



EDUCATION MATTERS

SPRING
2021

All grades resume in-person learning



Secondary students return to the classroom part-time

Student cars in the parking lot, bells ringing to signal the change of class, and friends eating lunch together in the Commons. It's a sight that hasn't been seen in nearly a year, and it looks quite a bit different than it used to. Not everyone is at school, the bells are on a different schedule, and the Commons is set up with chairs six feet apart in all directions, instead of the tables students are used to eating at. As of March 8,

2021, HSD is excited to have students in all grades once again walking the halls and sitting in teachers' classrooms at our schools.

"I was very excited when we found out that school was opening again," said HHS Senior Katherine Dawson. "Being able to see people and do work together is great. A big part of Hockinson is being a part of a small, close knit community, and so being in per-

son, around other people is a huge deal."

Among other safety precautions, such as masks, health attestations, and temperature checks being required for everyone who enters an HSD building, HHS students are attending school in a hybrid model, with students placed into two groups that each attend school in person two days per week

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A message from Steve Marshall



"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity.

An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Dear HSD Families,

When I interviewed to be your Superintendent in the spring of 2019, I was presented with a number of district-level challenges and asked to recast them as opportunities. I think it goes without saying that the 2020-21 school year has provided the HSD with an abundance of opportunities.

Our school district consists of staff, students, families, and community members. So when I say that the challenges have been plentiful, I am acknowledging that we have all shared in the struggle of finding our way through uncharted territory of educating students during a pandemic. In spite of these difficulties, our community has shown great resilience. I am hopeful that we are turning a corner and can look forward to new opportunities ahead.

I liken some of what we are going through right now to the emergence of spring. As happens every March, there is a time when you realize the days are growing longer. But the entire transition between seasons is gradual. It is also predictably unpredictable. There are bursts of sunlight, followed by intense downpours, and sun once again—all within the same afternoon. Ultimately, the weather settles, songbirds return, flowers bloom, and our days become warmer and brighter.

This March has had a few other hopeful signs: Every day, more and more of our staff are getting vaccinated, sports seasons are underway, and as of March 8 all of our K-12 students have the option of attending school in person for the first time since last spring.

The path to reopening has been a winding one. But I am grateful that we made the journey together. It has been a team effort. Our

teachers have pivoted between remote and hybrid learning models when needed; our classified staff have provided students with personalized support and kept our schools safe for everyone; our students have shown incredible commitment and flexibility; and our parents and families have adapted with patience and perseverance. All of this has made it possible to continue student learning while keeping our community safe.

This community has shown a lot of heart this past year, which is why I'm feeling so hopeful about our future. When I think of "heart," two meanings come to mind: A love for something or someone, and a determined spirit. On so many occasions throughout our 150-year history, Hockinson has shown both. We know that at the center of any strong community is its schools. And education is undoubtedly at the heart of the Hockinson community.

With this in mind, "Hockinson Schools: The heart of the community" is a new slogan we're adopting that draws inspiration from our past and conveys the spirit that will drive our future success. You might enjoy learning about the process we followed to arrive at this sentiment (see article on page 7).

Schools are stronger when their community has a love for, and belief in, the power of a public education and when they employ educators who love what they do. I am happy to report that we are 2-for-2 in Hockinson, and for these and many other reasons, the future is bright for Hockinson schools.

Sincerely,

Steve Marshall
Superintendent



SUPERINTENDENT

Steve Marshall
steve.marshall@hocksd.org

SCHOOL BOARD

Gordon Smith, Chair
gordon.smith@hocksd.org

Greg Gospe, Vice Chair
greg.gospe@hocksd.org

Patrick Carter
patrick.carter@hocksd.org

Tim Hawkins
tim.hawkins@hocksd.org

Dave Olson
dave.olson@hocksd.org

All grades resume in-person

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and participate in remote learning the rest of the week. The schedule is similar for HMS students, with half of students attending in person on Mondays and Thursdays, and the other half attending on Tuesdays and Fridays (Wednesdays are remote learning days for everyone).

"It feels great to be back in school with my students after a year of remote learning!" said HMS Language Arts teacher Christine Parker. "Nothing can replace the day-to-day personal interaction we have with students: the little moments of connection in passing and in the classroom are very difficult to replicate in the remote learning environment."

Seventh-grader Matthew Drendel echoed the words of many of his peers when he noted that while things are different now, being back in school is definitely cause for celebration. "Things feel really different with all the masks and precautions," Drendel said, "but it's more fun to be at school, and it's definitely better than being at home all the time. It's nice to see my friends and to see other people in general."

