Blue Ribbon: Cascade Receives National Award

BY KIM BROWNING

All means All! This is the vision at Cascade Elementary School and living this vision is one of the primary reasons we are one of four schools in Washington State to receive a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School Award. Early last spring I received a phone call from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction telling me that Cascade was nominated for this award. After doing a little research to make sure this was real, our site council met to discuss the application process, which was quite extensive.

Let me tell you a little bit about Cascade Elementary School. We have really great students — actually they are truly amazing! And our parents and staff are equally amazing! Our students come to us from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. We get to create this special and unique school community built on strong relationships and the belief that all students will be successful, knowledgeable, and resourceful by the time they leave our school.

Our commitment to building authentic relationships that foster trust, caring and belonging provide the foundation for learning at high levels. We know our students need to belong, have the ability to do the work, have power, and have social connections. All classroom teachers greet students at the door each day, utilize daily/weekly Meetups and Buddy UPS to build classroom relationships, host class meetings to develop belonging and social connection, teach about grit and growth.

(continued, page 2)
Cascade Blue Ribbon

mindset, and celebrate mistakes as a pathway for learning. Teachers incorporate Calm Zones in classrooms where students can take a short break when they are feeling overwhelmed. We instill a sense of belonging to something special with many different rituals to celebrate success and belonging. The application included this statement: National Blue Ribbon Schools are held up as educational models, and as such are often called upon to explain what makes them so successful. While excellent schools employ multiple strategies, please describe the one practice critical to success as a school is wrapped in our culture defined by the relentless pursuit of our vision of “all means all.” To succeed in developing relationships and empowering ALL students to be knowledgeable, resourceful and successful, the staff at Cascade are committed to teamwork, high expectations, and accountability. This is where PLC’s and the 80/20 rule come into play. Teachers work collaboratively on grade level/job, aide teams and their instruction is 80% the same and 20% different. We cultivate and know our “why,” and we share the common goal of meeting each child where they are and getting them what they need to be successful humans engaged in our school and community. To accomplish this, all decisions are made through the lens of what is best for each individual student emotionally, socially, and academically. Monthly grade level data meetings are one example of how we live “all means all.” Data meetings include the principal, psychologist, counselor, bilingual teacher, intervention teachers, special education and classroom teachers. We examine and discuss the list of students who are going to intervention and those teachers share specific areas they are working on. The same process is repeated for bilingual and special education. Communication between classroom teachers and specialists is critical. Before the meeting, any teacher who has a concern enters a student’s name and lists their specific concern (academic, emotional, social, or attendance). Collectively, we discuss solutions and make action plans. If the concerns are ongoing, the teacher refers a student to a Guidance Team Meeting where we include all relevant staff and parents to discuss next steps. We seek creative solutions and have an all hands on deck approach for meeting the needs of all students. Examples of this include: classified assistance allocation based on needs of students instead of equal levels, doubling up students who are really struggling, moving a student up a grade level for some content areas, reallocating and changing staff/student schedules to accommodate student needs, and providing either scheduled or as needed “breaks” for students to go with an adult to meet their sensory needs. We demonstrate commitment to ALL students through our daily actions. Because “all” really means ALL in our school culture, both our students and community will be equipped to thrive.

Cascade Elementary School

East Wenatchee, WA

Focus On: EP&O Levy

November 2020

Reconfiguration and Attendance Area Revisions

By Garni Christensen

November 2020

Superintendent’s Message: Safety in a Pandemic

By Garni Christensen

November 2020

District Updates

Construction

Construction on six of our campuses is on budget, slightly behind schedule, and the contracted projects are moving forward. Both Eastmont staff and our contractor are hoping for a light winter, so that everything is completed and ready for use prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

Finances

All predictors for school funding are trending poorly. We continue to plan to stay focused on needs and maintaining basic services. To date, we have been able to avoid layoffs through natural attrition and when possible realignment of duties and responsibilities to remaining employees. Our reserves continue to meet the Board’s goal of 8% of expenditures. This level provides fiscal health and allows the District to meet monthly obligations.

