

‘The Cove’ offers students calming space

A place for students to get back on track

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal



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Broadway Middle School Steve Sherren, educational assistant Amber McCanna and counselor Natalie Dyroff are the driving force behind the school’s new calming room, called The Cove.

Broadway Middle School has introduced a new program to help students, particularly those whose history involves trauma, acquire the tools for identifying and regulating emotional extremes to promote their overall wellness and academic success.

Counselor Natalie Dyroff and assistant principal Steve Sherren gave a presentation on the middle school’s recently established calming room, which the students chose to call The Cove, during the Seaside School Board’s regular meeting Nov. 20.

The space—similar to ones incorporated at The Heights Elementary School and Gear-

hart Elementary School in 2017-18—is set up with various stations and activities for students who need to take a 10- to 13-minute break and refocus themselves. The middle school team, which includes educational assistant Amber McCanna, developed on the program implemented at the

elementary schools as part of the districtwide embrace of trauma-informed care practices. They worked to tailor the middle school space for the older students and began rolling out the program in early November, wanting to ensure they had “the correct processes in place,” Sherren said.

Among the different grade levels there is common language regarding four “zones” of self-identification. Students are in the blue zone when they feel sad, sick, tired, or bored, and they are in the yellow zone when they feel frustrated, worried, or wiggly. The goal is to help them return to the green zone, where they feel calm, happy, focused, and/or ready to learn. The calming room is not designed for students who are in the red zone and experiencing extreme emotions that limit their ability to learn strategies for self-regulating. When students reach that level, the primary goal is de-escalation.

When students go to The Cove, either by election or at the direction of a teacher, they identify the zone they are in and select the station at which they would like to spend time. There are stations for movement, art, sensory stimulation, fidgeting, relaxation, and

playing brain games. Based on what the student is feeling or how they are struggling, McCanna gives them suggestions on which station might be helpful but ultimately allows them to choose.

After their session in The Cove, the students once again self-identify what zone they are in. The educators also engage the students in a discussion about what similar strategies they could employ on their own at home or in the classroom without being a disruption, Dyroff said.

Although they were concerned at first the calming room would be used merely as a way for the students to get out of class, the results so far show otherwise.

“They don’t try to manipulate the system,” Dyroff said. “It’s well-respected.”

Eventually, the administration plans to put small spaces in each room that emulate the calming room, often called

peace corners, where students can move to for a few minutes to “go reset,” Sherren said.

In other news:
• The board accepted a gift offer from Rack Room Shoes of \$7,740.43 worth of shoes for elementary students. The administration takes recommendations from teachers about which students are in need and then purchases the shoes and distributes them.

• The board approved a request from the nonprofit organization Council on International Educational Exchange to place exchange students at Seaside High School. The district has established guidelines for whether they agree to work with an exchange organization that include the organization is a nonprofit; has local representation or coordination; requires J-1 visas from students; and is approved under the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel. CIEE meets these guidelines.

Broadway Middle School students advance in tech contest

Students are state finalists in nationwide competition

Seaside Signal



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Broadway Middle School students are among those vying for success in Samsung’s “Solve for Tomorrow” competition.

classrooms — five from each state — were chosen based on their creative and strategic proposals to solve complicated issues that affect their communities by using STEM learning. All 250 teachers selected as state finalists will receive one tablet for their classrooms and have the opportunity to advance through future phases of the contest to win additional prizes and educational opportunities.

The state finalist schools were chosen based on their creative and strategic propos-

als to solve complicated issues that affect their communities by using STEM learning.

Along with Broadway Middle School, the Seaside School District is joined by Yoncalla High School, Yoncalla; Waldo Middle School, Salem; South Salem Senior High, Salem; George Middle School, Portland

State winners will be selected to submit a video of their project in action. For achieving state winner status, 40 of those schools will receive a \$20,000 Samsung technology package, including a Samsung video kit to produce their video. The other 10 will progress as a national finalist

Ten national finalists will be selected to attend a pitch event where they will present their project to a panel of judges. For achieving national finalist status, seven schools will receive a \$50,000 Samsung technology package. The other three will progress to the national winner stage.

Three national winners will

be selected, and each will receive \$100,000 in classroom Samsung technology and supplies.

With \$2 million in technology on the line, the state finalists will submit a lesson plan detailing how students

will execute the proposed STEM project and how it addresses the identified community issue.



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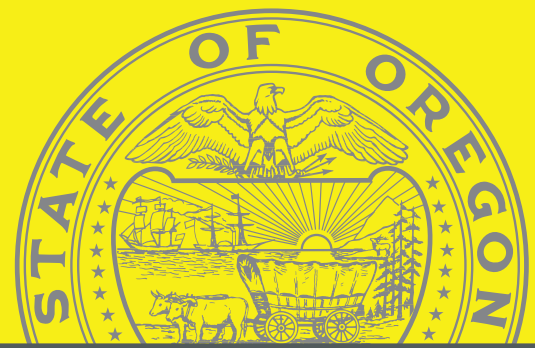
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