

School Board Recognition

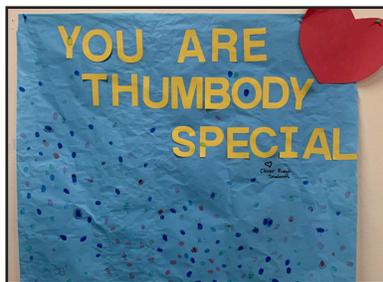
Greater Albany Public Schools joined the other 196 school districts throughout Oregon to celebrate January as School Board Recognition Month.

“Our school board members spend countless hours of unpaid time working to provide the best possible education for our students,” Superintendent Melissa Goff said. “They also serve as the board of directors for one of our community’s largest employers and the largest school district in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Celebrating School Board Recognition Month is one way to say thanks for all they do.”

School board members represent their fellow citizens’ views and priorities in the difficult task of maintaining and running our community’s public schools. They also reinforce the principle of local control over public education, which is an important and highly valued aspect of education in Oregon.

The school board’s main goal is to support student achievement. To achieve that goal, the board focuses on many needs, including:

- Creating a vision for what parents and citizens want their school district to become and how to make student achievement the top priority.



Posters from Liberty Elementary (left) and Clover Ridge Elementary (above) given to the Board at the Jan. 27 School Board meeting



Students from Central and Takena Elementary schools presented School Board members with individual posters

- Overseeing bond projects, from getting bonds passed to ensuring proper execution of taxpayer dollars.
- Setting standards for what students must learn and be able to do.
- Assessing whether schools achieve their goals, and whether students are learning.
- Accounting for the outcomes of decisions and by tracking progress and reporting results.
- Aligning the use of the district’s human and financial resources.
- Creating a safe and orderly climate where students can learn and teachers can teach.
- Collaborating to solve common problems and to support common successes.
- Focusing on continuous improvement by questioning, examining, revising, refining and revisiting issues related to student achievement.

The GAPS Board was recognized throughout the month of January by the students, teachers, parents, staff, and the community that they serve. At the Jan. 13 School Board meeting, music teacher Dinadan Gurney and his Honors Choir from Lafayette Elementary treated the GAPS board to a performance.

Continued on Page 2

School Board Recognition



JENNIFER WARD
BOARD CHAIR - ZONE 1

Q: Why did you want to serve on the GAPS Board?
A: In an increasingly polarized society, I was looking for a way to engage with my community in a way that was optimistic and respectful. Serving on the GAPS School Board is a personally fulfilling way for me to do that, since my children are GAPS students.

Q: How much time and energy is required to be an effective School Board member?
A: On average, 5-10 hours a week and the occasional sleepless night :)



KIM BUTZNER
BOARD VICE CHAIR - ZONE 2

Q: Why did you want to serve on the GAPS Board?
A: To represent, and be an advocate for, my community for what I feel is one of the most crucial and important aspects of our society...to educate our youth. There is no greater challenge with a better reward than being an advocate for children.

Q: What do you like best about Albany?
A: I love the fact that Albany is a community that comes together in times of need to support one another.



MICHAEL THOMSON
BOARD MEMBER - ZONE 3

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your time as a School Board member?
A: In the coming years, I hope we can begin to address some areas that have been neglected for decades. Things like class size, help for students with severe social-emotional needs, and offering students many paths to pursue life after graduation.

Q: What are some challenges you and your fellow Board members face?
A: A continuing challenge for our growing District will be providing a quality education experience for all kids within our budget.



ERIC AGUINAGA
BOARD MEMBER - AT LARGE No. 1

Q: Why did you want to serve on the GAPS board?
A: Advocating for youth is my number one goal. I also wanted to change the dynamics of the board and add diversity.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in your time as a School Board member?
A: I really want to listen to the community, staff, parents, and students. I want to listen to the wants, needs and frustrations and see what the board can do.



PAT EASTMAN
BOARD MEMBER - AT LARGE No. 2

Q: Why did you want to serve on the GAPS Board?
A: I believe that the opportunity to receive a good education is the most important thing we can provide our children. We will all benefit from that effort.

Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a School Board member?
A: Working with people who have a passion for educating children. This work is possibly some of the most important and rewarding effort we can undertake as a community.



HANNAH THORP
STUDENT BOARD MEMBER - WEST ALBANY HS

Q: How has the School Board experience helped prepare you for life after high school?
A: Other than looking really good on college applications... (by) exposing me to an effective, albeit small, form of local government. Particularly with the new board, I was able to observe what it takes for a group of leaders, who have the public's best interest in mind, to make important decisions. Superintendent Goff's work with equity and inclusion, particularly in the small focus groups, gives me hope for the future of this community. I think the experience will prove valuable to me in my future endeavors in the sense that it has provided me with perspective and led me to appreciate the work which people such as our School Board members do.

At the January 27 School Board meeting, students from Central and Takena Elementary presented individual posters to each School Board member and students from Clover Ridge and Liberty Elementary created 'Thank You' posters that hung in the board room. Students also thanked the Board in two videos that were shown at the Jan. 27 meeting, with recognition videos produced by both North Albany Elementary and Oak Grove Elementary.

