

LONGVIEW SCHOOLS Review

Sun and Shine help illuminate the “CVG Way”

A fast drumbeat and cheery tune kick off spirit assemblies at Columbia Valley Gardens Elementary. A video lights up the gymnasium’s giant screen, where “Sun” and “Shine”—two characters in yellow and blue T-shirts—march in time to the music and demonstrate the catchphrases that define the CVG Suns:

- S**afety first
- U**nderstands responsibility
- N**othing but your best
- S**hows respect

As the video winds down, the real Sun and Shine—a.k.a. third-grade teacher Caleb Pierce and kindergarten teacher Clara Prothero—stride into the auditorium to a cacophony of excited screams. It’s time for the day’s skit.

“They’re like our mascots,” explains Logan, a fifth grader.

“They tell us what to do and what not to do, like on the swings,” adds classmate Reece.

“They’re teachers,” says Aiden, also a fifth grader, with an impish grin, “but they’re really nice.”

Sun and Shine have been bringing their show to CVG assemblies for the past three years—often with their sidekick, Ray—math coordinator Jayne Poole.

Their March skit focused on following directions, using several young audience members to help Sun teach Shine



Caleb Pierce, Jayne Poole and Clara Prothero use their alter egos, Sun, Ray and Shine, to teach and encourage CVG students. Watch a video of their antics at: <http://tinyurl.com/SunandShine>

that following directions the first time is important, because in case of an emergency, that’s how you get to safety.

“We focus on these expectations as a school at all times,” explains principal Aaron Whitright. “Sun and Shine provide an interesting way of spreading the word of what it means to do things the ‘CVG Way.’”

Prothero says Sun and Shine appear to have had another impact on school assemblies: building community.

Last fall, Sun and Shine added a new trick—“the CVG Slide,” a special school dance. Now assemblies finish with everyone—staff and students—doing the Slide together, giving students the opportunity to have fun with their teachers.

“I feel like there’s a lot more joy. It’s not just going to an assembly,” Prothero says. “When you show the kids we’re in this together, they’re more excited to get on board.”

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Community Members,

First I would like to extend my best wishes for a happy spring. This winter threw us plenty of curveballs! I sincerely appreciate the patience of our families and staff as we pored over weather forecasts and surveyed road conditions to determine how to keep folks safe and still make the most of our school year.

As you might have read in earlier issues of the Review, Longview Public Schools' two main goals are to increase student achievement and improve climate and culture districtwide. (You can find individual School Improvement Plans on the school websites.) To improve climate and culture, we work hard at creating strong connections with our students.

In this issue of the Review, you will see several ways we're changing things up to help students—and

staff—feel more connected to their schools and each other.

Plus, as we focus on these very important happenings inside our schools, you'll see that we continue to work on a plan to prepare our district for the future through facility improvements and construction. Please consider joining us later this spring for a public hearing where we'll be discussing the Nov. 7 elementary school bond details.

I am excited by what I see happening in Longview's schools and hope you are too. Keep up with us on Facebook, Twitter and our website, and join me in support of our students as the spring season of concerts, sporting events and celebrations begins. I look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,
Dan Zorn, Superintendent

Join the conversation this spring

Get ready for another chance to share your thoughts about your school district!

Last fall, Longview Public Schools used an exciting online process called Thoughtexchange: Join the conversation to collect ideas and opinions from members of our community.

That first process drew 873 participants, who shared 1,998 thoughts and assigned 48,790 stars to their top priorities. Thanks to their input, the district and our schools came to better understand the needs of our students, families and community. To discover what priorities rose to the top, visit <http://tinyurl.com/LPSDiscover>.

You can prepare for the second Thoughtexchange conversation by signing up at <http://tinyurl.com/LPSTeJoin>. Also, watch for updates on our Facebook page @LongviewSchools.

School facilities plans continue to evolve

After gathering data and ideas from the staff/citizen Facility Planning Committee, members of the public and facilities experts, the Longview School Board of Directors is moving forward with the creation of a plan to improve deteriorating elementary schools.

Community members are encouraged to attend a public hearing on a final proposal to be scheduled later this spring. A decision on the bond

components and amount will be made in the coming weeks.

The community will consider the building bond request on the Nov. 7, 2017, ballot.

