

Banks reinstitutes driving training course using private company

A Driver Education program has been approved by the Banks School Board. Superintendent Marilyn McGlasson said that it has been approximately seven years since the district has offered a driver education program.

Parents have been able to obtain drivers training through private driving schools or by paying neighboring districts to allow their children to participate. Recently demand has increased on school-sponsored programs and Banks students are no longer able to participate in other school districts programs. According to McGlasson, 25 students have purchased commercial driver's training at a cost of \$275 - \$425 per student just since January 1, 2000.

Due to recent changes in the law the Driver Education program is now managed as a part of the Oregon Department of Transportation, which maintains a list of State-licensed and approved driver training schools. School districts may contract with one of these approved schools and receive a reimbursement for part of the cost from ODOT.

According to McGlasson,

Tom's Driving Academy, a state-approved school, offers a unique program. As a home-based course, it meets the needs of busy Banks students who can complete written course work on their own schedules. After successful completion of the written work, the family car is used for behind-the-wheel training and a mock driving test. Since January, 2000, twenty Banks students have privately contracted with Tom's Driving Academy. McGlasson interviewed 10 of these students/families and received only positive reports.

The Board approved contracting with Tom's Driving Academy. This will reduce the cost to students/families from \$295 to \$195. Students will enroll in the program through the District and the District will receive a reimbursement from ODOT to cover the actual cost of the program.

Banks High School math teachers Jim Wiechman, Laurie Daliposon and Carla Clark gave a presentation about the Integrated Math curriculum which interweaves the subject areas of Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, probability and

statistics, which are needed for the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) math requirements. The program is designed so that a student can obtain the three math credits necessary for graduation in Integrated Math, but may also opt to go on to Trigonometry and Calculus. Students can progress from one class to the next by obtaining a grade of C or better, either as their second semester grade or on the final exam. Wiechman, Daliposon and Clark are available for both before- and after-school tutoring and are assisted by Tracie Heidt, an AmeriCorps member. Heidt is available to tutor mathematics from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day.

Jeff Smith, Banks High School Principle, discussed the strategies used to increase school attendance. The school now calls the home of every student who is missing from school every day. Vice-Principal Jim Foster continues to follow-up with parents of students who have unexcused absences. According to Smith there has been a strong positive response from parents to these phone calls.

Another element in the effort

is written guidelines for pre-excused absences that align with new district policy. The guidelines clearly delineate the responsibilities of parents, students and teachers and the procedure for obtaining a pre-excused absence. The guidelines emphasize the importance of regular and consistent attendance and encourage families to limit pre-excused absences.

Banks Elementary School Principal Esther Lee discussed a change that has been made in Grandparents Day. In the past, a security problem was created when large numbers of children left the school with their invited grandparents, leaving the school unable to account for them. The elementary school will encourage grandparents to attend school with their grandchildren by arrangement with the office. This will give the children a chance to demonstrate their talents and provide more control. The elementary school will also host a lunch picnic in the spring.

McGlasson announced an opening on the Budget Committee. The board will review applications in January and

make an appointment in February. The board also approved the budget calendar.

In other action the board;

- Moved the January meeting to January 22nd.

- Thanked Jim Pursley for his donation of \$1000 to the Wetlands Project.

- Heard a presentation by Jeri Lerwick and Ralph Brown from the AmeriCorp program. Brown commended the high school staff for including the Americorp member as an active part of the teaching team.

- Were informed that quotes are being obtained to install a speed bump at the entrance to the student parking lot.

Listened to board member Joe Evers review of the program presented by veterans for students on Veteran's Day.

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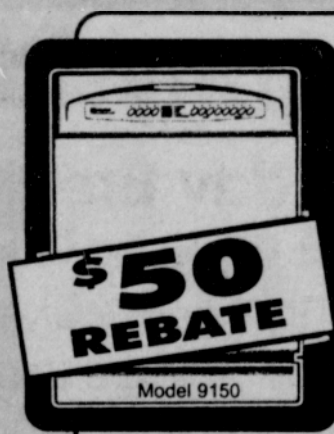
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