

# Cost: District steps in to help

*Continued from Page A1*

herself making up for the cost.

“Mostly the lower income families couldn’t afford it,” she said. “It’s not something you worry about when you’re busy paying your bills.”

At the Hermiston and Pendleton school districts, some principals allocate a classroom budget to teachers. Faircloth has invested hers in chair pockets, which her students will use to hold supplies.

“I didn’t have that at my old district. I was shocked when I found that out,” she said.

Going into the year, she said she prefers to have 10 or 12 sets of school supplies she can pop into a student’s cubby on the first day if they don’t have any, so no one feels left out.

But it’s not just about the staples.

“Anything that makes your classroom colorful and welcoming usually comes out of teacher pockets,” Faircloth said. “If you were to have just a government-funded classroom, you would have blank walls and everything would be white or brown.”

She estimates that in the past, she’s spent between \$500 and \$600 a year out of her own pocket funding her classroom.

Faircloth’s estimates agree with national statistics.

Date from the National Teacher and Principal Survey released during the 2016-17 school year shows that 94% of teachers spend money out of pocket on classroom supplies. The data is currently being reevaluated, but a previous finding from the same survey shows that during the 2006-07 school year, 92% of teachers in rural areas spent an average of \$407 yearly on supplies for their classrooms.

Matt Yoshioka, the curriculum, instruction and assessment director for Pendleton School District, said that the district has hired 21 new teachers this year, and he’s tried to equip them the best he can with extra resources

for their classrooms.

“We want them to start off on the right foot,” Yoshioka said.

Nationally, different campaigns are being launched to gift teachers school supplies from wish lists created on Amazon.

On the community Facebook page “What’s Happening Hermiston,” teachers from Umatilla to Union counties are linking their lists on a thread where community members are interested in helping out. They’re looking for everything from pencils and desk organizers to books and visual aids — things that make a classroom a habitat for learning — but that the untrained eye might not think twice about.

Faircloth said she doesn’t blame the schools for the lack of available funding. And she doesn’t blame parents either.

“I would like to see a program where parents can get some assistance getting school supplies. I feel for those parents who can’t provide it,” she said.

Jamie Campbell has two children heading to school in Hermiston this month and is concerned about getting her kids the supplies they need.

She moved back to Hermiston to care for her aging father after living in Florida for eight years. In the past, Campbell said she’s worked as a receptionist, but was unable to find a position in the area. Instead, she’s working at a local dollar store part time. She has back and knee problems, but that won’t stop her.

“Now that I’m working on my feet, it’s constant pain but you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do,” she said.

Campbell said her son, who’s headed to high school, wants to make sure he has everything he needs. But between her income and her husband’s Social Security, she’s not sure she can make it happen as she continues to pay the rent and put payments on the car.

“It’s kind of an embarrassment when all of the kids have their supplies, and

you’re just sitting there,” she said.

She reached out on social media, asking about what parents who can’t afford school supplies should do, and some people in the community offered to help her out.

At this point, Campbell’s not sure what she’ll end up doing. She said she prefers paying her own way and is hoping to pick up more hours at work.

“I love how the community pulls together, but make it more well known to people,” she said. “I’m sure other parents are going through (this).”

In Hermiston, the Church of the Nazarene held a school supplies drive for Rocky Heights Elementary, which ended Sunday.

“We know school supplies are getting expensive,” said office manager Gabrielle Fritz.

On Aug. 24, the Hermiston Education Foundation will host a Back to School Supply Dash run to gather donations for elementary and middle schools in the district.

Lisa Roberts, child development specialist at Sherwood Elementary in Pendleton, collects wish lists from the different schools to give to the organization Altrusa, which holds a school supplies drive for the district each year.

Roberts said that a high poverty level in the area means the district is stepping in more to help kids get ready for school.

“The number of kids that I help with school supplies and clothing has increased,” Roberts said.

She said it’s important to handle these situations with care.

“We try to keep it confidential. We always have a little closet full of supplies we can put together for kids really quickly,” Roberts said. “Throughout the year, once school starts, if a teacher notices a kid doesn’t have what they need, they’ll let the counselors know.”



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

**Jolene Hudson, a teacher with Pendleton School District, discusses safe places with a group of new teachers during a training on Tuesday.**

# School: New PSD teachers train for upcoming year

*Continued from Page A1*

staff are in the “probationary” period, which means they’re in the first three years of working with the district.

On Monday, the new instructors gathered for an extensive two-day teacher orientation geared toward preparing them to hit the ground running.

“We’ve never done more,” the district’s Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Matt Yoshioka said of the program. “When I started in 2000, I was handed a key and told, ‘Good luck, the books are in the classroom.’”

