

Stanfield schools see fluctuations in enrollment and proficiency

Stanfield schools are seeing more students and higher attendance number

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Stanfield School District saw some of the most dramatic fluctuations in population, attendance and proficiency on the west end of Umatilla County during the last school year, according to data recently released by the Oregon Department of Education. Namely, a rise in population.

The influx of students is for more than one reason, according to Superintendent Beth Burton.

“It’s something we’ve been working really hard for,” Burton said.

This time last year, the district housed 463 students. Today, there are 532 in total.

The steady incline is undeniable. During the 2017-18 school year, the ODE listed the district’s enrollment as 451. By the end of last school year, the number was 495.

She said the district had previously seen a decline in student enrollment, and that it may have had to do with administrator turnover.

In February 2018, Shelley Liscom resigned from the superintendent and elementary school principal positions due to conflict with the school board. She was going to stay on through the end of the 2017-18 school year, but Burton — then the principal of the secondary school — took her place instead.

Steve Sheller was hired to take the secondary school principal position that sum-



EO file photo
Beth Burton, right, Stanfield School District superintendent, said the recent influx of students into her district is due to a number of factors. This time last year, the district housed 463 students. Today, there are 532 in total.

mer, and Lacey Sharp later became the Stanfield Elementary School principal.

Students may have transferred to the Hermiston or Echo school districts, or have opted to finish school online.

Burton said during the 2017-18 school year, lower enrollment predictions also caused the district to keep two teacher positions vacant for the 2018-19 school year. As a result, the elementary school made use of blended-grade classrooms.

She added the district was planning to see an increase in enrollment after construction fueled by the recent school bond was completed. Burton said she didn’t think they’d see the increase this early.

The district plans to break ground on construction of a middle school wing for Stanfield Secondary School this summer.

“The passing of the bond has been good. When construction is done, people will be excited,” she said.

Burton added that an emphasis on the Every Day

Matters school attendance campaign may be responsible for the 8% increase in regular attendance across the district, rising one point above the 83% state average for last school year.

But the district also saw a 12% drop in English Language Arts proficiency among third-graders, and a 27% drop in math proficiency among eighth-graders.

“Looking at test scores is important, and gives you a one-time snapshot,” Burton said. “But you’re not looking at the same group of kids. Not all of our classes are similar size moving through.”

Graduation rates fell by 10%, and the percentage of college-going seniors fell by 25 points, down to 51%. The number of freshmen on track to graduate, however, increased 7 points to over 95%.

Burton said she didn’t know why college-going rates fell behind the state average of 62%, but that each graduating class at the district had different variables.



AP Photo/Tony Dejak, File

Findings from the Oregon Health Authority adds to evidence that vaping is subjecting many more youth to addiction. New data shows one in four Oregon 11th-graders reported vaping a nicotine product, with youth use of e-cigarettes, such as Juul, increasing nearly 80% between 2017 and 2019.

New data shows rapid rise in youth vaping

East Oregonian

PORTLAND — While overall use of marijuana among Oregon youth has remained flat, the primary way they’re using the substance — vaping — has dramatically increased, according to an Oregon Health Authority analysis.

The findings, which were released on Thursday, adds to evidence that vaping is subjecting many more youths to addiction. New data shows one in four Oregon 11th-graders reporting vaping a nicotine product, with youths use of e-cigarettes, such as Juul, increasing nearly 80% between 2017 and 2019. Marijuana use changed dramatically as well, according to the data, with youths shifting from smoking marijuana to vaping.

Youth vaping of marijuana increased 295% — from 11% to 44% among 11th-graders using marijuana between 2017 and 2019 — even as 11th-grade overall marijuana use stayed constant at 20%. The data comes from Oregon Healthy Teens, a survey of middle- and high-school students that OHA administers every two years.

“This is alarming,” said Dr. Dean Sidelinger, health officer and state epidemiologist for the OHA Public Health Division. “It confirms what we’ve long known — vaping is putting a new generation at risk for addiction. These products can get young people started on using nicotine and marijuana, and it is easy to get hooked.”

