

Bullying:

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Greenough said when there is a report of bullying, school administrators investigate it. Then, he said, there are consequences.

The exact definition of bullying is difficult to pin down, he said, though he added it involves a power dynamic in which one or more people have power over others and are abusive. It can take place in person or over the internet, he said.

Dealing with it becomes complicated, he stated, as it only becomes a school issue when it involves students while at school. Also, he said, it can sometimes be difficult to know if a reported case is actual or perceived, which is why investigations are necessary.

In these cases, schools contact involved parties, including parents, to discuss bullying and how they can move forward more civilly. Sometimes, depending on the severity of the bullying, students are met with consequences, he said.

Resolution is important, Greenough said, because bullying can have terrible effects.

"We want to make sure that students are supported through their educational experience," he said.

Lack of support, Greenough said, can lead to mental health issues.

He also said there have been deaths in Hermiston students, but he could not say whether instances involved either suicide or could be tied to bullying.

School counselor sees the affects

Over at Clara Brownell Middle School in the Umatilla School District, school counselor Nayeli



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Marc Martinez and Melissa Strong, Hermiston residents, pose for a photo Monday, April 18, 2022, after playing basketball together at Martinez's school, Sunset Elementary. Martinez said he is having trouble with bullying.



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Ryan Humphrey, dean of students at Clara Brownell Middle School, Umatilla, stands next to a poster Friday, April 22, 2022, at his school. The poster promotes good behavior, including showing respect to others. He agrees bullying is an important issue.

Guzman-Madriral offered her own insights on bullying. She said she speaks to bullied students, as well as

the bullies themselves. "The way that I like to look at bullying is when the instigator seeks to harm,

intimidate or coerce someone who they see as a vulnerable victim," she said.

She added she has seen a

wide range of bullying. Sometimes, a bully will threaten harm, making students feel fearful. It has a significant mental health effect, she said.

"It affects their self-confidence," she said. "Students, who face bullying, frequently don't want to come to school. They kind of withdraw from participating in other activities, which students are normally engaged in."

She said Clara Brownell tries to act quickly when there is a report of bullying. Then, she said, a clear message can be sent "that bullying is not accepted at our school."

According to Guzman-Madriral, potential punishment includes detention, in-school suspension, suspension from school or expulsion.

"It just depends on the severity of the incident," she said.

The case of Marc Martinez

Martinez, who said he is a victim of bullying in Hermiston, said he is otherwise happy. He likes his school, his teachers and his friends. He loves basketball, idolizes NBA star Steph Curry and often practices basketball.

Unfortunately, he said, even his love of basketball is damaged as a result of bullying.

One classmate in particular makes fun of him for being thin and mocking his skills, he said. In addition, he said, Martinez's bully has roughed him up as they have played against one another.

He said he has reported the bullying to a teacher, who brought the case up to the school administration. His mother, Melissa Strong, has gotten involved, as have other parents and people at the school.

Strong described a cycle. Bullying is reported and addressed. Then, she said, it will stop for a while, while

Martinez's alleged bully moves on to other students. According to Strong, the bully returns after a while to pick on Martinez again, only for the cycle to repeat.

She described this problem as frustrating, a sentiment her son shared.

Martinez said the bullying has gotten worse, as it has begun to involve his sister. In one particularly hurtful instance of bullying, Martinez said, his bully told his sister she is the reason for her parents' divorce.

Martinez described feeling hopeless about this situation. He said the bullying has gotten to the point he does not even want to talk about it. He does not think anything will change, he said, and his mother said she has similar feelings. The bullying increases mental instability, she said, and she worries for her son.

"The situation with him has been an ongoing thing, and I think it will eventually take a toll on his mentality," she said.

Escalation is another worry for the pair. According to Martinez, his bully is trying to encourage other students to bully him.

"He shouldn't have to come home from school, crying or upset," Strong said. "And he shouldn't have to go to school, afraid to be himself. He should be able to focus on other things."

Instead, she added, it is bothering him, affecting his schoolwork and his well-being.

Meanwhile, Martinez said he is trying to keep a positive outlook. He said he thinks of his Golden State Warriors' hero, Curry, and tries to follow his example.

Curry, too, felt pressure from people who were not very nice to him growing up, Martinez said.

"I'll try to do that, too," Martinez said.

BMCC:

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"We have no idea the college would be canceling classes that are full," he said.

Browning said the faculty's alternative to his proposal was to just not make any cuts.

Hernberg said the association has not presented a proposal but on April 19 left a message to set a time to meet with the administration and discuss alternatives to layoffs. Two days later, he said, there was not word back from the administration.

"We are eagerly awaiting their reply," he said.

Browning stressed cutting jobs is a hard choice to make, but this is more than about the budget.

"I think what's lost is about where we're heading," he said. "We're losing sight of where we're going."

Blue Mountain, he said, needs to make some changes in how and what it provides students, he said, and the days of the two-year transfer degree being the heart of the teaching at the college are passed.

He said the college's declining enrollment reflects the changing work environment.

According to Browning, BMCC in 2011-12 had the equivalent of 2,482 full-time students, and in 2021-22, that total was down to 1,124, and transfer education is forecast to continue a downward trend for the next three to five years.

BMCC BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING INFO

The Blue Mountain Community College Budget Committee meets Monday, April 25, at 5 p.m. via Zoom at bluecc.zoom.us/j/97330220871 or by phone at 253-215-8782. The meeting ID is 973 3022 0871 and passcode is 911962.

The budget document will be available online at www.bluecc.edu/about/administration/finance no later than April 25.

This is a public meeting where deliberation of the budget committee will take place. Any person may participate in the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the committee.

If you would like to provide public comment during the meeting, notify Shannon Franklin at sfranklin@bluecc.edu no later than noon the day of the meeting or by mail to Shannon Franklin, board secretary, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.

If a person with disability needs assistance to participate in the meeting, or if you wish to offer your comments regarding the proposed budget, notify Franklin at 541-278-5951. The committee, if necessary, may hold a second meeting May 10 and a third May 12, both at 5 p.m. via the same Zoom link and phone number. Public comment will be handled in the same manner as above.

Instead of two-year degrees and lengthy certification courses in technical and mechanical fields, he said students and employers need courses that deliver job-specific basic skills and education in just a few weeks. After that, employers want to be able to send employees for more training and education as needed.

"We're giving them the full Sunday dinner, but what they need is a real good roast beef sandwich now," he said.

All of Blue Mountain's approach to structure, course offerings and compensation must change, Browning said, and the hurdle to that pivot is the collective bargaining agreement between the college and the faculty.

The deal is too restrictive to allow the college to

provide the kind of education students and employers want today. Without an overhaul of the agreement, he said, BMCC cannot meet its mission statement to provide quality, innovative education that strengthens the local communities.

Browning's take on the collective bargaining agreement struck Hernberg.

"I'm surprised to hear that because Mark Browning signed the collective bargaining agreement in January," he said.

He also said as of the afternoon of April 21, 656 members of the community, BMCC alumni and students have signed an online petition at savebmcc.com urging the committee to not follow through with the administration's budget plan.

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