

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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by the board was held in open meeting. Dirksen had opted for a public review, a policy that previous administrators eschewed, opting instead to hold their performance reviews in executive session. The board gave Dirksen an overwhelming vote of confidence, unbeknownst to him prior to the meeting. Dirksen garnered "excellent" reviews in all categories but one, "organizational management," in which he received an "outstanding." He received excellent marks in leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communications and community relations, organizational management, instructional leadership, human resources management, values and ethics of leadership and labor relations. The board based the review on a point system, awarding zero points for unacceptable, one for needs improvement, two for good, three for excellent and four for outstanding.

Two schools, Heppner Elementary and Heppner High School, were also recognized Monday night as receiving "outstanding" scores on the state school report card. Staff at the schools were honored with plaques and treated to cake and refreshments.

In other business, the board:

- received the Oregon Department of Education report on statewide dropout and graduation rates for the 2011-12 school year. According to the report, MCSD has a four-year graduation rate of 76.33 percent, higher than the state rate of 68.4 percent, and a dropout rate of 3.36, somewhat lower than the state dropout rate of 3.4 percent. The district's five-year graduation rate was 78.7 percent, also higher than the state's five-year graduation rate of 72.4 percent.

- "Morrow County School District is pleased that we exceed the state average; however we are also aware and concerned that we do not have 100 percent of students graduating on time," said the release. "Our plan is to improve our ability to identify all students that are not on track to graduate and work with them in meaningful ways that will encourage them to complete their high school diploma in four years or even five."

- heard an update on the status of the ongoing resolution of the serious drainage problem at Irrigon Elementary School.

- received the annual audit, which will be released at the March 4 meeting after board acceptance.

- received a \$420 donation from Pastor Jonathan Enz on behalf of the Heppner United Methodist Church toward music programs at Ione and Heppner schools. The monies were raised through the church's Christmas music program, "Christmas Is..."

- heard presentations by HHS math teacher Troy Morgan and technology teacher Dave Fowler on an Oregon Department of Education pilot research program which combines math and technology; and from HES teacher Jannie Allen on a pilot over-the-counter drug education program. She said that HES has



Top: (L-R) Top row—Heppner Elementary staff Mary Ann Elguezabal, Brandi Sweeney, Superintendent Dirksen, Rick Drake; bottom row—Jannie Allen, Sherry Matteson, Melissa Coiner, Karen Smith-Griffith and Karen Clough, receive HES's plaque from ODE. Above: (L-R) Superintendent Dirk Dirksen and HHS teachers Dave Fowler, Troy Morgan and Rick Drake accept HHS's plaque for being named an outstanding school by the Oregon Department of Education. Bottom right: Pastor Jonathan Enz (L) presents music teacher Rick Drake a check for \$420 on behalf of the Heppner United Methodist Church toward music programs at Ione and Heppner schools. The monies were raised through the church's "Christmas Is..." program. —Photos by April Sykes

received a \$500 donation to the basketball reading program, with an additional \$250 for books.

- heard a presentation from HES students on the school's CEO (Chief Example to Others) program.

- received three options for the 2013-14 school calendar, all with a two-week Christmas break.

- Option A calls for an early start, with teachers beginning Aug. 12 and students beginning August 19. The district noted that the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo will be held Aug. 15-18. The two-week Christmas break starts Dec. 20, with school resuming Jan. 6. Spring break would be March 24-28. Students would end May 29 and teacher work days are planned June 2 and 3.

- Option B calls for a pre-Labor Day start with teachers beginning Aug. 19 and students Aug. 26. Christmas break would begin Dec. 20 with school resuming Jan. 6. Spring break would be March 24-28. Students would end June 4, with teacher work days on June 5 and 6. This option is close to the current school calendar.

- Option C calls for a post-Labor Day start with teachers beginning Aug. 26, students beginning Sept. 3, Christmas break beginning on Dec. 20 and school resuming on Jan. 6. Spring break would be March 24-28. The students' last day would be June 18, with teacher work days on June 19 and 20. Dirksen said that he could not recall the last time the district has had a post-Labor Day start.

- Dirksen appeared to favor the early August start, saying that a change to an early start would give students more time to prepare for testing and would allow the semester to end prior to Christmas break, rather

than breaking it up.

The board normally accepts the option favored by the staff.

Board member Brian Kollman inquired as to what would happen to daily doubles if an early start was approved. Teacher Greg Grant, however, said that the state is now generally trending away from daily doubles as a student health measure. He also appeared to favor the early start, commenting, "We have taught more in August that we ever will in June."

- received the following enrollment report: A.C. Houghton Elementary-290; Sam Boardman Elementary-347; Heppner Elementary-178; Irrigon Elementary-199; Windy River Elementary-201; Heppner High School-173; Irrigon Junior/Senior High School-359; Riverside High School-394; Morrow County School District other-40; total-2,181.

- approved the following employment action for February: resignations/retirements/non-renewal-Jerry Gentry, Heppner High School assistant basketball coach, Pam Dowdy, HHS head volleyball coach; extra duty contracts-Nanci Mathews, HHS head track coach.

- approved rescinding and replacing professional development policies.

- approved the Inter-mountain ESD local service plans for 2013-14.

- heard a report from Dirksen and received reports from building principals on boosting security at district schools.

- held an executive session concerning personnel.

- heard the following announcements: President's Day holiday, Monday, February 18-no school; next board meeting Monday, March 11, Riverside High School, Boardman, 7 p.m.

