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Umpqua Bank makes impact on school district programs

Umpqua Bank was recognized as an outstanding business partner last night during the Baker 5J School Board meeting. In citing Umpqua’s commitment to serve Baker students, superintendent Mark Witty pointed to regular contributions, both in time and money, the company and its employees have made over the past several years.

For example, the Umpqua Charitable Trust has provided $90,000 in grants over the past three years to support Summer Academy. Their contribution joined grants from the Ford Family Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation and Leo Adler Foundation to provide a solid start for this program. Summer Academy 2018 served over 200 students entering grades 1-6 over a 6-week period, from the end of June to the beginning of August.

This past summer Umpqua’s support took a more hands-on approach as Chris Knoll, branch manager of Umpqua Bank in Baker City, taught a class called “Financial Beginnings” for intermediate grade students each week. The curriculum, provided by Umpqua Bank, covers topics such as money values, banking, credit and debit cards, mortgages and credit scores.

At the end of the summer session, the classes took a field trip to Umpqua Bank for a tour, and each student was given $1.

Student response to the program was overwhelmingly positive. “It was incredible,” said Angela Lattin, coordinator of Summer Academy. “They wouldn't know the word 'mortgage' if it wasn't for him,” Lattin said. “He made a huge impact.”

Umpqua provides each employee 40 hours per year to volunteer during their work time, and many choose to read in the schools with the REAL program (Read Everyday And Learn). REAL volunteers spent 61.5 hours reading with kids every day of Summer Academy. An Umpqua employee was there,
reading with kids, every day.

“I don't think we could do it without them,” Lattin said.

During the school year, REAL pairs volunteers with children at elementary schools in the district.

“Umpqua employees make up a quarter of the South Baker volunteers,” Jim Tomlinson, REAL coordinator, said of volunteer readers from Umpqua Bank.

“I am grateful for the ongoing and significant contribution Umpqua Bank and their employees exhibit, both financially and through volunteering in our schools!” added Witty. “Their generosity is changing kids' lives.”

About Baker School District 5J
Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) in Baker City, OR, is the largest of three rural school districts in Baker County, serving 1,700 students and employing over 235 educators and staff. District elementary schools include Brooklyn Primary School, Haines Elementary, Keating Elementary School, and South Baker Intermediate. Baker Middle School and two high schools, Baker High School and Eagle Cap Innovative High School, are also part of BSD. Additionally, BSD sponsors two charter schools, Baker Web Academy and Baker Early College, each offering teacher-supported online education. BSD provides next generation education for the future of Eastern Oregonians and launched Baker Technical Institute (BTI), a career and technical program that partners with regional employers and industry experts to provide an innovative education in hands-on fields. BSD believes strong schools are the foundation of strong and vibrant communities and is committed to prepare students to become successful life-long learner.

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The Baker 5J schools exist to be the center of community vitality eliminating the barriers for gratifying individual educational experiences in order to have capable contributing citizens with character.