The orientation program will be tested by this year’s group. Between the 21 new teachers, there are just 15 full-time years of experience in the classroom, with 17 beginning their first full-time position in teaching.

Many of the new hires, Yoshioka said, have just finished their bachelor’s degrees and student teaching but are licensed to work in Oregon while enrolling in a master’s program.

While that means most are inexperienced, Yoshioka also sees a group that is fresh and excited to get to work.

“It’s awesome, it’s like, ‘This is it.’ All of a sudden they have a grown-up job,” he said, laughing. “(College) programs are preparing them better than they ever have before.”

Still, Monday and Tuesday were dedicated to getting the new teachers up to speed as fast as possible. Monday began with the hires meeting Superintendent Chris Fritsch and the Pendleton Association of Teachers before focusing on professionalism training.

The group also took a trip out to Tamástslikt Cultural Institute at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to learn about local tribal history and culture, which was then followed by a lunch with the school board.

Tuesday’s training started with a morning session on Conscious Discipline led by four teachers from the district. Josh McGraw, Maria Davis, Jolene Hudson and Betty Townsend taught lessons on how to handle emotional situations with students in a healthy and effective way.

“For Conscious Discipline, discipline is not a form of pun-

ishment,” Hudson said.

Yoshioka said the instruction helps teachers be more “self-aware” of themselves and the students.

“It’s a mindset shift program,” he said.

This is the second year the district has presented the program to teachers, though McGraw said that he and others have been using the lessons it showcases for the last four years. The program is over two decades old and has become popular around Umatilla County, with classrooms implementing it around the world in Africa, Asia and Mexico too.

The session featured lessons on how to defuse emotional situations that arise between and within students in a way that students can learn how to acknowledge and address their own emotions.

Some of its important elements included creating a safe, age-appropriate space for students in the classroom where they can go to when they need to process emotions. These spaces include materials, such as plush toys with expressive faces to help the student identify what they are feeling, and items like sensory sequin pillows that relax them to help work through those emotions.

The point isn’t to be perfect or have children rely on these materials, McGraw said, but instead to make them available to students and reinforce the program’s values enough to make a difference.

“If we do this 20% of the time, students in our community are going to benefit,” McGraw said as he ended Tuesday’s lesson.

While the concepts of the program are designed to be implemented across all ages of students, much of Tuesday’s lesson focused on examples of students in elementary school and younger, which got Kiana Rickman and Bethany Van Cleave talking about how they could implement the same concepts in their classes this year.

Rickman was hired to teach history at Pendleton High School, while Van Cleave will be an eighth grade English/language arts teacher at Sunridge Middle School. Though both are in their first full-time teaching job out of college, both are familiar with the school district.

Before seeing each other for the orientation on Monday, Rickman and Van Cleave last met at PHS. Rickman graduated in 2015 before attending Nebraska-Wesleyan University where she joined the women’s soccer program, while Van Cleave graduated the following year and went to Eastern Oregon University. Neither had any idea they’d soon be working in the same district.

While the school district managed to bring two of its own products back, it’s also attracted others from around the Pacific Northwest.

Jennifer Wirth grew up in Brush Prairie, Washington, and will be teaching special education classes for second- and third-graders. She graduated from Eastern Washington University and said she was drawn to Pendleton by the community and the district’s educational philosophy.

Hali Fugere grew up in Timber before attending EOU and said she came to the district after her fiancé was hired in the city.

While the four first-time teachers sat together at lunch on Tuesday, all expressed more excitement than nerves ahead of next week’s first day of school and the challenges ahead of them.

“I’m excited to learn from my mistakes,” Van Cleave said. “I’m just excited to meet my kids.”

In addition to the two-day training, the district also provides yearlong support for the new teachers. Each will receive a staff mentor who will be their liaison for questions, take them on observatory walks to other classes and observe them in their own classrooms. The district also holds monthly teacher workshops, and provides an instructional coach to assist with developing lesson plans along with offering other professional development opportunities.

While 21 new teachers in the district may present some challenges, Yoshioka is optimistic and committed to their long-term success, noting that all of last year’s hires were retained.

“We have an amazing group,” he said. “We want to invest more in the teachers. They’re important to us and they’re important to the kids.”

# Chief: Stability and service

*Continued from Page A1*

inspired by the 1987 comedy “Roxanne,” a movie where Steve Martin plays a fire chief of a small town.

Still, he thought his ultimate goal was as training chief and not fire chief.

He went back to school, culminating in a master’s in business administration from the University of Arizona.

