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Humbolt Elementary October Academic Awards



Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Hanson's 3rd Grade classes created their own superheroes, testing out their superpowers.



Readers join the 100 Book Club



Students receive Self-Manager Badge

PROSPECTOR PRIDE

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Humbolt Elementary School and Seneca Elementary School

Seneca Elementary: Building bright futures with a 'one-room schoolhouse' model

By Angel Carpenter

With just 14 students attending Seneca School, Head Teacher Tina McCormick ensures each student gets plenty of personal attention, fostering values like responsibility, accountability and leadership.

"Because they've known each other for so long, they're like siblings, and some are siblings," she explained. They support and help each other, forming a close-knit community.

Among these students, seven are in grades four to five, while the other seven are in kindergarten to second grade. This arrangement allows older children to become role models for the younger ones, according to McCormick, who is in her fifth year of teaching at Seneca School.

This year, they've adopted a "one-room schoolhouse model," with one main teacher, and the school staff wear many hats.

McCormick, who serves as the primary teacher, instructing students from first through fifth grades, said she has found support through a rural remote collaboration called Eastern Oregon Regional Educator Network "REN." This year, their primary focus is ensuring the students meet or exceed math requirements.

LeAnn Coalwell takes on multiple roles at the school. Not only is she the kindergarten teaching aide, she also drives the school bus, despite the bus barn being located 25 miles away in Canyon City. Coalwell's duties also include teaching

computers and typing and managing the library.

Lacey Elliott serves as the administrative assistant and instructional assistant, teaching art, music and physical education. Additionally, she helps with the four kindergartners in the morning.

Skip Ryder, the school custodian, also serves the students' hot lunches and takes on recess duty.

McCormick said she is pleased with the outcomes of their hard work, and seeing the students helping each other.

"I love how these kids are so caring for each other, and they come from great families, and they want to learn," McCormick concluded. "I think my kids are the best kids, hands down."

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Seneca School students and head teacher Tina McCormick enjoyed a daylong field trip to Idlewild Campground Oct. 4 where they learned about fire safety, wildlife and environmental conservation.

Front row, left to right: Blain Gravem, Hennessee Phillips, Wesley Ford, Sadie Hughet, Isaac Hughet, Severin Mortimore, Hannah Hendrix-Lawrence
Back row: Avah Snapp, Zivah Moore, Blaine James, Danner Moore, Noxi Long, James Moore, Quentin Graves, Head Teacher Tina McCormick

Community Supports Homecoming

Thank you to all the amazing community members and businesses who helped make our Homecoming week a success: Polaris, GC Fairgrounds, City of John Day, Sheriff Todd and all the County law enforcement, John Day Fire Department, Bob Armstrong, Tanni Sanowski, Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, John Day Floral, Erin Hodge, Kristal Hansen, Trista Cox, and all the businesses who decorated! We appreciate your support!

-Kalli Wilson and the GU Leadership Team

Thank you Humbolt Staff

I would like to give a shout out to all the Instructional assistants at Humbolt. You all do an amazing job. Each one of you are valued and we all appreciate you more than you know. Our school couldn't operate without you.

-Shanlee Cobb, Special Education Teacher

GU is Grateful for Amy Hunt

Amy Hunt is a great addition to our Grant Union Staff. She is committed to creating a pathway for every student to find success at school and beyond. Her dedication to making sure the schedule was as good as possible for every student is greatly appreciated. Amy Hunt's can-do approach and work ethic are phenomenal! Thank you Amy!

-Mark Witty, Superintendent

A Giving Community

I wanted to give a shout out to Malheur Lumber for their donation of wood chips for the playgrounds at Humbolt and Seneca. And also, Byron's Excavating for hauling the wood chips.

-Dustin Wilson, Head Custodian/Facilities Manager

Maintenance and Custodial Crew

The GU maintenance crew worked hard this summer to make GU look great both inside and out. Their dedication and care make our school better for students, staff and community members. Thank you Debbie Gibson, Hadley Boethin, Dixon Apostol, Dennise Blevins and Dustin Wilson!

