PROSPECTOR PRIDE

November/December 2026 *Volume 4 Issue 2*

A publication of Grant School District 3, Grant Union Jr/Sr High School, Humbolt Elementary School and Seneca Elementary School

Homecoming Traditions at Grant Union!

Each year feels new and exciting, but the underlying traditions of Homecoming are preserved!

1 Pep Assemblies,



2 Noise Parade,



12 Spirit Stick,



3 Volley Buff,



11 Homecoming Court,



10 Home Games (with a canon)



4 Powder Puff,



5 Hallway Decorating,

6 Dress up Days,

7 Homecoming Dance,

9 Bonfires,

8 Alumni Decades Parade,



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Little Pro Football Camp...

Our Little Pros had a great time at the two-week Youth Flag Football Camp put on by Grant School District 3 in partnership with John Day/Canyon City Parks & Rec! We had 27 amazing participants in 3rd through 5th grade who learned new skills, built confidence, worked as a team, and most importantly, had FUN! The camp wrapped up with an exciting game played under the lights on Grant Union's football field! A HUGE thank you to our volunteer coaches for giving their time, sharing their knowledge, and helping make this camp such a great experience for our young athletes. Our community is lucky to have people willing to invest in our kids! Way to go, Little Pros! We can't wait to see you on the field next year!



-Charissa Moulton, Humbolt Dean of Students

Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher!

Some connections to Seneca Elementary last a lifetime! Adele Cerny spent decades teaching at our little school before retiring about 15 years ago. Recently, she donated a wonderful collection of books for our students to enjoy. How special it is to have someone who gave so many years to Seneca continue to give back to the next generation of readers. Thank you, Adele, for always being part of our Seneca family!

-Stacy Durych, Seneca Elementary Teacher

Thank You, Local Firefighters!

There is something special about having real-life heroes visit our little mountain school! In October, our local firefighters spent time with the students, answering questions, sharing fire safety lessons, and giving them an opportunity to learn from the people who help keep our community safe. Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to make learning come alive for our students!

-Stacy Durych, Seneca Elementary Teacher

Finley Steps Up...

It is nice to know that when another school has a bus breakdown, our community steps up. Aaron Finley jumped in to get Irrigon's Soccer Bus back on the road and get the kids and coaches home. Thanks, Aaron, for all you do for Grant Union!

-Andy Lusco, GU Vice-Principal/Athletic Director

Raymond Makes Learning an Adventure!

A special shout-out to Mrs. Raymond for all the creativity, energy, and heart she brings to Seneca Elementary. Whether she's working with our youngest learners, encouraging curiosity through hands-on activities, or helping take learning beyond the classroom walls, she reminds us that some of the best lessons come from doing, exploring, and experiencing. Thank you for making our little school such a special place to learn!

-Stacy Durych, Seneca Elementary Teacher

Turning Bottles, Cans into Opportunities!

A big thank you to our Seneca staff and Jay and Hunter Durych for rolling up their sleeves and helping our students sort and redeem bottles and cans. All that sorting and collecting added up to $240 for our PTA! What a great reminder for our students that even something as simple as recycling can make a difference when we work together. We appreciate everyone who helped make it happen!

-Stacy Durych, Seneca Elementary Teacher

Reitz Family Pumpkin Patch...

A huge shoutout and thank you to the Reitz Family for allowing Humbolt students to visit their amazing Pumpkin Patch and pick a pumpkin to take home. Thank you to Humbolt PTA for purchasing a pumpkin for each student.

-Humbolt Elementary Staff and Students





Thank you, Jim & Beth Spell!

Last year, our kindergarteners planted their very own pumpkin seeds, returning this year as 1st-graders to pick the pumpkins they grew! Mr. and Mrs. Spell made the day even more special by baking cookies and reading pumpkin books! Thank you for opening your home and giving us such a fun, hands-on learning experience. We truly appreciate the time, effort, and love you put into making this such a memorable experience!

Vanessa Houpt, Humbolt 1st-Grade Teacher





Shout Outs

Send a shout out to staff, students, or community members, by sending an email to shoutout@johndaysd.org.

