



JUNE 2020

Hilltopics

Our Vision: All students prepared for careers, college and citizenship.



Incoming Kindergartners to be new elementary's "first class"

Soon-to-be kindergartners are now enrolling for the 2020-2021 school year in Kalama School District—the first class that will spend all of their primary years in the newly-built Kalama Elementary School.

Construction of the \$35 million school (Kalama's first new school in more than 60 years) has continued throughout the year. The project remains on-budget and is expected to welcome both kindergartners and 1st-through-5th-grade students in January 2021.

Among the amenities elementary students will enjoy once the school opens: a full-size, high school regulation gym; a new cafeteria and kitchen; classrooms

for art and music; and dedicated areas for STEM learning.

The district's full-day kindergarten program provides children 5 years old on or before August 31 with the opportunity to develop essential social, emotional and problem-solving skills, preparing them for success in school and life.

Families that have not already registered their child for kindergarten are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. Registration packets are available on the district's website, www.kalamaschools.org, and can also be mailed. Call the school to request one at 360-673-5207.

New KHS principal excited to build relationships

"The Kalama Community has a reputation of support and pride for their schools, which is why I am beyond excited ...



Kalama is a beautiful and unique place to live and work. I look forward to working with the staff to make a positive impact for students."

That's the sentiment from Heidi Bunker, who as of this summer, will officially be welcomed in as Kalama High School's new principal. Bunker replaces current KHS Principal Guy Strot, who is moving to Southeast Washington to serve as superintendent for Dayton School District.

"My priority coming into Kalama in July will be to get to know the staff and the important work they are currently doing," said Bunker. "I will want to know what their priorities have been over the last year and how that relates to student success as we move into the 20-21 school year."

Bunker brings more than 20 years of experience in school administration and teaching to KHS. Most recently, she served as Assistant

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Superintendent's Message



Dear Kalama Parents and Guardians,

What can be said about the 2020 school year? If you have watched the news or surfed the Internet, you have heard statements like, “we are in unprecedented times” or “in these challenging times...” Often these statements accompany a sales pitch by a company, or a not-so-encouraging news story. So what does this all really mean?

What it says to me is that we need to continue to stick together. Despite being forced apart physically, being unified in purpose will be critical to navigating the near and distant future. Our local unity, despite the ambiguity around us, will allow us to come out of the Covid-19 fog stronger and better than we entered it.

To that end, we will be asking you a host of questions to help plan for how school will end, and how it should begin next year. Please share your input, as it will be the foundation for how we organize and support students next year. While we will be subject to the orders of the Governor, to the extent that we do have flexibility we will use it to create options and opportunities for our students that match the needs of our parents and students.

We are committed to you - our Kalama community. With your input we will work together to design an approach to educational opportunities that works for our students, maximizes community resources and makes us better as a system than we would have been without this challenge. Kalama School District has a strategic plan that aims our efforts towards being the Best School In The Universe. Without you, we will always fall short, but with you we will achieve this goal every day that we accept it.

Thank you!

Eric Nerison

Kalama School District Superintendent

New KHS principal

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Principal of Centralia Middle School where she focused on increasing student achievement, ensuring school safety and managing resources. She also spent the past two years working on a college and career-readiness team.

“Part of this work involved developing more CTE elective opportunities as well as giving students more awareness about post-secondary options,” Bunker explained. “The excitement we saw in students thinking about different career possibilities as well as the collaboration process of working with the career counselors reminded me of how much I missed working at the high school level.”

Bunker, who holds a pair of Bachelor’s Degrees from Central Washington University and a Master’s Degree and Principal Certification from Heritage University, said she looks forward to working in a small school district where she has the opportunity to build relationships with students, staff and the community at a personal level.

“The small school setting is similar to a family,” she said. “It fosters a safe environment that enables students to grow emotionally and academically.”

Bunker will be Kalama High School’s first female principal.

a LOOK at a CHINOOK



NAME: Hannah Buck

GRADE: 7th going into 8th

FAVORITE SCHOOL SUBJECT: English

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING? Learning about history

WHAT’S YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE RELATED TO DISTANCE LEARNING? Learning math

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST ABOUT NEXT SCHOOL YEAR? Seeing all my friends!

