



## Learning respect for differences

### Schools pilot program to develop compassion, empathy for others

**H**air. Eye color. Skin color. Eyewear. Family size. All of these and more make each student in the Davis School District unique.

To help students better understand the value in that uniqueness and to help them engage with others who are different from them, the district Equity Department is piloting anti-bias lessons in several schools.

Bianca Mittendorf, the district's Title IX coordinator, said the lessons were created to give students the tools they need to better interact with one another with kindness. The lessons are simple and geared toward each grade level.

Lessons have been developed for students from lower elementary grades up to the secondary grades.

#### Superintendency Message

## Good news on horizon of COVID-19 pandemic

**F**ebruary 2nd is Groundhog Day.

This is the day that Punxsutawney Phil either sees his shadow or not and predicts the remainder of winter.

It is also the name of a Bill Murray movie from 1993, "Groundhog Day." His character is covering the festivities and gets caught in a daily repeat of the same day. He goes to bed and wakes



Zurbuchen

up the next day to repeat the previous day.

We all now have a bit of a kinship to Murray's character. The COVID pandemic sort of feels like Groundhog Day. Each day we go to bed only to wake up to the continued impacts in our lives of the pandemic. We've now been living this reality for a year. And, unfortunately, we seem to be having to live with it for the foreseeable future. Murray's movie was a comedy; ours is not.

There is good news on the horizon.

"The hope is that when we have finished with these anti-bias lessons," Mittendorf said, "that we will have helped to foster and cultivate 21st century citizens who are able to navigate an ever-changing world. ... Our differences are not to be feared. They are what makes us unique and should be celebrated."



Susan Gorringe teaches students at West Point Elementary an anti-bias lesson.

Currently, the lessons are being taught in eight elementary schools and six secondary schools. The hope is to eventually have teachers trained so the lessons become part of every classroom.

Foxboro Elementary is one of those pilot schools. Principal Chris Whitaker said the lessons have already helped students see that they have a culture and that they belong to a school community.

"As they start seeing other students as being part of 'us,' — they're not them, they're us — then we treat

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At Davis School District, we have been able to provide a vaccination opportunity to our staff. In the past month, we have issued over 11,000 such invitations to full and part-time staff, substitutes and contracted individuals. This is part of our wonderful partnership with the Davis County Health Department.

We continue to provide rapid testing through our Test to Return, Test to Play, and Test to Stay options. Since

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## PILOT, From Pg. 1

our (Foxboro) family a certain way; we look out for each other.”

One reason Whitaker was interested in Foxboro being a pilot school is because of the school’s unique population.

“That’s one of the things I love about this school is that we are so diverse,” Whitaker said.

“We’re diverse in our cultures; we are diverse in our economic statuses; we are diverse in our languages — both in our heritage language and being a French immersion school,” she said. “So, in theory there are a lot of opportunities for there to be divisions. And this has been one more additional part to reduce that chance for division.”

Emily Furse, an elementary behavior coach and teacher at Foxboro, said the school is fortunate to be part of the pilot program. Each lesson she teaches is adapted for the grade level. For younger grades, a lesson on culture may be just talking about similarities and differences of each student. In an older grade, the conversation may be more about learning appropriate language when talking about differences.

“It’s mainly just creating a positive vocabulary around culture,” she said. “The hope is that kids will be more comfortable having these conversations with each other. And that as they have more conversations about things that they

have in common and differences, that it becomes a commonality, and more comfortable and more familiar. ...”

At West Clinton Elementary, Susan Gorringer, counselor, said teachers at the schools are also playing an active role in the discussions, which helps the teacher have more awareness of what students are feeling about themselves and others.



A student types into a survey descriptions of herself. Students then talk about what makes them the same and what makes them different.

Early on, she establishes that the classroom is a safe place where students can speak openly.

“We talk about communication, and about miscommunication and non-verbal communication,” Gorringer said of a lesson with older students. “And that is really important. We were able obviously to tie in the mask, saying this year it is a little bit different. That helped students understand sometimes

there might be a miscommunication, and it might just be because I have a mask on.”

One lesson with the older students, Gorringer said, also helps students understand that it’s OK to notice differences. The hope is that they learn how to communicate about differences in a positive manner.

“So if I notice someone is different from me, whether that be a skin color or hair texture or a height, then what do I do with the information?” Gorringer said. “It’s good for them to learn that at this age because it develops more compassion, more empathy and they’re able to get along.”

## NEWS, From Pg. 1

we began this process, we have been able to provide over 10,000 rapid tests, providing a degree of assurance that healthy people are in our facilities.

Following the guidance from the CDC and the health department, masking continues to be required of all those in our facilities. With our reliance on masking, we have been able to reduce our quarantines from over 1,000 per week to fewer than 70 each week and to reduce the time in quarantine to 10 days from 14. This alone has reduced the missed days of schooling for our students by over 1,300 student attendance days per week.

Let’s continue to observe our safety protocols: masking, physical distancing when practicable, cleaning and disinfecting, personal hygiene, and staying home when sick. If we continue to do our very best, we will be able to keep

each other safe and healthy. This is certainly a team effort, one where each of us has a responsibility to each other.

In the end, Bill Murray’s character was able to break the endless repetitions of the same day. We will be able to do the same if we remain vigilant in our COVID approach.