The five GAPS Board members also received certificates of appreciation from the Oregon School Boards Association presented by district administration. Throughout the final week of January, each of the five Board members had Q&A features and graphics posted on the district website and social media, with each member receiving their own day of recognition. Student Board Member Hannah Thorp also had a Q&A feature published.

"Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation for our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round effort on their part. They are dedicated individuals who are committed to improving student achievement and to fighting for the best for all of our students," Goff said.

Read Full Q&As with each board member at bit.ly/GAPSBoardQA

Going Viral (in a good way)

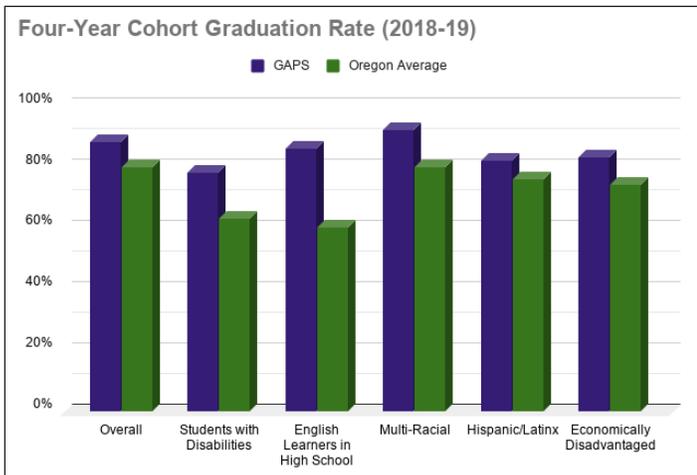
South Albany High School freshman basketball player Max Louber became an international sensation after making a miraculous behind the back, falling out of bounds shot against Central High School on Jan. 24. Max's shot was shared widely throughout social media with millions of views, retweets, and shares, and was the No. 1 play on ESPN SportsCenter Top-10.

"I wasn't really concerned if I was going to make the shot or not, as my goal was to save the ball from going out of bounds and to pass it to my teammate under the basket," Max said. "But I definitely felt like there was a chance when I turned around to look at it. I thought it was very cool and very lucky.

"It has been super exciting to see my shot go viral," added Max, who's shot helped lead his team to a 64-60 victory. "It is really crazy to see myself on Sport Center, a program that my friends and I have looked up to and watched for most of our lives. I have gained a lot of followers/supporters on my social media and I am honored to bring a spotlight to Albany."



Graduation Rates Continue to Rise



Graduation data released by the Oregon Department of Education on Jan. 23 reveals that Greater Albany Public Schools graduation rates continue to rise, up six percentage points over the last six years and eight percentage points higher than the Oregon average.

The district's four-year cohort graduation rate for 2018-19 was 88%, a six percentage point increase over the 2013-14 cohort year and roughly a 1.5 percentage point increase from last year. The Oregon state graduation rate is 80%, also up eight percentage points from 2014.

GAPS saw rises in student group graduation rates across the board, indicating the effectiveness of the district in increasing success among all students. "We are super proud and excited at our graduation rates this year," Assistant Superintendent Lisa Harlan said. "We show marked improvement in almost every area."

"Two of the areas we identified last year for improvement were the serving of our students with disabilities and students who were English learners in high school, and the gains in these student groups have been remarkable – 17% and 9% increases, respectively, in our 4-year cohort graduation rate," Harlan added. "I think this directly reflects the work schools have done in Quality Teaching methods (QTEL), and the more broadly this is embedded across the system, the greater success we expect to see."

Among students with disabilities, the 2018-19 cohort had a dramatic one-year increase in graduation rate, jumping from 61% in 2018 to 78% in 2019. The Oregon state graduation rate for students with disabilities is just 63% this year and Corvallis reported a 68% graduation rate.

GAPS English learners anytime in high school had a graduation rate of 86% in 2018-19 after that number stood at just 53% in 2013-14 and was 76% last year. For the state, English learners in high school had a graduation rate of

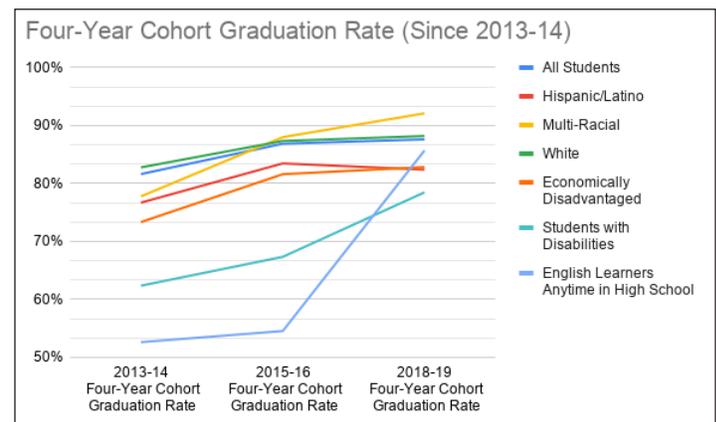
just 60%.