Contributing to the Kalama community

Kalama School District has been providing essential services to the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to help those in need. Here are just a few of the ways the district has had an impact outside of the classroom:

Free pick-up meals for students

The district has provided free pick-up breakfast & lunch service M-F to all students during the COVID-19 school closure—more than 10,000 meals in total! This included preparing breakfast and lunch throughout Spring Break to ensure our families were covered.

Community food boxes

Thanks to a partnership with Fibre Federal Credit Union and EAT, the district has been able to provide food boxes to local families experiencing food insecurity.

No-cost childcare for essential workers

Kalama School District began providing free full-day childcare services to first responders, healthcare workers and, as spots have allowed, grocery workers.



L-R: Jessica Read, Kortney Burpee and Jacqueline Stangel helping to provide pick-up meals for students during the COVID-19 school closure.

Teachers say distance learning offers challenges & opportunities

For Kalama School District teachers, the transition from traditional, in-person classroom learning to distance learning has presented both a series of challenges and opportunities.

We asked our teachers to share some of their experiences with at-home learning thus far, and here's what they had to say:

What has the transition to distance learning looked like for your class?

Bryce Pollock, Choir; Shop: For my shop classes I have been creating a series of instructional woodworking videos in my own shop. It has been fun to see student responses to videos come in and interact with them online. In choir we have done a lot of listening and analyzing exercises. We are also currently putting together a remote performance, so stay tuned!

What are your priorities as an educator as we move forward with at-home learning?

Lori Byrnes, Math: My biggest priority is to make sure students are safe and have everything they need, and then I want to keep them motivated to learn. I want them to realize the importance of their education and how much teachers care about them.

How has this experience changed your perspective?

Lizzie Sheldon, Special Education: It definitely has reaffirmed my passion for teaching. While we are getting by with this model, it is definitely not what any of us signed up for when we became teachers. We miss our students! This experience has shown me to treasure my time with my students, even when I am tired and overwhelmed.

What's your advice to families who are still trying to adjust to this model?

Sharon Irwin, Algebra I & II; Math Fundamentals: Do your best to encourage students to be resilient. Yes, this is a stressful time, but how we handle stress helps students grow and learn. Adulthood is stressful and we all build skills to cope ... Teachers are not expecting more than students should be able to do. We want learning to continue to form educated, hard-working, contributing young adults. That is the purpose of school.

Nicole Becker, Alternative Learning; Academic Support: Reach out and ask questions; we are here to help. I know this is hard on you, but we are Kalama strong and we will all get through this together.

Read more teacher responses to these questions on our website, kalamaschools.org.

Residential Customer



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Alex Anderson
Autumn Bethune
Richard Beverage
Abigail Bozarth
Dominick Brooks
Matthew Buller
Damian Cochran
Payton Collins
Calvin Conerly
Monique Cornell
Jacob Coulson
Steely Creagan
Dominick Foster
Chad Fox

Trey Gilman
Lily Given
Chase Glenn
Jackson Gorans
Jaycee Griggs
Tucker Halbert
Jenna Hargrave
Jade Harman-Harris
John Hause
Miranda Hepperle
Marshall Herbeline
Dylan Holgerson
Jordan Holgerson
Samantha Hosenev

Destyne Huffman
Jackson Hull
Caleb Jones
Allison Karjola
Alexis Kaschmitter
Amanda Killinen
Hillary Korpinen
Devon Laurion-Cranmore
Kevin Lindell
Zamias Lockridge
Araceli Lozano-Zuniga
Jonah Lucente
Skyler McKenzie-Reeves
Abi Meyer

Tanner Mills
Sutton Moon
Mary Morrell
Adam Morris
Matthew Morris
Grace Nevin
Kohl Nichols
Lily Nichols
Megan Nixon
Colby Northrup
Riley Ofrecio
Trenton Ogden
Jazmine Porter
Paige Peak

Donaven Perez Presley
Tessie Pritchard
Alexander Roberts
Dylan Rogers
Aspen Smith
Brady Spiess
Chase Staup
Gracie Stemkoski
Macey Tucker
Brennon Vance
Sadie Wall
Cole Wallway
Karsten Winther

We can't wait to see all the places you'll go!