When asked what she was most excited about now that students are spending some of their time in class, Ms. Parker said she couldn't wait to talk about the books students are reading together.



Lunch in the Commons at HHS may look a bit different, but students are happy to eat on their laps if it means seeing their friends in person.

"Conversations flow so much more naturally when we're in person," Parker said, "and students are excited to share what they know and learn when we inhabit the physical space together."

Every week, more and more of Hockinson's teachers are vaccinated. With this information and the many safety precautions we have in place at all Hockinson Schools, we look forward to a time in the hopefully not-too-distant future when things look a little closer to normal.



Catch up
with a

GRADUATE

Spotlight on 2020 graduate Ryland Moore

Favorite subject: Musical Theatre Production

Favorite HSD activity: Drama Club and the Swim Team

What I value or appreciate most about my HSD education: HSD taught me to balance my schedule and take advantage of the opportunities that I am given. I always had a busy schedule, but that's because I always felt like I was able to do what I wanted. Even if that meant being a part of a musical, trying to get my district times in swim, and maintain a strong GPA. The schools never held me back and I was always encouraged by my teachers and coaches to push myself.

What I'm doing now: Attending Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in Theatre. We just managed to put on a production of The Bald Soprano

while maintaining CDC safety requirements and COVID-19 precautions. It was my first time performing in over a year, and it felt so good to be working on another project! It was truly an experience trying to put on a play during a pandemic knowing that it could be shut down at any moment, but I'm so glad we took the risk and prevailed against all odds.

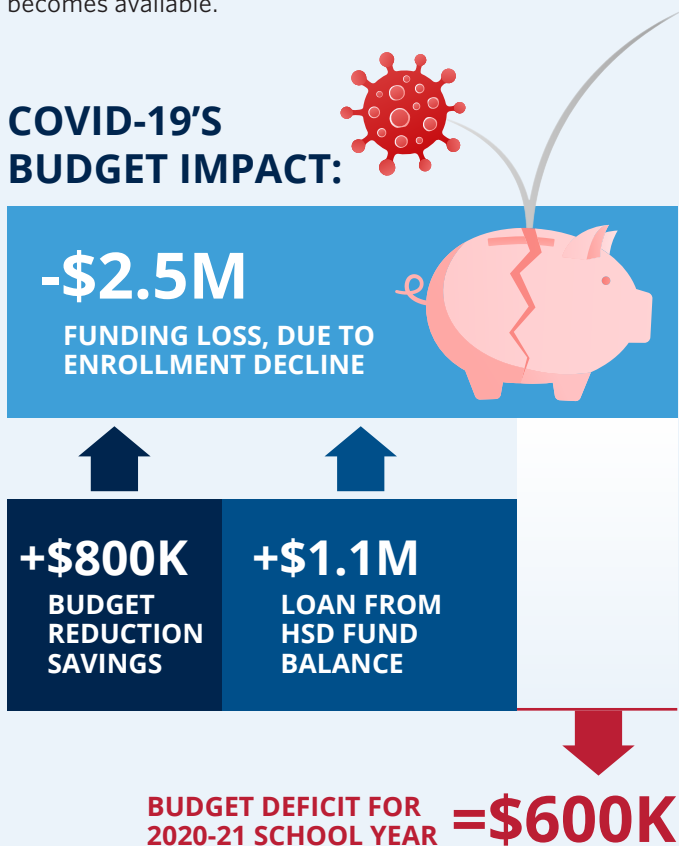
What's next for me: I plan to continue my education at OU, and as things begin to open up more, look for opportunities that the city of Atlanta has to offer!

My advice to younger students: If you're interested in a subject or an after-school activity, try it! Don't be afraid to reach out to teachers and students who can help you get involved in something new. You may end up finding something you really love and want to pursue after high school!

Understanding Covid-19's impact on school funding

The Hockinson School District is committed to keeping our community informed about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our schools. In the fall of 2020, we experienced a nearly 13 percent decline in student enrollment as schools remained closed to help prevent spread of the virus. The state of Washington funds school districts partly based on their enrollment figures, and this decline in our enrollment resulted in a \$2.5 million shortfall in our district budget for the 2020-21 school year. In order to help mitigate this loss, HSD made reductions in staff and programming, reducing operating costs by \$800,000; however, in order to make up for the remainder of the deficit, the district had to borrow \$1.1 million against its fund balance, leaving a \$600,000 deficit for next school year. This understandably puts the district in a difficult position with finding a way forward that will ensure Hockinson students receive the education they deserve. While the district is working to find ways to further reduce operating expenses, we are also hopeful that the state may be able to provide additional funding through the current legislative session. The HSD will continue to provide updates to the Hockinson community on this issue as more information becomes available.

