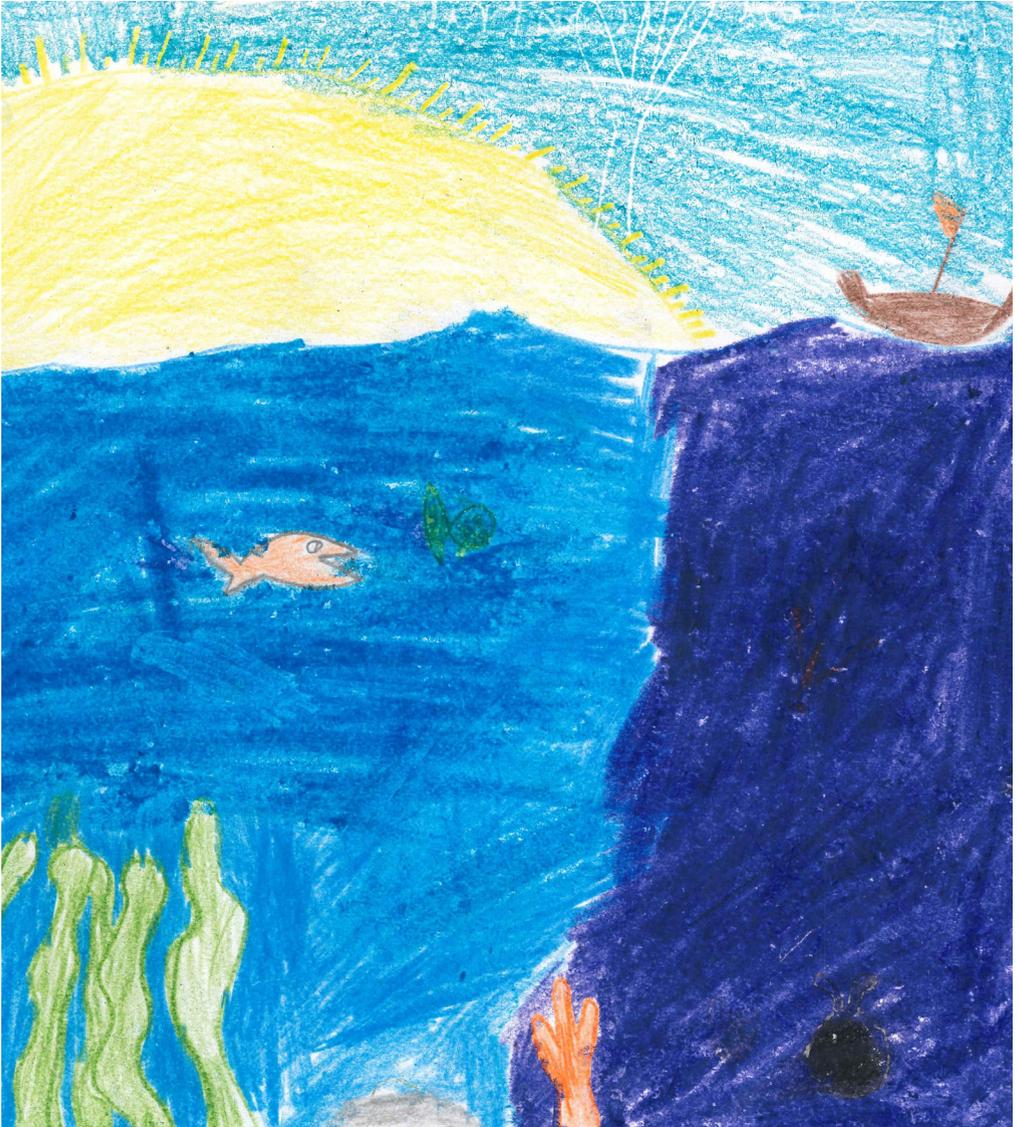




# WE ARE FERNDALE

A FERNDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLICATION



## ISSUE 3 JUNE 2019

# IN THIS ISSUE

## **P.3 June Greetings**

*An update from Ferndale School District Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn as the 2018-2019 school year concludes.*

