

SCHOOL:

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into one location.”

He said the district would likely have to purchase modular classrooms before the next school year to accommodate the growth. He said the district is already looking into what to buy and where to place them.

“I think the biggest challenge our community faces with regard to the school district is how to handle this continued growth,” he said. “The long-term question is how do we address that growing student enroll-

ment with the challenges of limited capacity at each one of our schools.”

Smith said, despite the added challenges of relocating district staff to make room for students, he is excited for the upcoming school year. He said students may see some changes this year.

Elementary school students will have enhanced technology opportunities, he said, with grades three through five having one-to-one access to devices in the classroom.

Opportunities for high school students are expanding as well. Smith said more dual credit, enhanced

placement and online learning opportunities will be available this year. He said an additional art teacher has been hired to offer a digital arts program for students wishing to study film making and video editing. The Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder Program will be back again this year, he said, and students have already broken ground on the second house.

Maiocco said the district is also trying to proactively partner with parents this year to stress the importance of student attendance.

“Every day matters,” he said. “If a student is not on track in September in first grade, they are likely not on track to be at grade level in reading at grade three,” he said. “They’re more likely to become a chronic absentee than to be on track for reading in grade three.”



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

The new Hermiston School District office on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2015. The office is in use now, but construction and setup on the building isn't 100 percent complete.



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Kaeden Cragun, left, meets his new kindergarten teacher, Barb Leque, at an open house Monday at West Park Elementary School in Hermiston.



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Hermiston School District Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith, left, leads a tour of the new district office, 305 S.W. 11th St., during the first school board meeting there Monday.

LEAVE:

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fore the 2014-15 school year.

Prior to working in Hermiston, McElligott worked for the Morrow County School District and coached softball and basketball at Irrigon High School. While head coach of the Knights, McElligott won state titles in both sports. He was also a math teacher.

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said his office investigated allegations of a sex crime at the high school involving McElligott while he was working there.

“We looked at some reported allegations,” he said. “There was no evidence of a criminal act or witnesses that could provide any information that there was a criminal act involving Mr. McElligott, and that was closed out as ‘no action can be taken.’”

Hermiston police chief Jason Edmiston said the department also investigated allegations involving McElligott in February and determined the allegations were not sustained. He said the Department of Human Services provided the in-

formation about an incident alleged to have occurred in Hermiston. No criminal charges were filed, he said, and McElligott is not currently under investigation by Hermiston police.

Keller said the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission is required by law to investigate every complaint received, and anyone can file a complaint. The investigations take anywhere from a few months to more than a year, depending on the case, she said. When the investigation is complete, she said the executive director can recommend that the complaint be dismissed or that disciplinary action be taken against the licensee. Disciplinary action includes public reprimand, license suspension and license revocation, which are listed

on the Educator Sanction List on the commission website, she said.

If any of the disciplinary actions are pursued, Keller said the educator has the right to appeal the decision to the Office of Administrative Hearings, which can take several months. After the hearing, she said, the recommendation of the administrative law judge is presented to the commission for the final determination.

Prior to being hired at Hermiston, McElligott was credited with turning around the Irrigon Knights boys basketball program during his five years there. Irrigon went just 2-21 in McElligott’s first year, 2009-10, won five games in year two and 15 in year three before breaking through with a 28-1 re-

cord in 2012-13. The only loss came to Oakland in the state title game. A year later, Irrigon went 26-2 and won the state title, beating Oakland.

McElligott compiled an overall record of 76-52 in five seasons at Irrigon and went 6-17 in his only season at Hermiston. In six years as a varsity head

coach, McElligott has a record of 82-69 with the one state title.

— Sports reporter Sam Barbee contributed to this report.

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