Campus Safety

In every Eastmont office, classroom, and work area next to the main light switch should be bright green Emergency Procedures flip chart. Inside are the steps we take at the classroom level, building supervisor level, and district level. We regularly hold both scheduled, and unscheduled drills of our most common emergency procedures.

The superintendent and transportation director will make a decision to have school start later or close schools by 6 a.m. or earlier. The decision is usually made the morning of school and not the evening before. This gives local road crews ample opportunity to clear roads and assess road safety. Please note: Conditions vary greatly in Eastmont and what is being experienced on North Sunset Hwy may be very different than Fancher Heights, Rock Island or over in Wenatchee.

Weather: 888.1111
District Office: 884.7169

Regional Media Notified:

No new information posted indicates schools are running on regular schedule.

News of a school delay/closure will be posted immediately once the decision is made through the following channels:
District Website: eastmont206.org
Facebook: @eastmontschool
Twitter: @eastmontschools

It’s SNOWING!!
WILL SCHOOLS BE CLOSED?

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By Garni Christensen

November 2020

Focus On: District Messages

Superintendent’s Message: Safety in a Pandemic

By Garni Christensen

November 2020

My hope when we returned to school in August was the COVID Pandemic would soon be over and activities would be back to normal by now. Ideally, we would have been finishing up a successful start of school filled with academics happening on campus, inspiring music and arts, and celebrating a successful season of fall sports.

Unfortunately, this situation continues with many versions of what works, what doesn’t work, and adapting to current conditions. The indicators I am watching include the local infection rate, regional hospitalizations, and individual community case numbers. We also are sharing information at least weekly, and often daily, with the Chelan-Douglas Health District. Our primary goal through this experience is to not become a transmission site within our community and return all students to campus as soon as safely possible.

In addition to this quarterly newsletter, I also send a weekly ParentSquare COVID Bulletin that goes out to our employees and parents. This bulletin includes information on weekly counts and related activities. We started using this system for emergency notifications and have adapted it as a primary communication tool during this experience. To subscribe, please visit the ParentSquare Community page of our website and click on the red Emergency Text Messaging System link. Messages can be sent via text or email. You can also search ParentSquare.

Cascade Elementary School is featured in a video announcement of the 2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Cascade is mentioned at 29:53. View this video online at cutt.ly/blueribbon2020

Focus On: EP&O Levy

November 2020

Eastmont School Board: Thank You for Your Support!

Dear Community,

Thank you for your continued support of Eastmont by approving our Educational Programs and Operations Levy. We appreciate your trust in us with your children, grandchildren, and also your tax dollars.

Please know we work constantly to ensure maximum value for the tax funds we receive in support of quality public education and the future of our community.

Sincerely,

Dave Piepel
Board President
Anneitte Eggers
Board Vice President
Whitney Smith
Board Director
Meaghan Vibbert
Board Director
Cindy Wright
Board Director
Garn Christensen
Superintendent

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At this point, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every person on the planet in one way or another. It has affected national leaders, caused widespread shutdowns, crippled once-booming economies and fundamentally changed the way that we socialize, communicate and do business. Not least of all, it has forced us to drastically change the way we approach educating our children.

But how have these changes affected children right here in the Eastmont School District? Gwen Gleason, a fourth grade at Eastmont Elementary, puts it bluntly.

“I don’t like it,” Gavin said. “I want the whole thing to just go away so I can go back to school full time.”

Gavin is currently in a hybrid model where he does online learning in the mornings and in the afternoons he joins one of his classmates for in-person instruction at Lee. He says they are required to keep their masks on and sanitize their desks after class to ensure the safety of other students. Their work spaces are also socially distanced.

He says his favorite part of in-person classes is getting to see his friends. Mallory Ottome, Gavin’s mom, said that’s one of her biggest concerns.

