

LONGVIEW SCHOOLS Review

Get to know your new superintendent

Dr. Dan Zorn will hit the ground running on July 1 as superintendent of Longview Public Schools. He recently took a few minutes from his work in Kalispell, Montana, to tell us a bit about himself, why he cares about public education, what he hopes to accomplish in Longview—and which football team he cheers for.

Q: What do you want Longview to know about you?

A: I've been a public educator for 30 years. Early in my career I taught elementary school and coached at the high school level. Then I was a principal for five years before becoming an assistant superintendent for the past 16. My responsibilities have focused on curriculum and instruction, in particular, and human resources as

well. I have a lot of experience doing virtually everything relative to a school district.

I come from a family of public school teachers ... I truly believe the work of the public educator is the most important work in our society. Our mission is to serve everyone, no matter what, and that requires a system that's incredibly flexible and responsive to all student needs. That's certainly a belief I'll bring to Longview.

Q: What is the strongest asset you will bring to your new position?

A: I try to understand all sides of situations. I am very interested in listening to and engaging all members of the school community in discussions around what's working and what we might need to work on to better meet



the needs of our students.

I also have a pretty good handle on what is important for student learning—the curriculum side of things. I bring a focus on individual student needs. Whether students have identified learning disabilities,

Continued on page 2 >



2015 Commencement Dates

R. A. Long - June 13 at 3 p.m.
Mark Morris - June 13 at 7 p.m.
Both at Memorial Stadium

Discovery - July 23 at 6 p.m.
Location TBD

FIND INSIDE

- Superintendent's message | 2
- Testing pinpoints reading issues | 2
- ESD 112 to analyze district facilities | 3
- Class yields credits and certification | 3
- Get registered for kindergarten | 4
- Longview schools win two awards | 4
- Alternative high school named | 4



Message from the Superintendent

Dear Longview Schools Patrons,

The end of the school year is fast approaching, and with it comes the promise of change.

Some of our students will graduate and move on to new endeavors, while others will leave familiar classrooms and schools as they move on to the next grade level.

This is a time for celebration and farewells—including mine as I conclude my service as your interim superintendent.

It has been an honor to join your school district's journey this past year. Together we supported Longview's schools, providing a place where students can grow and

where teachers and administrators can continue to hone their skills. Then, together, we selected a new leader who will begin July 1.

Longview Schools' new superintendent, Dr. Dan Zorn, has the opportunity to join your enthusiastic learning community, and I will leave my post knowing the district will be in good hands.

Thank you to all of you who care so deeply about your students and their education. I envision great things ahead for Longview Public Schools and this community. I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,
Dr. Greg Kirsch
Superintendent

> Dan Zorn, continued from page 1

special needs, are highly academically capable or have some specific skill deficits, we need to be making sure we're getting those gaps filled, so they have opportunities to be successful. ... As a parent, I've found that part of my challenge is to help my kids uncover what they're good at. The school process is the same.

Q: What will Longview's schools be noted for in five years?

A: I hope in five years we'll have a system with significantly increased student achievement levels—better test results and higher graduation rates. I think that's very reasonable, and I believe the systems and people are in place to make that happen. ...

In Kalispell, we raised our graduation rate 11 percent in the past five or six years. I'm also really proud of the work we've done to transition to the increased expectation of the State Standards. ... There's no silver bullet that does this—it takes a lot of hard work and a lot of focus.

Q: Why Longview Public Schools?

A: I've spent 43 of my 53 years in Montana (he lived in suburban Chicago for 10 years as a child) but have had my eye on Longview for a couple of years. ... I've been particularly struck by people's love for the community and its school system, and I want to be a part of that. ...

My wife and I came out last summer and spent time in Longview to get a feel for it. I like the whole blue-collar nature of the community. That fits me. I'll wear a suit and tie when I need to, but my nature is to gravitate to jeans and a T-shirt—and my (Chicago) Bears hat.

Read more from Dr. Zorn at www.longview.k12.wa.us/suptMessage.html

SBAC testing pinpoints third grade reading issues

Results from the newly implemented state-mandated tests are trickling in—and bringing opportunities for some young Longview students.

The families of third graders whose English Language Arts scores fall into the lowest of the four achievement levels are being invited to meet with their student's teacher and principal before the end of the school year to discuss the child's overall progress.

The meetings are a requirement set by the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for all third grade students who are not reading at grade level.

"This is really driven by recent

research showing that dropouts can be traced back to their fourth grade year, going through without strong reading skills," says Bill Ofstun, Longview Public Schools director of Assessment & Technology Integration.

Reading trouble puts students at risk, he said, because it causes them to fall behind in all subjects.

Today's third graders have the opportunity to bring their reading skills up to speed through tutoring and attending summer school.

"It's really to promote a change in their trajectory," Ofstun said.

Families of all other students will probably see score reports in July.

