

Enterprise:

Continued from Page A1

Weiser, Idaho, and taught emotionally disturbed students in Nampa, Idaho, and elementary school in Ontario for a couple of years.

The move to Harney County saw her start as the assistant principal at the high school for a year, before taking the job of assistant principal at the elementary school and as principal at the correctional facility for incarcerated young men.

"It was an interesting job," Hunter said. "It was definitely a challenging job because there was lots of barriers. Our facility was a high-security facility, so safety and security always came first and education came second. ... We got creative and while I was there, we started a couple career technical education programs. Students were able to earn a welding certification so that when they were released and went back to their home communities, they were marketable to get a job."

That facility housed boys ages 14-24.

"On their 25th birthday, if they still owed time, they went to what the kids called 'up state;' they went up to the adult facility," she said. "We also were able to offer dual credit through Treasure Valley Community College (in Ontario) so students were able to work on a college degree so some of our high schoolers were able to take college classes. It was pretty cool to be able to break the cycle of students not getting a strong education. I actually really enjoyed it. It was not necessarily where I saw myself, but I enjoyed my time there. I was there for two years."

The past two years, Hunter has been student services director for the Harney County School District. As such, she oversaw special education,

facilitated the talented and gifted programs, oversaw school counseling and more, including overseeing the students from the Burns Paiute Indian Reservation, a small tribe north of Burns.

Eager to experience Wallowa County

Hunter's contact with the tribe near Burns adds to her eagerness to get to know Wallowa County. Although there's no reservation here, she's quite aware of the presence of the Nez Perce Tribe and some of its contacts here. She said she's eager to learn more about the tribe here.

But she's not entirely inexperienced in Wallowa County.

"We've spent a lot of time here," she said of her growing-up years and her time with her family. "We spent a lot of summers here at the lake and just being in the community. Once I heard that Blake Carlsen was leaving, I started spending more time here."

Hunter said she sees this as a long-term move for her and her now-12-year-old son.

"It's a move for our family," she said. "One day, I hope that when my son will go off to college and he'll want to come back and raise his family here. We've very much felt that in this community and just spending time here, walking down the street and everyone waves at you. It's a very family-oriented community. I'm really excited to get to know everyone and become one of the family community members."

In fact, she expects her move here to be her last move.

"This was the 'forever move.' We're hoping to find a rental here and get our place sold there and our hope is to buy a small farm and settle in," she said. "This is a community I can see being happy in for a long time. Following Blake, who's been here for 18 years, he speaks very highly of the community."

Wallowa:

Continued from Page A1

and "soon after enrolled in the Educational Leadership Principal Licensure program through Lewis and Clark College where she expanded her experience into 7th-12th grade at both Joseph Charter School" and into her role in recent weeks as Wallowa interim principal.

She joins Wallowa at a time when the school has momentum, she said, not only as a level of normalcy returns with the ebb of the two-year COVID-19 pandemic, but also with Wallowa's recent reaccreditation scores. The school was rated by Cognia with a score of 362 on a scale of 100-400, and had the highest possible ranking on 25 of 30 rated categories.

"We're the only school out of the county that is accredited," she said. "I think the whole process (is) really insightful to see what are our strengths. We have a lot. ... That for sure is part of the momentum."

She added as the school comes out of the pandemic that it's important to look at the lessons from those two years.

"I feel like we're



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Junior/Senior High School's new Principal Sara Hayes, left, talks with school secretary Jessica Nye on Monday, April 25, 2022.

rebounding into a positive space," she said.

She described a "feeling" in the atmosphere of the school — including during a recent field trip — as playing a key role in her decision to apply for the position.

"I think that the kids and the staff, the feel that is Wal-

lowa and how unified the staff are in supporting our kids. I think for me, just being in there and feeling it. It's one thing to hear it, but to feel that energy, is definitely what did it for me."

Hayes said she's carrying a high level of excitement for her new role, and hopes

to not only tell students' stories, but put students in a position where the story is one of success.

"What's really resonated with me is we want to build those experiences so they can better know when they head out of high school what they want to do," she said.

Score:

Continued from Page A1

for its standard operating procedures, the evaluator found.

Accreditation, Superintendent Tammy Jones said she learned through the process, is important because it, in a sense, validates the education students receive at an accredited school.

"Basically what they said is it's a process that shows colleges, military and people that kids have graduated from an accredited institution, from (a) high school, that meets rigorous standards," she said of the explanation she received from Cognia. "I think that's really what it is

there. There is (also) a stamp that, I believe, goes on the diplomas. It's kind of another level of insurance."

Cognia not only assessed school documentation, but spoke with students, parents and staff in its examination of the school. Jones said the school sought to get a good cross-section of the parents and students — including different ages, grades, and levels of success in school — to talk to the evaluator.

Jones said the staff coming together to give students a quality education played a key role in the high accreditation score.

"What staff has come to realize is we have to build

systems to sustain and look at things more deeply. They have been coming together every Monday for a while and just roll up their sleeves," she said, noting staff has addressed questions such as, "What's quality instruction? What is it that's necessary for kids to learn? What do we have to have in our classroom?"

Jones said an aspect learned during the COVID-19 pandemic — the importance of relationship — has played a role in helping staff better know what specific students need.

"We know the kids. We know every kid," she said. "That is the benefit of a small

school, but the staff here will do whatever it takes."

She mentioned, for example, if a student is struggling in a specific subject, the knowledge staff has of that student can help pinpoint the cause of the struggle, rather than just taking a shot in the dark.

"What's their aptitude? Where is their strength areas? Helping them build on that and engage in school," Jones said.

As for the areas Cognia said Wallowa needs to continue growing, Jones said the work on that starts right away.

"That becomes our goals for the next school year," she said.

Coleman Oil Wallowa Cardlock is NOW OPEN

- Conveniently Located
- Accepting all Major Credit/Debit and CFN Cards
- Easily Accessible for Semi trucks, Campers and RV's
- Non-Ethanol Premium
- 24/7 Fueling

Coleman Oil 71051 HWY 82
Wallowa, OR 97885
888-799-2000
www.colemanoil.com

2022

I ♥ Northeast Oregon

PHOTO CONTEST

Visit wallowa.com and enter today!



We are **HIRING**

WORK WITH A DYNAMIC TEAM & MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE

PART-TIME & FULL-TIME POSITIONS OPEN AT OUR RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

Learn more at wvcenterforwellness.org or contact HR at hr@wvcenterforwellness.org 541-426-4524 x1062