— **John Zurbuchen, Assistant Superintendent**

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# Employees, students honored for achievements

- In the month of February, the Board of Education of the Davis School District recognized Stewart Elementary teacher **Shaunna Summers** and Buffalo Point Elementary teacher **Meghan Shaver** for their exemplary work helping students.

- Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson announced **Sadie Hawes**, a fifth-grade student from Layton Elementary, as an honorable mention winner for her essay about Gail Miller in the She Started It – Better Days Art and Essay Contest. She received a \$50 award for her essay highlighting an important woman in Utah history.



Oleson

- **CoriDawn Oleson**, a buyer in the district Purchasing Department, recently obtained her Certified Public Procurement Buyer certification, one of the most highly regarded certifications among procurement professionals in the public sector.

- Two teachers in the district received scholarships from Western Governors University. **Kayla Robinson** at Morgan Elementary received the “K-12” scholarship for \$2,500. She is pursuing a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction. **Vanessa Stone** at Farmington High received the “Superhero Within” scholarship for \$2,500. She is pursuing a Masters in Learning and Technology.

- The Utah Music Educators Association recognized **Christine Wolf**, Central Davis Junior High, as Outstanding Junior High Music Teacher of the Year. Former Davis High Band Director **Steven Hendricks**, who now teaches at Kaysville Junior High, was inducted into the Hall of Fame.

- Speech and Language Pathologist **Cynthia Ford** was highlighted on KSL’s Teacher Feature for her work mentoring other SLPs and helping students improve their speech and language skills.

- **Mitch Pendleton**, Student Technology Specialist at Bountiful Elementary, has been selected as a Microsoft Innovative Educator after completing a rigorous course and application process.

- Several district employees were selected as the 2020-21 Health Heroes for their efforts to live healthy lives and inspire others around them. — **Annette Ainscough**, Farmington Junior High; **Tyler Anderson**, Clearfield High School; **Rabyn Baker**, Canyon Creek Elementary; **Tiffany Barber**, Related Servers; **Andrew Bird**, Woods Cross High School; **Julie Boam**, South Davis Junior High; **Sue Call**, Meadowbrook Elementary; **Ed Campbell**, North Layton Junior High; **Katie Frederiksen**, Davis High School; **Shawn Gardner**, Central Davis Junior High; **Brenda Hagen**, Fremont Elementary; **Nancy Hammond**, Legacy Junior High; **Dustin Hawkins**, Layton High School; **Rachelle Herbst**, Digital Learning; **Crystal Hunter**, Reading Elementary; **Chris Laypath**, Vae View Elementary;



Students at Valley View Elementary organize pantry packs.

**Alicia Madsen**, Vae View Elementary; **Heather Peterson**, Tolman Elementary; **Leslie Pett**, Snowhorse Elementary; **Catherine Sparks**, Nursing Services; **Karen Swank**, Sunset Junior High.

- **Valley View, Oak Hills and Muir Elementary** schools participated in a pantry-pack competition to see which school could put together the most packs for the Bountiful Food Pantry. The friendly competition produced just over 3,500 pantry packs. Based on the percentage of students per school, Valley View Elementary won the competition with 1,170 pantry packs. Oak Hills Elementary put together 958 packs and Muir Elementary had 1,376.

- The **HOSA: Future Health Professional students from Bountiful High and Woods Cross High** delivered over 300 blankets to members of the Supportive & Palliative Care Program at University Health. **Patryk Hughes**, Bountiful High, organized the event as a way to provide comfort to hospitalized patients.

- **Layton High National Honor Society** students delivered valentines to school nurses and Davis County Department healthcare workers while they were distributing the COVID-19 vaccine at the Legacy Center.

- The **Farmington High Nixelles** captured the 5A state drill team championship for the second year in a row at the 2021 State Drill Competition held this month. The **Viewmont High Vykelles** brought home second place and **Bountiful High Mandonelles** took fourth place. In the 6A division, **Layton High Lancelles** earned third place and **Davis High D’Ettes** fifth place. Viewmont High Drill Coach **Melanie Walker** was recognized as Utah’s 5A Drill Coach of the Year.

- **Kaysville Junior High counselors** went above and beyond hosting both in-person and virtual open houses to help sixth-grade students learn about programs, classes and opportunities available at the junior high.

- The **Davis High girls and boys swim teams** each received fifth place in the 6A division of the 2021 State Swim Competition.

# Showing love to others



Latinos in Action students place hearts on the window of a senior care center. The activity is part of the service the group does throughout the year.

Latinos in Action students at Syracuse High surprised residents at Barrington Place Alzheimer's Special Care Center in Clinton with hearts and messages taped to their windows for Valentine's Day. The students spent several weeks leading up to the holiday cutting out and designing hundreds of hearts.

Each semester, LIA students complete 10 hours of service. They usually help with school carnivals, literacy night, back-to-school nights and parent teacher conferences, but this year has been unlike any other year.

In an attempt to find a service opportunity that fit with COVID-19 guidelines, the group decided a 'heart attack' for the senior care residents would be a

good opportunity to involve everyone while social distancing.

"Latinos in Action is such a family; they really look out for each other

and love being together," said Syracuse High LIA Advisor Joy Reid. "When they are helping others, ... they always feel so happy after. It's great for our community to see these kids out serving and helping others."

