a more timely matter.

"The process took a little more time than it should have," Govus said.

Govus also added that "Principal Romero is a first-year principal, and she's still developing her own communication style. As a district, we're still adjusting our communications procedure as a whole."

The specific details of the disciplinary action that Cummings took will not be released, Govus said. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects all student information from public records, including academic records and disciplinary records.

"We know children are going to have conflicts. However, if they are in a professional environment with trained behavior specialists and guidance counselors to support them,

they have a much better chance of learning from that conflict, understanding what resolution looks like, realizing the consequences and actively making better choices in the future," Govus said.

On the morning of Dec. 17, almost three weeks after the Nov. 28 incident, Romero sent out an email to the parents of Cummings regarding safety. Although she did not specifically address the altercation, she did talk about how the school is proactively working to support the children.

"I'm proud of our Cummings community, and my promise to you and your child is that our school will remain a safe place for all students to learn and grow," Romero said in the email. She also directed parents to an anti-bullying website and an anonymous tip website for the Oregon Department of Education.

Later that day, in a case of terrible timing, a knife was found in one of the classrooms. According to Romero, the safety of the school was not compromised and there is no connection between the two incidents.

Romero sent out another email at 3:45 p.m. on Dec. 17 to notify the parents of Cummings about the second incident.

"As you know, safety is our most important priority. Honesty and transparency play critical roles in safety, which is why I'm sharing this message with you," Romero said in the email.

There will be a Safety Town Hall Meeting at Cummings on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 6 p.m.

The SKPS Office of Safety, Security and Risk Management, SKPS Office of Behavioral Learning, SafeOregon and the Keizer Police will all be attendance to share ways to work together to keep children safe.

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