

SCHOOL NOTES

ODE provides assessment grant

DALLAS — The Dallas School District received a \$20,000 technical assistance grant from Oregon Department of Education to assess the condition of the district's buildings. "It is designed to identify which buildings are better off renovated and which buildings make more sense to replace," said Kevin Montague, the district's facilities manager. Architects performing the assessments must be certified by ODE, and one of those firms is already working on a project for the district. "They've indicated that because of their district familiarity, that they could hopefully do more facilities than the anticipated three to four that ODE expects this grant to fund," Montague said. It's possible all facilities could be assessed with money from the grant, he added.

Falls City receives music grant

FALLS CITY — The Oregon Community Foundation awarded the Falls City School District a \$20,000 grant to support music classes. The district's AmeriCorps' Ethos Program music teacher Jessica Wood applied for the grant, which will pay for Falls City's share of the cost of having her in the district and \$12,000 for instruments and music curriculum. Superintendent Jack Thompson said the grant is flexible, just in case AmeriCorps doesn't receive funding for Ethos. "AmeriCorps is now waiting to see if they get their federal budget for their grant," Thompson said. "If they get their grant, they'll fund Ethos. It all depends on what the feds come up with." Ethos has other funding options if the federal grant is eliminated, and the OCF grantors said they would be willing to have more of the money go to paying for Wood, if needed, Thompson said.

Eight WOU students recognized

MONMOUTH — Dulce Maria Zamora, deputy consul, and Claudia Cabrera, community affairs consul from the Mexican Consulate in Portland, visited the Western Oregon University campus May 16 to recognize eight recipients of a grant program administered by the consulate. The recipients did not want to be named because of their DACA status, according to WOU public affairs. The grant supports citizens of Mexico (including DACA students) living abroad who are pursuing higher education. At WOU, the scholarships benefit students in the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program. The total grant was for \$10,000, making it one of the largest awards awarded to Oregon partners through the IME Becas program.

Chase is OSEA Employee of the Year

INDEPENDENCE — Denise Chase, paraprofessional librarian at Central High School, was selected by the Oregon School Employees Association as its 2017 Employee of the Year. "Denise exemplifies the best attributes of our members," said Tim Stoelb, president of OSEA, in a press release. "Her peerless professionalism, immense integrity and warm sense of humor made her nomination stand out from this year's field of nominees." Chase's nomination was initiated without her knowledge by her fellow chapter members, who elicited letters of recommendation from coworkers and administrators. A committee of past OSEA presidents blindly selected her out of a pool of nominees from around the state. Chase will be honored throughout OSEA's annual three-day conference in June in Portland. She will be presented with a traveling trophy and plaque during the Saturday night awards banquet on June 24.



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

The WEB Program at Talmadge Middle School helps incoming students get ready for what's next.

Eighth-graders lead WEB Program

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — It's tough being a sixth-grader. Not only are you at a new school, but it's bigger — and with different classes and lockers and lunches.

Fifth-graders at Ash Creek Elementary School crowded into the Talmadge cafeteria on Thursday to learn more about their next adventure: Middle School.

Principal Perry LaBounty answered a few questions and introduced the councilors at Talmadge, but the real stars were the eighth-grade WEB leaders — part of the Where Everyone Belongs Program.

Questions came steadily for the experienced middle-schoolers: Will there be enough time for lunch? Will there be recess? Will we be late for classes? Will



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

The WEB Program works on making life easier for sixth-graders and preparing fifth-graders for middle school.

we get a locker? Can we chew gum?

Natalie Webb assured them they will have plenty of time to eat and get to class. They can even have some recess, and some teachers

will allow gum in class while others won't.

There's so much angst involved in the transition from elementary school to middle school that Talmadge Middle School

teacher Kelly Cutsforth brought the WEB Program to the building in 2008, when sixth-graders were moved from Ash Creek Elementary School back to the middle school.

Now, Karina Newbeck runs the program, filled with eighth-grade leaders working to make life a little easier for sixth-graders, while preparing fifth-graders to make the big move.

WEB leaders are hand-picked by Newbeck after applying for the program. Each student must have two teacher recommendations before they can be considered.

"They give up eight hours of their summer, and are here the first day of school, when it is just sixth-graders, so really two days of their summer," Newbeck said. "And they're missing class now."

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