“It’s frustrating, because at the age my kids are it’s really important for them to have that social interaction that school provides,” she said. “Some of my friends that I’ve had for 25 years I met when I was in fourth, fifth and sixth grade.”

For kindergartener Evie Smith, and her sister Auggie, a second grader, their learning is still all online. But that’s by choice, said Kathryn Leese, the girls’ mother. Evie was in kindergarten at Rock at Lee Elementary, and last week moved from Rock Island to the Eastmont Virtual Academy. The girls spend a lot of time with their grandparents and the family didn’t want to put them at any risk of contracting the virus from school.

“We didn’t feel like we were really ready to be in-person,” Leese said. “Evie was feeling a little sad about leaving Mrs. Torres. So because Rock Island has a bee as the mascot we got her a little stuffed bee that spent some time in the classroom with Mrs. Torres and now it’s here with us.”

The girls are luckier than most however, and have a lot of older people that love in our family,” said Leese.

When asked what she misses the most, she says it’s the people.

For senior Makenna Schwab, there’s been a learning curve when it comes to working hard for the cello. Teachers are going above and beyond to make this difficult situation work. "We were sad to leave the Rock Island family," Lease said. “I’m really grateful for all the teachers that are working hard and really understanding the mindset and really making sure we’re ok even though we’re not physically in the classroom.”

When asked what she misses the most, she says it’s the people.

“Tune the cello. Teachers are going above and beyond to make this difficult situation work. "We were sad to leave the Rock Island family," Lease said. “I’m really grateful for all the teachers that are working hard and really understanding the mindset and really making sure we’re ok even though we’re not physically in the classroom.”

"It really affects older people and we have a lot of older people that love in our family,” said Leese.

She adds she’s anxious for them to go back to school.

"We have such a great place to live. When you talk about things that are limiting us growing as a community it’s that skilled workforce," she said. “So the more we can educate these kids and provide them a great opportunity here in the valley, they’ll want to come back. That is one of the goals.”

She says she feels like the community took a really big step toward that goal by extending this levy another four years. In fact, Vibbert followed a similar path herself. She is a product of the district, and after graduating from Eastmont High School she attended WSU and came back to the valley after finding a job here. If there’s one thing she wants the public to know, it’s that your tax dollars are being spent wisely and that school administration officials are always looking for opportunities to make that money go further.

Vibbert “Thrilled” About Passage of EP&O Levy

Eastmont School Board member Meaghan Vibbert is pleased that her fellow East Wenatchee community members voted to extend the Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) levy on the Nov. 3 ballot.

“I am thrilled,” she said. “I am really grateful to the community that they felt that they could trust their tax dollars with the Eastmont administration and that it will be used efficiently and effectively.”

She also has two daughters, ages 11 and 14, at home who are doing online learning. She says they’re excited and a bit back and she’s anxious for them to go back to school as well. But she commends the Eastmont teaching staff for going above and beyond to make this difficult situation better for our students.”

When asked voters to know that even if not all the students are in school yet, the programs they chose to fund are being provided to students even in an online format.

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Vibbert “Thrilled” About Passage of EP&O Levy

Eastmont School Board member Meaghan Vibbert is grateful to the community for passing the EP&O levy.

By DominiCK Bonny

Vibbert says when you’re talking about the future of our community. If you value education that provides more than just the bare minimum required by the state, levies like this are essential. And she says that passing an EP&O levy like this makes our community a more attractive place to come back to for students raised here.

“We have such a great place to live. When you talk about things that are limiting us growing as a community it’s that skilled workforce,” she said. “So the more we can educate these kids and provide them a great opportunity here in the valley, they’ll want to come back. That is one of the goals.”

By DominiCK Bonny

CTE Program in Good Hands with Jim Schmutzler

By DominiCK Bonny

Career and technical education is important to Jim Schmutzler, and it should be. As the new director of CTE, he’s got some big shoes to fill in taking over for Ken Fullkerson who recently retired after 40 years in that role.

