



JCSD Elementary Schools gear up for K-5

JCSD's Buff Intermediate and Madras Primary Schools are looking forward to serving students in grades K-5 beginning in the fall of 2017. Both schools are preparing to make the transition comfortable and easy for students and families.

"The change is helping the district create a more equitable learning environment for all students," said JCSD Superintendent Rick Molitor. "It also should make things easier on parents and students. There will be fewer school transitions for our students enabling them to form more of a connection with their elementary school. It will also help make involvement and coordination at lot easier for families."

Both elementary schools are taking steps to make new students and family members feel welcome.

"We are very excited to welcome the intermediate learners to our school," said Madras Primary School Principal Deborah Hunt. "Many of them attended here as young learners. We are also looking forward to working with students for not just three years, but now up to six if they come as kinders."

Hunt believes the older students will serve as role models for the younger students.



Art time at Buff Intermediate.

"There will be leadership possibilities that our older learners can bring to our school culture," she said. "Also, having the continuity of staying at the same school for a longer period of time will help students feel safe and connected."

Hunt is looking forward to the opportunity to really get to know learners and their families and is planning a family welcome event in the spring. If parents have questions before that, they can contact Principal Hunt at 541-475-3520.

The staff at Buff Intermediate is excited about welcoming younger students to their campus. Principal Billie White is looking forward to the opportunity to see students grow socially and academically for six straight years.

"Having the chance to form that bond with both students and families is important," White explained. "Parents will have the chance to get to know me as well as the staff and continue to form relationships that will hopefully make them feel like they are a part of the school."

To ease the transition, White encourages parents who have questions to come in for a visit.

"Parents are their child's biggest advocates and an important piece of their education," White explained. "Bring your student in to tour the building. Talk to your child about the changes. We are going to have the best years here at Buff. Bring your smile, bring your sense of humor and be ready to learn."



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— Deborah Hunt, Madras Primary School Principal

Performing Arts Center Events PAC

April

19 JCMS Spring Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m./ PAC Stage

21 JCMS Band Concert, 6:30 p.m./PAC Stage

For more PAC information call (541) 475-4327.

Calendar

April

11 School Board Meeting, 7 p.m./SSB

11-12 No School, Teacher Work Day

25 School Board Meeting, 7 p.m./SSB



Members of the Warm Spring Youth Tribal Council meet in the MHS library to plan for an upcoming event (from left: Malia Collins, junior; Keeyana Yellowman, senior; Raymond Sam-Smith, sophomore; Savannah Holiday, junior; Ashley Meanus, senior; Gavin Begay, senior).

Native students share hopes for the future

There is a group of Native American students at Madras High School that have hopes for the future and deep respect for the past. Six members of the Warm Springs Youth Tribal Council recently shared some of the challenges and opportunities the district faces with taking cultural understanding to the next level.

"The district does a good job of teaching students that everyone is here together and keeping us integrated," said Malia Collins, grade 11. "I went to a school where Indians only hung out with Indians and it's not like that here, but there's still a lot more work to do."

According to Collins and the other Youth Tribal Council members, what JCSD students and educators need is a deeper understanding and more curriculum about Oregon's Native American history.

Senior Ashley Meanus explained that programs offered before and after school or during Indigenous Peoples Month can be good, but it's not enough and they can also perpetuate stereotypes. She also said that not everyone participates.

"Pow Wows and performances are fine, but it's important to understand our Oregon tribal history and we also need to talk about our Native American culture in a modern sense, so native students have a sense of self identity."

The Warm Springs Youth Council hopes for a future that further integrates Native American history into the curriculum. Not just general history, but specific teaching about the nine tribes of Oregon. They also want teachers and students to talk more about historical and intergenerational trauma, which they believe will create a stronger sense of identity and pride, along with a more accepting school culture for all students, teachers and staff.

MHS seniors and Warm Springs Youth Council co-presidents Keeyanna Yellowman and Gavin Begay hope to help create a Native American Student Union that advocates for cultural awareness and education year-round.

"A lot of our teachers have the option to integrate Native culture into the classroom, but they may not have the tools or understanding," said Yellowman.

The district team has been working to live up to the JCSD Strategic Plan in terms of integrating culture into the school buildings according to JCSD Superintendent Rick Molitor, who served as an advisory panel member for the Oregon American Indian/Alaska Native Education State Plan.

"The state plan is a much needed step in our work with native students and I would like to see the goals in the plan, many of which are what our students are telling us, a key focus for our next education agreement between the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and 509J.

Molitor said that the district team has already started working to implement the Oregon American Indian/Alaskan Native Education State Plan. Part of this effort includes providing culturally relevant professional development for school district staff, increasing recruitment and retention of Native teachers, and implementing historically-accurate, culturally-embedded Native American curriculum and instructional materials into the classroom.

"We're proud of the progress we've made, but we recognize that we still have work to do," said Molitor. "We're doing more to engage Warm Springs families and honor and celebrate our Native American culture. We're also proud to see our MHS students taking a leadership role through the Youth Tribal Council."

Other district efforts to enhance cultural awareness and engage Warm Springs families include hosting MHS parent teacher conferences at Warm Springs K-8 Academy, partnering with Warm Springs' Val Swifter to bring programs to students, and creating more opportunities to learn about and celebrate Native American culture.



Student Glenn Bruno, grade 7, gets ready for the annual science fair at Warm Springs K-8.

Including the Native American Experience

To ensure the success and engagement of all students, the Jefferson County School District has been taking steps to integrate Native American culture into its curriculum. These efforts include:

- Implementing a new social studies curriculum that incorporates Native American history and culture. Resources that will be used include "First Oregonians" and "Indians in Oregon Today." This curriculum will be implemented next fall for grades 6-12, with grades K-5 to follow.
- Providing culturally responsive training and teaching strategies for current teachers, including those at Warm Springs Academy. This training was developed by the Coaching For Equity Institute.
- Incorporating culturally responsive training into the new teacher induction program focusing on "Strength Through Diversity." The training includes a tour of all the communities the district serves and a trip to the Warm Springs Museum for the American Indian Culture and History experience.
- Efforts to encourage more Native Americans to become teachers as part of the "Teach Central Oregon" program. These efforts include a collaboration with George Fox University to offer a bachelor's degree in teacher education that includes one class per week and one Saturday class in Madras so that teaching candidates can work and attend school at the same time.
- New programs that will bring native dance and language experiences to Warm Springs Academy.
- Culturally significant attire worn at graduation ceremonies.
- A resolution passed by the district last year to celebrate both Columbus Day and Indigenous People Day.

