

# SCHOOL: Added signs in Umatilla and Nez Perce at Washington Elementary

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teachers didn't understand their culture. Around 10 percent of both groups felt they were harassed at school because of their culture.

"Analysis of individual items on the cultural identity subscale showed that students were proud of their language and their culture, but that class assignments did not always encourage their cultural identity formation," the study states. "Finally, analysis of the individual items on the family and community relationships scale showed that the majority of students felt the school welcomed their family and community, but that teachers did not always reach out to their family members to invite them to the school."

Smith said there was "some really strong, positive things that came to light" through the report. Smith said the university researchers interviewed teachers that students considered culturally responsive and used their answers to formulate a survey that will be given to other teachers.

Board member Dave Krumbain asked Smith how teachers were supposed to know about a student's cultural identity. Smith responded that teachers should develop a culture of sharing with students

"Those are more culturally responsive classrooms, where you're invited to bring



A group of children color during family night for American Indian students and families on Tuesday at Washington Elementary School in Pendleton. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

your suitcase of cultural identity in class with you," she said. "There are other places where you leave that outside at the door."

The district has undertaken a number of initiatives over the past few years to improve academic outcomes for tribal students.

With the aid of state grants, the district developed and implemented a tribal

curriculum for several grade levels and added signs in Umatilla and Nez Perce at Washington Elementary School.

The district also made a conscious effort to recruit more American Indian teachers, although its only resulted in two teachers so far. Oregon Teacher Pathways, an Eastern Oregon University pipeline program

for aspiring teachers, has also struggled to attract CTUIR students at Pendleton High School.

But one of the district's chief initiatives is funded through a grant from the state's Tribal Attendance Pilot Program. The grant funds a "family advocate" position that focuses on boosting attendance in tribal students. As a part of the

program, Washington has hosted monthly family nights to make tribal families feel more welcome at the school.

In its second year, Washington held its first family night of the school year on Tuesday. Families dined on pizza and cookies in the school cafeteria before children were ushered into a nearby den to play with boardgames and coloring

sheets while the adults listened to a presentation from Cason's Place, a grief support organization. The night concluded with award presentations for students with good attendance.

Sitting with his children, Brad Spencer was pretty familiar with Washington's family nights. Spencer's brother Brent was the family advocate for Washington last year and Brad frequently attended the inaugural events.

Brad said the family nights were a good way to motivate children to attend school and opened up lines of communication between parents and the school.

Sitting a few tables down, David and Cassandra Thompson were attending their first family night with their two children. Cassandra Thompson said she felt like the district could be doing more outreach, especially during November, which is National American Indian Heritage Month. Outside of Washington school, Thompson said there isn't as much outreach.

Regardless of the feelings in the room, the crowd that turned out for Monday's event filled most of Washington's small cafeteria room. Stacey Jacobs, the current family advocate, said it was the best turnout yet for a family night.

Contact Antonio Sierra at [asierra@eastoregonian.com](mailto:asierra@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0836.



Construction is complete on a new training tower at the Umatilla County Fire District 1 substation off of Westland Road outside of Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## UCFD: Next priority is replacing old engines, updating equipment

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partner up with community health workers and visit the homes of people who have chronic illnesses or who have just been released from the hospital. The goal of the program is to help people manage their health issues to prevent unnecessary return trips to the hospital, thereby reducing the strain on paramedics and ambulances.

Stanton said the grant-funded program has been a positive for the community so far.

"We're seeing some amazing work being done with the paramedics in conjunction with the ConneXions program," he said.

The third major change, Stanton said, has been building the drill tower at the district's Station 23 on Westland Road. The four-story tower, which was just finished, was built in conjunction with Blue Mountain Community College's fire science program. But Stanton said the facility will be a resource for fire districts and programs throughout Eastern Oregon.

"We're already in talks with county search and rescue about starting a rope rescue team," he said. "As a regional concept versus just us doing it."

Blue Mountain Community College and UCFD will host a grand opening for the new fire training tower at noon on Monday, Nov. 20 at 78760 Westland Road.

