



Howard Happenings

March 2014

www.howardelementary.org



ACE Award Nominations

The ACE (A Champion in Education) Awards are a collaboration of the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce and the Bethel, Eugene 4J, and Springfield school districts along with presenting sponsor Oregon Community Credit Union to recognize excellence in education. Each award winner's school will receive a \$1,000 cash prize toward a project or program in their school.

Do you know someone who's a champion in education?

Please take a moment to nominate that deserving teacher, administrator, classified employee or volunteer.

Eugene, Bethel and Springfield school districts have launched the "A Champion in Education" (ACE) Awards in collaboration with the Eugene and Springfield chambers of commerce.

ACE Awards finalists and winners will be announced at an awards ceremony to be held Tuesday, April 29th at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts in Eugene, Oregon. Each awardrecipient's school will receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

The ACE Awards are presented by title sponsor Oregon Community Credit Union and representatives of the local business and education communities to honor those who are making significant contributions to future generations as leaders in education. ACE Awards are given in four categories: teachers, administrators, support staff and volunteers.

Nominations can be made online at theaceaward.org and are due Sunday, March 9th. Don't miss out on the opportunity to nominate a deserving principal, teacher, volunteer, or classified staff member!

Success and Student Attendance Go Hand in Hand

As you know, there is a direct correlation between student attendance and success in school. Late arrival, early dismissal, and absences interrupt the flow of instruction for both the student and the class as a whole. We realize there are often situations for which you have no control. Unfortunately, there are many absences from school that could have been avoided. Please understand that Oregon law requires children 5 - 16, to be in school except for illness and extenuating circumstances. Attendance letters are sent home if a student is absent the equivalent of 4 days during a 4 ½ week period. Please note that this threshold applies to excused/unexcused absences and tardies. Should a student's attendance record meet the criteria above, or if there has been a history of attendance problems, we are obligated to report our concerns to the Lane County Truancy office. Their involvement is designed to ensure every child attends school on a regular basis. If you have any

questions or concerns regarding the county attendance procedures, feel free to contact the school.



New Volunteer Background Check Procedure

The school district requires criminal background checks on all volunteers who will be performing tasks that could put them in close and unsupervised contact with students. Our purpose is to help assure parents and the community that our students are safe while at school. You may already know that all school employees complete a more extensive criminal check before they are hired.

Volunteers who meet one or more of the following criteria must fill out our confidential volunteer background check application:

- the volunteer will have unsupervised contact with students;
- the volunteer has a regular and ongoing assignment at the school;
- the volunteer will be off campus with students in an unsupervised situation, including driving students on field trips;
- the volunteer is a mentor to a student or students;
- the volunteer is a coach or activity director; or
- the volunteer is unknown to the school or department staff.

If you would like to volunteer in our building, and are not a currently approved volunteer, please complete the confidential volunteer background check application at www.helpcounter.net/eugene. If you do not have internet access, please contact the school office to set up a time to use the volunteer computer station.

A criminal conviction will not automatically disqualify a person from volunteering in a school. We will consider each situation individually and any decision may be appealed to the 4J Communications Department.

Our schools very much depend on the contributions of volunteers! If you have any questions about this rule or about volunteer opportunities at our school, please contact the school office or your student's teacher.

Volunteer Sign In/Out a Must

As an added safety precaution at Howard, we require that all visitors/volunteers start their visit in the office. Please check in and receive a visitor's badge so that staff members and students know you are a "safe" visitor. If you do not have a badge, don't be surprised if a staff member asks you to please stop by the office to check in. Equally important is that you sign out when you leave. By doing so, we know who is in the building in the



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event of an emergency. Thank you, in advance, for honoring this important safety procedure.



Howard New School Design Open House

Tuesday, April 8, 2014, 5:30–7 p.m.

The new building design is well underway and we are excited to share the plans with you!

Please join us to view the design progress and share your comments.

Visit with the architects and other design team members.

5:30 p.m. Open house begins

6:00 p.m. Presentation

7:00 p.m. Ending time

Join the mailing list for school design news by emailing howarddesign@4j.lane.edu

Watch for updates at www.4j.lane.edu/bond

Call 4J Communications at 541-790-7737

Family Resource Coordinator Change

Vanessa Vasquez will be filling in for Alicia Longoria while she is on maternity leave. Vanessa will be available to help with parent needs in the office on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons beginning in mid March.

District Calendar Changes Due to Snow Days

Eugene 4J schools were closed for students for four days last week due to snow and ice. The snow days will be made up on days that originally had been scheduled to be no-school days for unpaid furlough: March 31, April 17 and 18, and May 23. These changes mean that 4J students will not lose any school days as a result of December's weather.

School Calendar Changes:

- March 13: Regular school day (was no-school staff work day for middle and high schools)
- March 14: Regular school day (was no-school staff work day for all schools)
- March 20: No school at middle and high schools (staff work day)
- March 21: No school at all schools (staff work day); end of second trimester 12/19/13
- March 31: Regular school day (was no-school furlough day); first day of third trimester
- April 17: Regular school day (was no-school furlough day)
- April 18: Regular school day (was no-school furlough day)
- May 23: Regular school day (was no-school furlough day)

Thank you for your patience and understanding with these schedule changes due December's hazardous weather.

<http://www.4j.lane.edu/2013/12/school-calendar-revised/>

PTO Corner

PTO Meetings: Held in the Howard Library from 6-7pm and child care is available

Tuesday, March 18th

Tuesday, April 15th

Tuesday, May 20th

PTO Spring Events:

Jog a Thon: Friday, May 9th

Carnival: Thursday, June 5th

Please visit us on our website for up to date information and events: <http://howard.4j.lane.edu/parents/pto/>

Volunteer Opportunities:

Jog a Thon: This will be an all-day event on Friday, May 9th. We will need volunteers to help organize the event and help during the event. Volunteer times during the event can be as short as one hour, please email Howard PTO if you are interested.

Carnival: PTO will be seeking out volunteers to be part of the Carnival Committee. This event is very large and takes a lot of parent support and a lot of planning. We will begin the planning stage this month, and need your help and ideas! Please email Howard PTO if you are interested in helping, or at least get on our email list so you have all the information.

If you are interested in receiving event and volunteer information, please email us and we will add you to our contact list. You will be able to be removed from the list at any time.

Howardelementarypto@gmail.com

Join the Green Team!

Want to be green? Well, here is your chance! Howard has started a Green Team, which is a group of students, parents, and teachers interested in making Howard 'greener'. The team can do this by deciding upon goals, projects and activities that cut waste, reduce water usage and conserve energy. The team can also create a garden/outdoor landscaping that uses less water and chemicals. We have a team of leaders from the Green School Initiative that helps run the groups, along with Mrs. Kreider every 1st and 3rd Tuesday from 2:10-3:10. If you would like more information, you can contact Mrs. Kreider at kreider_a@4j.lane.edu or 541-790-4913. Students in BEST are more than welcome to attend. However, transportation has to be provided at 3:10 if you normally ride the bus. Our next meeting will be March 4th. Hope to see you there!!

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 9th. Remember to spring forward one hour!

Future Happenings

3/7 – Partners for Sustainable Schools Movie Night, 6:00 pm

3/18 – PTO Meeting

3/21 – No School – Professional Development Day

3/24 – 3/28 - Spring Break

3/31 – Classes Resume

4/8 – Howard New School Design Open House, 5:30 pm