



# GREATER ALBANY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## CommunityNews

Our motto guides our work: Every kid, every day



Dear GAPS Community Member,  
I can't believe my first year as superintendent has passed so quickly. I

have made it a point to be in all of our schools and classrooms regularly this school year.

First, I want to thank you for trusting us with your children's education. Secondly, I want to acknowledge the tireless work of our teachers and support staff to not only teach kids but to make our schools welcoming places where the joy of learning is encouraged. We believe it is our duty to meet the needs of every kid, every day!

I encourage parents to engage kids in being physically and mentally active over the summer to prevent the "summer slide" that happens from being out of school for the long break.

Encourage them to read regularly, journal, play math games or take classes offered by our parks and recreation department or the Boys and Girls Club. And limit screen time to encourage physical activity.

I look forward to a great school year in 2016-17. Please be safe.

Sincerely,  
Jim Golden, Superintendent

## Congratulations, Class of 2016!



Photo: Don Bacher



Photo: Terry Poe

South Albany High School graduated 295 students – a graduation rate of 89.5% – and West Albany High School graduated 312 students – a graduation rate of 98.5%, the highest graduation rate for a large, comprehensive high school in the state.

To inspire younger students and show the graduates how far they have come, seniors participated in a senior march at their elementary and middle schools. **See the inspiring photos on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/greateralbanypublicschools](http://www.facebook.com/greateralbanypublicschools).**

### 2016-17 budget brings back school programs and adds staff to support staff and student needs

The budget for next school year adds new staff for the district's growing student enrollment and student needs.

The district is growing, and projections are for continued increases in student enrollment. The budget adds 11.7 new teaching positions as a response to higher enrollment and in an effort to improve student

achievement.

GAPS is the 13th largest district in the state with an enrollment of about 9,600 students.

Other budget highlights are new staff to support students in special education and continuing the middle school track program.

Read more budget details online. The adopted budget is available at [www.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.albany.k12.or.us).

# Community Input: Oregon Rising Forums

## Hundreds of people shared their priorities for GAPS schools in Oregon Rising forums

In April and May, GAPS joined educators and education supporters around the state in a community input process to help shape the future of our schools. The goal of Oregon Rising was to gather input from more than 10,000 Oregonians.

The District held four community forums. About 300 people shared their views for schools at the meetings, and even more participated in the online survey.

Meetings were held at West Albany High School, North Albany Middle School, Clover Ridge Elementary School and South Albany High School.

This input will provide a local perspective to the statewide process but, more importantly, it helps us understand what is important to parents and community members.

The following are select comments from each meeting.

**Read the notes with all comments from each forum on the GAPS website: [www.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.albany.k12.or.us).**



### West Albany High School, April 20

- Increase use of educational technology.
- Provide earlier access to Spanish language instruction.
- Construct high school auditoriums.
- Set and consistently enforce student rules among schools.
- Improve Talented and Gifted (TAG) instruction.
- Improve science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and offer support for parents helping their children with math.

### North Albany Middle School, May 10

- Increase use of educational technology.
- Provide earlier access to language instruction.

- Expand staff ethnic and cultural competency diversity. Be more inclusive of students with disabilities and special needs.
- Construct high school auditoriums.
- Make facility improvements.
- Increase access to electives and vocational programs.

### Clover Ridge Elementary School, May 17

- Increase access to special education programs.
- Expand access to electives, such as art, language vocational and music programs.
- Address facility issues, such as air conditioning, that would affect student learning if the calendar were adjusted.
- Keep class sizes from growing too large.

### South Albany High School, May 25

- Increase middle school capacity.
- Construct high school auditoriums.
- Increase parent involvement.
- Focus on college-ready courses.
- Expand access to Spanish instruction.
- Improve student safety, focus on school climate programs to reduce possibility of bullying.
- Create access to mental health programs for students.
- Continuing inclusion of special needs students in classrooms.
- Encourage greater parent participation in schools.
- Provide equal opportunities to access programs such as music at all schools.

### Bond listening sessions to be planned for fall

These forums were the first effort to reach out and listen to general community goals. The District is planning additional listening sessions in the fall to learn about priorities for a possible bond measure for facilities projects. More information will be announced when those dates are set.

# Great Opportunities for Students

## Oak Grove Elementary teacher shares love of science with students, wins national teaching innovation award

*Mark Gullickson wants to share his passion for science with his students. He has expanded opportunities for hands-on learning through grant awards and was named one of America's most innovative teachers for 2016 by the Henry Ford Foundation.*

Oak Grove Elementary third-grade teacher Mark Gullickson wants his students to have opportunities to learn science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Over the years, he has introduced computer coding, Lego Robotics, basic AutoCAD, 3D printing, renewable wind energy, aerodynamics, and fish and stream

biology to his students. Each lesson has a common goal to engage students and build interest in science.

Gullickson's classroom is packed with tools for hands-on learning that he has purchased with grant funds or received through business partnerships.

He spends an average of 60 hours per week on curriculum planning and grant research and applications.

"I try to empower students with hands-on activities because that is how they learn and those are the things that stick with you," he said.

Gullickson was the 2009 Oregon Technology Teacher of the Year.



This year, he has received multiple grants and awards to support the Oak Grove after-school STEM club and fund tools to integrate technology into his classroom activities. Read more at [www.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.albany.k12.or.us).

## Partnership with LBCC gives students training in mechatronics



Nathan Baker had two graduation ceremonies in June: West Albany High School and Linn Benton Community College.

For his junior and senior year, Baker was enrolled at both schools, earning both a high school diploma

and associate's degree in mechatronics. He was one of six GAPS students participating in the free college program that provided hands-on instruction.

The LBCC program, advised by professors Dave Mack and Denis Green, is open to any interested, motivated high school student.

"Mechatronics is a blending of electronics, electrical and computer controls," said Mack. The program is open to any student but, Mack says, they need to be motivated. "It is a challenge for them to do both their college and high school at the same time," he said.

Mechatronics is a high-demand, skilled career field with potential for work in a variety of industries.

Graduates are eligible for employment with just an associate degree. Baker, however, plans to earn a degree at OSU in engineering.

Read about this program and Nathan Baker's experience on the District website: [www.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.albany.k12.or.us).

Read more about these opportunities for students at [www.albany.k12.or.us/news](http://www.albany.k12.or.us/news)



**Greater Albany Public Schools**  
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Find back-to-school information at [www.albany.k12.or.us/parents/back-school-2016-17](http://www.albany.k12.or.us/parents/back-school-2016-17)

## Key dates for next school year

**Sept. 6:** School starts for grades 1-6, all grades at Timber Ridge and grade 9

**Sept. 7:** School starts for all other grades except kindergarten

**Sept. 12:** School starts for kindergarten  
Find important dates on the district website: [www.albany.k12.or.us/about/academic-calendar/](http://www.albany.k12.or.us/about/academic-calendar/)



**Open house planned for new SAHS cafeteria on Aug. 30. Watch Facebook for information.**



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## School safety update: Lead and radon tests planned for all schools this summer

Student safety is the top priority for all GAPS schools. This summer, the District will join districts around the state in testing water to ensure that it is safe for students to drink. If elevated levels of lead are found in drinking fixtures, maintenance staff will correct the issue and ensure that the water is safe before school starts in September.

The District will also test all schools for radon, a naturally occurring gas that can be unsafe with prolonged exposure. Radon is undetectable without air quality tests. If a school shows elevated levels of radon, maintenance staff will follow recommended mitigation, which includes improving ventilation.

### 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](mailto:info@albany.k12.or.us) • Web: [www.albany.k12.or.us](http://www.albany.k12.or.us)