COVID-19'S BUDGET IMPACT:



Workshop Model at HHES keeps learners engaged, whether at home or in class

The remote learning format that has dominated K-12 education for the past year has posed many unique challenges to educators everywhere. One way that HHES teachers have kept their students engaged is by adapting a well-known, commonly used teaching technique called the Workshop Model to their online learning platforms.

The model has three steps and is designed to engage students and help students think creatively to come up with solutions to problems. First, the teacher presents a learning strategy to the class, like a new math concept or reading strategy. Next, students work together in small groups or individually to tackle a task that employs the new strategy. Finally, the students rejoin together as a class to “debrief,” during which the teacher facilitates a discussion in which students describe successes, any obstacles that were overcome, and then reinstate the strategy being presented.

Anna Hoffman, a fifth-grade teacher at HHES, has been able to utilize the capabilities of the virtual classroom format to employ the Workshop Model in a way that not only guides her students through academic material, but also keeps them engaged in the subject matter.

Each morning, students check-in with each other, “taking time at the beginning to create a classroom community.” From there, Ms. Hoffman delves into the first learning strategy of the day. After a short lesson, she divides the class into breakout rooms where students collaborate on a specific task. After checking in with each group, the students are brought back into the online classroom and Ms. Hoffman leads them through a discussion that reviews the strategy and solidifies the lesson. Ms. Hoffman says that she has successfully applied this teaching technique to math, reading, mini-research projects, and other areas of instruction.

Ms. Hoffman admits that there have been challenges, but she’s been able to find ways around them for the most part. She has learned that being structured in her class activities while also allowing for creativity and flexibility (i.e., through breakout rooms) helps make space for most students’ needs. As Ms. Hoffman explains, “students thrive from structure and routine but there are multiple opportunities for variety. This way, we get to make sure that each student gets what they need from class.”



HHS athletes are back on the practice field!

Months after the school year began, and well into the second semester, Season 1 sports finally made their 2020-21 debut at HHS this winter for Girls Soccer, Football, Volleyball, Boys and Girls Cross Country, and Boys Golf. Students returned to practice in February and have been conditioning amongst their peers and friends with all safety precautions in place, including wearing masks and practicing in small groups. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, Hockinson's all-star student athletes have still managed to have highly successful seasons so far this year.

We're winning!

The HHS Girls Soccer team wrapped up their season as undefeated league and district champions by defeating Tumwater 2-0 on March 20.

HHS Football also sent off retiring Head Coach Rick Steele as winners, finishing with a perfect 5-0 record.

For the second year in a row, HHS senior Ally Peterson has secured the 2A district cross country title. Her winning run time was 18 minutes, 29 seconds. Fellow senior Trevan Bischoff set a new school Cross Country record, running a 5k in 16 minutes, 4 seconds.

Up Next

Season 2 began on March 22 and includes traditional spring sports: Baseball, Softball-Fastpitch, Boys Soccer, Track and Field, Tennis and Girls swim.

Season 3 will begin on May 10 and includes traditional winter sports: Boys and Girls Basketball, Wrestling and Boys Swim.



HMS student leaders support peers through Homework Club

When Janice Broten's eighth-grade Leadership class convened virtually at the beginning of this school year, her students decided they would like their annual school community service project to be something that would directly support their peers, particularly those who might be struggling with aspects of remote learning. The HMS Homework Club was successfully established after being presented to the school's Associated Student Body and staff leadership to help students who need academic tutoring or want a virtual space to connect with someone after school hours.

"I personally wanted to start the club so if people needed some one-on-one help with their work they could get it," said eighth grade student tutor Kiera Poulsen, "especially since asynchronous work and at-home learning are challenging for some students."

Kiera is one of the student leaders in Ms. Broten's class who helped to get Homework Club off the ground. Now, she shows up almost daily to provide peer-mentoring and hopes to stay involved with the club even after students return for some in-person learning. One of her favorite parts of Homework Club is getting to build strong relationships with her classmates and watch them succeed.

"I love being able to work with different students and sometimes just being able to socialize and get to know people better!" Kiera said.

Homework Club is held from 2 - 3 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays via Zoom. Students log in and are either paired



Kiera Poulsen and Robbie Matheson (below Spotlight) started the Homework Club to help their peers during remote learning.

