

Morale high in Banks schools despite unknown funding amount

Banks School District Board of Directors heard a grim report from Superintendent Marilyn McGlasson, at their September 16 meeting, about the state of school financing. Future Farmers of America (FFA) representatives presented their summer activities and administrators unanimously reported that school began on a positive note despite the grim financial picture.

FFA Chapter President Tim Dyck reported that two summer fundraising events, tire recycling and a hay bale maze at the Banks Barbeque, were very successful. FFA members also did extremely well at both the Washington County Fair and the Oregon State Fair. Three chapter members, Dyck, Jared Rigert and Ryan Evers, will travel to the 75th annual national FFA convention in October.

Superintendent McGlasson noted that enrollment in the district continues to rise, with about eighteen more students enrolled than projected. During the summer, many maintenance activities were completed, including a huge cleanup underneath the grandstands and the installation of a new sidewalk as part of a city grant. McGlasson told the board that

the district had opted to let the grass dry out and get brown because of increases in water rates. She also expressed thanks to two individuals, not parents of district students, who organized a crew of approximately 30 volunteers for general cleanup and beautification throughout the district as part of the annual SOLV Clean-Up Day.

Funding discussed

McGlasson spent some time explaining the political situation in relation to school funding. The continuing debate about how to solve the budget dilemma has become a political argument for both Democrat and Republican legislators in the face of upcoming elections in November. Further complicating the budget shortfall is that, as of Sept. 16, data project a continued reduction in the Oregon economy of \$150 million per month, according to McGlasson, due primarily to reduced income and capital gains taxes. McGlasson told the board that she is in daily contact with the Confederation of School Administrators (COSA) and the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) about the situation and has discussed the

impact of reduced revenue with state Representative Bruce Starr, who represents the Banks area.

The situation is particularly difficult because Banks, like school districts across the state, is still waiting for actual numbers, rather than vague projections, of what revenue they will be receiving. McGlasson assured the board that district policy is being followed and, as she said in a letter to parents, "whatever the results from Salem, the situation handed to us will be handled with fairness and equity in an attempt to minimize, as much as possible, the impact on students."

After school lab opens

Banks Elementary Principal Marty Voge reported that referrals were significantly reduced from last year and that morale among the staff was high. BES has a new AmeriCorps member, Theresa Pompili, who will be supervising the grant-funded after-school learning lab that is expected to begin in October and run through May. Voge also told the board that he has been working with John Schaefer on ways to improve bus loading.

"Very large" class of freshmen

Banks High School Principal Jim Foster told the board that the very large freshman class has had him scrambling for basic materials such as textbooks and desks. Because this class is a "bubble" in the enrollment, and next year's enrollment should drop back to more normal levels, Foster said that it is difficult to justify buying books that will be used only this year, but he had obtained enough used texts and donated desks to complete the school year.

Foster told the board that all Banks high school teachers are now certified to sign-off students on the Proficiency-based Admission Standards System (PASS), the new system of admission to Oregon colleges,

that is integrated with the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). The high school staff is developing curriculum for the CAM for implementation next year, according to Foster.

During the board round table, Chairman Joe Evers said he hoped that all five members of the board would be able to attend the OSBA regional conference next month. He also said that after a visit to the special needs classroom, he greatly admires the ability and patience of the teachers. Director Gene Kelly said he was glad to see the upbeat attitude of district administrators and encour-

aged the administration to stay positive in this time of financial crisis. In reference to the financial troubles of the district a couple of years ago Kelly said that the district had greatly reduced expenses before and "we can do it again."

Bargaining contracts ratified

Following an executive session to discuss the recently completed collective bargaining process, the board returned to general session to ratify contracts for both licensed teachers and classified employees. Both agreements fall within the parameters established by the board and are for the 2002-2003 school year. The highlights of the agreements are as follows:

- Four percent step increase for classified employees
- Three percent step + one percent cost of living increase for licensed teachers
- \$600 insurance cap
- Language that will allow the district to reopen contract negotiations related to the potential loss of 2002-2003 revenue.

McGlasson said that the work of the board negotiating team (Nancy Hungerford, Willis Meeuwesen, Doug Nordholm, Nancy Hall, Jim Foster and Jim Smith) required extreme patience and endurance to complete the arduous process begun last spring.

Banks Centennial Chili Cook-Off

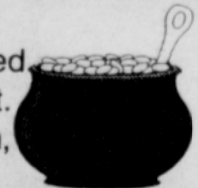
The Banks Centennial Chili Cook-Off will be held October 19 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. next to Jim's Supermarket in the Oak Village Shopping Center on South Main in Banks.

The cook-off is open to the public, with a registration fee of \$25.00 for a chili entry.

Participants start cooking at 9:00 a.m. and must do all cooking at the site, supplying their own equipment and stove. Clean-up is also the participants' responsibility.

Wine tasting and dessert will also be offered and a silent auction will be held during the event.

For more information or a registration form, contact Mike Riddock at 503-324-9023.



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