

Schools: Signs aim to serve as motivating force for students to stay in school

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is monitoring.

Boyd borrowed the idea for the yard signs from a similar community effort implemented in Newberg a couple years ago in response to the increasing teen suicide rate. Although the signs were intended as an anti-suicide campaign, the Newberg School District also saw a rise in their attendance rates, Boyd discovered.

He is working to distribute the signs to individuals and businesses throughout the Seaside School District boundaries. Although he hopes it will have an effect on attendance similar to what Newberg experienced, the campaign is also about reinforcing the idea of treating people with respect.

"In an environment that seems to be a little more 'you vs. me' than it's been in the past decade, we're a community that's going to support everyone, even those we don't agree with politically, socially, or even their lifestyle," Boyd said.

Getting students to school

Last year, the district team worked on several initiatives to gather data about

attendance and start promoting awareness. The high school sent an "attendance nudge letter" to all households, 464 in all, delineating between excused absences, unexcused absences, and regular attendance — or students attending school 90 percent of the time.

Although some students can handle missing school without it negatively impacting their grades, teachers can't give children the best education possible when they are not in class, Boyd said.

"Everything is a building block, so it's just that much harder to get the next piece," he said. "And you don't know what day is going to be the day that the light bulb comes on for that student to say, 'Wow, now I know what I want to do for my career.'"

The letters included comment cards for parents and guardians to fill out. They were asked if the letter provided new information, if it influenced them to encourage their students to attend school, and if they would work to help change the community's culture regarding attendance and promote school as a priority.

Boyd also experimented with a few programs that



The white yard signs going up around Seaside and the outskirts are part of the Seaside School District's efforts to create a positive environment in the community and motivate families to prioritize their children's attendance at school. The campaign is modeled after a successful one implemented in Newberg a couple years ago.

included tangible rewards. For one of them, the administration picked random days to stop by all the classes and give a prize — such as a sheet cake or pop-sicles — to those with 100 percent attendance. Typically, about one-fourth of classes would be eligible.

For another program, the school received a \$50 gift card from Del's Chev-

ron and purchased hundreds of other \$5 gift cards using another grant from the Northwest Regional ESD. Any student who met the attendance goal of 90% for a month was entered into a drawing for the \$50 gift card, and those who weren't picked still got a \$5 gift card. The program was done for both the months of April and May, and the school saw

the attendance rate improve significantly.

Although Boyd doesn't anticipate bringing back either of those programs this year, he feels they accomplished their goal of "promoting attendance, raising awareness, getting kids talking about it."

The high school's regular attendance rate rose from approximately 65% in 2017-18 to about 70.2% in 2018-19.

Continuing the effort

Looking ahead, Boyd is interested to see the impact of the sign campaign. He is hesitant to try multiple initiatives at once or in quick succession, as it deters their ability to gauge the effectiveness of each one.

The high school will continue a few of the efforts implemented last year, however.

In place of study lab, the school introduced 25-minute classes with about 30 to 34 students and two instructors per class. The students will stay with their class and instructors throughout their whole high school career, regardless of grade level.

The administration hopes the colloquium classes give students a chance to connect

with an adult educator, who reviews their grades and attendance weekly and helps them develop both academic and soft skills. By fostering that relationship over a long period, Boyd believes, school staff can better understand students' individual needs and address them.

Additionally, over the summer, he reached out to local medical providers and asked for their help controlling an area that contributes to absenteeism: doctor appointments. If schedulers can make an effort to suggest appointment times outside of school hours, it provides families with more latitude to prioritize school attendance.

"The medical providers were really receptive to that," Boyd said.

Finally, the high school's attendance secretary Shirley Yates will continue to make personal phone calls to parents and guardians when students have an unexcused absence, as opposed to them receiving an automated message.

"If teachers and administrators and parents can all work together to be on the same page, it will really help keep kids in school," Boyd said.

Drugs: Providence Seaside makes prescription drug disposal easy with new program



Jodi Vantress, pharmacist in charge; Julie Owens, pharmacy manager, and Dan Gist, technician and CPAT buyer, pose in front of the MedDrop box located in the pharmacy at Providence Seaside Hospital.

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of these packages. A considerable amount of research went into selecting this company, she said. "They provide proof of incineration." Packing up the medical drop box is labor intensive and time consuming as it is a legal requirement two pharmacy employees are present to witness the packages being passed off to UPS.

One might wonder if at least some unused medication could be repurposed, i.e. given to someone who can't afford it. Some states, for example, allow for unused veterinary medication to be returned to the prescribing veterinarian's office to

be administered pro bono to animal patients who have no owners, or whose owners can't afford their pet's meds.

"The reason drugs can't be repurposed is because many are temperature and humidity sensitive and there's no way to know how they've been stored," Owens said. "Also there's no way to know if they've been tampered with."

The Seaside Providence Hospital drop box is located inside the retail pharmacy. Pharmacy hours are 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., seven days a week, except for Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

"This is a community service," said Alana Kujala,

Seaside Hospital's Community Partnerships Liaison. "By having two locations in the city, we can stay on top of it."

The medical waste drop box is impossible to miss. It's a powder coated steel receptacle with a one-way medicine drop and locking drop door. To prevent tampering or theft, the door is triple locked, and the receptacle itself is securely fastened to a structure that is permanent. The box meets

DEA requirements and is made in the USA.

Similar drug collection receptacles can be throughout the north coast. In addition to the one in the lobby of the Seaside police station, other receptacles are located at the Warrenton police station, the Astoria police department, the Cannon Beach police department, and Columbia Memorial Hospital.

"I'm proud of this program," Julie Owens said.

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