## **P.4 Walking in Two Worlds**

*A feature on Vista Middle School Principal Heather Leighton.*

## **P.9 New Leaders Join Teams at Ferndale High, Skyline**

*Ravinder (Rav) Dhillon named Ferndale High School Assistant Principal, Obadiah DeWeber named Skyline Elementary Principal.*

## **P.10 Interview with FHS Graduate Ellie Elfson**

*2019 FHS grad Ellie Elfson reflects on her time as a student in the Ferndale School District.*

## **P.12 Ferndale School Bond Updates**

*Updates and information following the February 2019 passage of the Ferndale School District bond proposal.*



*Student artwork by Central Elementary 3rd grade students Caleb Strait (cover page) and Brielle Flaherty (table of contents page, above)*

# DEAR FERNDALE FAMILIES,

Spring is a time to celebrate retirements, graduations and the end of another school year. Here are a few Spring 2019 highlights from around the District:

## Retiring Staff

I joined Ferndale staff, students, and community members at the May School Board meeting to honor our School District retirees. The power of each individual's story and the thoughtfulness by which they were honored was quite touching. Assistant Superintendent Mark Deebach had this to say about our retiring Administrative Assistant in Food Services Kathy Bruns, "You have given the Ferndale School District a precious gift over the last thirteen years. You have given us your time, energy and talent. I want you to know that you have had a lasting impact." I include Mr. Deebach's words as they provide a universal sentiment. We are grateful to our staff members for the gift of their service.

## Graduating Seniors

Another class of Golden Eagles will have graduated by the time this letter reaches you. Their plans include apprenticeships in trades, employment, university and community college study, mission trips, military service and more. I have seen this class be brave; I have seen them speak up; I have seen them show leadership in their community; I have seen them celebrate each other; and I know that, whether they remain in Ferndale or leave for other communities, they will be change-makers. I can't wait to hear about their good work.

## Bond Updates

There may not be dirt moving at the new Ferndale High School project site yet, but we have accomplished a tremendous amount of work since you passed our school bond in February 2019. Here are a few highlights:

- We have hired Dykeman Architects and, working with them, we have developed a comprehensive plan for gathering input from the community regarding the design of the new high school facility.
- We plan to (on June 19) sell the first \$41.6 million worth of the bonds so that we have funds to proceed with the work.
- The Bond Oversight Committee has established itself as a well-defined, independent organization and an integral part of all aspects of the bond work.
- The Design Advisory Committee application has been created, posted and is open to applicants until July 31, 2019.

To sign up for weekly bond updates and to access the Design Advisory Committee application, please visit our bond information website at [www.weareferndale.org](http://www.weareferndale.org).

With that, I want to wish you a wonderful summer. As always, I hope you will get in touch if you ever have questions for me or for the Ferndale School District. I often talk to or email directly with community members and publish answers to those questions at [www.ferndalesd.org/school-board/responses-to-community-questions](http://www.ferndalesd.org/school-board/responses-to-community-questions).

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Quinn, Superintendent, Ferndale School District



From Left: Husband Ken Quinn, Linda, Son Tyler, Daughter-in-Law Willa, Grandson Raynor, Daughter Caitlin, Son-in-Law Blue

# VISTA MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL HEATHER LEIGHTON: WALKING IN TWO WORLDS



To share Vista Middle School Principal Heather Leighton's story is to share a story about the people she loves. Heather reflects on that and says, "I was fortunate enough to grow up with a family that has strong cultural boundaries. Living next door to my grandmother and with aunties whom served as pillars in our home provided me with a strong foundation."

Leighton has four children, Winterhawk, Watiko, Jaie and daughter Merisa. Winterhawk is a junior playing college football at Central Washington University. Watiko recently committed to play football at Southern Oregon University. Jaie is a sophomore at Lummi Nation School. Merisa works as the Health/Policy Coordinator for the Lummi Indian Business Council and is a new mom to Heather's first grandchild, Kashus.

