

April 2, 2026 Superintendent Report

Tragic Loss

On March 20th, the district experienced the tragic loss of a student just prior to spring break. In response, we immediately activated our crisis protocols and coordinated with community partners, including the Coos Bay School District and Coos Health & Wellness, who provided on-site support the same day. Later that morning, additional staff support was deployed through our local Educational Service District. Counseling rooms were made available for both students and staff, along with additional staffing on hand to ensure classroom coverage as needed. As we transitioned into spring break, we also opened campus from Saturday through Tuesday to provide safe spaces with drop-in counseling support.

Upon return from break, we have continued to prioritize student and staff wellbeing through ongoing counseling availability and monitoring. This response is strengthened by our ongoing partnership with Coos Health & Wellness, through which three mental health providers serve students directly in our schools, funded by the Student Investment Account (SIA) grant, along with an additional provider funded through Waterfall who is embedded in a school building. These partnerships are essential in allowing us to provide consistent, school-based mental health services that would otherwise be difficult to sustain.

In addition, the district is actively exploring expanded mental health support. One example is a service called Care Solace that helps connect students and families to local mental health providers by navigating insurance, availability, and appointment scheduling. Expanding access to care remains a critical need in our community, where available services are limited, and resources such as SIA funding and potential partnerships like Care Solace play an important role in helping the district address these gaps. Throughout this process, our focus remains on care, connection, and strengthening the systems of support available to all students and staff. While we have not made a determination on this particular program, this is an example of a current opportunity we are actively exploring.

We are also exploring a "Creat resilience" youth art campaign at the high school, which includes an art contest sponsored by the Hold on Campaign for Suicide Prevention. This is a free opportunity to help foster resilience and mental health in our youth, as well as connect students to other healing resources available to them. It not only provides multiple pathways of submitting art, such as essay, poem, plays, song, dance, etc...but also provides staff with the resources they need to implement if they choose to.

I also want to recognize and thank our high school staff for their extraordinary response during this difficult time. While they were experiencing the same sense of loss, they remained focused on supporting our students with compassion, care, and professionalism. Staff came together, supporting one another while creating a safe, stable environment for students throughout the day. Their strength, leadership, and unwavering commitment to our students reflect the very best of our district. We are deeply grateful for the way they rallied in support of one another and

our students—there truly could not have been a better group of people to care for our students during such a challenging time.

It's Budget Season

The district's annual budgeting process begins with the development and presentation of the Superintendent's Recommended Budget, which reflects projected revenues, expenditures, and district priorities. This proposed budget is then reviewed in a public setting by the Budget Committee, which includes members of the Board and appointed community representatives. The Budget Committee will meet on May 12, 2026, with an additional meeting scheduled for May 19, 2026, if needed, to deliberate and approve the budget. Following Budget Committee approval, the proposed budget moves forward to the School Board for formal adoption, completing the process and establishing the district's financial plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

Prior to the budget meetings, we will hold a budget training session on April 30th for any budget committee members that wish to attend.

State Testing

Students and staff are preparing for annual state testing.

When we refer to "state testing," we are talking about summative assessments. Each type of assessment used in our schools serves a unique purpose, but all work together to help us understand and support student learning.

Summative assessments measure learning after it has occurred and are used to evaluate overall system performance. They are similar to a satellite image, providing a broad, high-level view of long-term patterns and trends.

Interim or benchmark assessments, along with formative assessment practices, are considered assessments for learning because they help guide instruction. Interim/benchmark assessments act like the navigation unit in your car, you can see the map, but its function is to map your route and check progress at key points along the way and helping us adjust course over time.

Formative assessment practices are like the information you gather from your dashboard while you're driving, giving immediate, real-time information, speed, fuel levels, and alerts, so you can make adjustments in the moment so you can reach your destination as planned.

Oregon Statewide Assessment System, aka the Smarter Balanced testing, includes annual summative assessments in English language arts and math for grades 3–8 and 11, and science in grades 5, 8, and 11. Additional required assessments include English language proficiency testing for multilingual learners and the Oregon Extended Assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

While this time of year can bring a mix of excitement and stress, these assessments are an important part of understanding student progress and ensuring we are preparing all students for future success.

PTA Food Boxes

Our Hillcrest PTA was awarded \$500 in food assistance from the National PTA. The purpose was to identify an area of food scarcity for our students and make a plan to help address it. The received this grant really close to winter break, and we opted not to couple this during our food boxes last winter, but rather identify a time/purpose this spring. PTA did not do much with it in the meantime and wanted to know what we could do before it expired this spring. So, in a very short amount of time- they worked their tails off to purchase items, prepare baskets, and provide food assistance over spring break for 18 families total.

They are an amazing group of parents!

Student Health Update

“During the winter months the board ordered the high school principal to purchase a supply of iodine pills to be administered to the students. It was a short lived fad, particularly when it was discovered the students spit them out as fast as they were being handed out. As one recipient reported, “they were vile tasting things!” - Board report from 11/13/1924.

