

Umatilla students stay active during summer

By **SEAN HART**
Staff Writer

School can be difficult for students whose families move for agricultural work.

One student moved to the Umatilla School District halfway through the first quarter of last school year and then moved back to Arizona for three months while his mother was working there. The student later returned to Umatilla and then left again, only to return for the last two weeks of the school year.

To help students whose education has been interrupted, the InterMountain Education Service District provides summer school in Umatilla and Milton-Freewater for migrant students whose families moved within the last three years for agricultural work.

Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said 102 migrant students are enrolled in the summer program at McNary Heights Elementary School.

"Summer school is an opportunity to ensure that, while parents are working, (students) are able to obtain some consistent schooling throughout the summer to hopefully make up those gaps in learning that can occur during frequent moves," she said.

McNary Heights ESL teacher and summer school site administrator Nicole Taylor said the additional time in school is beneficial for migrant students, as is extra practice in English.

"We do have a few monolingual kids here right now, and they are coming and they are doing a great job," she said. "They are getting exposure to the language. They are getting an opportunity to continue with language programs they were working on during the school year to target their learning of English. It's a great intervention."

The summer school program benefits other students as well. Sipe said the district supplements the migrant program with Title I and 21st Century Community Learning Center funds to allow all students in Umatilla to attend for free. On average, 180 students have been attending the pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade program at McNary Heights each day, while an additional 40 have been participating at the high school.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Kids check out the new books they received Wednesday at McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla. The Children's Reading Foundation READ Up literacy program provides free books each week paid for with Ready 2 Learn grant dollars.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Jayden Hansen writes during his third-grade summer school class Wednesday at McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla.

"We have different ways that we fund different kids, but the key thing is that any kid can come," Sipe said. "They're covering reading. They're covering writing. They're covering math. But they try to do it in a way that is pretty hands-on and very engaging."

On Tuesday, students who will be entering the third grade this fall were performing experiments on gummy bears to see how the different substances affected the candy.

Jayden Vela said he thought summer classes would be boring, but after attending, he enjoyed them. Pedro Figueroa said he is bored when he is not at summer school.

The teachers try to make learning a fun experience, but Taylor said the education they impart is very beneficial.

"The kids are having a good time, but they are definitely getting reading and math intervention,

the region.

"How do you get people away from the technology and back in the grandstands?" Nelson asked. "That's where the evolution of the sport has come in. It's wild and crazy every Saturday at HSO. And that's what we have to do."

"Pretty much me and Dan have talked about a whole bunch of different events that a lot of tracks just don't do, and pushing the envelope of how crazy of an event you can have," Tarr said. "We're just really excited about the buses ... It should be really exciting for the fans."

up children from the grandstands, drove them around the track and pit area then dropped them off again.

At least initially, it looks as if the heavy amount of Tri-Cities advertising, mixed with exhibitions and special experiences at HSO have generated interest for the school bus races.

"The word's out," Nelson said. "We're getting more positive reinforcement."

The whole point of the bus race, Nelson said, is to generate a renewed interest in auto racing and save Hermiston Super Oval from the fate of Tri-Cities Raceway, and the only way to do that is to use events like the

EDUCATION

which is what they need so you don't see a huge drop in their fluency," she said. "One thing that people don't realize about reading benchmarks is that they are actually expected to gain (proficiency) over the summer with no instruction whatsoever, and that's just almost impossible."

Students are expected to read 60 words per minute at the end of their first-grade year, she said, but 80 words per minute by the beginning of second grade.

Sipe said the district has also been giving away free books to encourage reading through The Children's Reading Foundation READ Up literacy program, which is funded by a Ready 2 Learn grant. She said children in third grade and younger have been given a new book each week to encourage reading at home.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Third-grade teacher Sara Liebe helps Jayden Hansen and Rubi Munoz-Mendoza during her summer school class Wednesday at McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla.

A fresh batch of books was handed out Wednesday after the summer school session that ends at noon. For the six students participating in the science, technology, engineering and math academy, however, the educational opportunities continued into the afternoon.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Yamilex Madrigal-Armenta, Darlyne Munoz-Mendoza and Erika Aguirre-Luna eat lunch Wednesday at McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla. The Summer Feeding Program provides breakfast, lunch and dinner free to youth aged one through 18. Adults can eat for one or two dollars, depending on the meal.

Summer meals program growing in popularity

By **SEAN HART**
Staff Writer

No child should have to go hungry, and a program in Umatilla ensures children there are well fed.

Through the school district's summer feeding program, children ages 1 to 18 can eat breakfast, lunch and dinner for free each weekday.

The meals are funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program and are growing in popularity.

"It's been a great year for all of the summer feeding programs," Superintendent Heidi Sipe said. "One of the things we find is that it continues to grow. As word spreads, more and more people attend."

Sipe said an average of 185 people eat breakfast, 250 eat lunch and 30 eat dinner at the various sites. Adults can also partake in the meals for \$1 for breakfast and \$2 for lunch or dinner, she said.

"For the adults, that fee simply recoups our cost, so that we're not misusing the funds," she said. "We have to make sure that we're only feeding children for free, so we are very careful about that. It's still a great way for families to get out, go for a walk, do an activity."

Sipe said the meals also provide a social opportunity for families. McNary Heights attendance secretary Natasha Ugarte said many families are joining in.

"My kids have dinner during dinner time, and it's pretty successful," she said. "Full families come and eat, and I've noticed them intermingling with other families and talking about school. It's actually pretty cool."

The meals are served at different times and locations Mondays through Fridays. Breakfast is served from 8-9 a.m. at McNary Heights and from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Umatilla High School. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at McNary Heights, the high school and Kiwanis Park near McNary Market. Dinner is served from 4-5 p.m. at McNary Heights.

Sipe said for the first time the district has been offering its STEM academy during the summer. For \$10 per day, she said the students have the opportunity to further their technical education by studying topics such as the moon and volcanoes.

McNary Heights attendance secretary Natasha Ugarte said the fee scares many people away, but it

costs less than a babysitter.

"They pay a minimum of \$20 per day (for childcare)," she said. "We're a lot cheaper, and they get educated."

Sipe said students can still register and participate in the remainder of the STEM academy. For more information, call McNary Heights, 541-922-6650.

OVAL:

continued from Page A9

across and ramming the trailers," Nelson recalled. "We weren't really hurting the vehicles, we were just destroying trailers all over the place."

Although attendance is at a three-year high, according to Tarr, it still has a ways to go, and Tarr and Nelson are hoping that the continuance of events such as HSO's Month of Destruction will continue to raise attendance numbers at one of the last local bastions of auto racing in

BUS:

continued from Page A9

is it's not very (dangerous). The average person doesn't jump in a school bus and go ripping around a racetrack and crossing paths."

Nelson said interest for the first-ever Hermiston bus race is almost deafening. He said his phone has been busy with inquiries as far away as Yakima. A pair of buses with signage are parked in Hermiston to drum up interest, and Nelson is excited with the amount of interest he's already received. HSO hosted exhibition bus races the past few weeks, which included a bus tour that picked



STAFF PHOTO BY SAM BARBEE

In anticipation for Hermiston's first bus race at Hermiston Super Oval, a bus to be used Aug. 15 sits in front of Desert Lanes Family Fun Center.

school bus race to put get people in seats.

"I think it'll be crazy because we're running the school buses on the figure eight track," Tarr said, "and the length of the school buses — they're over 40 feet long so they're equal

so the length of four average-sized cars. They're gonna be in that intersection for so long, there's a good chance that the fans will see an intersection collision with the school buses. And I'm sure they'll go crazy."

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