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BOTH MEETINGS ARE CURRENTLY ON HOLD. WATCH SIUSLAW NEWS FOR RESUMPTION

- Tuesday Evening Group (2nd Tuesday) 5-7 p.m. - Ichiban Chinese/Japanese Restaurant
- Urologist Dr. Bryan Mehiliff attends.
- Tuesday Lunch Group (3rd Tuesday) 12 noon - 1:00 p.m. - Ichiban Chinese/Japanese Restaurant
- Urologist Dr. Roger McKimmy attends.

Contact Bob for more information:
(H) 541-997-6626 • (C) 541-999-4239
maribob@oregonfast.net

Cross Road Assembly of God

Sunday 9:00
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in person & Online

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PROGRAM from page 1A

That's when an IEP comes in. These programs lay out the special education instruction, supports and services a student needs to thrive during their PreK-12 public education.

"It's a process of what's called differentiation," Utz said. "It is individualized, since each kid may have a different set of needs, and need help supporting their learning styles and their ability to receive information and, then, be able to show what they know."

The district's special education teachers work with several different methods as they find what works best for each student.

"It's a prescriptive thing, where you try and figure out how to individualize for each kid, even within a really broad spectrum of learners in a classroom," Utz said.

Sometimes that is small classes, with more adults able to help the students. Sometimes it's adjusting assignments in the general education classes to accommodate the student.

"There are lots of differ-

ent small ways that all of us can work together," Utz said. "That's the ultimate goal — that every kid has a variety of ways to learn and a variety of ways to show what they know."

Utz first got into special education when she started at Siuslaw School District. After becoming a classified aid, she saw how much her husband was enjoying his time as a certified teacher in Siuslaw's special education program.

"I saw what he was doing, and I saw what I was doing in the teen mom program, and decided I would go back to school and get my certification," Utz said. "That's been 20 years ago now. It was just being part of a program that felt right. It was a pathway that opened up, and I've loved it."

That love hasn't gone away even with the ongoing pandemic and working with other district administrators to adjust an entire student body into working from home. They also guided the district into last spring's hybrid model of education and the return to full-time in-person instruction last

month. "All of the stuff that goes along with COVID has definitely been a challenge," Utz said. "When you think about public service, like a school, it can be tricky to navigate, but I think we're doing the best we can. We're just trying to make changes where we need to and pivot with whatever new information comes our way. All that while we're doing the best we can to provide for all of our students what they need, so that they can get back to whatever is close to normal."

The special education staff are some of the best equipped people to help students — but that department is struggling to be fully staffed.

"We have been doing a really good job of moving people around and doing extra help here and there to make sure that we don't have kids without the staff that they need," Utz said. "But it would be nice to be at full staffing."

Currently, each school has at least one open position in their special education departments. Positions are open in the life skills programs and resource rooms.

They are positions that have been budgeted for and planned for, but just haven't gotten filled yet.

"The reason they're open is pretty much as a result of COVID," Utz noted. "People either were concerned about working in a more social environment or decided they were close to retirement."

The job positions, along with others in the district, are posted at www.siuslaw.k12.or.us/page/job-openings. Each listing also shows the wages and benefits the district offers.

Additionally, people do not need to have a background in special education.

"We can train and people can learn, because we have people who are really dedicated and love what they do as much as I do," Utz said. "There's a lot of passion around it. So training new people coming into the profession is, in our mind, great. It's like, 'Welcome! We are excited to share this with more people.'"

The department is also a good beginning for people interested in becoming a teacher.

"People start as a classified

aid and then say, 'Oh, I really love this, I want to become a teacher,'" Utz said, noting that is how she started. "I'm seeing this as a long game. With this many positions to hire, my hope is that we can get some people who are really interested in longevity and staying with us for a long time. Obviously, you need to have a heart for kids, and then need to be able to temper what you are seeing, feeling and thinking. You need to be able to walk a mile in that kid's shoes, and help them from that vantage point, because what we do in special education is so individualized."

