

**HEALTH CLINIC
SEEKS TO
OPEN CENTER**
REGION/3A



**BULLDOGS STAY
ALIVE IN REGION
5/8 TOURNEY**
SPORTS/1B

EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2018

143rd Year, No. 18

WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Your Weekend



- "Proof" at BMCC's Bob Clapp Theatre
 - Willow Creek Symphony in Boardman
 - Korean War Tribute at Convention Center
- For times and places see Coming Events, 6A

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
53/34	47/27	47/25

Watch a game



Pendleton vs. Scappoose
Friday, 7 p.m., at Round-Up Grounds, Pendleton

PENDLETON District buys ads to grow brand

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

In between news broadcasts and pop songs, Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch's voice is now a regular presence on radios across Umatilla County.

Last week, Fritsch spoke about a Pendleton School Board meeting where he would discuss the strategic plan. This week, he planned to record a new ad about Veterans Day.

Fritsch isn't making these comments as a part of a news story or talk show. Instead, the district is spending \$10,000 to buy airtime on Elkhorn Media Group stations to spread positive messaging on Pendleton schools.

The radio ads are part of the district's recently

See RADIO/10A

HERMISTON

A range of needs

School district navigates special education changes after split from ESD



Instructor Mindy Walchli, back center, leads a group of students collecting recyclables from classrooms on Nov. 1 at Sandstone Middle School in Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

During a social skills exercise in a Rocky Heights Elementary School classroom, instructor Kendra Scott asks her students to think of things for which they're thankful.

Just back from lunch, some students say their favorite meals, while others name family and friends.

"Our teacher," one savvy student pipes up. The students are part of Rocky Heights' behavioral skills class, one of several in the Hermiston School District for students with special needs. Students work on handling behavioral issues, such as anger management and coping with trauma.

The Special Programs department serves students with a range of needs, including speech, autism, developmental disabilities and behavioral issues. Many of the programs have specialized classrooms housed at schools throughout the district, including Sandstone Middle School and West Park Elementary.

Amanda Beckley, the lead behavior specialist at Rocky Heights, said teachers collect data every 30 minutes to track student progress on specific target behaviors. Those include using gentle words, gentle touch, respect for self and respect for others.

"As far as direct instruction for social skills, we work on everything," she said. "How to make friends, solve conflicts, how to calm your body," she said. "The biggest difference between this and other classes is that we focus on it every minute of class, even



Educational assistant Lijuan Shen helps sixth-grader Nicole Neustal learn to type on Nov. 1 at Sandstone Middle School in Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

when math is happening."

Though these students spend some or all of their academic time in specialized classes, they join their grade-level peers for classes like P.E., music, and art.

"Whenever we remove a student to a special classroom, we always have a plan to get them back into a traditional classroom," said B.J. Wilson, Hermiston's Special Programs director.

Beckley said while their strategy has

largely stayed the same since she started in Hermiston 18 years ago, a growing number of students need those services.

"We look at it more from a trauma-informed lens than before," she said. "The need for kids dealing with trauma has increased. We have an alarming number of students in the foster care system."

See EDUCATION/10A



Echo grade-schoolers march across a Union Pacific Railroad crossing on Main Street for a Veterans Day parade on Thursday. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

ECHO

Students march to celebrate veterans

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Echo School students spent Thursday paying tribute to veterans with a parade, assembly and reception.

Under a clear blue sky, students marched through the center of town, carrying flags. Each of the elementary school classes was dressed up as a different branch of the military, while sixth-graders dressed up as famous veterans and the older students used

posters to form a giant American flag. Richard Thew, a Navy veteran who came downtown to see his grandchildren in the parade, said it is important for each generation to study the past and learn from it.

"I like to see the kids get out there, and obviously they've been learning some about history and the branches of the service," he said.

High school students Annal-

See VETS/10A



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