Alumni Spotlight: Andy Day

Andy Day attended Humbolt Elementary School, Blue Mountain Junior High School, and Grant Union High School, graduating in 1976, celebrating fifty years this summer. He shared a few memories with us about growing up in Grant County with two older brothers and a younger sister. His dad was a manager at California-Pacific Utilities Company, who provided electric services to Eastern Oregon, and his mom worked for the Oregon Department of Human Resources in the Child Protective Services office.

The Day family lived on Humbolt Street in Canyon City, across from the school, until 5th-grade when they moved to Second Street in John Day. “People took care of each other. Every parent on the street kept tabs on each other’s kids. Back then, the kids were pushed out of the house to go play after school and we weren't expected home until the street lights came on.” Neighborhood kids spent their time riding bikes up and down the street (and at one time or another sneaking bikes up to ride on the school roof), squirrel hunting, or hiking up to the airport to explore. He fondly remembers camping overnight up on airport hill, investigating old mines, and using pine needles as torches. “Nobody got hurt. We didn’t break the law, but we stretched it quite a bit!” Day remembers when the school was heated with coal. He said the kids liked to pick up small pieces of coal off the ground after a delivery as though it was treasure.

His yearbook credits Day as active in Search and Rescue, Letterman Club, Work Study, Football, Golf, Wrestling, Baseball, and Intramural Basketball. He played outside linebacker, graduating with a shoulder injury and a scar across the bridge of his nose from a helmet that was too big. He laughs and adds, “We made do with what we had!”

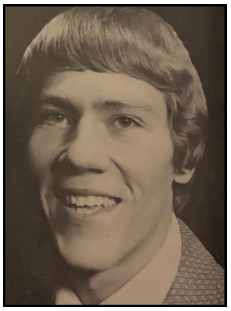
Day’s favorite teachers included Pete Baucum, who taught Biology and Conservation, and Don Jones, who taught Citizenship and Clusters, as well as coaching football. “I didn’t really like school, but if I had to be there, Baucum's class was where I wanted to be. I just wanted to be working and hunting, but looking back now I wish I had taken it more seriously.” Day explained that students had to be present in their afternoon classes in order to play sports, so it wasn’t unusual for him to take off in the morning for a squirrel hunt, returning in time to get to school at lunch. By his senior year, Day took his last few classes and left school for a work study position at Lou’s Tire Center, where he spent his time retreading tires.

After graduation, Day worked for the Forest Service a few years before taking a job in the Public Works Department for the City of John Day, then the City of Mount Vernon. After twelve years in public works, Day enrolled in the Trades Program at Boise State University, attending classes and apprenticing for a plumber in Boise, traveling home to visit his family on the weekends. He started Andy’s Plumbing and Sports in 1998, finding his own unique way of combining his plumbing business and his passion for hunting and archery. On his retirement in 2020, he handed the business off to his son-in-law Bob Cobb, rebranding the business Patriot Plumbing and Gear.

Day has continued leading the 4-H Archery and Shotgun club, who he had shared his knowledge with for over 20 years. “Four times I’ve had a student Robin Hood an arrow!” he exclaimed, sharing that when a student is able to perfectly hit one arrow already in the target with another arrow, he bought them a dozen arrows. He also reloads shotgun shells and makes sure students have the right equipment for what they need.

Day’s retirement has been busy with hunting, fishing, golf, playing cards, and traveling with his wife Maxine. One of the highlights has been taking their grandchildren on a trip when they turn fifteen, making special memories with each of them.





Pictured Above: Andy and Maxine Day with Andy’s daughters: Shanley and Bob Cobb with Bobby, Garret, Noah, and Cooper of John Day, Oregon; and Samantha and Ben Phillips with Lucy and Asher of Nampa, Idaho.

Also pictured: Day’s senior yearbook picture, along with his team football and baseball photos.





GRANT SCHOOL DISTRICT #3

2026 Spring Studer Parent/Caregiver Experience Survey Results

Your Feedback Matters. Together, We Make a Difference.