The Board's priorities include districtwide safety and security projects, replacing multiple elementary schools and possibly relocating special education preschool students who are currently served at the Broadway

Learning Center.

Work on the high schools is not part of the current proposals, but the Board is continuing to study high school needs and developing plans for when other building bonds are paid off in 2023.

More information can be found on the school district webpage—www.longviewschools.com—in the Long Range Facilities Planning area.

The Longview School District is an Equal Opportunity district in education programs, activities, services, and employment. Longview School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, age, families with children, honorably discharged veteran or military status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal. We provide equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. We also comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the

When staff and students connect, stars shine

"Student connectedness" is a focus area in Longview Public Schools' strategic plan, and this winter we invited our middle school students to consider ways that staff make a difference to them.

We sent them part of a poem called "The Star Polisher" and asked who they consider to be their star polishers. Here are a few of their responses.



Teacher: Erik Edmundson
School: Cascade Middle School

Student Esmeralda writes:

"Mr. Edmundson has made an impact in my life. During choir he will take time off teaching music, and he would give us lectures about when life gets tough you should get back up. He is a big inspiration to me. ..."

Erik Edmundson's response:

"Being a music teacher, I have an opportunity. As we're creating music together, it's a picture of how society can interact to do the same thing, but everyone needs to play their part.

"To do that I need to make myself better. As I grow, what am I contributing to that piece of music, to the school, to the community, to society?"

"We are people of impact. We make a difference."



Teacher: Audrey Case
School: Mt. Solo Middle School

Student Lizzie writes:

"She made me realize there is more to life than video games. It's fulfilling your dream, and my dream is being an artist and to get done with school and go around the world to show people my art and change other people's lives."

Audrey Case's response:

"I was doing my best to change her mind toward school. She made the choice. You just have to care."

"The Star Polisher" by Leah Beck

"... The stars are the children in my class. My job is to take them—in whatever shape they come—and shine and buff them and then send them out to take their places as bright twinkling beacons in the sky ..."

Student Caleb writes:

"Mrs. Nelson is an amazing teacher who makes learning science fun. ... She cares so much about every one of her students and is always trying her best to make her class fun as well as educational."

Lynn Nelson's response:

"My thing is to get kids excited about science and consider it as a career. More novelty goes a long way. I want them to remember it for life, not just this week."



Teacher: Lynn Nelson
School: Cascade Middle School

Read more from our stars at
<http://tinyurl.com/starpolishers>

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Eagle's Nest helps families support students

The halls are quiet after school gets out at Northlake Elementary, but Patti Brown's room is still buzzing with sounds of learning—and constructive play.

Malea and her dad, Chance Pacora, sit at a table flipping playing cards with Brown, a math specialist, and paraeducator Connie Greeley.

"Can you make ten any other way?" Brown asks, and Malea selects various cards from a deck—a four and a six, then a seven and a three.

Pacora watches how Brown coaches Malea and smiles. "I'm learning too," he says.

This is Eagle's Nest, a Northlake program where teachers and specialists take turns staffing a classroom after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Their mission is to help families boost their students' learning.

"The goal is to show parents easy strategies," says Holly Davis, a Northlake reading specialist.

"It's showing them how to bring joy back into learning," Brown adds.

Their tactics involve number and word games, and a variety of learning activities that can be checked out to use at home. One key strategy is doling out lots of encouragement—to both students and parents. Research has shown that when students are stressed



Paraeducator Connie Greeley shares teaching tips and games with Malea and her dad, Chance Pacora.

out it's hard for them to learn and remember, so they want families to find ways to make learning enjoyable.

"It isn't just a bunch of flashcards and notebooks you have to suffer through," Brown says.

Pacora says the time they spend at Eagle's Nest makes a difference. "We work on stuff at home too, but I don't know all these tricks and games they know," he says. "It's fun."

Greeley, who also helped with Parent Connection, the predecessor of Eagle's Nest, says she has heard stories about the difference these programs make.

"Last year, one family was targeting math, and they felt that when the

student did testing, they saw an increase in their scores," she recalls. "They were telling their friends, 'Hey, you guys need to come and work on whatever skill your student needs work on.'"

And that's the point of the program.

"We're just trying to meet the needs of the kids," says reading specialist Davis.

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