

Students from 1A

the guns that people are talking about.”

Siuslaw District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak and school administrators were on site monitoring the students' actions during the walk-out.

Grzeskowiak was communicating with staff and the Florence Police Department (FPD) throughout the protest.

The reason for the strong police presence was a response to a concern raised on social media.

“With the rumors of counter protesters coming to campus to block the doors to prevent students from leaving the building, police officers were on site at the high school as a precaution,” Grzeskowiak said.

FPD had several vehicles at the high school, the main locations of the student action, and there were officers on 30th Street.

Officers at the school said they were there to insure student safety and to make sure that the students did not inadvertently interfere with passing traffic or block the entrance to the high school.

Grzeskowiak said the students' actions were not discussed before the walkout with school staff or approved by him or the district.

He added that the event was low key and students returned to class in about 20 minutes.

“The students do have a right to free speech and to peacefully assemble, but the district does not condone the disruption of instructional activities. District staff cannot physically intercede to inhibit the rights of students,” Grzeskowiak said. “The students did not present notice to administration of their partici-

pation in today's event.

“The student event was more or less spontaneous. Students had heard about it on the news, and from other social media outlets that it was happening, but it did not appear as anything was specifically organized by the students.”

Overall, about 70 students from Siuslaw High School participated in the event.

Engagement by students from Siuslaw Middle School was significantly higher than from the high school. Some middle school students chanted “No more Guns” as they walked the short distance north

to the high school.

Siuslaw Middle School Principal Andy Marohl walked with his students to monitor the situation as it was underway.

“On March 14, many students from Siuslaw Middle School participated in a demonstration against gun violence in schools. Students were exercising their First Amendment rights to demonstrate against a social justice issue that they feel strongly about,” Marohl said. “As a building administrator, I would never encourage students or help organize students to walk out of school during instruc-

tional time. However, I will respect their right peaceably assemble and I walked with them to the high school to help ensure their safety as they marched.”

He thanked the FPD for their help in ensuring students' safety.

Siuslaw students gathered in front of the high school for about 17 minutes, standing in silence, and then quietly returned to school.

The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that over 1 million students, from more than 3,000 schools, took part in the National School Walkout.

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OCHS from 1A

Grant is confident that the process put in place by OCHS, after extensive consultations with the ODJ, is being adhered to.

“Everything is proceeding as outlined in the letter sent to members last month,” Grant said. “We have received applications from candidates for the board and they are in the process of being reviewed. We expect ballots to go out towards the end of this month.”

The vote for new directors will end a period of dissent between members of the group and the previously seated board.

Complaints of improper selection and seating of board mem-

bers were not acted upon by the previous board and were then forwarded to the ODJ by disgruntled humane society members and volunteers.

An inquiry was undertaken by the ODJ last fall as it requested financial and administrative documents be presented for review.

Grant and her staff's findings concluded that there were unacceptable irregularities in the manner in which OCHS had been conducting its board elections, so changes were suggested.

The OCHS board accepted the recommendations, and the nomination and election of a new board is now underway. The first step, submission of Candidate Forms, has been completed.

Campaign from 1A

Club of Western Lane County cheer team and snacks for after-school sports programs at Mapleton.

Thousands more dollars from the 2016 donation campaign are still available through voucher programs, doled out through Cross Road Assembly of God, located in Florence.

“We're hoping to help people with rent and utilities, just an emergency kind of assistance,” Leighton said.

Donations for 2016 totaled approximately \$14,000 — and were dwarfed by the 2017 totals, so SA is looking for assistance in finding worthy causes for the money.

“Because of the magnitude of the money that's here, I

want people involved locally,” Leighton said. “I want people who know what's going on, people who have ideas. There are just a myriad of ways to help.”

SA is hoping for up to 15 individuals to be a part of the committee, which plans to begin in June.

“It's important that the community gets involved in this,” Leighton said. “They gave us the money. Now help us spend it.”

To become a member of the committee, contact Leighton at debi.leighton@usu.salvationarmy.org or by calling 541-892-2723.

The Cross Road Assembly Church, which currently holds the emergency vouchers, can be reached at office@florence-crossroad.org or by calling 541-997-3533.



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