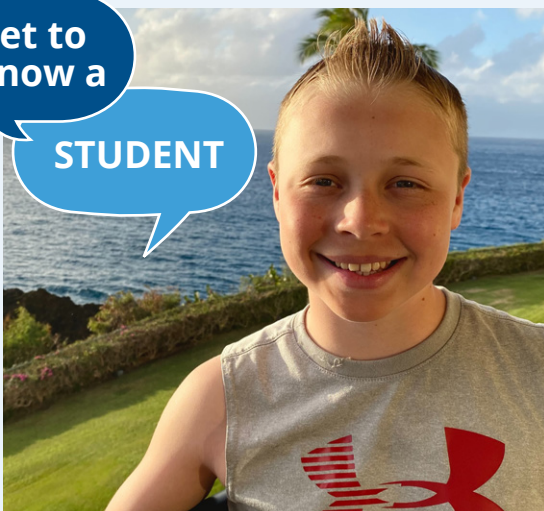
with a tutor or are provided with their own breakout room to have a "quiet space" to focus on their work, while a student leader checks in on them from time to time. Each student volunteer was trained in aspects of supervision and virtual classroom management, such as what to do if a student is experiencing technical difficulties. While this tutoring time is hosted and entirely run by student leaders, an adult staff member is also present on the call to provide additional support if needed.

If your middle school student is interested in attending Homework Club, please contact jessica.ambrose@hocksd.org.

Student tutors: Olivia Barton (8th); Kate Jones (7th); Alexis Heeter (8th); Elle Holmes (8th); Kaili Humphrey (7th); Thilo Kluth (8th); Robbie Matheson (8th); Olivia Muller (8th); Kiera Poulsen (8th); Charlie Varney (8th).

Get to
know a

STUDENT



Spotlight on 8th grader Robbie Matheson

Favorite subject: Math

What I like most about school: Seeing my friends.

What I'm most proud of: Volunteering around school and the community.

Hobbies: Trampoline, rugby, football, riding bikes.

When I grow up, I want to be: An engineer or architect.

About Homework Club: I joined Homework Club because it was something new to try and I wanted to help kids that are struggling and need a little boost. It's been cool to see someone I've been working with not missing any assignments in Schoology and feeling confident doing their work. Helping other students has given me added confidence in my own school work as well.

HHS equity-based book groups provide space for meaningful conversations

In an effort to further educational equity in Hockinson Schools, our educators continue to examine the ways current policies and practices may result in disparate outcomes for students. Last summer, along with colleagues from Hockinson and from around Clark County, HHS Social Studies Teacher Heidi Morris participated in a series of equity-based book groups to explore topics and ideas related to furthering equity in schools.

"I have really valued the time that I get to spend with my colleagues discussing equity issues and making our district a more equitable place," said Morris.

The purpose of the groups is to further develop an understanding of historical contexts used in class; to discuss how to engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision making; and how to ensure policies and practices allow all students to have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in school.

With direction from HHS Principal Andy Schoonover, this professional development opportunity for teachers and certificated staff has grown into a more comprehensive group that includes students who are interested in furthering the district's equity work.

Student input is an important component of educational equity in Hockinson Schools. Last semester, teacher Tom Royce and instructional coach Shannon McCombs worked directly with HHS students who were invited to join select meetings with the staff book group. By bringing students in for discussion with their teachers and other school staff around these important issues, the group's work can expand by hearing from students about what they may hear or see that adults don't; to help our students identify plans to make HHS welcoming to all; to empower students to make change; and to create a common vision for the school.

Book groups continue to meet weekly to discuss and share outside resources with each other. A new student equity-based book group will also be started at the Middle School in coming weeks, following the return to in-person learning.

To learn more about the Hockinson Equity Team please visit our website.

HOCKINSON SCHOOLS

the of the community

During a year of historic challenges, leaders from the Hockinson School District reached out to our community to learn more about its current perceptions of, and future ambitions for, Hockinson Schools. In conversations with community members, staff, students and board members, a theme continued to emerge: Hockinson schools are an integral part of Hockinson's identity and sense of community.

"Community and Communications" is one of the three main priorities of the HSD's Strategic Plan. In an effort to better meet this goal, a survey was given to a focus group of staff, parent, and student representatives and members of the Citizens Advisory Committee last fall. The survey aimed to identify words or phrases that best describe Hockinson Schools' strengths and areas of growth, as well as what makes Hockinson special. A recurring analogy showed up in the responses: Hockinson Schools are the "heart of the community." In follow-up discussions, respondents noted a number of examples that illustrated this sentiment: a sign on the main road to Hockinson proudly states, "We heart Hockinson." Another reads, "We love our teachers." A historic levy button found in our archives says, "I heart Hockinson." Wherever we looked, we saw a heart theme.