"I am proud to be a member of the Lummi Nation. We are the Lhaq'temish people, the Lummi people. My ancestors have laid the foundation for my future. I honor and acknowledge the sacrifices they made on my behalf. It is for this reason, I always do my best to live a good life." Leighton goes on to say, "Those sacrifices have grounded me to one world while giving me what I needed to go out and earn my bachelor's degree and two master's degrees. My Grandma paved the way and taught me the importance of walking in two worlds, meaning education is important as are our cultural ways of life. That is what I do. That is part of what I try to teach my students and my own kids – learn to walk in two worlds."

Heather says that "walking in two worlds" has special meaning. It is a way of living life through the lens of your own culture and reaching for the tools needed to live in the outside world. "This is a special part of my Grandma's legacy in our family," she says. "My Grandma knew that the world was changing. She knew that to be complete spiritually, we needed to stay

grounded in our culture but that we needed to learn to also exist in the modern world.”

If you have seen Heather Leighton in action as principal at Vista Middle School you know that she is passionate about kids. You know that she is a fearless leader. You know that she is innovative. You know that she is committed to excellence. What you might not know? Part of why Heather loves Vista students is because she WAS a Vista student.

“I started at Mountain View Elementary. I remember Kindergarten vividly because we had a para-educator named Janette Jefferson who supported me. Janette was a Lummi Tribal Member. That was important. I saw her and thought that I could do what she did – I could be a teacher.” Leighton goes on to talk about her experience at Vista Middle School, “I had three teachers at Vista that really impacted my life. Mr. Williams, Mr. Freeman and Ms. Hebert. I love middle school so much because I feel like it is a pivotal time in life. I could have gone either way myself but I was fortunate to have had teachers who really showed up for me. Ms. Hebert introduced me to track and running became an outlet throughout my life.” Leighton went on to laugh a little as she admitted that her track records still hold a place in the Vista gymnasium.

Her records may be hanging around in the gymnasium but Leighton spread her wings as soon as she graduated from Ferndale High School. According to Heather, the future started with a commitment to taking the first step, “I didn’t know what I wanted to do, I just knew that I wanted to start. I applied for and received the Gates Foundation Millennium Scholarship in the first year of scholarship funding. This allowed me to finish my 2-year degree before graduating with my BA and Teaching Certificate from the WSU partnership program Oksala.”

Heather went on to earn two master’s degrees. Her first, a master’s in Reading & Literacy and a second in Educational Leadership.

Heather spent time teaching in Mt. Vernon and Lynden before answering the call to come home and lead Lummi Nation School as principal. According to Heather, her work was to lead her staff and motivate students to reach for their best futures. She did this work for nine years before accepting the position as principal at Vista Middle School.

Heather says, “My mom always says that you end up where you are supposed to be. I believe that. I believe that I was able to make the choice to be here in Ferndale because my Grandma paved the way for that dream.”

# FHS Booster Club Brings Community Support + Saturday Night Lights on June 22

It was 2014. Needs throughout the Ferndale School District were clear. Paying for those needs? That was another story. But it was not a story that Greg Ebe intended to leave unfinished. In an email to community leaders, Ebe made the following plea, “It is now clear that much responsibility to help provide our students the programs that they deserve will have to come from outside the District from organizations such as ours. There is a long list of projects, it is time for us to get started.”

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. In this case? Necessity was the mother of the Booster Club.

The Ferndale High School Booster Club enhances the academic experience for students by providing resources for things that the School



District may not otherwise be able to pay for with tax-payer money. Examples include the electronic sign at the FHS roundabout and offsetting the cost of activities like sports and dances.

Long-time Booster Club member Victor Boulos recalls the years since the group first came together. “This Booster Club came to life because a group of us decided that the stakes were too high. The needs were too great. We didn’t want to let another class of FHS students graduate without creating an organization that could come alongside and provide additional resources when needed.”

