Summer sees start of bond construction work

NEW SURPRISE LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL ON SCHEDULE TO OPEN NEXT FALL

This has been a very busy and productive summer for our construction projects, with Surprise Lake Middle School in the starring role. We encourage everyone to keep up with the latest news via our district website (fifeschools.com), and specifically, the construction section.

Over the summer, the demolition of the lower building at SLMS was completed. In the footprint of that building and the bus turnaround, the entire new SLMS will be constructed. The footings for most of the building are poured, with steel coming soon. We should see portions of the building going up in the next month. Check out this recent time lapse video of the work at bit.ly/fifeconstr1.

The project is moving along as scheduled and will continue throughout this school year. We are planning to move into the new building at this time next year and complete the demolition process and final site work, including landscaping, in September and October of 2020.

NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & FHS STEAM PROJECTS IN PLANNING STAGE

The elementary educational specifications committee has completed its work and Integris, our architect for that project, is finalizing the schematic design. The next step in this work is the actual design documents. The new school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021, so we are delighted that we have plenty of time to make important decisions and get your feedback.

The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) Center of Innovation at FHS is also progressing. This addition will replace the current portable classrooms and house many of the innovative programs at FHS including science labs, art studios, technology labs and open spaces for students and classes to gather and collaborate. Our architect, is working on an early schematic design. We look forward to seeing their work make our words come to life!

We are excited to share our most current information on both of these projects with you via an online communication tool called ThoughtExchange. This will give you the ability to ask questions and share thoughts in real time. Look for more info coming soon!
Staff summer retreats lay important foundation

An important part of the back-to-school activities for staff are our building-level staff retreats. While each building administrative team designs the day-long retreat their staff will engage in, all are aligned with each building’s strategic plan for the coming year.

At Discovery Primary, the theme for their retreat was “Building Foundations.” A good portion of their day, as well as that of their elementary partners at Endeavour Intermediate and Hedden Elementary, focused on their continued implementation of and support around the PBIS program. At its heart, PBIS - which stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support - calls on schools to teach kids about behavior, just as they would teach about any other subject, like reading or math. It encompasses a prevention-oriented approach to student discipline that is characterized by its focus on defining and teaching behavioral expectations, rewarding appropriate behaviors, continual evaluation of its effectiveness, and the integration of supports for individuals, groups, and the school as a whole.

The Surprise Lake Middle School staff met at the Puyallup Public Library for their retreat where conversations were centered around PBIS as well as restorative and culturally responsive teaching practices. The Point Defiance Park Pagoda made a beautiful setting for the Columbia Junior High School staff, where the day’s focus was on their continued use of Social Emotional Learning and implementing effective school-wide AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination - see next article) practices. The Fife High School staff met at Station House 725 in Puyallup for a day of learning that included a focus on the power of developing a “Growth Mindset” - both for staff as well as students. According to Carol Dweck, the psychologist who developed the growth-mindset concept, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

Career & College Readiness program reaches milestone

AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a Career & College Readiness elective class entering its fourth year in the Fife School District. The 2019-2020 school year marks a point of celebration for the AVID program as this year will be the first time the program now includes a cohort of students in all eligible grades 7-12.

Melissa Brownell, art and AVID teacher at Columbia Junior High, started with the first AVID cohort of 9th grade students in 2016. Brownell states, “It is very exciting to see how this program has grown from one cohort to four. I, as well as my colleagues, have seen a dramatic increase in students taking ownership in their learning, articulating where they need support, and their ability to solve problems as a result of AVID practices.” Brownell says she also noticed a ripple effect across her entire school. “The changes I have described don’t just exist in our AVID cohort students. They have also spread across our entire student body.”

This same cohort of students will now be seniors and have worked for the past three years with Mike Chapman, social studies and AVID teacher at Fife High School. According to Chapman, “AVID has changed my perspective in education. It has made me focus on post graduation plans and helping kids not just graduate but to become successful adults. The program also provides the best professional development I have ever been to!”

AVID is designed to challenge students academically and build career and college readiness skills in the areas of reading, writing, inquiry, collaboration, and organizational study skills while simultaneously exposing them to post-secondary pathway options. Students are selected for this program based upon an application and interview process.
GEARING UP FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

While our students and their families were enjoying a well-deserved summer break, the Fife School District was busy preparing to ensure our students would have the best experience possible. Here is a snapshot of some activities from across our district showing the preparation that precedes what is sure to be another great year at Fife!