It became clear that "schools are the heart of Hockinson" is a heartfelt representation of how this community feels about its schools. Looking back, this makes sense. As long as the Hockinson School District has existed, schools have been at the geographic and cultural center of our close-knit Hockinson community.

It has been said that strong schools help support strong communities. We also know that a supportive community helps to create strong schools. The school-community connection works both ways. So we are excited to celebrate the special relationship between Hockinson's schools and its families. Expect to see more "Heart of the Community" imagery on Hockinson school publications as well as around our campuses and town in the coming months. We hope that it reminds everyone—staff, students, families, and community members—that when it comes to getting through challenges and educating our future, we are all in this together.

HOCKINSON SCHOOL DISTRICT
17912 NE 159th Street
Brush Prairie, WA 98606

P: (360) 448-6400
F: (360) 448-6409
www.hocksd.org



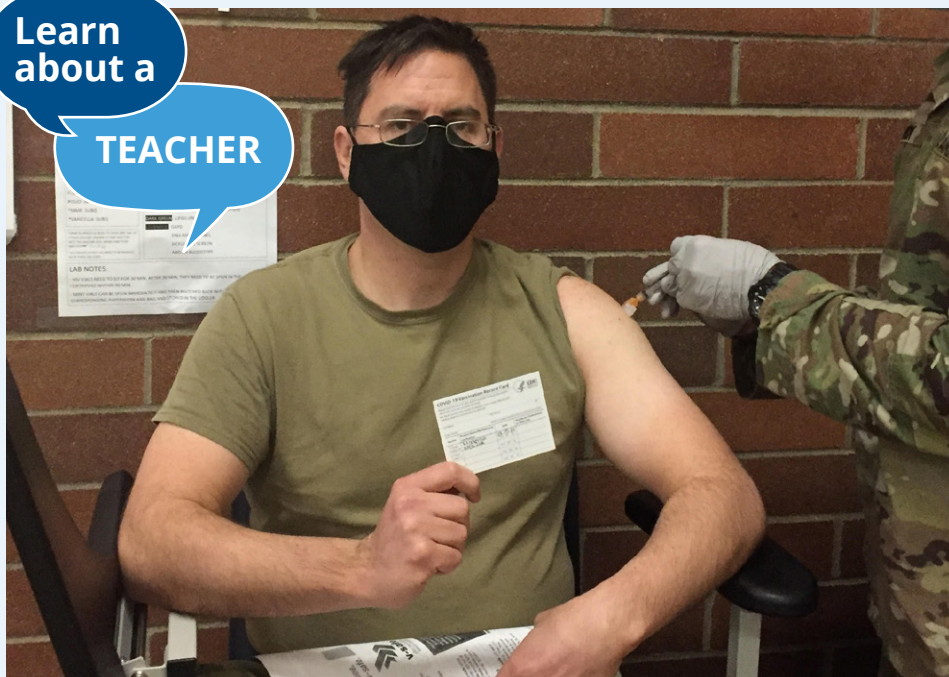
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Learn
about a

TEACHER



Spotlight on HHS teacher Heber Nelski

Subjects taught: This year I am teaching Algebra 2, Algebra 2 Honors, Precalculus, AP Computer Science A, and AP Computer Science Principles.

Education & experience: I didn't always know I wanted to be a teacher! I joined the Washington Army National Guard in high school and went to college at Brigham Young University and Clark College. I've taught English in Croatia, and was deployed to Iraq as a Combat Me-

teorologist and worked on a Quick Reactionary Force team. After deployment, I earned my bachelor's degree and started my work as a teacher in schools in Portland and Vancouver before coming to Hockinson. I recently earned my Master's Degree in Mathematics and am a re-enlisted member of the WA National Guard. I was even recently activated as a National Guard member to support safety at the US Capitol in January.

Hobbies: Swimming, hiking, rockhounding, reading, computer programming, video games, board games, Dungeons and Dragons, and anime. My absolute favorite hobby is doing any of the above with my four daughters: Melissa, Felicia, Holly and Naomi. I also really enjoy whistling.

One way I've made the most out of teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic: I thrive on being with my students, building relationships with them, and watching them learn, all of which have been made more difficult during remote learning. However, I have developed more patience and learned how to more effectively communicate with students through emails, virtual class, and other electronic media. Ultimately, I'm finding ways to build better relationships with whole families as well as with individual students.

What I'm most proud of as a teacher: My unwavering confidence in every student to succeed in both Math and in Life. My students know I love them, but, more than that, they know that I believe in them. My students trust me, and I trust them. I don't come to school thinking about what I am going to teach—I come to school thinking about who I am going to teach.

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