Boulos gives a lot of credit to community partners and one in particular – Lummi Nation. “Lummi Nation has been with us from Day 1,” said Boulos. “When we began the FHS Booster Club, we knew that our first project would be fundraising for an electronic sign at Ferndale High School. We applied for a grant through the Lummi Indian Business Council and were awarded a grant to fund the entire project. Every time I look at that sign, I remember that very generous gift. I am grateful for the many ways that Lummi Nation continues to partner with the Booster Club.”

Booster Club Member and Auction Chair, Carol Brumet says that community support has prompted the Booster Club to move forward with another big idea. “We are planning our inaugural Saturday Night Lights event on Saturday, June 22. This is a keystone event - the kind of event that alumni will come home to Ferndale to attend. Our community turned out in a really big way to support our recent school bond – we know what it looks like when Ferndale comes together for kids. That is what we see happening at our auction in June.”



When asked what a successful event looks like, Brumet says, “This is a shorts and flip flops event – this event is for everyone – we’d like to see five-hundred people at Pioneer Park under the ‘big white tent.’ Our goal is to raise \$200,000.”

Ferndale High School Principal Jeremy Vincent says that the Booster Club makes a big difference for FHS students. “From my perspective, the Booster Club plays an important role in equity on our campus. They make sure that the cost of athletics and extracurricular activities is not a barrier for our students. That is a big deal and I truly appreciate each of the members who step up to give and serve with the Booster Club.”

The story doesn’t stop there. In addition to underwriting the cost of athletics and activities for students, the Booster Club has also made it possible for students to travel to conferences, has brought sound system upgrades to the Performing Arts Center and, two years ago, made it possible for FHS to start a Robotics Club.

Ferndale School District Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn says, “I am thankful for the individuals who lead our Ferndale High School Booster Club. They meet needs for our students. They fill the gaps where we may not be able to with limited school funds. This group makes a difference for kids in Ferndale. ‘Thank you’ doesn’t quite cover it.”

**Event Details:** Saturday Night Lights at Pioneer Pavilion & Field - 5 pm on June 22  
Booster Club website: [www.fhs-boosters.com](http://www.fhs-boosters.com)

# Ferndale School Board Selects Student Member

Ferndale School Board members have selected Ferndale High School sophomore Avneet Pannu to serve as a student representative on the Ferndale School Board for the next two years. Avneet was sworn in at the May 28, 2019 school board meeting.

Five students applied for the position. Student Noah Semu will remain on the School Board for the 2019-2020 School Year after serving on the Board during this most recent school year.



Ferndale School Board President Dr. Kevin Erickson thanks all of the Ferndale High School student applicants, “I want to extend my appreciation to our student applicants. It was a pleasure to meet each of them through this process. We are fortunate to have such incredible young people here in Ferndale. I know I speak for my fellow board members when I say ‘thank-you’ to each student who applied this year.”

Ferndale School District Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn welcomes Avneet, “The relationship with our student board members is a highlight of my work,” said Dr. Quinn. “In my experience, our student representatives bring a unique energy and perspective and show us what is most important to our students. I know from meeting Avneet that she will add an important voice as she joins our current student board member Noah Semu on the Board.”

Information about the Ferndale School District School Board can be found at [www.ferndalesd.org/school-board](http://www.ferndalesd.org/school-board). The web page features an overview of the school board, meeting agendas and board policies among other related information.

# New Leaders Join Teams at Ferndale High School, Skyline Elementary School



During the spring, the Ferndale School District announced that Ravinder (Rav) Dhillon has been selected as the new Ferndale High School Assistant Principal and that Obadiah DeWeber has been selected as the new Skyline Elementary Principal.

Dhillon currently serves as an Assistant Principal Intern at Bellingham High School while DeWeber currently serves as Principal of Lummi Nation School. Both are set to begin their new positions full time on July 1.

Dhillon describes herself as a caring and dedicated educational leader. “My goal is to work with teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders to connect students to the resources they need for their future as citizens in the global economy.”

The Ferndale School District opened the assistant principal position to support current FHS administrators as work begins to build a new Ferndale High School. School bond process updates are sent weekly and posted at [www.weareferndale.org/updates](http://www.weareferndale.org/updates).