Heppner students advance to state chess tournament



Above: The kindergarten through fifth-grade Heppner chess players. Front (L-R): Jon Waddell, Felix Mathew, Cedrick Dayandante, Gracey Deloach and Tyson Vawser. Middle (L-R): Mason Lehman, Jackson Mason, Kendall Dowdy and Gavin Hanna. Back (L-R): Adults Pat Struthers, Mary Ann Elguezabal, Dick Jones and Sherry Matteson. Not pictured: Hannah Palmer and judge and coach Wayne Seitz. Below: Sixth-through-eighth-grade players and coaches. Bottom (L-R): Joe Jones, Xavier Glover and Jimmy Adams. Top (L-R): Pat Struthers, Dick Jones, Alex Lindsay, Sherry Matteson and Mary Ann Elguezabal. —Contributed photos

Students from Hermiston, La Grande and Heppner came together on Saturday, Feb. 2, for the Regional Chess for Success Tournament. The teams that placed first, and individuals that placed first or had a score of 4.0 or better, qualified for the state Chess for Success tournament held in Portland on March 15 and 16.

La Grande and Hermiston each brought teams to compete in the Junior High Division. After five hours of play, the scores were Heppner at first place with 11.5 points, Hermiston at second place with 10 points, and La Grande at third place with eight points.

For the Elementary Division, Heppner was disappointed not to have any competition. So, naturally, the local elementary team also placed first. Heppner also had some individuals qualify for the state finals. Joe Jones qualified with 5.0 points and Alex Lindsay qualified with 4.0 points. Jackson Lehman qualified with a score of 5.0 and Mason Lehman qualified with 4.0 points.

The local branch of Chess for Success has been gaining popularity with students. Each September, organizers said, the students at Heppner Elementary School start asking, "When is Chess Mates going to start?"

The club has about 30 students this year, as well as six students—all former members—who come down from the junior high and high school to help out with teaching the game. Levels range from beginners to intermediates to advanced players, with some who are just beginning to learn the names of



the pieces and others who are serious about learning tactics and strategies.

During January, the club begins the tryouts for the Chess for Success Regional Tournament. There are three categories: kindergarten through fifth grades, sixth through eighth grades, and high school players. Competition is stiff, as the local club must pare regional competitors down to only 10 players in each category. The Heppner area only had five students for the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, including Joe Jones, Alex Lindsay, Jimmy Adams, and Xavier Glover.

The club had a good crowd for the younger division, and there were some tough games to narrow the field. This year, the players for the K-fifth grades were: Jackson Lehman, Tyson Vawser, Cedric Dayandante, Gavin Hanna, Mason Lehman, Kendall Dowdy, Hannah Palmer, Gracey Deloach, Felix Mathews and Jonathan Waddell.

After the tryouts, organizer Mary Ann Elguezabal asked one of the students what they had learned. One of the fourth graders commented, "I learned that a fourth grader can get beat by a second grader!" Tough competition, indeed.

Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Matteson and Mrs. Elguezabal are the organizers of the club, and Mrs. Sweeney is treasurer and secretary. The chess club also receives the time and effort of other volunteers: Wayne Seitz, Dick Jones, Cherry Weber and Pat Struthers were the mainstay volunteers this year.

"It is a tremendous relief to have these volunteers that are so knowledgeable about the game," Elguezabal said. This year, the tournament was held in Heppner, which meant the group needed lots of extra volunteers for coaching, judging, cooking and preparing snacks, technical support, set up, clean up and crowd control.

"We were blessed to have just the right amount of help at exactly the right time," said Elguezabal. The Heppner students still have a big job ahead of them, though. Before the state tournament on March 15-16, the teams will need to learn more strategy, practice patience, figure some new tactics and learn notation. The local club will also need to find some financial support to help with the cost of attending the state tournament.

Anyone who would like to volunteer or contribute, contact Brandi Sweeney at 676-9128.

Ione school announces honor roll

Ione Community School has announced its honor roll for the first semester of the 2012-13 school year.

The following students earned a 4.0 GPA: Kaitlin Garrett, Morgan Orem, Roman Rodriguez, Katelyn Boss, Tristan Estabrook, Maia Fuchs, Rachel Holland, Ann Rietmann, Joe Doherty, Lauren Garrett, Oskar Peterson, Bailey Haguewood, Emily Holland, Gus Peterson, Julianne Carlson, Stacey Halfvorsen

and Evan Rietmann.

The following students have earned honor roll status by earning a 3.5-3.99 GPA: Dayshawn Neal, Maggie Flynn, Karsyn Rios, Austin Morter, Babali, Peterson, Tatum Clark, KarsenDumler, Jason Juarez, Jessie Flynn, Joshua Stillman, Daniel Holtz, Rita McElh-gott, McKenzie Estabrook, Joel Stillman, Luke Jobes, Larissa Jones, Tim Emmel and Lacey Thompson.

The following students

have earned honorable mention status by earning a 3.0-3.49 GPA: Wyatt McNary, Austin Carter, Daniel Doherty, Donald McEl-ligott, Cord Flynn, Hannah Padner, Breawna Teeman, Sadie Hasbell, Marisol Avila-Ramirez, Hannah Flynn, Ashley Medina, Cassidy Braun, TJ Patton, Karina Rios, Audrey Guenther, Zane King, Jordan Braun, Kirk Haguewood, Shadow Kendrick and Stewart Syverson.

<p>Business Forms</p>	<p>Business Cards</p>	<p>Letterhead & Envelopes</p>	<p>Banners & Signs</p>	<p>Full Color Printing Heppner Gazette Times 188 W. Willow 541-676-9228</p>
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