MAINTENANCE TEAM COMPLETES HUNDREDS OF WORK ORDERS

Our maintenance team was busy performing a variety of tasks getting the grounds and buildings ready for the arrival of staff and students. According Clint Parrish, Director of Facilities, the maintenance and custodial team completed 209 work orders over the summer. In addition to the yearly grounds and classroom preparations, a few other projects included painting new parking lines and stall numbers in the bus parking lot, collecting and sending ten pallets of out-of-date books to surplus, outfitting the new temporary portables at SLMS with clocks, whiteboards, fire extinguishers, room and teacher name tags, and blinds, salvaging as many reusable items as possible from the old SLMS building prior to demolition, and in many cases retrofitting these items in new locations in our district.

DISCOVERY STAFF GET THE YOUNGEST LEARNERS READY FOR THE FIRST DAY

Discovery Primary has been preparing for the arrival of the graduating classes of 2031 and 2032! Julie Bartlett, principal at Discovery, describes the preparation that goes into introducing our youngest learners to their Fife educational journey. “We spend the summer months eagerly preparing for the approximately 625 preschool through first grade students. We start our kindergarten students slowly, conferencing with each family first, then adding one half of the class at a time. This helps students have more attention as they are learning about school.”

HEDDEN & ENDEAVOUR WELCOME NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Hedden and Endeavour Elementaries welcomed new assistant principals to their staff this summer and embraced the task of helping these new administrators “learn the ropes” in each of their respective buildings. Hedden Elementary welcomes Jill Dornan, former 2nd grade teacher at Endeavour Intermediate, and Endeavour Intermediate welcomes David Pogson, joining us from the Auburn School District.

SURPRISE LAKE MS PREPS FOR A YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

The Surprise Lake Middle School office was temporarily moved to the district office for the summer months due to construction. Moving a building’s “command center” from one location to another and back again within the span of two months is no small feat, but the Surprise Lake Middle School administrators and office staff made the transition as seamless as possible. During relocation, the construction and Fife maintenance teams converted the old art room and an adjoining storage area into a fantastic music space. The team also converted some offices that were located behind the Saber Center into the Life Skills room. With the placement of two new portables on the SLMS grounds, all of the classroom space that was located in the lower building was replaced. Mark Beddes, SLMS principal, stated, “Thank you so much to Cornerstone and of course the Fife maintenance crew for getting things ready to go!”

FIFE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STAFF SPEND A DAY “SERVING” THEIR SCHOOL

A unique way that the Fife High School staff prepare for the coming school year is through a new tradition called “Serve Day.” On Serve Day, teachers and staff members come to school in August to do various clean up and improvement projects to get the school ready for our students. Fife High School principal, Brandon Bakke, states, “Fife High School is all about Family, Honor, and Service, and our staff tries to model his for our community, and we want to the school looking its best for our students!”

Only through these collective efforts of all building teams and departments in our district - and this is just a sampling - that we can be ready for the arrival of over 3700 students each fall, showcasing what is truly meant by #togetherweRfife!
A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Fife Public Schools Community,

As we enter into the 2019-2020 school year, I hope you are as excited as our team of educators are to kick off what will promise to be another great year in Fife! The summer months have been busy this year because of the facilities projects underway, thanks to our voter-approved bond.

The staff at Surprise Lake Middle School has done a wonderful job adapting to the construction changes and getting the school ready for the 2019-2020 school year. The kids are going to have a special experience, as the last students to attend the ‘old’ SLMS, while the ‘new’ SLMS is being built right in front of their eyes. Construction will be taking place all year!

In other areas of the district, I am so pleased with our direction and the leadership teams that have created opportunities for this direction to be realized. Specifically, our leadership teams at each of our schools have created strategic plans with action items and have monitored those plans to ensure our students and schools are engaged, inspired and improving each year. It starts with our building administrators and our district office staff. Our building administrators are the leaders of our teachers and students. Our district office staff are there to support and lead along with our building leaders. Together, they are responsible for the success of our students, the environment they learn in and the overall health of our school system. I am proud of the work we are doing in Fife and the results we are seeing because of it!

I hope this new quarterly newsletter will help us stay more closely connected to you and be a useful source of information for you. We will still communicate via our website, fifeschools.com and through the various social media accounts we manage; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. As always, please feel free to reach out to me here at the district office. My door is always open!

Cheers to another great school year in Fife Public Schools!

Kevin Alfano, Superintendent