

Junction Elementary School District

Clay Ross, Superintendent

Junction School

9087 Deschutes Rd.

Palo Cedro, CA 96073

Phone: (530) 547-3276

Fax: (530) 547-4080

www.junctionesd.net



Christopher Nelson, Principal

Board Members:

Clint Snyder

Hope Bjerke

Ken Parisot

Kelly Lindblom

Kristen Knott

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Greetings Junction Elementary School District Family,

Lately there have been discussions about an Assembly Bill from the State of California that was signed into law in October of 2021. This law, AB 367, actually went into effect at the beginning of this school year. The law states- "This bill would enact the Menstrual Equity for All Act of 2021, which would require a public school, as provided, maintaining any combination of classes from grades 6 to 12, inclusive, to stock the school's restrooms with an adequate supply of free menstrual products, as defined, available and accessible, free of cost, in all women's restrooms and all-gender restrooms, and in at least one men's restroom, at all times, and to post a designated notice, on or before the start of the 2022-23 school year, as prescribed."

Previous to this law, there was an Education Code, (EC 35292.6 (a)), in effect that has been repealed by the signing of this Bill. This Education Code stated, "A public school maintaining any combination of classes from grade 6 to grade 12, inclusive, that meets the 40-percent pupil poverty threshold required to operate a schoolwide program pursuant to Section 6314(a)(1)(A) of Title 20 of the United States Code shall stock at least 50 percent of the school's restrooms with feminine hygiene products at all times. In recent history, Junction has neither met nor exceeded the 40% poverty; we still don't. Our practice has been to make feminine hygiene products available to those in need by keeping free supplies in the office and providing them when requested.

Recently the law was discussed openly at our Board Meeting at the request of some concerned parents. Parents expressed their concerns and frustrations with not having advance notice of this law prior to the posting of notices in the restrooms at the middle school. I will accept ownership of that and apologize that I did not send out information to parents in advance of posting the requirements of AB 367 in the appropriate restrooms. I understand the strong desire of many in this community to have private conversation with their students about this matter; I will do my best to provide advanced messaging related to sensitive topics in the future.

Additional concerns were raised about the actual restrooms chosen for the posting. We only have one of each Womens and Mens student restrooms so in our case 'all womens restrooms' and 'at least one mens restroom' mean the same thing.

In reading AB367, the words Men's and Women's restrooms are used; not girl's and boy's. When reading the full text, it is clear that the intent of the law is to provide access to students. The law is also written to apply to schools serving students from 6th-12th grades as well as Community Colleges. It does not apply to restrooms used by Preschool-5th grade students. My current interpretation is that Women's and Men's really mean Male and Female restrooms. Since there are laws pertaining to the separation of use between staff and student restrooms, then the law pertains to student restrooms.

Currently, we have posted the requirements of AB 367 in the middle school restrooms, we have ordered the dispensing machines and additional feminine products; they are on backorder. Additionally, I have asked the attorney from the attorney consortium to prepare a presentation for the next meeting of the superintendents in this county so that all of us will hear the same message and know the same requirements. In the meantime, we will continue our prior practice of providing the products discreetly, free of charge, to those in need via the school or district office.

I will keep you posted. Thanks for reading, understanding, and remember...GOOOO RAIDERS!!!

Clay Ross
Superintendent