

Strategic Plan Implemented in Schools

At Grant School District 3, we are proud of the progress being made as we continue to implement the strategic plan. This year, the staff are working on building a culture of respect, improving communication, and strengthening partnerships within the community. These priorities are shaping the daily experiences of students and staff, and making a positive impact on school culture.

One of the most visible changes has been in the area of student respect. At Grant Union Jr/Sr High School, an updated student handbook, the staff's focus on presenting consistent expectations, and the staff's commitment to model and reinforce respectful behavior, have made a difference. "We are already seeing more positive interactions in classrooms and hallways," Principal Shanna Northway says. "Teachers report that students are responding well to Prospector Pride cards and shout-outs, which highlight respectful actions and build pride in our shared school values." The staff's focus on the Standards of Excellence has created a common language for respect, accountability, and high expectations.

The staff at Humbolt Elementary School are also focusing on communicating clear and consistent expectations to students. They are creating a buddy class program, which will expand their student buddy program, pairing older classrooms with younger classrooms. The self-manager system for 2nd through 6th-graders will continue this year, along with the addition of a 5th and 6th-grade ambassador program to encourage student leadership opportunities.

At Seneca Elementary, students buddy together on a regular basis with older students often reading and helping the younger students. It is also common for the entire school to take field trips together, such as their trip to Lake Creek Youth Camp to drop the 6th-graders off for Outdoor School and their spontaneous trip to John Day in September for an agricultural soil lesson and lunch at the park when the school unexpectedly experienced a power outage.

The schools are also making major strides in communication with both staff and families. Grant Union has launched the Red Binder site, which has streamlined staff access to important information, while new budgeting systems have increased transparency and efficiency. For families, the expanded use of SchoolMessenger has made it easier to stay informed about events, updates, and opportunities. Parents are receiving more positive messages about their students' successes, which helps strengthen the home-to-school connection and creates a stronger sense of community.

A small change that is making a big difference at Humbolt Elementary School is an earlier release time for students, who now catch the bus at 3:10 pm. This helps get kids home earlier and prevents overcrowding on buses, dropping them off before heading to the junior/senior high school. This change also provides staff more opportunities for communication and collaboration, allowing time to check in with each other and reset for the next day.

At Seneca Elementary, communication is everywhere. Head Teacher Stacy Durych sends a weekly newsletter, The Seneca Way, through e-mail, along with an increased presence on social media. When the class experienced their surprise field trip due to a power outage, parent/guardian permission was obtained through individual phone calls and in-person requests when the bus stopped by their home. On the drive through Canyon City, the students passed a new billboard with their picture and the message "Seneca Strong."

The schools also report their partnerships with the community continue to grow in meaningful ways. Junior high students are benefitting from monthly trips to the county library, which not only supports literacy but also encourages community use of the library. The CTE and woodshop programs are providing hands-on learning that directly supports local projects, while Grant Union's role in hosting the first annual Safety Summit for Grant ESD brought educators and first responders together to strengthen school safety. These partnerships have created new opportunities for students and strengthened Grant Union's role in the community.

Humbolt Elementary is excited to encourage agricultural education in the classroom with the addition of the greenhouse, bringing regular visits from Grant Union FFA/Ag Instructor Kailee Oliver and her students. The staff are also excited to strengthen their relationship with Grant County OSU Extension, SNAP Ed, John Day Senior Center, and so many other great community partners!

The Seneca Elementary staff are excited to continue their relationship with the Burns Piute tribe, local ranchers, and the Forest Service. These students are preparing for the future by learning their history through relationships, art, and language.

As a result of these efforts, our schools are seeing stronger student engagement, improved collaboration, and deeper connections between school and community. The strategic plan is more than a document—it is shaping the way we teach, learn, and work together. We are excited to continue this journey and grateful for the support of families and community partners in making Grant School District 3 a place where every Prospector is known, empowered, and ready for the world.



Junior high students at the Grant County Library