



Leadership Corner

A Message from Rick Molitor

Superintendent



With the holiday season upon us, I wanted to share my appreciation of our dedicated JCSD 509J team. I'm always impressed by their passion and adaptability – even during times of change and challenge.

As I look back on our on-going efforts to improve teaching and learning, I recognize that we've had some great hurdles as well as successes. We have also taken some risks along the way. It reminds me that we are all truly learners – one of the core beliefs in our Strategic Plan. One great example of our learning curve has been our district's groundbreaking work with Proficiency or Standards Based Learning. We've come a long way in implementing this innovative approach and I'm excited about our direction and what it means to all of our learners K through 12.

That said, I want to acknowledge that getting to this point with Proficiency Based Learning has been a journey. We started at the high school level with incredibly ambitious goals and have learned along the way, how to be flexible while still maintaining high standards. Today, we're working at all grade levels to make Proficiency Based Learning the foundation of our education system in a way that makes sense to all of us.

I'd like to thank each and every student, parent, educator and board member for their patience and support as we strive to create a better future for our kids.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Rick Molitor, JCSD Superintendent



Tribal elders Iva McKinley (seated) and Char Herkshan present to fourth graders at Warm Springs K-8 Academy.

Native American Heritage Month

"Uniting to Empower Culturally Enhanced Learners to Shape the World"

– JCSD 509J Mission Statement

November was Native American Heritage Month and several events were held throughout the district to celebrate, including a "Rock Your Mocs (Moccasins) Day" and Native American Dance Assembly featuring student dancers.

Learning About the Past

Fourth graders at Metolius Elementary were recently treated to a visit and presentation by tribal elders from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Char Herkshan and Iva McKinley engaged the students with stories of what they and others of their generation endured as children growing up on the reservation.

Herkshan and McKinley were among many Native American children separated from their families and sent to boarding school run by missionaries. There they were forbidden to speak their native tongue or practice their native American culture and customs, and were often abused. Herkshan and McKinley's presentation was part of a joint effort by the Jefferson County School District's Performing Arts Center, Tower Theatre Foundation and the Museum of Warm Springs to prepare students for the recent performance of *Mistatim* at the PAC.

Getting to know our school board members

Meet School Board member Laurie Danzuka. Danzuka has been on the Jefferson County School Board for six years. Her three children attend Madras High School and Warm Springs K-8 Academy.

Danzuka first ran for the school board to ensure that Warm Springs had representation and a voice in the decision making process.

"Our district is raising the bar and expectations for our students, learning facilitators and all district staff because our children's quality of education is our priority. I am proud of the curriculum alignment happening throughout the district that is leading to proficiency-based teaching and learning. I want our schools to graduate students who are adequately prepared for whatever they choose to be after high school."



Warm Springs Students Lobby For Change

The JCSD 509J School District will now celebrate both Indigenous People Day and Columbus Day with help from a group of sixth grade Warm Springs K-8 Academy students.

The students from Ervanna Little Eagle's class wrote letters and made presentations at the October Impact Aid hearing stating their reasons why the second Monday in October should be set aside to recognize the contributions of the indigenous people.

The school board agreed and from now on will recognize both Columbus Day and Indigenous People Day.

"Our school district is unique in that it represents multiple cultures," said Superintendent Rick Molitor. "JCSD celebrates our diversity as a strength to be nurtured."

"My hat's off to these students," Molitor added. "They are leaders now – not future leaders."

Warm Springs Students Get Engaged In Learning

Staff at Warm Springs K-8 Academy are taking a more personal approach to education this year. Educators have been hard at work learning research-based teaching strategies to engage students in the learning process.

Instead of passively listening to lectures about history, math or social studies, students are more actively joining in discussions, writing about the lessons and explaining topics to each other.

"We want to minimize the time we are talking and maximize the time our students are reading something, writing something or doing something," said Warm Springs Principal Ken Parshal. "Our goal is to enhance their interest and understanding by encouraging them to contribute their own ideas to the subject at hand."

To help with this effort, the school is using School Improvement Grant funds to hire more support staff, providing students with more time and focused attention. The extra staff have helped cut reading group sizes almost in half.

"We are so excited to have the extra classroom support," said Parshal. "We can already see improvement in reading levels and we expect to see even more student success."



Left to Right: Jiana Smith Francis and Raelée Simmons at work in Small Engine Technology.

Eighth Graders Revved Up By Small Engine Technology

Students in Sara Vollmer's first period class have been hard at work carefully disassembling a variety of small engines, from lawnmowers to electric generators. All take painstaking care to keep track of each component – knowing full well they would need to put it all back together again.

"It's fun to learn about engines and their parts," said eighth grader, Isaiah Alire.

The students are part of Jefferson County Middle School's Small Engine Technology class. Part of the school's Career and Technical Education program, the class gives eighth graders elective choices to enhance both their academic and technical skills.

"CTE gives kids useful skills for life and more career options," said Vollmer. "We are teaching them to use common and specialty tools such as socket and torque wrenches and also about different kinds of fuels. They are learning trades that could help them get jobs in the future."

The program was started last year with a CTE Revitalization grant and has continued with district funding because it was so popular. Each class welcomes guest speakers and volunteers who assist the students.

"I can't thank our volunteers enough," Vollmer said. "They really add to the depth of experience."

"The kids just love the CTE classes," Vollmer added. "They are so excited to be here. The best part is that they are learning math and they don't even realize it. They are using fractions and decimals in a hands on, real world way."

Small Engine Technology student Juan Huerta Hernandez agreed. "It's the funnest class I have."

Additional CTE classes include Animal Science, Forestry and Natural Resources, and Woodshop. Woodshop students learn to measure and use hand tools such as mallets, planes and sanding blocks. To raise funds for the program, the students are building yard games they plan on selling to community members.



Mistatim comes to PAC

Students throughout Central Oregon visited the Madras Performing Arts Center to attend *Mistatim*, a theater production celebrating true friendships across cultures.

Performing Arts Center Events

December

- 8 Madras High & JCMS Winter Choir Concert - 7 p.m.
- 10 Madras High & JCMS Winter Band Concert - 7 p.m.
- 12 Winter Holiday Gala - 7 p.m.

For more information, call 541.475.4327 or visit www.jcsd.k12.or.us/PAC.



Calendar

December

- 14 School Board 7 p.m./SSB
- 21 Winter Break Begins/No School

January 2016

- 4 School Resumes

