

Raising the Standards of Education

By Wade Smith, Principal of Heppner Schools

In a time when schools across Oregon are slashing days, cutting programs, and reducing educational standards, Heppner Junior/Senior High School is doing just the opposite. Not only are we "thinking" outside the box, we are "acting" on our visions. From academics to athletics, the staff and I are raising the standards on our educational and athletic programs. As we finish out this school year, I would like to give our students, parents, and community members a glimpse of the direction we are heading and the undoubted success we will all reap from our academic and athletic paradigm shift that is already underway.

One of the key elements of any successful educational institution is the celebration of success. Over this academic year we have much to rejoice in. From individual academic student accomplishments to musical achievements to team competition victories, we all must applaud our students' efforts in their endeavors. Therefore, come one come all, whether you're a parent, grandparent, or community member, to Heppner Junior/Senior High School's first ever *Community Celebration of Excellence*. Sponsored by the Heppner Site Council, we are holding a free barbeque, awards ceremony and dessert on Tuesday, May 27 at 5:30pm. Come and enjoy a burger or hot dog while our band performs in the background. There will be plenty of classroom displays to enjoy in our open house format. The awards ceremony will start at 7 p.m., with dessert served at 8 p.m.

Another upcoming and exciting event is scheduled for our athletic program this summer, the Heppner Youth Sports Academy. Pioneered by our athletic department, this program strives to provide sports instruction to the youth and coaches in Heppner. This is an attempt to create a low cost camp for our youth to hone skills and receive top-level instruction. The goal is to accomplish this without having to leave town and pay large sums of money for camp experiences. Heppner Youth Sports Academy serves a dual purpose in that it allows the local coaches an opportunity to observe top level instructors and clinics and question top level instructors on teaching technique, game planning, practice planning, and all other facets of coaching. This is a no cost, low impact way for coaches to access these professionals without packing up and leaving town. The academy strives to create a teamwork atmosphere amongst coaches within each program. A scope and sequence of instruction that is guided by top level coaches and owned by all coaches. Well-trained connected coaches teaching common skills and attitudes serve the best interests of our youth. Heppner Youth Sports Academy strives to provide instruction in the following areas: Football, Basketball, Golf, Volleyball, Track, Softball and Baseball. This summer we have a football camp scheduled for June 11-13, a basketball camp June 15-17, and a volleyball camp June 18-20. All camps will provide instruction for Heppner athletes and coaches. Please contact the school for more information and registration.

As the school year winds down, underclassmen have been busy registering for next year's classes. As many of you may have heard, we have made significant changes to the curriculum offered at the junior high and high school levels. Although we are reducing staff, with creative planning and a new approach to how curriculum is delivered, we are vastly expanding our academic offerings. One of the biggest changes is in our language arts program. In the past, and still predominant amongst most schools across the state, students were tracked into classes based solely on their grade of enrollment. Simply stated, an eighth grader was placed in eighth grade language arts regardless if their abilities were above eighth grade standards or below. Needless to say, especially as class sizes grow, it is difficult to expect significant student achievement when there is such a discrepancy in abilities. Instead of tracking by grade level, we are now tracking by ability level. Thus, students in junior high that need a slower-paced class will be grouped together with other students of like ability. Similarly, students that are able to succeed at an accelerated pace will be placed in a class suited more to their needs. We are doing this both at the junior high and high school level. Determination of student placement is based objectively on four criteria: student achievement on the state reading assessment, achievement on the state writing assessment, their STAR[®] reading score, and their current academic accomplishments. For juniors and seniors who have the skills and determination to take an accelerated path, we are now offering an honors language arts class. The students enrolled in the honors class will also receive college credit for their hard work.

Another vast change is taking place in the math curriculum. Similar to past practice in the language arts field, we have placed students in classes based primarily on their grade level not necessarily on ability. Like the language arts format, we are now going to place students in classes that

best meet their needs to insure adequate learning and future success as they progress through high school. At the high school level students will find a vastly different approach to curriculum. No longer are we presenting our mathematics in the integrated approach that we have over the last seven years. As many school districts have discovered, this method was not as successful as it was prophesized to be. We are now going back to the tried and true, successful approach of the standard pre algebra, algebra I, geometry, algebra II, and calculus curriculums. Like our junior high mathematics, our schedule matrix allows students to take the appropriate class based on ability, not on their enrollment year. This will allow future high school students who have strong math skills to finish with calculus, rather than pre calculus or integrated III as our current system precludes.

As our students enrolled this week, I was also pleased to announce another offering for those who wish to challenge themselves in the social sciences field. Next year, we are offering an honors social studies class to juniors and seniors up for the challenge. As a college level class, students will receive college credit for their hard work and achievement. It will be an intensive reading, writing, and discussion based class that will allow our students to take a deeper look into government, economics, and the study of historical cultures and events.

Next to nursing, one of the fastest growing professions in the United States is exercise science. This is a broad field that encompasses everyone from personal fitness trainers, to team trainers, to physical therapists. We are now offering to juniors and seniors who are willing, an introductory to exercise science class. This class will cover topics such as sports nutrition, biomechanics and kinesiology, ergogenic aids, injury treatment and healing, and team psychology to name a few.

