

Register - Pajaronian

WATSONVILLE PAJARO FREEDOM AROMAS CORRALITOS CASTROVILLE APTOS LA SELVA BEACH ROYAL OAKS ELKHORN MOSS LANDING
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Proud to have been principal of WHS this past year

It has been one year since I became principal of Watsonville High School and I simply wish to thank the myriad of loving folks in this community who come together on behalf of student learning at WHS.

I returned to the Pajaro Valley Unified School District after working for 12 years in Salinas. I returned to Watsonville High after serving as an assistant principal 20 years ago and 10 years before that, serving in my first year of teaching, also at WHS.

Previously, I opened a new high school in Salinas, Everett Alvarez High School. I was pleased and excited with the outcomes but obviously wasn't able to utilize an alumni association to help at the west high school in Salinas. Here in Watsonville, I can't keep up with the alumni who wish to help out the Black and Gold. It is time to say "thank you" to so many individuals.

On April 28, 160 WHS students and 20 parents, alumni, members of the community gave the entire Saturday to beautify the school. We power-washed the buildings, planted flowers, put in a new cement sidewalk, painted flower boxes and some of the main building; cleaned up every speck of litter and pulled every weed. Dona-

Local
columnist

Murry Schekman



tions of plants, dirt and food came in from all over the community. We fed our workers a wonderful breakfast and lunch. Students commented that we should do this more often. We not only polished the school but we reinforced and added to the sense of community.

STAR testing took place the last week of April and the first week of May. Our scores have been low and not representative of the knowledge that our students possess. The entire staff worked hard to make sure that students understood the importance of giving it their best effort. We provided incentives with pizza and prizes, many donated by members of our community.

We had 60 members of the community on campus to provide pizza to the students. These kind individuals again were alumni, parents, civic leaders, grandparents, aunts, uncles and more. Soroptimists, Rotarians, employees from

Graniterock and City Council members were there to honor the students every day that we tested. It seemed to work and we are all now simply waiting for our results because we are optimistic that we will meet the state targets for WHS. It could lead to the shaving of my head — the students challenged me to do so if they meet the state targets. (My hairline is rapidly receding so it won't be a huge task to cut off the rest!)

We are soon to witness the opening of the Watsonville High School Sports Complex. Just like our new Geiser Field with an all-weather track and synthetic turf, the entire community will benefit from a complete gymnasium and swimming pool complex.

Our graduates of the Class of 2007 have the benefit of an additional \$100,000 of scholarship funds thanks to the efforts of the MAIA Foundation and the Educational Partnership Center. WHS already enjoys the benefit of a variety of partnerships with MAIA and the EPC but this is yet another example of different organizations working together.

The WHS Boosters Club put on a very fun and successful golf tournament on May 11 that raised about \$15,000 for our athletic program. They work

quietly and steadily on behalf of our athletic program and do so much behind the scenes to make our school run well.

Members of the ag community have helped influence our program this year so we can better prepare our students for some of the higher levels of agriculture-related jobs. We are now going to incorporate food safety, green technology, water conservation and even a small period of time to study golf course management. It's the ag community that is helping us to focus and prepare kids for better paying jobs in the ag industry.

I am in awe at what can happen when folks put aside their smaller differences to work together on behalf of student learning and I am grateful to see it happen at WHS this school year.

Again, I simply wish to thank the many, many individuals in this town who've contributed to Watsonville High this year. It's been a great year for our students and I am very proud to serve as principal of a school with such a rich past and a bright future. Go Wildcatz!

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Murry Schekman is the principal of Watsonville High School. The opinions of columnists are not necessarily those of the Register-Pajaronian.

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