-Mark Witty, Superintendent

Thank you Jay Colson

Jay Colson is a gem. His willing spirit and heart for Grant Union High School is unparalleled. He works tirelessly to set up for games, run scoreboards, and announce for games. His organization and discipline in keeping track of ever-changing schedules is amazing. Jay often rearranges his personal schedule and makes himself available on short notice. Jay's commitment to the student-athletes at Grant Union is inspirational. I know he wants everyone to remember, "It's a great day to be a Prospector!" Thanks Jay.

-Andy Lusco, Assistant Principal, Grant Union

Trista Cox Goes Above to Serve Students

I want to publicly thank Trista Cox for going above and beyond at the GU Soccer match on Saturday, September 9. She greatly assisted me in making sure the teams, officials and fans were taken care of in a timely and positive manner. Trista, thank you for all that you do to support our students and staff!

-Mark Witty, Superintendent

Fall Carnival!

The Humbolt Fall Carnival was amazing! Thank you to Humbolt PTA for this wonderful event for our students! We would also like to thank all the staff, families, volunteers and community sponsors that helped make this event a success! We have such a wonderful community!

Thankful for Catrina Gabbard

Catrina Gabbard is an amazing asset to the District. She came over to GU to train the Administrators and Secretaries on the School Messenger program so that we can more effectively communicate with our families. Her training was incredibly efficient and succinct. Thanks to Catrina, we all have much more confidence that we can use this important tool to reach out to the community. Thanks for this and all the great things you do for our district. You are a great teammate and always put kids first.

-Andy Lusco, Assistant Principal, Grant Union



Send a shout-out to staff, students or community members, in 100 words or less by sending an email to shoutout@grantesd.org.

Miller Receives Teacher of the Year

In September, the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Lottery named Robyn Miller one of the Regional Teachers of the Year. Miller believes that successful teaching comes down to a few important ingredients: love, acceptance, and belief. Miller shows every student, love and acceptance regardless of any barriers they face and believes that all students can achieve and do well. This positive classroom environment is what catches the attention of every student, parent and co-worker who have the opportunity to work with Mrs. Miller. "My biggest goal as a teacher," says Miller, "is that all students leave my classroom with self-confidence, the feeling of success, and the motivation to continue to learn."

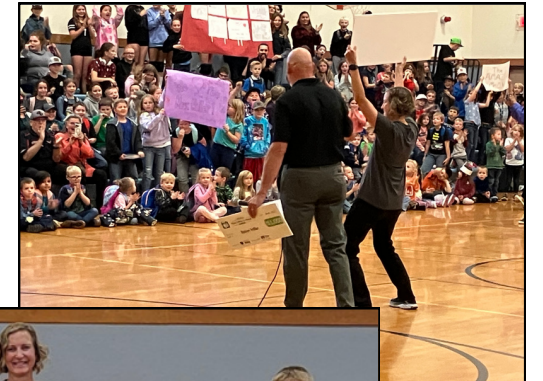
"She has the innate ability to connect with all students," stated Grant County ESD Superintendent Robert Waltenburg in his

recommendation to the selection committee. "She meets each student's learning needs in ways that go above and beyond the average educator. Students blossom in her classroom, making tremendous gains academically and socially."

This prestigious award was presented to Miller by representatives of the Oregon Lottery at an assembly before the entire student body. Miller may have been surprised with the award, but the Humbolt students were included in the secret on the day of the presentation. The students wholeheartedly agreed with the commendation, cheering and waving posters of support. Miller had a chance to thank the students and staff. "I cannot tell you how much I love working at Humbolt and how much I love working with each and every one of you. Thank you everyone. You are amazing!"



Teacher of the Year Robyn Miller celebrates with her 3rd Grade Class.



45 Elementary students participated in a one mile race following GU's home cross country meet, October 19, 2023

Homecoming 2023



Students of all ages flood the court when Grant Union wins the Dig Pink volleyball game to participate in the traditional "Pick Axe."