“We had a very strong candidate pool for this position,” Ferndale School District Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn said. “Our process was rigorous and included staff and students. Rav really stood out during our process and we feel fortunate that she has agreed to join our team at FHS. I know she will be a great fit.”

At Skyline, students and staff are excited to welcome DeWeber. A music teacher by training, DeWeber is passionate about providing a well-rounded educational experience for students.

“I loved music growing up,” said DeWeber. “My teachers in middle and high school inspired me to pursue a career in education. I am passionate about the Arts and about providing a well-rounded education for students. The team at Skyline has a phenomenal reputation and I look forward to joining them and learning together as we serve students and our community.”

Dr. Quinn said, “Obadiah’s personal and professional experiences are a great fit at Skyline. Our interview process included opportunities for our finalists to interact with the Skyline staff and community. I want to thank everyone who participated in this process. We look forward to his leadership and are grateful Obadiah has chosen to work in the Ferndale School District.”

# INTERVIEW WITH FHS GRAD ELLIE ELEFSON

*The latest in an interview series with Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn*

**LQ:** Hi, Ellie. Thank you so much for joining me to talk about your time as a student in Ferndale and about what is next for you in the coming years.

**EE:** Thank you for inviting me!

**LQ:** I want to start by asking you to reflect a bit on the past. Tell me a bit about your story as a student.

**EE:** One of my most valuable experiences was in Ms. Perry's Aquaculture class. I had a lot of freedom to set up independent projects, stay after school and pursue things that interested me. Ms. Perry really encouraged me to research and try new things. That experience had a big impact on my goals and interest in science.

**LQ:** You have been a part of the student body in Ferndale your whole academic career to this point. Would you share about a class or experience that had a big impact on shaping your dreams and goals for the future?

**EE:** I knew I was interested in science from a really early age. I will say that Ms. Zender's AP Biology class in my junior year was a pivotal point for me. I learned bio-ethics and gene traits in that class and became very inspired to continue pursuing science.

**LQ:** I have another question about your experience here in Ferndale. Are there classes or experiences that you wish you

would have pursued but didn't?

**EE:** If I could go back and take a few more classes, I would try more hands-on classes. Two in particular are the Small Engines and Engineering & Design classes. I think both of those classes would have really benefited me in life – especially the Engineering & Design class as I am on an engineering path.



**LQ:** We talked about the past. Let's talk about the present. What is it like to be in your last few weeks as a senior in high school? I can imagine you are busy and maybe even a little stressed out. Do you have advice for future seniors about how to prepare for this time in their lives?

**EE:** Senior year is exciting. It is busy and tiring but it is really exciting to know that the last thirteen years of school is almost done and we get to move on to a new phase in our lives. We all get to see the people that we grew up with transition to adult life and that is really cool. As for preparing for everything that needs to get done right now, I recommend making lots of checklists for homework, clubs, your job, scholarships and applications. Those checklists will help keep you sane during a very busy time. My other recommendation is to take Ms. Rice's College Readiness class. I didn't realize how much work went into applying for college and filling out the FAFSA. My experience in her class helped me understand what I needed to do to get ready for college and all of the resources we had access to.



**LQ:** I know from talking to you that you have exciting plans for your future. Can you talk about what your plans are starting next year?

**EE:** Next year I am going to attend the University of Washington to pursue Bio-Medical Engineering. I have been admitted to the College of Engineering as an Engineering undeclared major. One of the things that the program is working on right now is a wearable kidney for people who need dialysis. I am looking forward to seeing that kind of innovation up close and to get hands on experience in the field I am interested in. I know it will be more difficult because it is more competitive than high school but I am really excited for the challenge and for getting to know new people. Living in a city like Seattle is something I am looking forward to.

**LQ:** A follow up question. What should future students do now – what classes should they take, what should they prepare for – if they are interested in an academic path similar to yours?

**EE:** Definitely math and science. Don't take the easy route. Take as much math and science as you can – all the way through senior year. It is easy to think about creating

an easy schedule for senior year but I think continuing to pursue challenges will make you better prepared for the increase in competition at the college level. This year I designed my schedule with AP Calculus in the morning, Ceramics and Culinary in the middle of my day and then AP Chemistry in the afternoon.