After all, the program is about the kids.

"There really is no limit in my mind. Each kid has interests and strengths that we can expand from. There's no reason why any amount of after high school experience they have can't be fabulous, wonderful and exactly what they want it to be. The sky's the limit for our students," Utz said.

For more information, visit www.siuslaw.k12.or.us/page/special-education-overview-resources.

RESTAURANT from page 1A

"We did have to go around on the first day, but that's not out of the ordinary at all. We just make a few phone calls and make some minor route changes."

Also affected by the traffic were people living in the neighborhood around Burger King. Those residents are hoping things get sorted out soon.

"What's happening is, because they're not letting them (people in line) turn left into

Burger King, they're going down and turning left on Spruce then turning around on 37th," said neighborhood resident Belinda Shores. "After they turn around, they don't stop when getting back on Spruce, which is creating a dangerous situation for people living in the neighborhood. I'm sure it's going to quiet down but right now with people not being able to turn left into Burger King it's causing some problems."

Things seem to be improving though as of press

deadline and lines didn't seem as long, though a left turn was still the only option to turn into Burger King off 35th Street.

Burger King Shift Manager Daniel Morris said traffic like this is typical of a newly opened Burger King, adding the community has generally been understanding.

The restaurant received help with the traffic, too.

"Florence Police were very helpful in helping to direct traffic when things got really backed up," Morris said.

"When we've noticed the lines are getting especially long, we've also sent our staff out to personally let people waiting know that it might be quicker if they got out of line and came into our dining room and ordered. That also helped to lessen the pressure on the traffic."

Besides the traffic situation, Morris says things have gone relatively smooth.

"We've run into a few of the normal things that you run into when you first open, programming issues with our computers, things like that, but all and all we've been able to just keep on rolling," he said.

Burger King is at the corner of 35th Street and Highway 101 and is open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., except Sunday when it opens at 7 a.m.

DISTRICT from page 1A

and Brown was the first governor in the nation to sign into law a state's new district map.

Oregon is comprised of 30 state Senate districts and 60 state House districts. Each Senate district comprises two House districts. State senators are elected every four years in partisan elections. State representatives are elected every two years in partisan elections.

"For the first time in 40 years, Oregon is gaining a congressional seat — another delegation member to advocate for the common good of all Oregonians. After the past year and a half, during which Oregonians have faced unprecedented challenges that have urgently required federal attention and resources, I am particularly grateful that the Legislature has come together to pass today's historic legislation," Brown said at the signing ceremony. "My office reviewed the maps contained in the bills passed by the Legislature after they were proposed this weekend. Redistricting is a process that necessarily involves compromise, and I appreciate the Legislature working to balance the various interests of all Oregonians."

There have been bumps in the road to approving the new redistricting map, as an original panel made up of equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans, originally tasked with the redrawing, was reformed with a majority of Democrats impaneled.

Danny Moran, communication director for Oregon's Speaker of the House Kate Kotek, said, "The bipartisan committee created many opportunities for good-faith negotiations. The speaker is disappointed that after many months of work, House Republicans did not engage constructively despite many attempts to address their concerns."

Republicans disagreed with this assessment of the

problems encountered by the equally split panel and suggested they were misled by the majority.

"We've been cheated; we've been had," said Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles said. "I don't know if that makes me a sucker, but if it does, I will be a sucker with integrity and character."

In her statements after the signing of Senate Bills 881 and 882, Brown chose to focus on the end result of the process.

"The right to vote is sacred. In Oregon, we know

that every vote matters because every voice matters in our electoral process," she said. "I'd like to thank the Legislature for coming together, through adversity, to pass legislation for redistricting. We do not always all agree, but when we find common ground, we can work together to do what is best for Oregon."

The map was approved by the Oregon House of Representatives 33-16 and approved in the Oregon State Senate 18-6. The map takes effect for Oregon's 2022 legislative elections.

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