

KUA News

March 2024 newsletter



Empowerment Through Opportunity

Our mission: to break down barriers for students by providing more instructional time, enriching programs and a high-expectations, no-excuses environment to ensure high school graduation, college success and career readiness are reasonable goals for all students regardless of race, language, ethnicity, gender, economic status or zip code.

Administrators' Message


Significant growth in student learning and behavior defined the first two months of 2024 at Kids Unlimited Academy.

New data indicate that proficiency in kindergarten reading levels at KUA more than doubled between fall and winter quarters. The number of students needing reading support dropped by 4%, and the number of students "at risk" in reading dropped by 22%, according to KUA's diagnostic tool i-Ready.

Achieving almost an entire year of projected reading growth halfway through the school year, KUA's kindergarten classes are performing better than any other grade at KUA. Kindergarten teachers observed their students reading short sentences before winter break. That skill, in previous years, wasn't mastered by kindergartners until the end of the school year.

KUA's new English language arts curriculum, Amplify Reading, is one factor in students' rapid progress. The curriculum is grounded in understanding English letter sounds, how to put them together and how the brain processes these components into words.

KUA's i-Ready math data also show major increases in proficiency between fall and winter quarters. Proficiency jumped up 15%, the numbers of students still needing some support dropped 3% and the numbers of kids "at risk" dropped 12%.



Student behavior has vastly improved since the introduction in December of positive behavior checks. “Minor” behavior reports dropped from a weekly high of about 40 in October to roughly five the week of Jan. 22-26. Students’ positive behavior, as noted by staff, soared to almost 50 the week of Jan. 22-26 from approximately 10 the month prior.

While behavior trends are following an encouraging trajectory, KUA still experienced increases last month in unkind student behaviors and choices — at all grade levels. Many of these incidents are aimed at the way other students look, act or speak.

Kindness modeled at home is an ideal way to build understanding and tolerance, even among our younger learners. Simple expressions of gratitude — saying “please” and “thank you” — smiling when you pass someone and using kind words at home are things kids notice, imitate and internalize. We believe the best teachers are our parents and families — kindness starts with you!

Family nights in March highlight carnival and sports themes. The first, Pi Night, March 14, will treat KUA families to pizza “pies” and dessert pies, starting at 6 p.m., while everyone enjoys mathematics-themed games with the chance to win raffle prizes. This year’s Pi Night builds on the success of KUA’s first in 2023, when math instructional coach Cheryl Graham introduced the concept.

“The kids will go from game to game,” said Graham.

Basketball games and the NCAA March Madness tournament should be a slam dunk with families March 21. Come for pregame and halftime shows by our Pre-K through second grade classes. Parents will play against KUA students in grades 3-5, and middle school will take on the basketball skills of KUA staff. Free concessions will add to the evening’s fun before the buzzer sounds for spring break.

Don’t forget to register for spring break camp, March 25-29, at the KUA front office. Camp runs from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day and costs \$25 per day. School resumes April 8.

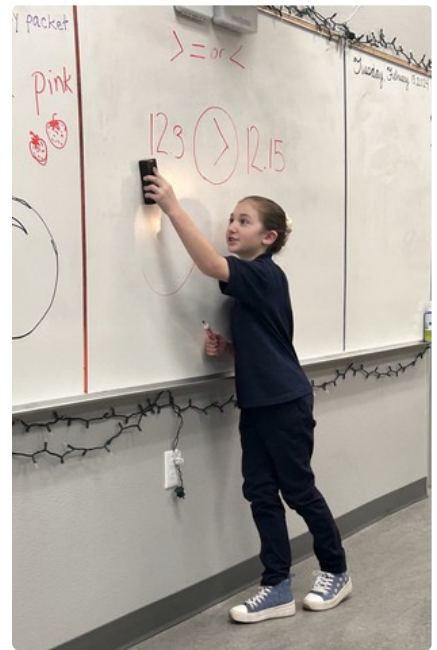
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Why year-round school?

We can't speak highly enough of our year-round [academic calendar](#), which is overwhelmingly supported by our families. Below are a few key reasons why we decided in 2021 to become Oregon's first year-round public school.

