



GREATER ALBANY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CommunityNews

The goal of all staff at GAPS: Help every kid every day



Approximately one year ago, I met with then Superintendent Maria Delapoe to learn more about Greater Albany Public Schools. I had a strong interest in serving GAPS as the new superintendent. I knew of the district's reputation of strong leadership over time, including former Deputy Su-

perintendent of Public Instruction, Rob Saxton; Chief Education Officer, Nancy Golden; and Dan Jameson of the Chalkboard Project.

I have just finished my first six months on the job, and I can say without hesitation that I am impressed with the caliber of leadership in the district and the incredibly dedicated teachers and support staff serving our children. Our schools are welcoming places where caring adults do their very best every day to make a positive difference in the lives of children.

We believe our schools need to nurture and promote creativity and model citizenship. All staff play an important role, including the folks who serve meals, transport students, clean the facilities, serve as secretaries or teaching assistants and, of course, our outstanding teachers.

Our focus is not only academic needs, but social and emotional needs as well.

Our goals are to be good stewards of public resources while doing everything we can to meet the needs of all students — every student, every day.

I am excited to serve Greater Albany Public Schools as your new superintendent!

Sincerely,
Jim Golden, Superintendent



Kindergarten expands to all-day program

Public school kindergarten is a full-day program now. This is the first year for the longer schedule, which is expected to provide educational and social benefits to students as they start their school careers.

Academic expectations for kindergarten have increased in most subject areas. Kids need to be fluent readers by the time they reach third grade. Educators have found a connection between reading skills in the early grades and academic success in the later grades.

In addition, young learners need to begin building basic math, social studies and science skills.

GAPS kindergarten students also receive P.E. and music instruction.

Parents can help kindergarten students succeed by talking to them about what they have learned, limiting screen time and reading together. A home environment where students hear a variety of words in a regular conversation can help improve student learning.

Facilities Update/Bond Planning

District Facility Advisory Council

Last year, the School Board appointed a 40-member community-based District Facility Advisory Committee (DFAC) to take a comprehensive look at each school. Their charge was to develop a plan and report back.

After approximately 40 hours of touring district facilities and 10 work sessions to discuss and review information about our facility needs, the group reached agreement on a report that lists projects for a possible bond measure in priority order. The projects address needs of the District's aging facilities and projected student enrollment growth.

DFAC guiding principles for projects include:

- Address critical physical needs of buildings.
- Address safety and security improvements.
- Focus on Career Ready opportunities for students through investing in programs and local business partnerships.
- Provide adequate technology access for student learning.
- Create appropriate educational spaces for today's learners.

GAPS has many aging facilities in need of repair and improvements to ensure student safety and an adequate learning environment. In addition, many schools are at or over student enrollment capacity. Current overcrowding has required reopening Fir Grove School this fall and adding modular classrooms to two other elementary schools. We currently have the largest student population ever in the Greater Albany Public Schools.

See the DFAC report at www.albany.k12.or.us

Thank you, members of the District Community Advisory Committee, for reviewing facility needs

Chad Angel	Heath Kasper	Shane Wooten
Christine Bailey	Chad Kerlegan	
Kelly Bussard	Torri Lynn	Maria Delapoer, Former
Milton Cardwell	Kevin Manske	GAPS Superintendent
Scott Casebolt	Sue McGrory	Russell Allen, GAPS
Roger Collette	Ben Mundie	Director of Business
Richard Costain	Dileep Nageswaran	Jim Golden, GAPS
Dale DeBolt	Ron Reimers	Superintendent
Jon Dilbone	Greg Roe (Co-Chair)	Tonja Everest,
Pat Eastman (Co-Chair)	Janet Steele	GAPS Assistant
Rich Engel	Mike Sykes	Superintendent
Douglas Hambley	Scott Wehrman	Doug Pigman, GAPS
Helen Jacobs	Russ Williams	Facilities Manager



After the fire: SAHS cafeteria rebuild will be ready for students in the fall

The new building at South Albany High School has walls and a new roof. The building, destroyed by an arson-caused fire last year, will be a two-story facility that includes the cafeteria, classrooms, kitchen and commons area.

