



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

First graders at Lyle Elementary School eat lunch on Monday. Dallas has made cost-saving measures in its lunch program.

DSD aims for savings on food service

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The food service program in Dallas School District is supposed to run independently of its partner of two years, Central School District — eventually.

After a review of the 2015-16 year that showed a need for cost savings and more efficiency, the district is taking a step in the that direction sooner than expected.

“We did need to have a really hard look at (if we could) shift some responsibility to our district staff, who are really competent, and see a reduction there,” said Tami Montague, the district’s business manager.

She presented last year’s review and this year’s plan during the Dallas School Board’s Sept. 12 meeting.

During 2015-16, the district budgeted \$990,000 for the program and expected to spend \$975,000, leaving a \$15,000 carryover.

Montague said they weren’t far off target, ending the year



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Students can select from vegetables at the salad bar.

with \$12,690, but by spring, program managers knew the cost of the program would be increasing more than the district could pay in the future. She said the management services contract, which includes half the salary of Central’s Food Services Manager Mike Vetter, was one of the biggest concerns.

“We knew that at point that we were going to have to have the conversation with Central about not being able to afford the entire half of Mike’s salary,” Montague said.

The estimated cost of management service for this year was \$117,900, including

half of Vetter’s salary and that of the in-district manager.

Montague said she talked to Vetter about reducing that and he said the in-district manager, with some training, could take on the bulk of the responsibility. The district would pay him as a consultant for 10 hours per month.

The move significantly reduced the contract cost.

“We are really pretty excited about this — and mostly because we are going to save about \$51,000,” Montague said. “That’s a big cushion. We are pretty thrilled with that plan.”

Overall, the district has seen growth in the program, with a 15 percent increase in breakfast and 4 percent in lunch sales. That is during a time when the district saw a 1 percent decrease in student enrollment.

Montague said the elementary schools are performing especially well. LaCreole Middle School and Dallas High School could stand to improve, though. She said the student population at the middle school fell slightly and the high school has always struggled to serve students in the allotted time, both of which affect sales.

“What we do recognize from this information is that we really need to focus on what our older students need from the program and try to meet those needs,” Montague said.

Other areas of focus will be restructuring the food service program in Luckiamute Valley Charter School to make it self-sustaining and using commodities in a more efficient manner.

Prepare your mind for emergencies

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

SALEM — You’re dumb during a disaster.

It’s not your fault. It’s your brain going into “survival mode” and shutting off higher function.

That’s according to Steven Eberlein, with the American Red Cross Cascades Region Foundation Partnership. Eberlein was the main speaker for the Red Cross’ disaster preparedness presentation “Prepare Out Loud,” in Salem on Thursday.

His presentation thoroughly covered the subject of the expected Cascadia subduction zone earthquake, from the geology that creates the mega quakes to preparedness tips.

He also discussed how people behave during an earthquake.

He showed video clips of people in earthquake-aware Japan doing things that didn’t seem logical. Instead using “drop, cover and hold” to protect themselves, people were putting themselves in more danger by trying to hold up grocery store shelves or running from buildings.

Eberlein said the culprit is the brain’s “fight or flight” response and our tendency to follow what other people are doing in

times of high stress.

The only way to overcome those sometimes detrimental instincts is to practice what you should do, he said. In other words, earthquake drills.

He acknowledges how silly that seems when Oregon doesn’t have that many earthquakes and “The Big One” may not happen for decades. Eberlein stresses doing it anyway.

“Eye roll your way through it,” Eberlein said.

He said practice still works even if you don’t take it as seriously as you should.

“We are not trying to make you smarter,” he said. “We are trying make your instincts better.”

Eberlein added another thing will help your state of mind in a disaster: preparing beforehand and remember items that will make a disaster situation seem normal — as much as possible, anyway.

“Comfort items — you need deodorant. You still are going to have to brush your teeth, even after Cascadia,” Eberlein said. “This is where you start to take control again and resume you’re your sense of normalcy, so don’t forget to put shampoo in your kit.”

For emergency kit weeks 15 through 18, go to www.polkio.com.

SCHOOL NOTES

Constitutional Essay contest open

POLK COUNTY — The 2016 Polk County Women for Agriculture Constitutional Essay contest is now open.

Students in grades 9-12 from Polk, Marion or Benton Counties may enter.

Contestants are asked to answer the question, “If the 1787 Constitution were presented today, would it be ratified? Why or why not?”

Each entry will receive a pocket copy of the Constitution. Each winner receives two books on the Constitution by Oregon author Mary Webster. Prizes will be awarded to first place (\$300), second place (\$200) and third place (\$100).

Essays must be 500 words or less.

Submissions will be submitted electronically and must be received by Dec. 31.

For full contest rules, visit www.owaonline.org/chapters/polk/.

Email entries to Arlene Kovash, kovasha@gmail.com.

For more information: Kovash, 503-838-3512; or Carol Marx, 503-362, 6225.



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