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District wins \$1.5 Million grant for seismic safety upgrades to elementary school

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The Brookings-Harbor School District will receive a nearly \$1.5 million Seismic Rehabilitation Grant to retrofit Kalmiopsis Elementary School as announced by Business Oregon's Infrastructure Finance Authority last week.

Superintendent Sean Gallagher gave a brief report on the new grant, earned in a statewide competition, at the School Board meeting on April 21.

"It will provide a tremendous boost to the school district and community, with the first priority being safety," Gallagher said.

The \$1,499,600 grant will fund various construction projects at the elementary school meant to reinforce the school to the point where it will remain standing long enough after a major earthquake to allow all people to evacuate safely.

Kalmiopsis Elementary School houses about 740 students and 80 full- and part-time staff on a typical school day.

"This is important because we live in an area of the state that has particular seismic hazards," Gallagher said. "In addition, our schools are emergency shelters for the community in case of disaster such as earthquake, tsunami or severe storm."

According to Gallagher, the project will likely include more than just hidden safety improvements to the school, because as areas are disturbed they are rebuilt. Gallagher has overseen multiple seismic retrofits in his career.

"Retrofit construction typically disturbs walls, floors and roofs while upgrading the structure of the building, so you often need a remodel with new carpets, paint, cabinetry, etc.," he said. "As a result, not only will it be a structural safety improvement for the building, but a functional and cognitive improvement also."

Other south coast school districts and colleges receiving grants from the first round of state funding include:

- Bandon School District, Ocean Crest Elementary, \$1,498,212
- Central Curry School District, Gold Beach High School, \$1,499,213
- Langlois School District, Driftwood Elementary, \$1,472,400
- Southwest Oregon Community College, Coaledo Hall, \$597,818
- Southwest Oregon Community College, Randolph Hall, \$624,550

A total of \$50.4 Million was up for grabs in the first round of funding.

Brookings Harbor School District plans to re-submit its proposals and applications for Azalea Middle School and Brookings-Harbor High School for a second round of statewide grants this June.

“That was just the first round of funding for seismic, and was only a \$50 million dollar purse for the whole state. The second round is three times that amount (\$150 Million). I think the likelihood of us receiving funding in the next round for at least one more project is very high,” Gallagher said.

The seismic grants include an economic boost as well. The grant funds ease the need for taxation to update school buildings. A project of this magnitude would typically take a bond measure to achieve.

The district will continue working with Anderson Engineering and Surveying in partnership with ZCS Engineering on the next steps for planning and construction phases. Design and strategic planning for the project will begin this summer. The construction phase of the seismic upgrade will occur Summer 2017.

Brookings Harbor School District 17-C: “Every Student Can Succeed.”