OHT and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a survey the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention annually administers in partnership with states, both found that nicotine vaping products are most popular among children and young adults: 23%

of 11th-grade students and 13% of young adults, ages 18 to 24, use nicotine e-cigarettes versus just 3% of adults age 25 and older.

About half of Oregon high school students who currently use e-cigarettes report they never smoked conventional cigarettes — not even one time.

In Oregon, youth vaping overlaps with use of conventional tobacco and flavored tobacco products, the OHT analysis showed. More than half of Oregon eighth- and 11th-graders who use tobacco use flavored tobacco. Roughly half of all youths who currently use conventional tobacco products started with vape products. Nearly two in five Oregon 11th-grade vape users also currently smoke conventional cigarettes.

A February 2019 study in the journal JAMA Network Open, one of the first studies to track youth e-cigarette users over time, found that young people who vape e-cigarettes are nearly three times as likely to start smoking cigarettes as peers who don’t vape.

BRIEFLY

OSP provides shot of suspect vehicle from fatal hit-and-run

HERMISTON — Oregon State Police have released a possible photo of the vehicle involved in a fatal hit-and-run crash in Hermiston in August.

The crash took place Aug. 31 about 2:30 a.m. on Highway 395 near Sherrell Chevrolet, killing Antonia Cobarubias, 41, of Hermiston as she was pushing a shopping cart. Left behind at the scene was a passenger-side mirror and a dark red bumper that appeared to belong to an Acura Integra from between 1994-2001.

On Thursday afternoon, OSP released two stills from a security camera that they believe show the vehicle in question in the parking lot of Rocket Mart, which is just north of the crash site.

They are requesting that anyone who can identify the vehicle or was in the area of Rocket Mart on Aug. 31 about 2:30 a.m. call Oregon State Police by dialing *OSP (*677). They can reference case number SP19-313012.

Umatilla County mails corrected tax statements

MILTON-FREEWATER — Umatilla County is mailing about 4,000 corrected tax statements to Milton-Freewater residents.

County Assessor Paul Chalmers said the county collects about \$280,000 in



Contributed photo by OSP
Oregon State Police pulled this still from a surveillance camera at Rocket Mart in Hermiston, which shows a possible suspect vehicle from a fatal hit-and-run on Aug. 31.

taxes for the Milton-Freewater Water Control District Bond, but the tax statements the county mailed around Oct. 5 showed no one owed a penny for the bond. Chalmers said one of the district’s board members contacted him Wednesday about the situation.

“It truly was a glitch,” he said.

Chalmers explained certifying the tax rolls takes multiple steps, and he and staff check and double check the numbers. He showed he certified the roll for the water control district bond on Sept. 25, but sometime between Oct. 1 and the mailing, the amount due for the bond on tax statements disappeared.

“I’m still waiting to hear from our software provider why it deleted the bond payments,” he said.

So the county assessors office is mailing corrected statements Friday

along with a short statement explaining the error. The situation is baffling, Chalmers said, and his office understands if folks are unhappy with getting a new tax bill.

County fair looking for court chaperone

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Fair needs someone to escort its court to various events, and it’s accepting applications for the county resident willing to fill that role.

According to a press release, the fair is soliciting applications for a court chaperone, a position that is expected to “guide and mentor” the two to six girls on the court throughout the year.

The chaperone will be expected to participate in all the court’s activities in parades and events, which are usually on weekends but sometimes require weekday and evening commitments as well.

All applicants must pass a background check and participate in an interview.

Applications can be accessed at the fair office at 1705 E. Airport Road in Hermiston or on the county fair’s website.

Applications are due on Nov. 15 at 4 p.m. For more information, contact the fair office at 541-567-6121 or at fair@umatillacounty.net.

City closes Airport Road for sewer work

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton closed the top half of Airport Road Monday and expects to keep it closed for a couple of weeks.

According to an email from Community Development Director Tim Simons, the detour will take drivers through Northwest H Avenue, 49th Street, and A Avenue.

The city is closing the road as contractors extend a sewer line to the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Industrial Park on the Pendleton airport airfield.

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