Our first look at Surprise Lake Middle School

Design work at the new Surprise Lake Middle School (SLMS) is nearly complete! Earlier this spring, the district hosted a virtual tour of the new school, which can be viewed online at fifeschools.com/tomorrow. These designs show what the new school will look like on the outside and on the inside. Construction of SLMS is slated to begin this summer and the first part of this work will involve the demolition of Surprise Lake’s lower gym building. Cornerstone General Contractors will be working through this coming summer, next year and the following summer with the goal of having the new SLMS ready to open in the fall of 2020!

After finishing Surprise Lake Middle School, a grand opening ceremony will be held at this location to celebrate the new school. Community members are invited to attend and details about this celebration will be forthcoming.

The next scheduled construction work will focus on the new STEAM Center of Innovation at Fife High School and a new elementary school. After a competitive selection process, the district hired McGranahan Architects to design the STEAM Center and Integrus Architecture to design the elementary school. The process of gathering design input and putting together initial schematics has begun for both projects.

Much of the progress thus far has been accomplished through our work with CSG (Construction Services Group), Integrus Architecture and Cornerstone General Contractors, with more progress scheduled in the months to come.

We're committed to keeping our community up to date as the design and construction of all facilities continues.
CELEBRATING OUR OUTSTANDING STAFF MEMBERS OF THE YEAR!

Congratulations to this year’s award recipients! Each year, staff members from each building in Fife Public Schools, including the ESC and Transportation, select certificated and classified employees of the year. This selection represents recognition of those staff members who have exemplified excellence in carrying out the mission and vision of Fife Public Schools.

From these Outstanding Staff Members, two district-level Outstanding Staff Members of the Year are selected. This year’s recipients are Sarah Brauner and Michelle Hirata pictured below receiving their awards from Superintendent Alfano at the April board meeting. Sarah Brauner (top) is an ELA teacher from Columbia Junior High School. Michelle Hirata (bottom) works as an educational assistant at Discovery Primary.

Discovery Primary and Fife High School ‘Read and Lead’

Discovery Primary first grade teacher, Lisa Matson and Fife High School Spanish teacher, Jeanie Lovino have partnered to form the “Read to Lead” program. In this program, Spanish language students from Fife High School are partnered with native Spanish speaking students at Discovery Primary to read together, play games and eat snacks.

The goal of this program is to give English Language Learners (ELLs) the opportunity to practice reading in English and further develop their language skills with the support of a high school mentor while simultaneously building a sense of community and connectedness with our schools. Since students get to work with high schoolers who either speak or are learning to speak Spanish, a secondary goal is to help these primary students look forward to becoming a high school student one day, themselves.

Thank you to Fife Public School’s fantastic Transportation Department! This program would not be possible without their assistance bringing the Discovery students to the high school for each mentoring session.

Big Brothers Big Sisters needs your help to launch!

Columbia Junior High and Surprise Lake Middle School are excited to announce a partnership with the Tacoma-Pierce County Big Brothers Big Sisters program. These schools are aiming to offer both school and community-based mentorship programs to help close achievement and opportunity gaps faced by our youth.

The goal is to launch the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in these schools at the start of the 2019-20 school year, but your help is needed to achieve this goal. In order to launch the program, a minimum of 20 volunteers are needed to dedicate 4 hours per month to mentoring a student. Mentors will receive support and training throughout the mentorship process, and will be matched with their mentee based on a number of variables.

Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs have a measurable impact on the lives of our youth. According to Big Brothers Big Sisters, in Pierce County alone, students enrolled in the program showed an 86% improvement in academic achievement, 92% improvement in their sense of social acceptance, and 100% maintained risk-free behavior (drug/alcohol abuse).

You can help us reach this goal of 20 volunteers in the following ways:

1. Complete the Volunteer Interest Form on the Columbia Junior High Counseling webpage (bit.ly/2PfdFM)

2. Spread the word! If you know someone who would be a great mentor please refer them!

5th graders learn and grow at science camp

Every spring, for more than a decade, Fife Public Schools’ fifth grade students travel to science camp. It’s there that they are exposed to science and nature in order to learn powerful lessons about the world. This past April, students from Endeavour and Hedden traveled to Gig Harbor’s Camp Seymour and Glencove for two and a half days of learning. While there, students attended classes including marine biology (with touch tank observations), reptile observation, environmental sustainability and boating.

Fifth grade camp is an opportunity for students to connect with one another and the environment in a whole new way.
A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fife Public Schools Community,

I feel fortunate to serve such an amazing group of people - you. Over the past several years, we have developed a relationship that feels like family. We gather for events together, we celebrate together and we look out for one another’s best interests. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me as your superintendent, to ensure that your children receive the highest quality education possible.

As we undertake a $176 million district renovation, approved by you, our generous voters, I also feel grateful that we have a construction management team that feels like family, too. Construction Services Group (CSG) specializes in K-12 projects and is overseeing all components of the Fife Public Schools Bond Project in order to help our district maximize our decision making capabilities, with information from industry experts.

From keeping us on time and on budget, to managing consultants, contractors, design teams, and contracts - the CSG team of experts is helping us to be sure that we utilize your tax dollars most effectively and create the quality educational facilities our kids deserve.

We’re also excited to be working with Cornerstone Construction as our Surprise Lake Middle School replacement contractor. Their early engagement in the process has provided valuable insights while we work through site logistics, maintain access to school during construction and inform the design process. They’re reviewing designs right now to determine efficient constructability and maximization of bond funds. It has been a true pleasure to work with all of our bond partners (architects, engineers, contractors, etc.). Thank you for your diligent work to create exceptional facilities for our exceptional children and staff. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to you, our community, for your support of improvements to our schools. #TogetherweareFife.

Sincerely,

Kevin Alfano, Superintendent