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### School district enrollment surges

The Crook County School District is hiring more staff to accommodate the increase in student enrollment.

“We are responding positively to this increase in enrollment,” said CCSD Superintendent Sara Johnson. “We brought the leadership team together, identified the pain points, then problem-solved, utilizing everyone’s best thinking. Everyone has a common aim: Do what is best for our students!”

When the school year ended in June, CCSD had 2,894 students. As of Monday morning, there were 3,119 students – an increase of 225 students.

Using the additional state funding that comes from an increase in enrollment, the district will hire two additional elementary teachers, a middle school teacher, a special education teacher, and five instructional assistants.

The number of students needing special education services has also grown. In December, the district served 410 special education students. Currently, the district serves 456 special education students – an increase of 46 students.

“I believe that the best work that I do is having great people in place,” said CCSD Special Education Director Mona Boyd. “We have an amazing special education team. They are always looking for ways to create better situations, even when they are hit with the unexpected. They are working hard every minute of every day to meet the needs of our students.”

Overall, district enrollment is up 8% from June.

Crook County High School grew 118 students, from 705 students in June to 823 enrolled this week.

Crook County Middle School enrollment increased 71 students. There were 610 students in June, and there are 681 students this week.

Barnes Butte Elementary grew by 16 students, from 633 in June to 649 this week.

Crooked River Elementary gained 26 students, from 604 in June to 630 this week.

The rural and alternative schools did not see an increase in enrollment.

“‘Show Up’ is one of our initiatives, and I would like to think that we’re doing the right work,” Johnson said. “We’re trying to offer great customer service, and the community is growing. I think it’s all a beautiful, perfect storm.”

Board President Scott Cooper said he heard a theory that families priced out of Bend and Redmond are moving into Juniper Canyon, what could be the last affordable housing area in the region.

“When I look at the jump in Crooked River enrollment, there possibly seems to be something to that,” he said.

Board member Doug Smith called the growth a “post-recession baby boom,” noting the increase in kindergartners.

Classrooms at the four Prineville schools are swelling, leaving teachers scrambling for desks and space. Johnson said the staff has gotten creative and is making some shifts in order to make it work.

The board agreed to re-engage the Long-Term Facilities Committee, comprised of board members, principals and district directors, to discuss the future of facilities.

“We can bring back to the board a solution on what we are going to do to react to the lack of classrooms as quick as we possibly can,” Smith said.

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