



*Medford 7-12 Schools
School Board Report
March, 2026*

Key Wins to date

- [February Medford Students of the Month](#)
 - ***Youth Frontiers retreats-*** Respect retreat for 9-10th grades and courage for 7-8th. The kids seemed to enjoy themselves, the small group leaders were awesome and had some great things to say about taking part, and the staff reported that our students were some of the most respectful and polite they have had.
 - ***Advisory Competitions have been a hit.*** Our first competition was on Halloween and advisories competed to answer holiday themed questions in a Blooket. It was well received with Mr. H's advisory winning. On Dec. 5th, we met again, this time for an obstacle course. Advisories competed by spinning, walking between cones, jumping a barrier, climbing under a table and hanging an ornament on the tree- all while blindfolded and taking direction from another advisory student. A great time was had with Mr. Domstrands Advisory taking home first place! A third challenge was had last month as they played musical chairs- its a way to have positive fun, build camaraderie, and connection.
 - ***We Competed in the 1 Act Play competition for the first time in at least 4 years!*** We've won several basketball games, Snow week went off without a hitch, and the weather is warming up!
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Current Challenges and Supports in Place

- We've seen an uptick in suspicious behavior surrounding the bathroom and possible vaping and vandalism. As a result, we have purchased a metal detecting wand and I am proposing the a policy be put in place for use of the wand. Mr. Ristau has that policy

Additionally, Caffeine pouches that strongly resemble chewing tobacco have increased in popularity. Because there is no way to tell the difference between those that are caffeine and those that are tobacco, not to mention the issues that caffeine can have on the body, I am proposing that we add the following language to the student handbook in regards to these pouches.

Caffeine Pouches (e.g., "Zin")

Caffeine pouches, including products such as "Zin," are prohibited on school property. These products resemble tobacco/chewing tobacco and will be treated the same as tobacco/nicotine products under school rules. Possession, use, or distribution of these items may result in disciplinary action consistent with tobacco/nicotine policy.

Lastly, students have really gotten into the squishy toy craze. Unfortunately, instead of being helpful, these "toys" which are marketed sometimes as fidgets to help students focus, are doing anything but. In fact we've had more issues with distractions, vandalism as they purposely break them and the slimy sticky goo inside goes everywhere, and other inappropriate behaviors with them, that they too are

needing to controlled etc. Language explaining what an appropriate fidget is and how they may be used will be added to the handbook as well: see below:

Fidgets and small sensory tools: these may be used during instructional time only when they support a student's focus and do not disrupt the learning environment and are allowed by the teacher.

To be permitted in class, fidgets must:

- *Be small enough to fit within the student's hand*
- *Not make noise*
- *Not create a visual distraction*
- *Be used quietly and appropriately at the student's desk*

Fidgets may not be thrown, used in gestures, struck against objects, shared with other students, or used in any manner that disrupts instruction or creates a safety concern. Items that explode, break apart, create a mess, or cause damage are prohibited.

Teachers may require a student to put a fidget away or may temporarily confiscate it if it is used inappropriately or becomes a distraction. Repeated misuse may result in loss of the privilege to bring fidgets to school.

Students with documented accommodations (IEP or 504 Plan) will be permitted access to sensory tools as outlined in their individual plans. These students and their fidgets are still subject to this policy if used inappropriately.

Next Steps and Priorities for the Coming Month

- **Master schedule for next year-** I am learning this process. Mrs. Routh had always taken care of the master schedule but with her departure this has fallen to me. I have been educating myself on how this works with our student info system- Infinite Campus- as well as getting input from teachers on classes they would like to add/change and/or better organize if possible. Mrs. Zimmerman and I met with students to get the first round of selection completed. I am working over spring break to get things updated and ready in Infinite Campus, now we will fine tune it and get it out to students- hopefully by the end of the year
- **Continued discussions with faculty and staff re: how to make our classrooms more manageable and conducive to learning.** We have identified several issues including concerns with middle schoolers in particular having trouble adjusting to the freedoms and changes that come with 7th and 8th grade. As a result, we are experimenting with some different ideas in scheduling, talking about a different form of introduction/orientation in the fall and how to have a more gradual exposure to the freedoms and changes. I also collected some good ideas at the MASSP conference in January that we will be discussing and looking to incorporate.

Thanks!

Jen Ford