And his rise at the Tucson Fire Department didn’t stop at training chief, with the city naming him fire chief in 2011.

Critchley retired after nearly three decades with the Tucson Fire Department at the end of 2017.

But the promise of more days with family was interrupted when both his mother and father died shortly after his retirement.

In the months that followed, the home renovation projects he used to keep himself busy started to dry out as he completed them.

Before retiring, Critch-

ley had been a nine-year member of the Western Fire Chiefs Association, the same organization that connected Berardi with Pendleton.

He eventually reached out to the association, telling them that he was interested in helping out wherever he was needed.

The group hooked him up with Pendleton, and he took the job without visiting the town, although he’s been to the Northwest before when visiting his wife’s family in Eastern Washington.

Although the mechanics of fighting fires and responding to emergencies are the same, Critchley said the main difference between the fire departments in Pendleton and Tucson are resources.

Critchley now manages a \$5.1 million annual budget whereas he oversaw a budget that was more than 18 times that amount in Tucson.

Still, he likes what he sees so far in Pendleton.

“It’s a good little fire department in a good town,” he said.

Critchley has spent his early days driving the roads of Pendleton and the surrounding area to get the lay of the land.

He’s also met with department staff from all shifts and intends to spend a lot of time listening to personnel and the community.

Critchley is the latest person to take a job that’s cycled through eight interim and permanent fire chiefs since 2010.

He said he aims to bring a sense of stability to the department by focusing everyone’s goal on why they do their job — to serve the community.

He also hasn’t ruled out applying for the permanent position when it opens. City Manager Robb Corbett has also indicated that he would invite Critchley to apply for the position when it opens, but he hasn’t committed to a hiring timeline.

As interim fire chief, Critchley earns somewhere between \$89,268 and \$119,232 per year.

# Immigrants: Immigrant Oregonians fear signing up for Oregon Health Plan

*Continued from Page A1*

which benefits are covered by the new rule, including social media posts in English and other languages, outreach to community organizations and providing talking points to the state’s call center for Oregon Health Plan members.

Jonathan Modie, a spokesman for the Oregon Health Authority, emphasized the importance of health care.

Modie described the rule as “really stigmatizing” and said it “punishes people who work hard but may not have the best income, who are trying to provide for their families and themselves.”

About 132,000 Oregon children with at least one

immigrant parent have access to health care through the Oregon Health Plan, the state’s public health program for low-income people and other qualifying groups.

Medicaid recipients under 21 years old will not be affected by the new rule. Pregnant women’s use of Medicaid will also not count toward the public charge rule.

The Oregon Health Authority reported that at least about 68,000 people who are not citizens receive health care through the Oregon Health Plan.

According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, each case is different, and assessing whether someone is a public charge “looks at

all a person’s circumstances” and weighs “various positive factors against any negative ones.”

“This rule is impacting people’s behavior in a context of this larger climate of fear around anything having to do with immigration,” Englander said.

Salem organizations have seen the impact of the proposed changes for about a year, ever since Trump administration officials announced they were considering means-testing applicants for green cards.

Levi Herrera-Lopez, executive director of Mano a Mano, said fears have led some families not to enroll in the Oregon Health Plan, which leaves them reliant on emergency

room care.

Mano a Mano has a contract with the state to enroll people.

“They’re fully eligible for the benefits and they’re opting not to have access to preventative care,” said Herrera-Lopez.

Fewer than 20 eligible families in the past year decided against enrolling. Confusion about what the changes are and to whom they apply is rampant, Herrera-Lopez said.

The impact is magnified because many Latino families are of mixed immigration status, he said, and may include members who are U.S. citizens, green card holders, visa holders or people without legal status.

If families fear enrolling for

benefits could harm someone’s immigration case “that means the whole family will go without,” he said.

Herrera-Lopez believes the rule change is motivated by a desire to “make it so people are having such a hard time to live here they just leave,” he said.

Mano a Mano advises families to consult immigration attorneys about the potential impact of changes, and will still encourage people to enroll in OHP, he said.

Oregon is home to about 400,000 people born in other countries, according to 2017 Census Bureau estimates, though that count doesn’t distinguish between naturalized citizens and non-citizens.

Immigrants from the

Americas make up the largest share, accounting for nearly half of foreign-born Oregonians.

About one in three are from Mexico. Another third are from Asia, with Vietnam and China as the most well represented countries.

Non-U.S. citizens are far less likely to have health insurance than their U.S. citizen counterparts, whether born here or naturalized, Census data shows.

About one in four families with a Latino head of household reported receiving food stamps in the 2017 Census Bureau survey.

Statewide, about 15% of all Oregon households reported receiving food stamps.