**LQ:** You were awarded Outstanding Student by the Family & Consumer Science Department this year. Tell me a little bit about your work and interest in this area.

**EE:** I have been very involved in the Food Science and Independent Living programs. This year I was able to create a special project in this area and I focused on testing recipes intended for catering a big CTE dinner. Part of what I tried to do is make sure that each recipe could be completed, transported and served easily. That experience helped me to understand cooking on a new level.

**LQ:** We are proud of you, Ellie. We are rooting for you and hope that you will come back often!

# Ferndale School Bond Updates

*Weekly updates are sent each week regarding the bond projects*

The Ferndale School District's bond proposal was approved at 62.04% during the February 12 Special Election – a rate that meets the super-majority requirement for municipal bonds.

Superintendent Dr. Linda Quinn has been sending weekly bond updates since February. The updates are sent to Ferndale School District staff, as well as to an opt-in email list for external stakeholders.

To date, here are some of the progress highlights:

- We have hired Dykeman Architects and, working with them, we have developed a comprehensive plan for gathering input from the community regarding the design of the new high school facility.
- We plan to (on June 19) sell the first \$41.6 million worth of the bonds so that we have funds to proceed with the work.
- The Bond Oversight Committee has established itself as a well-defined, independent organization and an integral part of all aspects of the bond work.
- The Design Advisory Committee application has been created, posted and is open to applicants until July 31, 2019.

Visit the school district bond information website, [www.weareferndale.org/updates](http://www.weareferndale.org/updates), to subscribe to weekly updates emails. The updates are also posted to the district website and bond information website.

Currently, bond projects are in “pre-design” phase. Part of the work during this phase is to gather input. The Ferndale School District has utilized Thoughtexchange, a public input tool, as one of the ways to engage the Ferndale community and gather input. Results from the first Exchange, which closed May 8 and asked “What is most important to you as we move forward with the bond projects?”, are available at [www.weareferndale.org/thoughtexchange](http://www.weareferndale.org/thoughtexchange).

The Ferndale School District will continue to engage with the community through Thoughtexchange and various other opportunities including focus groups, public events and Town Halls.

The first Town Hall event took place on Tuesday, June 11 in the Ferndale High School Cafeteria and included the presentation of a timeline (see pages 14-15), meeting partners from Dykeman Architects, laying out steps in the visioning and design process and information about applying for the Design Advisory Committee.

# Bond Projects

To meet the critical facility needs identified by community members, the following projects were recommended to the board:

## **New High School - \$105 Million**

Rebuild Ferndale High School on the existing campus.

## **Performing Arts Center - \$2 Million**

Modernize the Performing Arts Center.

## **Critical Building Needs - \$4 Million**

Address critical needs at our other school buildings, like new roofs, HVAC systems, plumbing and structural elements.