Homecoming Court announced during the Football Game.



Cross Country wears pink in honor of Dig Pink and breast cancer awareness.



Sophomore boys have a team meeting during the Power Volleyball game



Seniors pose after the Powder Puff Football game.

2023 Homecoming Court:
 Freshmen Everett Vardenega and Gracee Hueckman
 Sophomores Jakob Reeves and Jamie Vandehey
 Juniors Ryland Beil and Fallon Giffin
 Seniors Eric Culley and Drew Williams
 King Alexander Finley and Queen Macy Carter
 Seniors Till Winegar and Sivanna Hodge
 Seniors Tallon Van Cleave and Halle Parsons



Seniors Sivanna Hodge, Leila Wenick, Drew Williams, Halle Parsons, and Jaydika Anderson hang out at the Bonfire



Seniors pose while bowling at the 5th Quarter Party (after the football game)



Power Volleyball



Powder Puff Football
 Seniors & Freshmen vs Sophomores & Juniors



Right: The 8th Grade hall became the Wild West during Homecoming week hall decorating.



Senior court poses with the GU Spirit Stick... their trophy for winning the Homecoming festivities!
 Thank you Studio 15 Photography!



Freshmen and Sophomore Classes during the Noise Parade



Juniors and Seniors hoot and holler their way through John Day

Julie Reynolds, Prospector for Life

Grant Union runs deep in my veins,” stated Julie Reynolds, who grew up in Grant County as Julie Ann Elligsen, attended the old Canyon City School, Humbolt Elementary, John Day Middle School and graduated from Grant Union High School, class of 1967. “I am proud to be a Prospector.” Reynolds attended Oregon State University, majoring in Education, before returning to Grant County to teach. “My husband, Dennis, and I were excited to return to Grant County to start our careers and raise a family.”

After teaching at Prairie City High School, Mount Vernon High School, and John Day Junior High, Reynolds achieved her dream of returning to her Alma Mater. In the Fall of 1991, Reynolds returned to Grant Union to teach English, Journalism, Drama, and Creative Writing. “I found great pleasure in reading papers by my students and in directing over 80 plays.” Dennis and Julie raised three sons who also graduated from Grant Union High School: Percy (1994 graduate), Beau (1999 graduate), and Jake (2010 graduate).

When she retired in 2011, Reynolds began to substitute teach for the schools with priority being given to Grant Union. “I always enjoy the feeling of walking into ‘my school’ and the energy of students. Substitute teaching has placed Reynolds in some very different classrooms from her own. “I have learned to greatly appreciate teachers of all subjects and ages,” stated Reynolds, who returned to Grant Union as a full-time substitute in January 2023 to finish out the school year. “I wanted to establish good habits in reading, writing, and grammar in

grades 7,8 and 9.” Reynolds introduced herself to her new students with the announcement, “I am old, old school, and a life-long Prospector.” If Reynolds could share one piece of advice for students today, she would tell them to “be respectful to everyone. Do your best and be proud of your work, it will show. Your work is a portrait of you.”

Reynolds completed the school year for Grant Union and has returned to substitute teaching for the 2023-24 school year. Reynolds now walks the halls with previous co-workers, past students who have returned to teach, and a new generation of students. “I love this school, students, staff members, and the spirit of the activities offered; sports, clubs, and personal projects.” When asked about her thoughts on education today, Reynolds stated, “As teachers, we need positive support from parents and community. Be true to your school, compliment students, teachers, administrators, para educators and staff. Go Prospectors!”



Grant School District 3 Plans for the Future

Grants School District 3 is in the process of strategic planning, which creates a vision for the next three years and measurable goals to achieve that vision. “The Grant SD #3 Strategic Plan will be critical in setting the direction of the district over the course of the next 3 years,” according to Superintendent Mark Witty. School board member Amy Charette stated that strategic planning “helps to align the District’s goals with its resources and capabilities.”