Harlan also noted the continued impressive graduation rates associated with students who have ever taken a Career Technical Education (CTE) course or CTE pathway, which increased to 92% and over 95% graduation rates, respectively. Grad rates for economically disadvantaged students rose to 83%, a 10 percentage point increase over the last six years, and the district also saw large gains among underserved races and ethnicities and homeless students.

West Albany High School (WAHS) continues to rank among the top high schools in the state in overall graduation rate among four-year cohorts at 98%, which is 18 percentage points higher than the state average. WAHS has graduation rates at 90% or higher among nearly all student groups, with its rate for students with disabilities rising by nine percentage points from last year to reach 94%

At South Albany High School (SAHS), the graduation rate among students with disabilities grew from 51% in 2018 to 78% in 2019, an increase of 27 percentage points. SAHS had 90% of English learners anytime in high school graduate, up from 71% last year, and has a four percentage point increase in overall graduation rate since 2013-14

Albany Options School (AOS) saw its graduation rate jump 13 percentage points from 2018 and 31 percentage points over the last six years. AOS had its grad rate for English learners any time in high school reach 75% for 2018-19 after reporting a 14% grad rate in 2013-14.



Upcoming Dates

Feb. 8: iSwim for Kids

Feb. 17: No school (Presidents Day)

Mar. 14: iRun for Kids

Mar. 23-27: No school (Spring Break)

State Champion Fin-tastic Fish!



The Fin-tastic Fish FIRST FLL Team #27006, one of seven Albany teams to compete in the Intel Oregon FIRST LEGO League Championship Jan. 18 and 19 in Hillsboro, took home a state championship earning the 1st Place CORE Values - Gracious Professionalism award.

In a field of over 60 teams representing regional qualifying tournament winners in the state of Oregon, the Fin-tastic Fish were recognized for showing each other and other teams respect at all times, recognizing that both friendly competition and mutual gain are possible, on and off the playing field.

"The girls work in community service and giving back to others, and their development and sharing of robotics curriculum with young or new teams they mentor, world-wide, has truly made a difference" said head coach Mark Gullickson, a 4th Grade teacher at Oak Grove Elementary.

Gullickson's teams have earned the CORE Values - Gracious Professionalism and/or Inspiration award in each of the last five years. The 2019-20 team, comprised of 6th-8th graders Addlynn, Evelyn, Gouri, Lucy, and Mikayla, also finished tied for 4th place overall at the state competition.

"When we got our name called we all exploded and were super happy and it felt really good," said Mikayla. "I really enjoy being with my teammates. They're really nice, funny, sweet, and kind and we can all work as a team really well together"

The FIRST LEGO League (FLL) encourages creativity, fun, problem solving, and competition for ages 9-14, as teams design, program, and build LEGO robots to compete on a 4' x 8' table and create an innovative solution to a real-world problem inspired by the yearly theme. The Fin-tastic Fish named their robot GLEAM - an acronym of their first names - and use blue LEGO's - simulating water - found from around the world.

In addition to robotics, the team also works on research projects and community service. This year's team focused on

connecting people that have limited mobility with accessible playgrounds and worked with Apple and Google Maps to help people find accessible playgrounds in their community.

At the state championship the team was one of just five recognized for its research project and innovative solution and was asked to share the project presentation during the event closing ceremony, before a crowd of over 2,000 people.

The team uses the SCRUM framework to manage all of their short term and long term goals and find tremendous success in all of their endeavors while learning teamwork, problem solving, time management, and many other skills.

"LEGO robotics has taught us a lot of things," Gouri said. "Being on a team means that you can work with other people and you can get along very well. It's taught us leadership skills and many other skills that we can take with us later in our lives."

Strategic Planning Update

Work on Greater Albany Public Schools' Strategic Planning initiative continues as the team and district leadership are working to establish a vision and goals to present to the School Board and community.



After the completion of the Community Forums and surveys at the end of October, the Strategic Planning Team began meeting weekly. The team was tasked to analyze data from roughly 1,200 surveys, 17 focus groups, seven staff discussions, and four community forums.

Every individual survey and all comments from the group discussions were read and entered into the database. In its efforts to draw common themes from all of the community respondents the team worked on drafts of a belief statement, mission statement, and vision statement representative of the district.

All of the response data was subsequently sent to data management firm Qualtrics, which is in the process of analyzing and summarizing the results. The data will be received back disaggregated by historically underserved groups and will be shared with the Board following the receipt.

The Strategic Planning Team is scheduled to reconvene on Feb. 6 after the Qualtrics data has been returned to revisit their past work and incorporate the new information. The team will be asked to revise drafts for February board consideration and compose three to five draft goals to present to the Board.



GREATER ALBANY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Greater Albany Public Schools
718 7th Ave SW
Albany, OR 97321

(541)967-4501