

Grant Union Offers Flexibility in Schedules

Grant Union Jr/Sr High School strives to be “A place where every Prospector is known, empowered, and ready for the world.” One area helping to fulfill this vision statement is the flexibility built into student schedules. While every student is required to complete the Oregon state-mandated graduation requirements, many students reach their Junior and Senior years to discover they only have a few required classes remaining. In order to remain sports-eligible, students are required to be enrolled in 2.5 credits, which equals 5 classes per semester. This gives them some choices of how to spend their time.

There are several options for students at this point in their education, and Tonia Seebart, Grant Union’s Career Coordinator, enjoys helping students take control of their own education goals. A few of the options chosen by upper classmen are taking additional classes, becoming a teaching assistant, or heading to work through the work study program.

Students who choose to spend their time taking additional classes may be filling in gaps in their requirements through in-person or online high school credits, or they may be enrolled in a college level course through Eastern Oregon University or Blue Mountain Community College. Students enrolled in online classes have access to teacher advisors and may work on their classes at home, in the online classroom, or in the student commons.

A popular choice with Juniors and Seniors for an elective credit is to be a TA (teaching assistant) for a favorite teacher. At this time, seven students TA for teachers at Humbolt Elementary, seven students TA for teachers at Grant Union Jr/Sr High School, and five students are currently working in the Grant Union office. Seebart stated, “I never thought I needed an assistant until I had one!” Students planning to pursue a teaching career may also be interested in enrolling in Eastern Oregon University’s Future Educator classes, earning valuable college credits for their involvement in the classroom.

Whether preparing for college or the work force, another option for students is the work study program. While the school strives to provide every student opportunities to plan for future education and career goals, a work study position can help students gain hands-on work experience. Seebart can help students who already have a job and would like to use school hours to go to work or students who are looking for a position by connecting the student with a local employer. The work study program is a community partnership between the student, the parent, the employer, and the school. The program helps students:

- apply their academic knowledge in a real-world setting,
- gain insight into achievable goals and interests,
- develop positive work ethics, and
- gain confidence in their own abilities.

Senior Emmalynn Northway works at the Grant County Education Service District, or ESD, gaining experience in office work and customer service. Although she someday envisions herself entering a medical field rather than education, she loves the people she is working with and has found the experience valuable. “It shows you what to expect, like time management and responsibility.” Her supervisors, Deputy Clerk Emma Winkelman and Accounting Specialist Tara Young have appreciated her work. “It’s a really great introduction to what a real job will be like after high school,” Winkelman stated, “how to have a boss and learning something new.” Northway completes sorting, scanning, filing, answering phones, and other small office projects. She finds the accounts payable and purchase orders interesting and shares, “you have to be super organized and there is an exact way to do it.” She looks forward to the privilege of helping with budgets in the Spring. Northway shared the job has helped her gain social skills and computer experience, as well as confidence in the workplace. Her favorite part of the job? Definitely the people she works with! “Everyone includes me, even though I’m only here for an hour. They make a point to stop and say hi!”



Senior Taylor Palmateer is pursuing a future career in cosmetology, but currently works one hour each morning at the Grant County Fairgrounds before heading to school for the day. She is gaining valuable office experience “just showing up,” pointing out the necessity for students to learn the value of scheduling their days and being punctual with their commitments. “There are basic life skills you need to learn,” said Palmateer. She spends the majority of her time filing and sorting paperwork, completing computer forms, and designing



posters and flyers advertising upcoming events, with every day looking a little different depending on what might be going on around the fairgrounds. “We can always use help around the fairgrounds,” Grant County Fairgrounds and RV Park Manager Mindy Winegar points out how important it is for students to learn what types of jobs are available within our own community. “We need to show the next