But Schmutzler feels ready to take on the challenge after spending nearly a decade as Fullkerson’s number two. COVID-19 isn’t making that any easier though.

“How do you teach welding when you can’t send home a welder?” he asked. “So our teachers did a lot of brainstorming and a lot of researching and supplemental activities to meet their frameworks.”

CTE educators have been trying to take all of the elements of the curriculum that can be translated to an online learning format and transition that online. For everything else they have CTE kits for students to work with at home.

For instance, the small engines teacher put together a small engine repair kit that includes the engine and a box of tools and then she worked with students over video chat to show them how to pull the engine apart and put it back together again.

“They worked right along with her,” he said. “Some of the kids worked at their garage, some of them worked at the dining room table, and some of them were out on the patio.”

But that’s not the only program that had to get creative. Schmutzler said the landscape design teacher sent home kits with LEGO’s and sugar straws and they mimicked what they would have fabricated on the computer using these simple materials.

“Is it the same learning they would get in class with the software program? No,” he said. “But it’s something they can use to apply that theory we’ve been working with them on for a lot of weeks.”

Other CTE classes that are getting creative include floral design, which sent flowers and other materials home with students to practice their arrangements. Biology classes at the junior high and high school levels sent home soil samples for students to test. The sports medicine class put together ACE bandage taping kits for students to practice wrapping the limbs and fingers of long-suffering family members.

At the junior high level, our shop teacher sent home bolsa racers and tools and had them design it,” Schmutzler said. “A lot of dads and parents were jumping right in and helping out. The feedback from parents was that they appreciate the effort. It’s more than just the minimal effort.’

For the high school level drafting classes, students were sent home with laptops loaded with the software they need to continue their education in that field. That’s also been the case with business classes.

(continued, page 8)
Charlton Returns to Eastmont as Asst. Superintendent

By RUS ALMAN

This is not the start to his new position that he was expecting. Matt Charlton, Eastmont School District’s Assistant Superintendent and Executive Director of Secondary Education, to this point has focused largely on listening and learning to fully understand the unique needs of programs under his watch, building his understanding of systems already in place. The unusual circumstances of the pandemic have certainly hindered his ability to get a clear picture of the extent of many systems because they are operating in a limited or altered manner.

At the same time, it’s given him an opportunity to build and lead programs that have become a larger school district to the pandemic, such as remote learning, while helping in the development of plans to transition back to on-site instruction. “COVID has certainly thrown a curve ball in everyone’s work, including mine,” he said. He’s anxious to see students back in the school and operating at full capacity again.

Charlton, a 1988 graduate of Eastmont High School, recently obtained his teaching certification and a BA in social studies from Washington State University. He returned to the Wenatchee Valley to teach 8th grade U.S. History and English at Orchard Middle School in Wenatchee. He was earning a MA in public administration at Central Washington University, he transitioned into school administration, becoming first an assistant principal and then a principal in districts in western Washington. He earned his superintendent certification at Washington State, worked two years as the assistant superintendent for the North Mason School District and then became the superintendent of the Manson School District, where he served for 13 years.

When Eastmont’s assistant superintendent position opened, he took the opportunity to return to his home town. “It was always a desire to come back home and move back to the Wenatchee Valley and specifically to Eastmont, so we jumped at the chance.” He welcomed the opportunity to bring his previous experience in school administration home to Eastmont so that he could give back to the community where he was raised.

At the same time, he came to the position with a “learner’s mindset,” taking the opportunity to grow his skills in a larger school district. “The leadership team here was really an attraction. They have a good reputation in our area,” Charlton said.

Charlton’s role in the school district is multifaceted and complex. He is the executive director of secondary schools, providing support and guidance to the administrators, staff, students and parents at Starling Intermediate, Clark Intermediate, Eastmont Junior High, Eastmont High, Canyon View Community Facility and the newly-developed Eastmont Virtual Academy. He describes his role as “problem solving and helping things run smoothly.”