Construction will be completed during the summer, and the new facility will open in time for the 2016-17 school year, which starts on Sept. 6.

The school community is grateful for the tremendous support from the community. So far, more than \$200,000 has been donated to help replace materials and equipment that were destroyed.

In late summer or early fall, the school will invite the community to celebrate the building's completion with an opening ceremony. Details will be announced as the project nears completion.

Next steps

The School Board reviewed the DFAC recommendations at the Jan. 11 meeting.

They are beginning to gather input from the community before making a decision later this year about whether to send a bond to voters and, if so, how much and which election.

See more information at www.albany.k12.or.us

A new vision for GAPS

Population Study/Efficiency Study

In addition to reviewing facility needs, the District is conducting two additional studies to provide information to assist with future planning.

Population Projection Study

First, a population projection study is under way to provide an analysis of population projections for the district and the mid-Willamette Valley.

Albany, an attractive community in its own right, is a potential bedroom community for Corvallis, Salem and Eugene. Due to its central location, reasonable housing costs and good schools, Albany may see unexpected growth now that the recession has ended.

Efficiency Study

Secondly, a group of education experts from the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts is conducting an in-depth analysis of district operations.

This study uses a national model to look at educational, fiscal, facility and other district operations and compare them to “like” school districts in the Oregon.

The population and efficiency study will allow District staff to make the best possible decisions during the upcoming budget process and ensure accurate planning to accommodate future growth.

The goal is to develop decisions that result in good stewardship of public resources and the most efficient and effective district operations.



These Five Pillars for Becoming a Great Public School are the values that guide our decisions.

Pillar 1: Schools that produce good citizens

- Mentally and physically healthy kids.
- People who give back to their communities through service.
- Creating an inclusive community where all people are valued.

Pillar 2: All students graduate and go on to successful post high school outcomes

- Employability skills; good attendance, work habits and social skills.
- Lifelong learners (high school is not enough!).
- Degrees, certificates and personal improvement through more education.

Pillar 3: Equity Lens

- Schools are places that overcome individual circumstances purposefully.
- Resources are allocated in a manner that helps overcome issues of poverty and race. Outcomes for all groups are similar.
- Continual reflection on operations. No shame, no blame, no excuses.

Pillar 4: Continuous Improvement Principles are used system wide

- The organization embraces a “Growth Mindset.”
- The organization utilizes continuous improvement principles and has a culture that has the technical training and believes in system thinking and improvement.
- Decisions are made using data and a culture of continuous improvement permeates the entire school system.

Pillar 5: Efficient Operations

- Schools are system oriented and seek to continuously improve operations.
- Transparent operations with explicit measurements.
- Public and private partnerships are sought out in order to leverage more resources to improve student outcomes.





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West Albany Rhythmix earns trip to New York a capella competition

In January, West Albany High School placed first in the Northwest Semifinal A Capella competition, beating out high school groups from around the region.

In April, they will compete against finalists from eight regions around the country at the International Championship of High School A Cappella finals competition in New York.

Rhythmix is a coed group directed by choir instructor Cate Caffarella.

New GAPS website will be an information hub

A new GAPS website will launch soon and will provide easier access to information about the district. The site will showcase district programs and activities, highlight student news and share information about district operations.

“The focus is on user friendliness and highlighting the great things our students are engaged in, including academic achievement, special projects and community engagement,” said Superintendent Jim Golden.

Watch for the new site: www.albany.k12.or.us



www.albany.k12.or.us

For More Information

For more information about Greater Albany Public Schools, please contact us:

Phone: 541-967-4501 • E-mail: info@albany.k12.or.us • Web: www.albany.k12.or.us

