

Kennedy from A1

teenagers stand huddled in the field behind the gardens, waiting.

Math and science teacher David Heritage counts down from three and they all watch.

There are no bells at Kennedy to signal the end of class, and today disappointment marks the distinction. The rocket that Heritage had planned to send off into the skies stands firmly on the ground. It will have to wait until he can supply it with new batteries or make the repairs himself — because while maintenance is happy to help at Kennedy, part of the learning experience is being hands-on and taking care of things yourself. Like when, a week before, Vicki Costello's class pulled on gloves and picked up shovels to weed the garden area while wrestling with stubborn blackberry bushes and springtime allergies.

Learning opportunities aside, maintenance will be there this summer when Kennedy gets a new home economics room and a library. It's two projects South Lane's maintenance head Matt Allen has on his to-do list, along with overseeing technological and security upgrades around the district, the redesign of the community pool, and the construction of the new Harrison Elementary School and early learning center that will sit in the footprint of the old portable buildings Kennedy used to call home. The projects are being funded with a \$35 million bond passed by voters in 2016. While original estimates called for approximately \$19 million to go to the construction of Harrison, the new school's price tag has already increased to nearly \$24 million, elbowing out funds for the other projects.

When estimates for the redesign for the pool came in roughly \$700,000 more than what the district had set aside, a community group stepped forward to begin fundraising, aided by the district's communication's office, which had also created a new logo for the pool and attended city council meetings to discuss the project. The early learning center that will sit in Kennedy's old footprint will house Head Start, a federal program aimed at educating children from low-income families prior to kindergarten. According to the district's ma-

terial outlining the bond funds, the building will receive just over \$1 million.

Head Start has yet to contribute to the construction.

Resolution 1711, passed by the South Lane School Board, cut Kennedy's Delight Valley moving budget, funded by the bond, from \$412,000 to \$200,000.

"I think one of the important things to understand is that

and to our school district to make sure that Kennedy came to Delight Valley and had an environment where those kids could learn best. So we used a lot of the bond dollars, and not a lot of the dollars — but a percentage of the dollars — was dedicated to making sure that Kennedy was not an elementary school anymore but Kennedy High School."

With the early learning cen-

tion on Taylor Ave. That's because, according to the Oregon Healthy Teen Survey, just over 26 percent of Kennedy students felt there wasn't enough money for food, compared to 17.8 percent statewide. As a result, many students were eating less than they should have while at home.

When Posthumus got to Cottage Grove High School, she felt lost in a sea of faces and ended up failing most classes her freshman and sophomore years. Faced with a choice of what to do, she elected to go to Kennedy as a last resort.

"I was told, 'Don't go to Kennedy, it's a terrible school,'" she said. "And then I come here and it's completely different. Like, there's so many more opportunities."

Once at Kennedy, the small-school environment allowed her to thrive. Behind by two years in credits, she made them up and took care of her remaining credits so that she can walk across the stage this weekend to receive her diploma — something that once looked like a dream that was impossible to reach.

"My success is definitely through Kennedy," she said. "My Kennedy family is probably the best support I have because they know, 'Hey, you mess up and that's okay as long as you fix it. If you continue to do it then it's your choice. But

if you want to work better, we'll help you with the tools that you need.' And that's what I love about Kennedy."

For Posthumus, she has not only gotten on track academically but also has seen her school help her through struggles in her personal life. Through guidance from trusted teachers that understand her, she has navigated difficult relationships in her life. An involved student, she designed the logo for Kennedy's sweatshirts, works on crew and makes sure that her fellow students respect their teachers.

"I've had a couple words with people and been like, 'Um, they're doing their job. They're paid to do this, they're not being disrespectful. They're asking you a simple thing. It's reasonable. They're your teachers. They're here to teach you. They just want to see you go down a good path,'" she said.

She still feels, though, that she is viewed in a negative light from parents, people around the community and even middle schoolers who share the same bus as Kennedy students.

"I think people really need to look more into Kennedy instead of just judging us because some of us aren't all the same," she said.