ANNUAL NONDISCRIMINATION NOTIFICATION: The Longview School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its program or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Longview School District offers classes in many Career and Technical Education program areas. For more information about the application process and particular course offerings, contact the Director of the Career and Technical Education Department at (360) 575-7991. Lack of English language proficiency will not be a barrier to admission and participation in Career and Technical Education programs.

ESD 112 to analyze district facilities

Longview schools are creating the future today—and that includes ensuring district facilities will serve the needs of our students, both present and future.

Longview School Board recently voted to embark on a Facility Master Plan that will be conducted by specialists from Educational Service District 112.

The district hasn't had an updated long-range plan since 2002, and our community's needs have evolved significantly since that time. The district began a study with an architectural firm in 2011, but the process proved controversial, and in January 2014 the School Board decided not to act upon any of the recommendations.

Noting the district's numerous aging buildings and need for an overall plan, the staff and citizen Facilities Advisory Committee advised the Board to move forward with a new plan. It chose to



work with the ESD, because it is an impartial entity with no vested interest in the outcome.

The planning process will assemble background information on the community and school district, analyze current and anticipated educational programs, and consider enrollment history and projections. It also will create a capacity analysis

for each school and conduct an assessment of the condition and adequacy of each facility.

This autumn, the findings will be shared and community members will be involved in planning for the future. The new facilities plan is expected to be complete in 2016. The total cost of the ESD work is \$29,000.

Class yields skills, college credits and certification

The IT Academy at Mark Morris and R.A. Long high schools enables students to build skills, earn college credit and achieve professional certification—all in one yearlong class.

During the course, students use the Microsoft suite of Word, Excel and PowerPoint to develop their skills in word processing and formatting, developing spreadsheets and creating presentations while working through a variety of business-related tasks.

After completing each of the programs, they have the free

opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency by taking professional Microsoft exams and earning Microsoft Certification—an accomplishment that can earn them credibility with potential employers.

"What I keep telling kids is it's the proof of your skills when you're applying for jobs," says Jocelyn Schauer, CTE business teacher at Mark Morris.

R.A. Long CTE business teacher Sharon Jacobs describes the exams as rigorous and impartial. "It doesn't

care if you're 14 or 80 (years old)," she says.

Students who earn B's or higher in the yearlong class receive up to 13 credits from Lower Columbia College. Passing the certification tests in Word, Excel and PowerPoint earns five more college credits each.

"I tell them software changes, but the knowledge transfers," Schauer says. "Being able to persevere and developing their skills in business—that helps them out too."

The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

ADA/Students: Rod McHattie, Director of Special Services, (360) 575-7008
ADA/Employees: Chris Fritsch, Assistant Superintendent, (360) 575-7003
IDEA and 504: Rod McHattie, Director of Special Services, (360) 575-7008

Affirmative Action: Chris Fritsch, Assistant Superintendent, (360) 575-7003
Title VII and Title IX: Chris Fritsch, Assistant Superintendent, (360) 575-7003
Athletic Equity: Chris Fritsch, Assistant Superintendent, (360) 575-7003



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Calling all parents of kindergartners-to-be!

Only 232 kindergartners have registered to start school in fall 2015, but Census information suggests Longview Schools will have more than twice as many!

Without an accurate kindergarten headcount in the spring, it is difficult for the District to plan and get the right number of teachers and classrooms in the right places for our students. And

that means students might get shuffled around in the fall.

Please register your student (age 5 before Sept. 1, 2015)—and encourage others—so we all can have a smooth start to the school year.

To register your child for the first time with Longview Schools, please visit any school in the district for information and registration forms.

Longview high schools win two Washington Achievement Awards

Each of Longview's two traditional high schools recently received Washington Achievement Awards in the following areas: R.A. Long for High Progress and Mark Morris for Special Recognition in Mathematics.

The distinction, based on three years' data, puts them among 401 of the state's highest-performing schools.

"We can see the improvements we're making in our Longview schools as we implement best practices for student learning," said Ken Hermanson, District executive director of Leadership and Learning. "But when someone outside our district looks at our results and sees

we're making a difference—that's really encouraging."

As a High Progress award recipient, R. A. Long is in the top 10 percent of schools showing academic improvement in reading and math for all students.

Mark Morris was awarded Special Recognition in Mathematics for being in the top 5 percent of schools with high median student growth percentiles.

In the six years of this award program, Mark Morris High School has received three other Washington Achievement Awards: math growth in 2013, extended graduation rate in 2012 and improvement in 2011.

Alternative high school named "Discovery"

What began as On Track Academy several years ago has helped many students catch up on missing credits, and two years ago it became an alternative high school in its own right.

After a public involvement process, the School Board approved the name change April 13.

The name Discovery reflects the process of exploration students experience at the school as they find options for career and college, explains Principal Jill Diehl. It also speaks to regional history. Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery passed through this area in the early 19th century, and the school is near Lake Sacajawea.