



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2021

Gregory-Portland Independent School District

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G-PISD Administrative transitions announced for G-P Middle School and the Wildcat Learning Center (WLC)

Gregory-Portland Middle School and Wildcat Learning Center (WLC) students and staff will soon be seeing some new faces at school each day. Administrative transitions will occur following the resignation of G-P Middle School Principal Julie Verstuyft, who will complete her last day with the district on December 17, 2021. Verstuyft said family priorities have resulted in the need for her to make an unexpected change during this school year.

Martha Rose will serve as Interim Principal after Verstuyft, and will begin transitioning from her current role as G-PISD Coordinator of Federal and Special Programs to support the middle school. Rose has formerly served as Principal of several middle and elementary schools. Additionally, current Wildcat Learning Center (WLC) Coordinator Gloria Dornak will relocate to G-P Middle School and serve as an Assistant Principal to further support campus needs.

G-P High School Principal Dr. Michael Norris said Dornak's transition will not leave WLC unsupported as he intends to relocate those students and staff to G-P High School this year. He said this change is intended to ensure WLC students will have greater opportunities to take a variety of courses including college and career dual credit coursework as well as participate in more school activities. Additionally, WLC teachers will be able to engage with G-PHS teachers for professional development, support, and alignment across programs.

"The WLC program will continue to operate as a 'school within a school,' simply offered at a new location with more opportunities for students," said Dr. Norris. "Our goals for all students include setting them up for success, and as a result I'm thankful we can relocate WLC as soon as possible to offer more for those students. It just makes sense to do so." As of this date, there are 24 students enrolled in WLC and four teachers serving this program. These students and staff will prepare for the transition to their new campus in the next few weeks, and will plan for their first day at the high school on January 5, 2021.

Sarah Hodges, Executive Director for School Leadership, said it's important for families to know that only WLC students and staff will be moving to the high school. "Wildcat Learning Center, or WLC, is a program to support students who can benefit from a different approach to learning," she said. "It's different, and set apart, from the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, or DAEP, which is not being moved to the high school. DAEP students and staff will remain at the G-PISD Student Support Center on Lang Road in Portland, and will be under the supervision of new DAEP Coordinator and At-Risk Coordinator J Hodges." Hodges also said administrative moves soon to occur will allow the district to conduct the search for a new G-P Middle School Principal during optimum hiring season for schools in the Spring, and stated that G-PMS students, staff, and parents will receive the opportunity to participate in a survey to identify their priorities in advance of the search for a new school leader.

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Cavazos expressed her thanks to the team for thoughtful planning which will allow ample time for a new Principal to be named at G-P Middle School for next school year, 2022-23. "We are fortunate to have experienced internal staff to support this transition and provide stability in our district. I want to sincerely thank Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Dornak, Mr. Hodges and others who are willing to transition and offer their expertise where it is needed most. Additionally, I want to thank Mrs. Verstuyft for her leadership in our district the past three years and wish her and her family all the best. I trust that we will be able to find the right leader in the Spring as a result of this strategic effort, under the leadership of Mrs. Hodges, and I look forward to all of those changes as we support our students and staff in the meantime with full effort and attention."

Dr. Cavazos also expressed her appreciation for WLC students and staff, who will soon make the transition to the high school. "I know this news may cause some initial concern for them, yet I also know Dr. Norris has plans to provide even more support for the program by relocating them to his campus. I could not be more proud of our team, outgoing and incoming, for all they do to put our Wildcats first."

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