He also serves as the special education director for the school district, oversees the transitional bilingual program, migrant program and many other smaller programs.

Charlton is sincerely thankful to the community for passing the Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy in the November election. “It’s also a testament to how the trust our teachers, administrators, leadership and school board and they feel like we are a good return on their investment. We are thankful and we don’t take it for granted.”

Levy funds help “make our school programs so much better and so much more extensive for students. It’s really the ‘special sauce’ on the hamburgers.” Levy funds provide the programs that make kids want to come to school, be it extracurricular, athletics, elective courses, just all those different types of things,” he said.

He loves to see kids gain knowledge through experiential learning by getting out into the community and learning hands-on with local businesses. EP&O funds directly support these types of programs. He has a personal passion for creating the custodial staff at Starling kids through community internships and mentorships so when students graduate they leave with real-world experience and better grasp of how their skills and education can fit into society. He envisions expanding these programs at Eastmont so that every student has multiple opportunities to participate in these programs.

Charlton is also a proponent of providing more on-campus options for advanced learning. While Running Start is certainly a viable option and a good choice for some students, he feels that offering more college-level instruction within the school district in cooperation with higher education institutions provides similar opportunities while still allowing students to experience the social aspects of secondary education.

These courses can offer dual credit, both for high school and college, and give students the ability to earn college credits toward degree programs while still attending class at their high school, saving them and their parents time and money.

Charlton’s wife, Shelley, who is also an educator, also applied to work in the school district and become a teacher at Eastmont Junior High School. They have three boys: Tyler and Bowen are enrolled at Washington State University, and Ben, who earned an AA degree in auto mechanics from Wenatchee Valley College and is now working as a mechanic.

Charlton is excited to be back in East Wenatchee and contribute to the district where he wants to say to schools “they can see the growth and upgrades in the community from when they attended here have just been amazing.” Recently he reminisced with a family who was moving back to custom for the customer and realized it had been nearly 40 years since he was a student there.

Plans in Place To Roll Out Modified Sports Schedule

By RUS ALMAN

It’s been months in the making and there are still plenty of unknowns, but plans are in place for sports to resume at Eastmont.

“It’s been a weird year,” said Russ Waterman, Eastmont School District’s athletic director. “As we all know, 2020 has been one for the books. While making the superintendent the other day it’s amazing how resilient everybody is, not only from the perspective of a vice principal or a teacher or an athletic director, but just the fact that we’re able to get through this and offer things.”

Since Eastmont’s students have been able to hold practices like they normally do in the summertime and the response from the kids has been “outstanding,” Waterman said. “Probably the most uplifting and positive thing is to be able to walk out to those coaches and those kids that have been practicing since October 5 and the smiles on their faces and the sense of normalcy that athletics brings into the lives of a lot of these kids. I can’t explain how happy people are. It just lets you know we’re making an impact in kids’ lives in a positive manner.”

He went on to explain, “I tell coaches all the time we’re really not winning state championships or league championships or any kind of goal for a traditional period, but we are winning kids. And we’re providing that leadership and opportunity to touch kids’ lives now and involved again and that’s a powerful message because that’s really our purpose.”

With the return of summer and fall and bringing changing state mandates and guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic, only a few schools statewide were completely shut down for on-campus instruction and athletics, Waterman and other athletic administrators are doing “the best we can” and depending on the governor’s office, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), and local health officials to come up with viable plans to allow students to participate in school-sponsored sports.

As a result of the pandemic, WIAA issued a plan to modify the sports seasons. Winter sports will begin on December 28 and run through February. Fall sports will begin March 1 and conclude at the end of April, with football beginning February 27 to allow teams to have sufficient practice time. Spring sports will be moved to May and June and will extend beyond graduation.