DISTRICT RESULTS

What You Told Us — *We're Making a Difference*

- ✓ I believe my child has the necessary classroom supplies and equipment for effective learning
- ✓ I am treated with respect at my child's school
- ✓ I believe the schools are clean and well maintained

Where We Will Focus — *Continuing to Grow Together*

- → I believe school rules are enforced consistently at my child's school
- → I regularly receive feedback from school staff on how well my child is learning

GRANT UNION JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

What You Told Us — *We're Making a Difference*

- ✓ I am treated with respect at this school
- ✓ I believe this school provides a safe environment for my child to learn
- ✓ I believe the school is clean and well maintained

Where We Will Focus — *Continuing to Grow Together*

- → I believe school administration make decisions that are in the best interest of children and families
- → I receive positive phone calls, emails, or notes about my child from the school

HUMBOLT LITTLE PROS ELEMENTARY

What You Told Us — *We're Making a Difference*

- ✓ I believe my child has the necessary classroom supplies and equipment for effective learning
- ✓ I am treated with respect at this school

Where We Will Focus — *Continuing to Grow Together*

- → I believe the rules are enforced consistently at this school
- → I believe school administrators make decisions that are in the best interest of children and families



Seneca Elementary

What You Told Us — *We're Making a Difference*

- ✓ I believe my child has every opportunity to be successful at this school
- ✓ I receive positive phone calls, emails, or notes about my child from the school

Where We Will Focus — *Continuing to Grow Together*

- → I believe school rules are enforced consistently at this school
- → I believe my child has the necessary classroom supplies and equipment to be successful at this school

OUR MISSION

Our Prospector Promise

A place for EVERY student to feel support, achieve success, and learn respect.

OUR VISION

A Place Where Every Prospector is

KNOWN, EMPOWERED, and READY for the World!

Where Your Future Begins

Grant School District 3, 401 N Canyon City Blvd, Canyon City, OR 97820
*541-575-1280 * https://www.grantschooldistrict.org*

Consistency, Fairness, and Understanding: Finding the Balance

By Shanna Northway, Grant Union Principal

One of the things we strongly believe in at Grant School District #3 is the importance of having clear expectations, consistent rules, and high standards for all students. At the same time, we also believe that every student deserves to be known, understood, and supported as an individual. Our goal is that every student who walks through our doors feels seen for who they are, understands what is expected of them, and knows that the adults in our schools care about their success. Finding the balance between consistency, fairness, understanding, and equity is not always easy. In fact, it is one of the more challenging parts of working with young people.

You often hear the phrase, "Fair doesn't always mean equal," and we think that is especially true when it comes to student discipline. We believe in having established rules and expectations that apply to everyone, but we also recognize that students come to us with different experiences, needs, challenges, and levels of support. What works for one student may not work for another. Our job is to understand those differences while continuing to hold all students accountable for their choices.

That doesn't mean students get a free pass or that expectations change depending on who they are. It means we take the time to understand the situation, consider the behavior, and determine an appropriate response. We want consequences to fit the behavior, but we also want them to be meaningful. Sometimes that means a traditional consequence, such as detention or loss of a privilege. Other times, it may involve a restorative conversation, repairing a relationship, making things right with someone who was impacted, or putting additional support in place to prevent the behavior from happening again.

Our goal is not simply to punish students for making mistakes. Our goal is to help them learn from those mistakes, take responsibility for their actions, and make better choices moving forward. We recognize that from the outside looking in, this approach can sometimes appear inconsistent or even unfair. Parents and students may see two situations that look similar and wonder why the consequences were different. What is important to understand is that there are often factors behind those decisions that are not visible to others. We have a responsibility to consider the circumstances of each situation while also protecting student privacy.

Another challenge is that consequences are rarely public. When something happens at school, other students or parents may know about the behavior but never see the follow-up. That can create the perception that nothing was done or that a student was allowed to get away with something. In reality, those situations are often being addressed through conversations, consequences, parent meetings, and ongoing support. Those details are generally shared only with the student, their family, and the school staff who need to be involved. Just because a consequence isn't visible doesn't mean the behavior went unaddressed.