The district's next priority, Stanton said, is making some capital improvements, such as replacing old engines and updating equipment.

They also hope to secure



J.W. Roberts, Chief Scott Stanton and Eldon Marcum of the Umatilla County Fire District, accept the statewide Fire District of the Year award at Wednesday's board meeting. Photo contributed by UCFD 1

a grant for a new app called "Pulse Point," which civilians trained in CPR can use to alert them if someone nearby has an emergency. Stanton said as the district progresses, they'd like to work on securing sustainable funding for the community paramedic program and to recruit more volunteer firefighters.

"That's an issue across the state, and across the nation," he said. "It's not new, but it is an ongoing problem."

Contact Jayati

Ramakrishnan at [ramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com](mailto:ramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4534

## FIRE: Cycle Oregon was canceled this year due to smoke

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insurance claims, which may provide a fuller picture of the economic impact.

Special wildfire recovery councils in Southwest Oregon and the Columbia River Gorge are also working on recommendations to help local economies bounce back. In those areas, the Chetco Bar and Eagle Creek Fires were particularly severe.

"We're trying to have this be a data-driven and locally-driven process to inform the kind of support we can deliver," Lewis-Berry said.

Broader economic impacts were also felt in Eastern Oregon — not only did fires affect air quality, but road closures of Interstate 84 on the state's northern border likely impacted summer travel and commerce to and from Eastern Oregon, Lewis-Berry told legislators Tuesday.

"Even though Eastern Oregon technically wasn't directly impacted by the fires, you certainly had a lot of people and businesses that were due to the road closures," Lewis-Berry said.

The interstate was closed 19 days eastbound and eight days westbound. State economists calculated that each day the interstate was closed cost shippers an extra \$250,000 to \$290,000, Lewis-Berry said.



The Eagle Creek fire in the Columbia Gorge burns the night of Sept. 4, 2017, in this Forest Service photo. Development officials want the Oregon Legislature to provide funding to help businesses impacted by this summer's wildfires. Courtesy U.S. Forest Service

He added that the state parks department also estimates that it lost \$157,000 in expected revenues due to fire season, while needing an additional \$150,000 for restoration costs at state parks.

While wildfires are nothing new for the state's rural areas east of the mountains, poor air quality due to smoke brought the wildfire issue front and center in the state's cities as well this summer, including Portland, Eugene and Salem. It also led to closures of popular events across the state.

Cycle Oregon, an annual cycling tradition in Central and Southern Oregon, was canceled, as were some

outdoor performances at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. This year's Sisters Folk Festival west of Bend also got the ax.

As a result, Lewis-Berry said, the fire season posed a threat to the Oregon "brand" of world-class tourism and recreation, which Travel Oregon and other groups are trying to protect.

There are also environmental concerns in areas affected by fire, such as watershed problems and soil erosion, which could also lead to public safety and public health issues.

But the wildfires aren't likely to stop anytime soon — which may require local economies to adapt.

## Following Trump visit, China sending envoy to N. Korea

BEIJING (AP) — Following President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing, China said Wednesday it is sending a high-level special envoy to North Korea amid an extended chill in relations between the neighbors over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

Song Tao, the head of China's ruling Communist Party's International Liaison Department, will travel to Pyongyang on Friday to report on outcomes of the party's national congress held last

month, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Xinhua made no mention of Trump's visit or the North's weapons programs, although Trump has repeatedly called on Beijing to do more to use its influence to pressure Pyongyang into altering its behavior.

Song would be the first ministerial-level Chinese official to visit North Korea since October 2015 when Politburo Standing Committee member Liu Yunshan visited Pyongyang and met with leader Kim Jong Un. Liu delivered a

letter to Kim from Chinese President Xi Jinping (shee jihn-peeng) expressing hopes for a strong relationship, although the respite in frosty ties proved short lived. Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin visited Pyongyang in October of last year.

China's Communist Party and North Korea's ruling Worker's Party have longstanding ties that often supersede formal diplomacy, even while Beijing has long been frustrated with Pyongyang's provocations and unwillingness to reform its economy.

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