At the beginning of November, WIAA issued procedures for safely commencing each sports season. Twenty-eight days prior to the start date of the season (Nov. 28 for winter sports), WIAA will review the metrics of the three regions they have established within the state. All of the districts east of the Cascades are being considered as one region. They will review the number of COVID-19 cases per thousand over a period of recent days, basic positivity rates, to assess whether enough districts are eligible to begin a season. This process will be repeated the following week (Dec. 6) and then a decision will be made whether to move forward or reschedule.

WIAA worked with Gov. Jay Inslee’s office, Department of Health to develop guidelines for rolling out high school sports eligibility. These new guidelines superseded those from the Safe Start program being used to open businesses and other venues. According to the WIAA website, “These revised guidelines give greater flexibility to school administrators to offer educational-based activities and athletics and meet the demand of their students and communities.”

The guidelines allow WIAA to assess each region as low, moderate or high risk based on the number of positive COVID-19 cases per 100,000 over the past 14 days and whether positivity rates are low or greater than 5 percent. Low risk is less than 25 per 100,000 AND less than 5 percent; moderate risk is 25-75 per 100,000 AND less than 5 percent; and high risk is greater than 75 cases per 100,000 OR greater than 5 percent.

To put this in perspective, as of the second week of November, the Washington State Coronavirus Response website lists Douglas County as “46.7 cases per 100,000 over the last 14 days and 9.4% positivity rate over the last week putting the county in the high risk category.”

Each sport is also assigned a risk level based on a number of factors, including the number of participants, proximity of participants, type of venue, and ability to use personal protective equipment (PPE). Based on the case local risk, the guidelines indicate which sports are allowed and at what level of participation. Being at the high risk level, winter Eastmont teams have been allowed to resume practice in groups of six with brief, close contact such as 3-on-3 drills for all sports. Low State Department of Health to roll out sports. Low State Department of Health to roll out sports. Low State Department of Health to roll out sports.
FOOD SERVICE CHANGES
Effective November 2
Meal Pick Up Locations and Times

- Eastmont Junior High School
  Events Center Entrance off Grover Street Entrance
  Mon - Fri 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. &
  Mon - Thurs 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

- Clovis Intermediate School
  Mon - Fri 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

- Rock Island Elementary
  Mon - Fri 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Bus meal delivery is no longer available.

Meals are available for returning K-4 students at the end of their school day. The free breakfast and lunch are in grab and go bags to be taken home and enjoyed. Meals will not be eaten at school or on the bus.

Sports Schedule (continued from page 7)

For more details on the WIAA plan and risk levels, visit their website at cutt.ly/wiaa-covid and click on the "WIAA COVID-19 GUIDANCE" box.

Waterman believes that the adjusted season schedule will still accommodate most multi-sport athletes. There will be some overlap but that also occurs during a normal school year.

In addition to managing the rollout of sports programs, Waterman has also been given the responsibility of heading the COVID-19 task force that responds to positive cases throughout the district. If a faculty or staff member is exposed to or contracts the virus, he makes recommendations based on health department guidelines on best practices to minimize risk. He is also helping to develop reopening guidelines for the district.

CTE Program (continued from page 4)

CTE students also have the opportunity to go in after school and work in small groups in the woodshop, welding and metal shop. The number of students who are able to be in those spaces at any given point are limited of course, but the opportunity is there if the students have the desire and their own transportation to their school.

When asked why CTE is so important to Eastmont students now and in the future, Schmutzler said it’s about the connection to what they’re learning now and what they will apply to life.

"It covers every program area and every aspect of our education," he said "Any teacher will tell you that having kids work with their hands and actually apply what they’re doing is the basis of all education. CTE is that – it’s applying those things to real world examples and problem solving. All the skills we need in life.”

Get Connected, Follow Eastmont on Social Media

Follow Eastmont Schools on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for breaking news and updates from around the district. Search and find Eastmont profiles using the usernames on each platform.