- Students retain what they learn all year, rather than experience summer learning loss.
- Additional time for authentic hands-on learning opportunities, excursions and field trips.
- Additional school days help to close the achievement gap.
- Increased opportunities for extra help and tutoring.
- Consistent routines lead to better-adjusted students — and teachers
- Easier access for vacations during the school year.
- Decreased teacher and student absences.



Attendance matters!

Regular school attendance promotes school success and is **required by Oregon Law**, which mandates that students miss no more than 15 school days each academic year. Any student

absent for 10 or more consecutive days will be dropped from KUA enrollment. **Your child may lose his/her spot at KUA.**

ATTEND TODAY
ACHIEVE TOMORROW



The loss of learning that takes place when your child is absent cannot be replaced. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades. If you need help getting your child to school on time, please reach out to us!

Always notify the school, by calling the office between 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m., when your child is absent or going to be absent for any reason. Please provide the student's full name, grade and reason for absence. A doctor's note is required for absences of longer than 3 days.

Medford: 541-774-3900

White City: 541-500-0700



What's cooking?

Our new Food Program puts more variety on students' plates.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner menus through March correspond to a theme that rotates each quarter. Pulled pork sliders and potato and sausage soup are new recipes to complement favorites like taco salad and chicken and cheese enchiladas. Check out the [menu](https://kuaoregon.org/menu) at kuaoregon.org/menu

All KUA students are eligible for free breakfast, lunch and dinner — cooked from scratch using fresh ingredients in our on-site kitchen. We are an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Our nationally recognized, award-winning food program is unique in the Medford school district, and we take pride in providing students' daily nutrition. Build your kids' healthy habits at home with whole foods instead of processed ones.

This healthier version of Shepherd's Pie replaces fattier beef with leaner ground turkey. More nutrition comes from fiber and B vitamins in sweet potatoes, instead of white mashed potatoes.

It's a dish that pays homage to Pi Night, March 14, and also updates a St. Patrick's Day classic. Find more family-friendly recipes at cookingmatters.org

Sweet Potato Shepherd's Pie

Ingredients:

- Nonstick cooking spray, as needed
- 4 medium sweet potatoes (2 1/2 pounds total)
- 1 1/2 pounds ground turkey or 93% lean ground beef
- 8 ounces mushrooms, washed and sliced
- 1 small onion, peeled and diced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 (15-ounce) can reduced-sodium chicken broth or beef broth
- 3 Tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup fresh, frozen, or canned green peas
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 1/4 cup nonfat milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoon unsalted butter
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 F. Coat a 9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Scrub the sweet potatoes and pierce several times with a fork. Place in a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and bake until soft, for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool while you make filling.
3. While sweet potatoes are baking, in a large skillet over medium-high, cook the turkey or beef, the mushrooms and onion, breaking up meat with a spatula or wooden spoon as it cooks, until meat is no longer pink, for about 15 minutes.
4. In a colander, drain off liquid and return to pan. Add the garlic and thyme; cook for 30 seconds. Sprinkle with the flour and stir to coat. Add the broth and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a simmer. Cook until mixture thickens, for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the peas, 1/4 teaspoon of the salt and 1/2 teaspoon of the pepper. Transfer to prepared baking dish.
5. Peel cooled sweet potatoes and place in a medium bowl. Add the milk, butter, cinnamon (if using) and remaining salt and pepper. Mash with a fork until smooth. Spread over filling.
6. Bake in preheated oven until hot and bubbling at edges, for 30 to 40 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe from cookingmatters.org

Upcoming dates

03/01 — No bus

03/04 — No school for teacher professional development

03/05 — No school for parent-teacher conferences

03/14 — Site Council, 5 p.m., Medford Pre-K building

03/14 — Pi Night, 6 p.m.

03/21 — Family Night, 5:15-7 p.m.

03/25 - April 5 — No school for Spring Break; see you April 8!

Check out some pictures from February!



100 Days of School



Valentine's Day



Kids Unlimited of Oregon — Medford Campus

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Sarah Lemon

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