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### **GUEST COLUMN FOR CURRY COUNTY COASTAL PILOT**

It is difficult to believe that the first nine weeks of school have past and we now move into the second quarter. The first two months of school have been filled with lots of activities inside and outside of the classroom that provide learning opportunities for our students.

Students are into the routines of school by now. Parent-teacher conferences will occur on November 7-8 to allow staff to report academic progress and other topics. Both schools have completed their fall sports seasons. Girls basketball and wrestling are in progress at Riley Creek while the high school winter seasons of basketball and wrestling begin on November 18 with the first day of practice in preparation for their first contests in December. High School Homecoming and Riley Creek's Red Ribbon Week highlighted the month of October with special activities and dress-up days.

The district has recently added new positions to support the district's improvement goals. To address school attendance, the district hired an attendance advocate who will work with students at school and with families to address the barriers to regular attendance. The overall goal for the district is 90% of the students attending school regularly. The rates for October were 89.8% at Riley Creek and 82.1% at the high school. The district also hired four former teachers to serve as mentor teacher/coaches. Their primary responsibility is to support all teachers with a special emphasis working with the new staff. This program's goal is not only to improve teacher skills that lead to student achievement but also to retain staff to become long-time Central Curry teachers and members of the community.

Probably the biggest initiative of the year across the state is the implementation of the Student Success Act (SSA). This new funding law will bring nearly one billion dollars to school districts to address specific areas but also allow districts to make local decisions for its priorities.

During the months of November and December, the district will be reaching out to the greater Gold Beach community to elicit input to develop the needs assessment required by the SSA. The needs assessment specifically addresses the following priorities: reducing academic disparities for students; meeting students' mental or behavioral health needs; and providing equitable access to academic courses. Input will be accepted through surveys, public meetings and individual interviews.

Throughout this process, the school board, teachers and staff will schedule time to collaborate with each other, review data on students' grades, attendance and discipline records, develop strategies to ensure that at-risk students stay on track to graduate and establish community partnerships that will collectively result in positive and supportive growth. In addition, there will be an emphasis to include the voices of students and families, especially those historically underserved by school systems.

Do not hesitate to contact the schools if you have any questions: Riley Creek Elementary School - (541) 247-6604; Gold Beach High School – (541) 247-6647; District Office – (541) 247-2003.