Historic Context -

In the early 20th century, goiter (enlarged thyroid gland) was a widespread public health problem in the United States. By the 1920s, some schools participated in iodine supplementation programs, distributing iodine tablets or “pills” to students to ensure they received enough of this essential nutrient. These programs were part of a broader movement in public health to combat preventable diseases through nutrition and early intervention. The approach was especially important for children, as iodine deficiency could lead to stunted growth, developmental delays, and cognitive impairments.

Widespread use of iodized salt didn’t take hold until the late 1920s and 1930s, so school-based iodine pills were an early and practical solution to protect children’s health.

ODE Facility Assessment Update

The district’s facility assessment through the Oregon Department of Education is now complete; however, additional time is needed before results can be shared publicly. Reports are still being finalized and must be carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy. We have hundreds of pages to review, with very detailed information outlined in them. During on-site visits, assessors often relied on verbal input from staff guiding them through facilities. As a result, some details, such as construction or renovation dates, may be imprecise, which can impact assumptions about the remaining life expectancy of building systems.

The state has also established a multi-month review process to support districts in understanding and validating the data. As part of this effort, the ODE Facility Assessment team is offering monthly virtual office hours to walk through key components of the reports, answer questions, and provide guidance on interpreting results. These meetings are scheduled through October 2026. We will continue to engage in this process and will share validated findings with the Board once the review is complete and we are confident in the accuracy of the information

and how to best prioritize their recommendations on their five-year capital improvement plan to assist with future planning, budgeting, and funding opportunities.

Fund for Teachers Fellowship Award

We are proud to share that two of our Hillcrest teachers, Talena Coplin and Vickie Guelker have been selected as 2026 Fellows through the Fund for Teachers grant program, a highly competitive national program supporting educator-designed professional learning. Each teacher was awarded \$5,000, for a total of \$10,000, to support an immersive fellowship in Italy and Greece focused on ancient civilizations, geography, and cultural development.

Their experience will include visits to historic sites in Rome, Pompeii, Florence, Athens, Delphi, and Santorini, where they will explore connections between history, science, engineering, and the arts, including the origins of democracy, human-environment interaction, and the influence of geography on culture. This hands-on learning will support the development of inquiry-based, interdisciplinary, STEAM-integrated instruction that connects global content to students' lived experiences.

This recognition highlights the innovation and dedication of our educators, and we look forward to the impact this experience will have in their classrooms and across our district.

Broadway House Update

We are pleased to announce that the purchase of the Broadway House, located adjacent to Clyde Allen Baseball Field, has been expedited, with closing now anticipated on April 7 following a final walkthrough and securing of the property on April 6. Upon closing, planning will begin for site cleanup and demolition of the existing structure. While this work may extend into the next school year, we will make every effort to move the process forward as efficiently as possible given the number of concurrent facilities projects scheduled for this summer.

Power Up Pack Grant Award

The district's food service program was awarded a Power Up Pack grant through Dairy West to support enhanced meal service and student engagement. The grant provides a mobile pizza service setup, including a portable serving cart with accessories, warming equipment to keep food fresh and appealing, and marketing materials such as signage and labeling tools. These resources will help improve meal presentation, increase student participation, and support the overall success of the nutrition program. The cart will be used to upgrade the "wagon" style cart by the front office of the high school which is one of the mobile locations where lunch is served.

Scheduled Building Visits with Board Members

Just a reminder, we have started scheduling monthly building visits for board members to tour our schools during the instructional day. These will occur on the second Thursday of each month from 8:30-10:30am. Next Thursday we have planned to visit Hillcrest Elementary School. In May, we will visit the middle school. If any board members are interested in joining us, please let Michelle Brix know. Generally, we would like no more than three board members on each visit. If a school or focus is of particular interest to all board members, we can always schedule multiple visits, but I'd like to make sure we have at least one school slated per month.

Teacher of the Year Nominations

We are proud to recognize the North Bend educators nominated for the Oregon Teacher of the Year program. This year, we had an amazing seven nominees, each a shining example of the many outstanding teachers who serve our students every day. What makes these nominations particularly special is that they come from colleagues, students, and parents, highlighting the deep impact these educators have on their classrooms and communities.

Of these nominees and those from other regional districts, the regional winner will be honored, and advance for consideration as the Oregon State Teacher of the Year. Candidates for this award are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled licensed public school educators in grades K–12, with a strong focus on classroom teaching.

North Bend School District's nominees were:

1. Jeff Buskerud - Hillcrest
2. Nora Collins - North Bay
3. Kalan Orsel - Hillcrest
4. Jeni Green - North Bay
5. Victoria Friedman - North Bay
6. Simmie Muth - NBHS
7. Eva Varga - Everywhere!

Staff Appreciation Week

We are excited to celebrate Joint Staff Appreciation Week next week, April 6–10, as we bring together both classified and certified staff in one shared week of recognition.

Each day, a different group will provide something special at the building level—whether it's the district office, PTA, building administration, certified staff, or classified staff—so that appreciation is truly shared across our entire school community.

In addition, one day during the week, district administrators and school board members will visit each building to help pass out ice cream treats after school as another small way to say thank you. If any board members would like to join us on a day after school next week, please let Michelle know.

This week is an opportunity to recognize the collective impact of all staff. Every role matters, and together you make a difference for our students each and every day.