

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Backing up words with action

It will be a tall order to find a better feel-good community story in the near future than the decision by the Hermiston School District to pay for all school supplies for elementary and middle school students for the start of the school year.

The district will also waive pay-to-play fees for grades six through 12.

All supplies will stay in the classroom, so parents will need to buy some school items for homework, but the move by the district is an extraordinarily decision.

The funds for school supplies comes from federal COVID-19 relief funds, while the district will use its own general fund to take care of the fee waiver.

The federal money was crucial for the district to be able to cover the expense of the school supplies but the district, its leaders and school board members should be lauded for thinking outside the box to help our youth.

Providing school supplies can be, and often is, a stressful episode for many families. The cost can be high, and if a family has more than one or two children the final tally can be prohibitive.

That's why this decision by the district is so important to so many families. To have a potential challenge like purchasing back-to-school supplies terminated means some families will not be burdened at a time when events — such as the COVID-19 pandemic — are already creating more stress than normal.

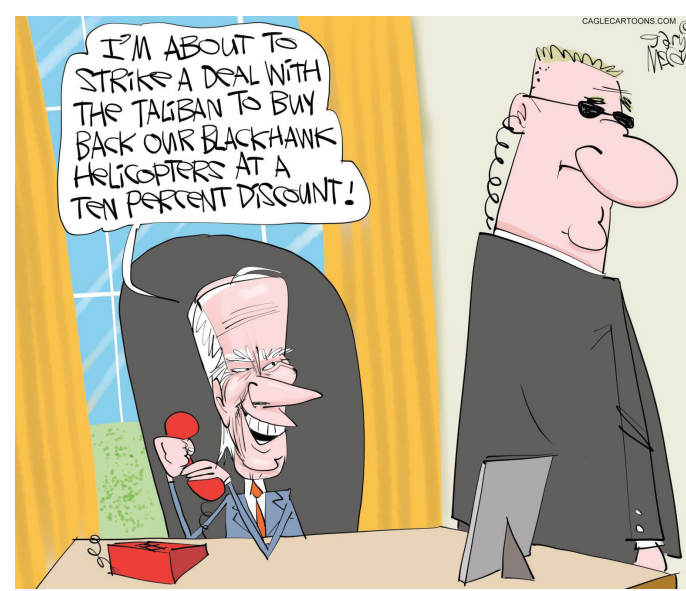
Actions by school officials — such as board members, administrators or teachers — often only see the light of day if there is some type of controversy. Their consistent hard work is also often forgotten or overlooked.

Yet, this decision by the district shows a degree of excellence and community care that is outstanding. The district made the right decision, and its officers, teachers and board members deserve to be lauded.

The district officials did a commendable and honorable thing by these two decisions. They clearly put the care of students — and, to a degree, their parents — to the forefront. That shows a group of people who not only say the right things about students and education but also back it up with action.

Nowadays that is a rare circumstance.

The Hermiston School District deserves a great deal of credit for its actions on this one. We applaud it.



YOUR VIEWS

Take responsibility for COVID-19 actions

I really hate having to mask up again, but I also hated flak jackets when I was in Vietnam. But I wore one, and it saved my life. The mask, although from several accounts it isn't considered effective, apparently does save lives. I got the vaccine, no problem.

I was in Safeway, Hermiston, today. Straw count, 60% of the people unmasked. If you're going to mandate, enforce it. If you don't want to mask up or get inoculated, fine. I think that's called suicide; it's your life.

The problem is, because of your self-centered inconsiderate actions, you will infect others — and that, my self-righteous friends, is called murder.

John Carter
Irrigon

Brown's support of Simpson plan is misplaced

It's encouraging to read Gov. Brown's continued support for removing the lower Snake River dams. These dams have caused profound harm to salmon populations in the Columbia River Basin and the Southern Resident orcas that depend on them to survive.

But it's as if Brown forgets that for decades, lawmakers in her state and Washington all but ignored the plight of the Columbia River Basin. Those years of inaction created a void into

which Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson, R, tossed a \$33 billion "solution" for the region.

Yes, this plan would bring the dams down — a long-overdue step needed to save salmon now on the knife edge of extinction. But Simpson's proposal also includes 25-year exemptions to the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, provisions no public official should consider.

So much of the fate of the Columbia River Basin would not be in the hands of the courts if state lawmakers and federal agencies had taken proper action sooner. Brown's amnesia is politically convenient, and casting Simpson's deeply flawed proposal as the sole solution is a disingenuous failure of leadership. There are more effective paths forward than Simpson's proposal, and we welcome Brown's leadership in crafting a regional solution to get the dams out as soon as possible while upholding our core environmental laws.

Quinn Read
Center for Biological Diversity
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Pendleton business community wows entrepreneurs

On behalf of our group of entrepreneurs who recently spent a day in Pendleton learning from your community of makers, thank you. Each year over

the past decade we choose a different region of the U.S. to explore the entrepreneurial ecosystem, gain insight into the challenges of starting and growing companies, and seeking to learn the "secret sauce" of building not only strong enterprises but great communities.

Our experience in Pendleton was amazing. Kristen Dollarhide and her colleagues at Travel Pendleton went above and beyond to help us connect to the amazing makers of Pendleton. We were enthralled by the stories of your entrepreneurs, their dedication to craftsmanship and their genuine openness to share advice, insight and wisdom with our aspiring entrepreneurs. What we came to understand is the power of a community that works together, that values and invests its energy in the legacy of a place while forging a hopeful future through passion, hard work and vision. From legacy companies to those in earlier stages of development, we saw a commitment to excellence, integrity and service that was inspirational.

Pendleton and Eastern Oregon are special — we could sense it in every interaction and conversation. We have never felt as welcomed as we did during our time in your wonderful community. Please accept our thanks and appreciation for an exceptional experience.

Tom Field, director
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