This is where we believe communication becomes incredibly important. As a district, we have a responsibility to communicate with parents when their student has received a consequence, explain why the consequence was assigned, and work together to support better choices moving forward. Parents should understand what happened at school or why a decision was made. These conversations help build trust, strengthen the partnership between home and school, and reinforce expectations for students.

We are working incredibly hard to improve how we communicate our rules, policies, and expectations to both students and families. Students should know what is expected of them before a problem occurs, and parents should have a clear understanding of our expectations and the potential consequences when those expectations are not met. The more clearly we communicate on the front end, the fewer misunderstandings we have on the back end.

We want to be clear that understanding a student's individual needs does not mean lowering our expectations. We can have compassion for a student and still hold them accountable. We can recognize that a student is struggling and still expect them to treat others respectfully. We can provide additional support while also expecting students to take responsibility for their behavior. Those things are not mutually exclusive.

At Grant School District #3, we want our students to know that mistakes do not define them, but how they respond to those mistakes matters. We want to build a district-wide culture where students are held to high expectations, relationships are valued, accountability is meaningful, and every student has the opportunity to learn and grow.

We won't get every decision perfect, and there will certainly be times when parents have questions or see things differently than we do. We welcome those conversations. What we hope our families understand is that the decisions we make are rooted in a genuine desire to do what is best for students while maintaining a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment for everyone.

Consistency means holding firm to our expectations. Fairness means responding appropriately to the situation. Equity means recognizing that students may need different support to be successful. And understanding means taking the time to know the student behind the behavior. Finding that balance is something we work toward every single day, and it is a responsibility we take seriously.

Outdoor School a Success for Humbolt 6th Graders

Humbolt 6th graders spent a week at the incredible Lake Creek Youth Camp for Outdoor School. While there, they participated in a variety of classes including first aid, shelter building, foraging, trapping, knot tying, fire, archery, beavers, and navigation. They also had several opportunities to give back to the community by helping with some clean up projects for the camp! In addition, students worked on teamwork and cooperation, sat down to family-style meals three times a day, and joined together each night for a campfire.





Thank you to the amazing Lake Creek Youth Camp staff and Coyle Outside for all of their time, knowledge, and hard work. In addition, Jesse Gosnell volunteered his time to chaperone a group of students for the week as well as teach the archery class, and Steve and Janine Attlesperger brought their dogs up for a Search and Rescue demonstration. Thank you so much to everyone who was part of making this week a memorable experience for our 6th graders!







School Cafeterias Serve Local Beef

The cafeterias of Grant School District 3 have an abundance of ground beef in the freezer, thanks to the generous donation of a whole beef from local Grant County ranchers. Grown in Grant County and gifted through the Farmers Ending Hunger program, this beef has been processed in Burns at a USDA approved processing plant and delivered to the school freezers.

"As our local Ranchers donate beef to the schools, the Farmers Ending Hunger program pays for the processing, which includes cut, wrap, and delivery," Head Cook KoRina Jones said. "This is so huge and our students will benefit from high quality beef."

According to their website, Farmers Ending Hunger is on a mission "to end hunger and food insecurity in Oregon by partnering with local farmers, ranchers, and food processors to deliver high-quality, local food to food-insecure communities" (www.farmersendinghunger.com). The program helps Oregon food banks and schools access locally grown meat and produce. Thank you, Grant County Ranchers!



Humbolt Elementary School cooks KoRina Jones and Debbi Clark serve sloppy joes made with Grant County beef to students.

Grant School District 3, 401 N Canyon City Blvd, Canyon City, OR 97820
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Raymond Announced Runner-up for Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year Award

Congratulations to Raney Raymond of Seneca Elementary School, runner-up for the 2026 Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Educator of the Year Award!

