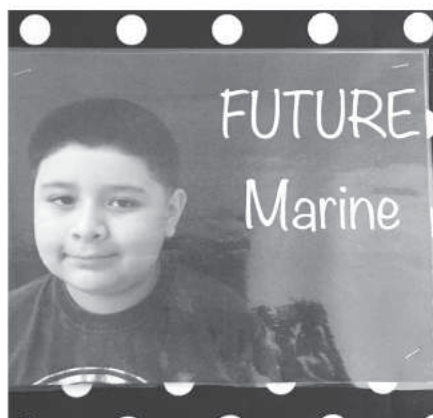




# Schools in Action!



## Jefferson County School District 509J graduation rates leap forward

High school graduation rates released by the Oregon Department of Education this week show that Jefferson County School District 509J is making significant improvements. In 2017, the district showed a 12 percentage point increase over 2016, moving from 60% to 72% for students graduating in four years. Madras High School increased to 78% not including graduation rates for the new Bridges High School which opened in September of 2016.

"We are extremely proud to see the results of the hard work and focus from Madras High School staff and students," said JCSD 509J Superintendent Ken Parshall. "This didn't happen overnight. Our team has been working to engage students at a deeper level and provide them with the

support they need to be successful in school, graduate and explore college and careers."

According to Madras High School co-principals Mark Neffendorf and HD Weddel, building relationships between students and staff and setting high expectations at the high school has been critical to the district's success.

"We've been able to build a trust with our students and that's making a big difference. Our culture is inviting and safe and our kids like coming to school," said Neffendorf. "We are also holding students accountable and setting high expectations for academics and behavior and they are rising to the occasion," added Weddel.



On January 12, Madras Elementary students from each grade level were recognized with STAR awards for their hard work in reading.

### STARs are shining at Madras Elementary

Something special happens when students take responsibility for their learning...they shine like stars. The team at Madras Elementary School has been working with students to set goals for learning and then helping them meet those goals. The students who work extra hard and do their best work are recognized each week as part of the STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) program. Each Friday, one STAR student from each grade level is presented with a certificate for "knocking it out of the park" in reading or math.



Principal Deborah Hunt visits with 1st grade students at Madras Elementary.

"The students are so excited about the STAR program," said Madras Elementary Principal Deborah Hunt. "It's amazing to see how proud they are when they make the connection. They understand that when they work hard, they are learning more and growing more."

According to Hunt, students at all levels can be selected as STARs.

"Some STAR students may be struggling in school and others may be high achievers. This is really about rewarding hard work," said Hunt.

### New Bridges High School principal embraces Madras Community

Brian Crook spent 21 years of his career as an educator with Bend La Pine Schools. First, he worked as a teacher and then an assistant principal for Bend High School. Then he became principal for High Desert Middle School. He enjoyed his work and had no plans to leave when he was contacted by MHS co-principals Mark Neffendorf and HD Weddel about a possible job opening at Bridges High School in Madras.

"I've worked in education for 30 years and I've loved every job I've ever had," said Crook. "I just knew that the Bridges principal position was a really unique opportunity and I had to do it."

Crook commutes from Redmond to Madras everyday with his wife Michele, who also accepted a position with JCSD and works as TAG (Talented and Gifted) coordinator and instructional coach for Special Education.

According to Crook, the two have become connected to the Madras community and are exploring options to move there.

"This is such a great community. The Bridges staff is amazing and the students are thriving with the extra support and attention," said Crook.

Crook explained that the team is creating a culture of trust and hard work.

"Bridges is a place where students work hard and move toward graduation. We have very high expectations for behavior and our students are rising to the occasion."

Students seem to agree.

"We have time to get stuff done and learn at our own pace," said Bridges junior Victor Calixtro. "The teachers are very supportive," added Aundrea Estrada, also a junior at Bridges.



Bridges Principal Brian Crook checks in with student David Benitez and Educational Assistant Brad Padgett.



Bridges Juniors Tyler Gephard, Victor Calixtro, Aundrea Estrada and Vincent Lopez work to stay on track for graduation.



Madras Elementary fifth graders Isaiah Moschetti (left) and Joshua Gregory (right) plan to attend college.



### It's never too early to talk about college and careers

Students in all grades at Madras Elementary are learning about life after high school. Teachers and staff are talking about college, trades schools and jobs to help the students explore their futures.

As part of the school's AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program, Madras Elementary hallways are filled with college banners made by the students. A bulletin board also shows pictures of teachers with the logos of the colleges they attended.

One day each month, students and staff also celebrate College Day. They dress in college gear or wear colors from a college they like. They also learn about different colleges including what classes they offer and how much they cost.

"We want kids to know that if they work hard in school, they have a chance to go to college or trade school," said Madras Elementary Principal Deborah Hunt.

"I have a big goal to go to Harvard or OSU and study technology," said Joshua Gregory, grade 5, Madras Elementary.

Gregory and his classmate Isaiah Moschetti were among several students recognized at a January school board meeting for exceeding state test scores.

"I plan to go to college, but I'm not sure yet what I want to study," said Moschetti, grade 5, Madras Elementary.

Hunt says the Madras Elementary team is also working to put together a career fair at the end of the school year.

"We are hoping community members will come in and talk about their jobs so the kids will see how many different options are out there."

If you or someone you know might be interested in speaking at a career fair, contact Madras Elementary at (541) 475-3520.



### PAC Calendar

- March**
- 15-18 High Desert Community Theater presents "Your Guests are Ghosts"
  - 25 *The Secret Garden* presented by OperaBend (One Madras performance only)

### Calendar

- February**
- 12 School Board Meeting 7 pm
  - 19 No School (President's Day)
  - 26 School Board Meeting 7 pm