As our students work diligently in high school preparing for their futures, many have plans to attend college. In the past our counselor, Mrs. Hardman, has worked hard trying to give our students as much help as she could without having set times when she could work with our seniors on their future plans and preparation. Next year, we have set aside two elective college counseling classes designed specifically for seniors who are taking the college track. Much more than just a free period to work on college essays, this class will explore college options; students will evaluate different colleges and their benefits and drawbacks; there will be specific instruction on financial aid such as loan, grant, and scholarship planning; and students will receive the one-on-one attention and appropriate time needed to plan their futures. I am expecting that this class will both broaden the post high school "world views" of our students while they explore colleges and universities beyond what they thought possible, as well as helping them and their families reap the benefits of diligent scholarship and application efforts.

For our students that may not be college bound, we have a number of different options for them to explore. Our technology and vocational program has improved their offerings. Next year we are offering an advanced metals class to our students wishing to pursue or learn about the metals and fabrication field. We are still offering a number of technology and construction manufacturing courses to meet our vocational students' needs. Similarly, we will continue to offer accounting and business classes and computer courses provided by our business department. We are "going digital" next year with our yearbook and journalism classes. We have purchased the equipment and software necessary for comprehensive page layout using Adobe Premier[®] and Photoshop[®] coupled with digital cameras and scanners. Students will learn by doing as they digitally edit photos and compose page layouts and graphic design.

We will soon be mailing home your student's proposed class schedule for next year. Please take a look at the classes they have chosen. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to give the school a call. I am sure that you will find the courses offered as comprehensive and thorough as they have ever been at Heppner. It is an exciting time as we plan for the future of Heppner Junior/Senior High School and I am confident that we are heading in a direction best suited to prepare our students for life long learning and success.

End of the Year school calendar

The school year is coming to end for Heppner and Ione students. The last school day for seniors is May 30. The last school day for the rest of the students is Wednesday, June 11.

Heppner High School's Spring Concert will be held Thursday, May 22 in the cafeteria at 7 p.m. The Heppner Elementary School Spring Music Program will be held at 7 p.m., on Thursday, May 29. An 8th Grade Celebration will be held at the cafeteria on May 31, with a dinner from 6-8 p.m., and a dance from 8-11 p.m.

HHS graduation is Saturday, June 7 at 2 p.m.

Ione Elementary School will be having a Spring Concert, Wednesday, May 21 at 6:30 p.m. There will be an Open House at IES on Friday, May 30, starting at 6:30 p.m. Friday, May 29 will be the 8th Grade Dinner starting at 5:30 p.m.

Ione High School graduation is Friday, June 6 at 7 p.m.

Shenanigans play for state legislature



Representative Greg Smith (far left) with the Shenanigans: (back row L-R) Matt Holland, Kate Kendrick, Eric Jepsen and Kara Clay; (front row L-R): Brynna Rust and Alex Carlson.

The Shenanigans fiddle group from South Morrow County had the honor of opening the day's legislative session at the Oregon House of Representatives this past Friday, May 16. They were introduced by Representative Greg Smith of Heppner. The group played two of their favorite tunes for the legislators and received enthusiastic applause.

After their performance, Rep. Smith visited with them and they went on a tour of the capital building, which included a climb to the top of the rotunda. They also sat in on part of the legislative session. During a recess of the session, the fiddlers were able to go up to the podium at the front of the house chamber and sit in

the speaker's chair and practice holding the gavel. They also enjoyed visiting Governor Ted Kulongoski's ceremonial office and took turns sitting in his chair and posing for pictures. The governor himself was not available that day.

The Shenanigans group, which includes Alex Carlson, Kara Clay, Matt Holland, Eric Jepsen, Kate Kendrick and Brynna Rust, is directed by Peg Willis of Pendleton.

Shenanigans next local performance will be on Friday, June 13 in Heppner when they do the final performance of "The Flood, We Remember." This is a program highlighting the history of the Heppner Flood with pictures, narration and music.

Local son returns home on USS Abraham Lincoln

Petty Officer 2nd Class Gregory MacDonald, son of Kathy Robinson of Deadwood and Robert MacDonald of Heppner, recently returned from a 10-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf while assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, homeported in Everett, WA.

MacDonald was one of more than 10,000 Pacific Fleet Sailors and Marines aboard the ships of the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Battle Group and USS Belleau Wood Amphibious Ready Group who participated in

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

MacDonald's scheduled six-month deployment began in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch in July 2002. As the battle group neared completion of its deployment in December 2002, the USS Abraham Lincoln Battle Group was recalled to duty in the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

MacDonald is a 1997 graduate of North Eugene High School of Eugene and joined the Navy in July 1998.

Yard of the Month



Doris Atteberry (right) was awarded Yard of the Month along with Terri and Jerry (left) Gentry, owners of the property at 315 Gale St. Atteberry is only the second renter to ever be awarded Yard of the Month.

Community Celebration of Excellence to be held at HHS

The Heppner Jr/Sr High School is presenting the town with a Community Celebration of Excellence. The event will be held Tuesday, May 27, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the Heppner High School.

Parents, children and community members are invited come to the free barbeque and dessert. Also during the time classroom displays and student work will be available for all to see. From 7-8 p.m., Junior High

and High School Academic Awards will be presented in the gym.

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