## **Safety & Security - \$1 Million**

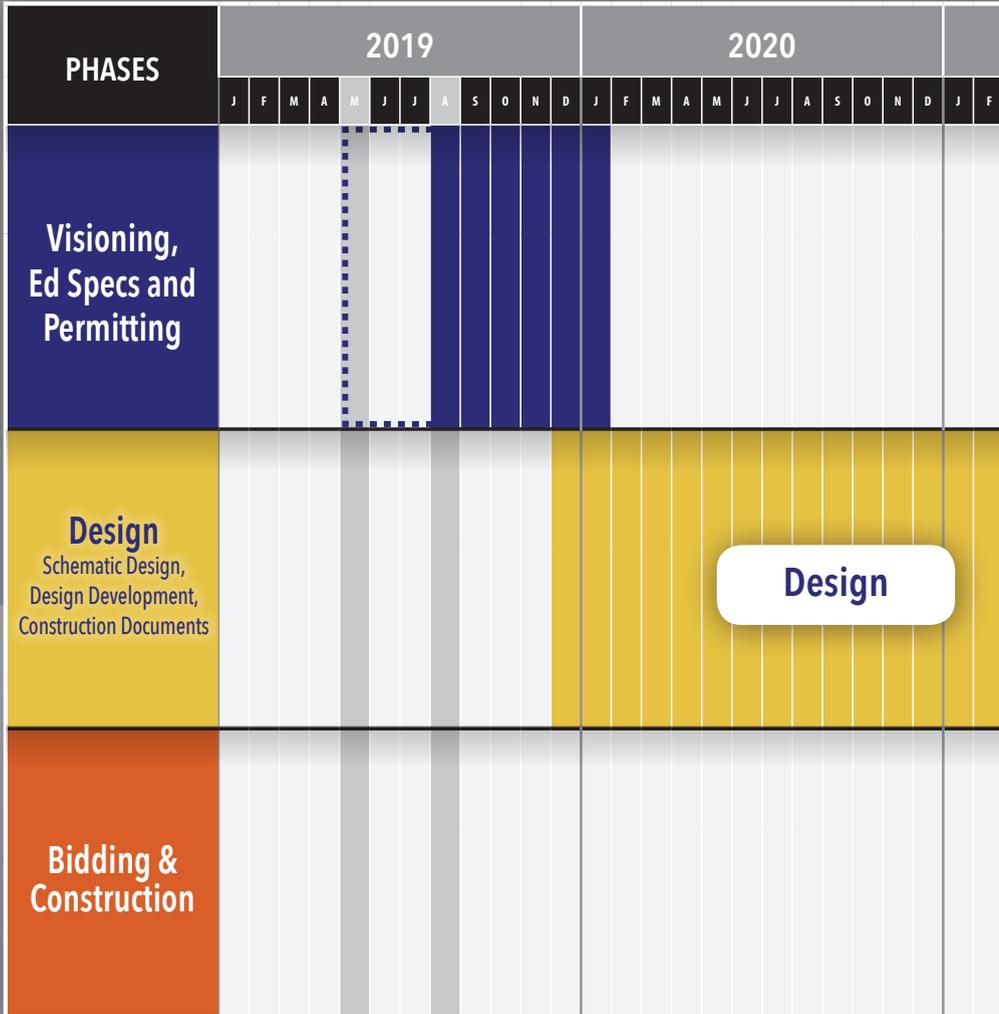
Improve school safety by creating secure access with modern doors and entrances and exterior LED lighting.

## **Design Advisory Committee**

The Design Advisory Committee will be comprised of a broad-based group of up to 25 members representing various District stakeholders. The Committee will be charged with (1) researching best practices for high school facilities; (2) soliciting community input; (3) sharing their own expertise; and (4) reviewing and providing feedback on design ideas.

Applications for the Design Advisory Committee are due on or before July 31, 2019. The application is available online at [www.weareferndale.org/DAC](http://www.weareferndale.org/DAC).

# FERNDALE HIGH SCHOOL







P.O. Box 698  
Ferndale, WA 98248

**Contact us:**

[fsdinfo@ferndalesd.org](mailto:fsdinfo@ferndalesd.org)  
360.383.9200  
6041 Vista Drive



@FerndaleSchools



@FerndaleSD\_WA



@ferndaleschools\_wa

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

Ferndale School District complies with all state and federal rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any physical, sensory, and/or mental disability, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, honorably-discharged veteran or military status or any other basis prohibited by law. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Civil Rights Coordinator & Title IX/RCW 28A.640 Officer, John Fairbairn, Executive Director of Human Resources; 360.383.9206; [john.fairbairn@ferndalesd.org](mailto:john.fairbairn@ferndalesd.org); Ferndale School District, 6041 Vista Drive, Ferndale, WA 98248 and/or Section 504 ADA Coordinator, Dr. Paul Douglas, Executive Director for Student Services; 360.383.9221; [paul.douglas@ferndalesd.org](mailto:paul.douglas@ferndalesd.org); Ferndale School District, 6041 Vista Drive, Ferndale, WA 98248.