"This competitive award recognizes an outstanding teacher for their creative efforts to teach students about the importance of agriculture," according to the Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation website. "Agriculture in the Classroom is a nationwide educational program designed to help students develop an awareness and understanding that agriculture is the source of our food, clothing, shelter and other essentials," (oregonaitc.org).

"Raney has a gift for taking a lesson and making it something the children can see, touch, explore, and experience," said Stacy Durych, Head Teacher at Seneca Elementary School and teaching partner of Raymond. "Whether they're learning about agriculture, animals, plants, or the natural world just outside our classroom doors, she helps them see that learning isn't something that happens only in books. It's happening all around them."

Raymond grew up on a ranch in Grant County, which has given her a special perspective on agriculture in the world around her. "Each year, I am reminded how fortunate I am to work in a school that values the outdoors, nature, agriculture, and hands-on learning. In our small school community, agriculture is more than a subject or an occasional lesson – it is the foundation that connects much of what we do in science, social studies, and math." Raymond reminds her students often, "Science and agriculture are best friends."

Raymond has facilitated in-class lessons on gardens, beeswax, greenhouses, and more, as well as helping to facilitate many field trips to local ranches, dairies, the forest, and the Strawberry Mountains. "Agriculture gives students a meaningful way to see how the concepts they learn in the classroom connect to the world around them, Whether we are learning about soil, plants, animals, weather, changes in matter, natural resources, or problem-solving, I look for opportunities to connect those lessons to agriculture and our local environment."

One of this year's projects at Seneca Elementary School is their Forest School, giving students the opportunity to explore the woods in their own backyard throughout the school year. "As the science teacher, I love being able to use the forest right outside our school as another classroom," Raymond said. The students enjoy hiking the nature loop, completing scavenger hunts and relay races, and checking in on the nature around them. "She's learning and discovering right alongside the children, and I think there's something really beautiful about that," Durych said. "She cares about doing things well, she puts in the effort, and she genuinely wants to make a difference."

"Agricultural education has also allowed us to teach students about stewardship and responsibility for our natural resources," Raymond said, sharing experiences with the local fire department and Forest Service which has taught fire safety, land conservation, and protection of the environment. "Through these experiences, students are learning not only how agriculture impacts their lives, but also how they can become responsible stewards of the land and resources around them.

From the clothing they wear to the food they eat, Seneca Elementary students are proud to be learning about agriculture and its connection to everything around them. "In a small rural school, agriculture is a natural part of our community and our students' lives," Raymond shares. "My goal is to use that connection to make learning meaningful, hands-on, and relevant."

Being named runner-up in the Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Educator of the Year Award has been a huge compliment to Raymond who is excited to share her love of agriculture with the students. "I am proud to create a classroom where agriculture, science, nature, and community come together, and where students can see that learning does not stop at the classroom door."









Grant School District 3
401 N Canyon City Blvd
Canyon City, OR 97820

PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER



Clothing Closet

Grant Union Jr/Sr High School has a clothing closet to help students who need access to clothes, backpacks, and shoes. For more information, call the Grant Union office at 541-575-1799.

Student Access to Library Cards



Grant Union staff would like to help connect students with the Grant County Library, offering access to more books and reading materials, both in print and online! See Mrs. Rookstool in the Student Commons for more information and library card applications.

Humbolt Elementary: 3rd Grade Superheroes



An Invitation to Grant School District 3 Christmas Programs

A Seneca Christmas: The Gift of Kindness, Music, Storytelling, and Holiday Magic
Thursday, December 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Humbolt Elementary School Christmas Program
Tuesday, December 15th at 5:30 PM in the GUHS New Gym

Grant Union Jr/Sr High School Band and Choir Concert
Wednesday, December 16th at 5:45 PM in the GUHS Old Gym

Grant Union Concessions Shop Local!

With the support of our local businesses - Chester's Markets, Figaro's Pizza, and Les Schwab Tire Center - we've been able to keep our business local and help fund our clubs and sports teams. When you visit these businesses, please thank them for always supporting our schools and programs!

Grant School District 3 is proud of our schools and proud of our community!