Schools across South Lane County receive grant money from various sources at the

See KENNEDY A11

"It's a major upgrade. Not as much mold."

—Toa Mageo, Student of the Month from Kennedy, drawing laughter while responding to a question from the South Lane School Board regarding how he felt about the move to the Delight Valley campus (May 7.)

we try to make sure that all of our kids in South Lane School District have the best educational opportunities possible. That's really, really important to us," said Garrett Bridgens, Communication Coordinator for South Lane School District. "And we do that through a variety of ways."

Statewide, school districts are struggling to maintain services as budgets continue to shrink. While the state passed a historic \$8.2 billion education package during the 2017 legislative session, educators requested \$8.4 billion and warned that school days, teachers and programs were still at risk. South Lane, like all districts around the country, receives funds for each student that attends school. In the budget adopted at the May school board meeting, South Lane receives an ADM (Average Daily Membership) of approximately \$2,514 per student.

Students who are considered special needs students are weighted, meaning the district receives more money based on the number of special needs students it has. The same is true for pregnant and parenting students, students who are facing poverty, or who are English-language learners. Pregnant and parenting students are worth double. So are special needs students.

The state does not require that funds districts receive for pregnant students be used

ned teacher, she also serves students at Cottage Grove High School.

According to Peter Rudy with the Oregon Department of Education, McKinney-Vento funds are distributed through competitive subgrants and in Oregon, those grants are released on a two-year cycle. South Lane School District is not currently a subgrantee, and therefore does not receive funds.

Stacked side-by-side, alternative school students tend to earn more money even though the total amount of funds a district gets is eventually divided equally among students. As a result, enrollment numbers at alternative schools, compared to traditional high schools, cannot fund the cost of keeping the lights on. However, alternative high schools traditionally educate the majority of students facing pregnant, parenthood, special needs, homelessness and other obstacles.

This year, Kennedy, which began with 94 students, had six pregnant or parenting students; 36 of those students were considered to have special needs, and 33 were homeless as defined by McKinney-Vento.

"And it's not just about funding, state school funding and how we do that," Bridgens said. "We want to make sure our kids have the best opportunity possible. And so, when we moved out to Kennedy, it was really important to our school board

ter taking its place on Taylor Ave., Kennedy made the move to Delight Valley, a former elementary school, and the district made several changes to the campus that had previously housed younger children. For example, sinks and toilets had to be adjusted in height. In addition, \$25,000 was spent to ensure that Kennedy students were able to receive hot meals in place of the cold lunches that had been bussed in to the loca-



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Potluck Lunch: 12:00pm
Worship: 12:30pm

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Youth & Families Pastor: Seth Bailey
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The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm
Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm

Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove
1447 Hwy 99 (Village Plaza)
541-942-6842
Pastor: Jeff Smith
Two Services on Sun:
9am & 10:45am
Youth Group Bible Study
Child Care 10:45am Service Only
www.cgcalvary.org

Center for Spiritual Living
700 Gibbs Ave. (Community Center)
Rev. Bobby Lee
Meets Sunday 3:00 p.m.
cslcottagegrove@gmail.com

Church of Christ
420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565
Sunday Service: 10:30am

Cottage Grove Bible Church
1200 East Quincy Avenue
541-942-4771
Pastor: Bob Singer
Worship 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
www.cgbible.org

Cottage Grove Faith Center
33761 Row River Rd.
541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Kevin Prueett
www.cg4.tv
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Service: 10:00am

Delight Valley
Church of Christ
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541-942-7711
Pastor: Bob Friend
Two Services:
9am - Classic in the Chapel
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

First Baptist Church
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Worship Service 11:00am
Youth Wednesday 6:30pm
cgfirstbaptist.com

First Presbyterian Church
3rd and Adams St
541-942-4479
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Worship: 10:00am
Sunday School: 10:00am
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Pastor: Wayne Husk
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Worship: 9am
Coffee Fellowship: 10:15am
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United Pentecostal Church
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Pastor: Dave Bragg
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Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm
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Sun: 10:30am
Confession: After daily mass,
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"VICTORY" Country Church
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