Parent meetings were held in September at each of the three schools asking for feedback on what the district is doing well and what areas parents consider to need the most improvement. The feedback from these meetings is being put into action both at the school and the district level. At the school level, this feedback is resulting in increased communication and the chance to work on immediate goals. At the district level, this feedback will influence the strategic planning by the school board. But the district is not done hearing from parents and

community members.

The Superintendent and school board have created an advisory committee, consisting of various stakeholders including 2 parents, 1 clergy representative, 2 high school students, and 4 members of the community that represent various groups in our community, 4 staff members, 2 school board members and the superintendent. Charette added that this community involvement “will ensure that the District and schools are working towards a common vision, which will lead to improved educational outcomes.”

The group will begin meeting on November 16, with a plan to present their recommendations at the February 21, 2024 board meeting. The attitude around the district office is very positive and energetic these days. “I think the Board is excited about the outcomes this process will bring and the ability to evaluate how the District is doing in meeting the goals, I know I am!” Charette stated.

CTE Programs Offered at GU

An automotive shop bustles with activity behind Grant Union Jr/Sr High School. A truck is being torn apart and put back together while a car is preparing for paint. These projects are part of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes offered at Grant Union. The automotive program is in its fourth year of classes, the third year since they have had their own shop, according to instructor Jason Miller. The automotive program was funded by High School Success Measure 96 which directed funds toward dropout prevention, career and technical education, and college-level education opportunities. “The auto shop program is a great opportunity for our students to develop life skills that will serve them well in the future,” according to Andy Lusco, Assistant Principal. “Additionally, it is a wonderful chance for them to find out if they have the aptitude and interest to work in this field.”

Students in their first year of automotive classes are faced with a curriculum of various modules to be learned, in addition to a shelf full of engines. Each student begins with an introduction to the shop and tools before becoming familiar with a working engine by removing the outside covers and looking at interior parts. They next dismantle the engine and rebuild the carburetor before putting the engine back together. Eventually, every student learns to completely dismantle the engine before returning it to its original condition and confirming that it still runs.

The classes then move into working with vehicles, becoming familiar with each of the systems and everyday scenarios such as changing the oil, charging a battery, etc. Once in a while, a student has a situation with their own personal car and comes seeking advice

from Miller. If he feels like the class can learn from the situation, he will invite the student to bring their car into the shop for the entire class to help problem solve or learn from the necessary repairs. “It is great to watch kids use their hands and brains to gain a new perspective on something most of them know very little about,” according to Miller, who loves working with the students.

A few more complicated projects such as bodywork and paint are left to the third and fourth-year students. These advanced students are currently working on restoring an El Camino, which will then be painted and sold to purchase new projects for the class. Once in a while, the classes work on a special project for a community member or even accept a vehicle donation that can be a valuable learning tool or an opportunity to restore and sell to fundraise for the program. The students in the auto shop take their projects seriously, which can encourage them with school attendance and participation. “Our auto shop program is a motivator for some students to attend regularly and graduate on time,” Lusco said. “Grant Union is lucky to have such a great program.”

One of Miller’s goals for the program is to attend various competitions sponsored by SkillsUSA. “Students participate in local and/or regional events to qualify to attend their state conferences, and those winners move on to the national level at our SkillsUSA Championships,” according to the SkillsUSA website. Miller hopes to instruct and inspire his students to take their skills to a conference, working together to experience the team building and self-confidence that comes from knowledge and a job well done.

Prospector PRIDE


Participation: We want our students to have strong attendance and be actively engaged in the school and events.


Respect: We want our students to have respect for their school and their community while making choices that values themselves and others.

Integrity: We want our students to do what is right even when no one is looking.

Discipline: We want our students to learn to consistently control their words and actions and to be conscious of those around them.

Excellence: We want our students to always strive for excellence and encourage themselves and others to succeed.







Instructor Jason Miller helps students dismantle the cab of a truck to prepare for painting.



Automotive III Students work on sanding down a truck bed.