

# Greater Albany Public Schools

## Community Newsletter **Winter 2021**

### School Board Appreciation



**KIM BUTZNER**

**MICHAEL THOMSON**

**JENNIFER WARD**

**ERIC AGUINAGA**

**JUSTIN ROACH**

BOARD CHAIR - ZONE 2

BOARD VICE CHAIR - ZONE 3

ZONE 1

AT-LARGE NO. 1

AT-LARGE NO. 2

## THANK YOU, GAPS BOARD!



Greater Albany Public Schools celebrated School Board Recognition Month in January, a time to appreciate and recognize the selfless work that our school board members do in service to our community and most importantly our children.

School board members represent their fellow citizens' views and priorities in the difficult task of maintaining and running our community's public schools, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, their work has never been more important. In this unprecedented time our Board members have continued to keep the wellbeing of our students at the forefront of all of their decisions while working with district leadership to maximize educational opportunities and support for families.

"Our school board members spend countless hours of unpaid time working to provide the best possible education for our students and have never worked harder than during the COVID-19 pandemic," 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."

The primary focus of the school board 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
- 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.

Appreciation videos created by GAPS teachers, staff and students were shared with the Board members in January. You can view the complete collection of appreciation videos [here](#).

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The GAPS Board members also received certificates of appreciation from the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) presented by district administration.

For the 2020-21 academic year, Kim Butzner is the Board Chair while Michael Thomson is the Vice Chair. Eric Aguinaga, Jennifer Ward, and Justin Roach are also serving on the board, with Roach recently appointed to fill the vacated position previously held by Pat Eastman.

The GAPS community is also served by a pair of student Board members from South Albany and West Albany High Schools. This year, LJ Carmichael has represented WAHS and Esperanza Herrera-Moore has represented SAHS, with each providing reports during each Board meeting and bringing the needs of their fellow students to district administration and the community at large.

## 2021 School Board Election

Multiple School Board positions are up for election this year, with terms expiring on June 30, 2021.

Many of the qualities that make board members great are acquired over time, through training and experience, so don't discredit your potential worth as a board member, even though you may never have served in such a capacity.

Boards typically meet one or two evenings a month and may also have occasional work sessions. Before the monthly meetings, you'll need to study the materials provided (board packets) so you can make informed decisions. A substantial time commitment is required of board members beyond meeting and meeting-preparation time. There are committee meetings, work sessions and occasional appearances on behalf of the district.

Board members are elected to four-year terms. You must be a registered voter and you must have lived in the district for one year immediately preceding the election. School district employees elected to serve on the board must give up em-



### WHAT DOES A SCHOOL BOARD DO?

The board's major responsibility is setting policy. The board hires and evaluates a chief executive (superintendent or college president), who in turn hires staff.

#### BOARD MEMBERS MUST ALSO:

- Establish budget
- Choose curriculum
- Set goals, evaluate progress toward those goals
- Ask voters to approve bond measures and local option levies
- Guide collective bargaining

ployment with the district to sit on the board.

The Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) created the [Get on Board](#) website in 2017 to inform prospective board members. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Election Details

The special district election will take place on May 18, 2021. Candidates can file February 6, 2021 through 5:00 pm on March 18, 2021.

Candidates must file with the Linn County elections office. Though GAPS lies in both Linn and Benton counties, Linn county is the sole organizer for the district election. Prospective candidates that reside in either county will file in Linn county. Candidates will appear on election ballots in both counties where applicable.

Prospective candidates may access the SEL 190 Candidate Filing form [here](#). In addition, you may view the State of Oregon's [County, City and District Candidate Manual](#) for more information.

If you have any questions please contact the Linn County Clerk's Office at 541-967-3831 or email Supervisor of Elections Derrick Sterling at [dsterling@co.linn.or.us](mailto:dsterling@co.linn.or.us).



## ParentSquare

Greater Albany Public Schools is now using ParentSquare, which will allow the District and your student's school to do everything from sending out alerts by text and phone to sharing email messages with families. We encourage all parents and guardians of GAPS students to create an account to chose your preferred method of communication and how you receive messages, plus **many more features** to come!

Families can easily use ParentSquare on a mobile device by downloading the free ParentSquare app in the App Store or Google Play. **Don't want to use the App? No problem!** All of the same functions of the App can also be easily accessed on the ParentSquare website at [www.parentsquare.com](http://www.parentsquare.com).

**To create an account, simply visit [parentsquare.com/signin](http://parentsquare.com/signin) and use the email address or phone number you used with your school during registration to activate.**

The screenshot shows the ParentSquare interface for South Albany High School. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Search Posts', 'Español', and a bell icon. The main header features the school's name 'SOUTH ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL' and its tagline 'PROUD HOME OF THE REDHAWKS'. Below the header, there's a search bar and a 'New Post' button. The left sidebar includes sections for 'Greater Albany Public Schools', 'SOUTH ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL Switch School', 'COMMUNICATE' (with 'Posts' and 'Alerts and Notices' options), 'EXPLORE', and 'PARTICIPATE'. The right sidebar shows 'EVENTS' with a calendar for February 2021 and a list of upcoming events like 'Feb 15 No School- President...', 'Feb 17 Girls Soccer Workout', and 'Feb 24 Boys Soccer Workout'. In the center, there's a post from 'GAPS Updates (Feb 11, 2021)' about food service availability on Presidents Day.

# GAPS Celebrates Black History Month

During the month of February, Greater Albany Public Schools joins school districts and other organizations throughout the state and beyond in recognizing the impact of Black Oregonians.

The 2021 theme of Black History Month is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity". GAPS encouraged all teachers to participate in Black History Month with their students, providing lesson ideas and resources for all grade levels highlighting excellence in the Black community with inventors, CEOs, community leaders, artists, and more.

In past years many students did not learn about the contributions of Black Americans as they did with their white counterparts. The Oregon Encyclopedia's [Blacks in Oregon](#) page provides a history of history of Black contributions, stating "Issues of race and the status and circumstances of Black life in Oregon are central to understanding the history of the state, and perhaps its future as well."

The future became the present In November, when Alex Johnson II was elected mayor of Albany, becoming the first person of color to hold the office. "I'm an American man of African descent," said Johnson to the Albany Democrat-Herald. "I didn't want it to be about me being the first Black anything because my goal is I won't be the last."

GAPS Superintendent Melissa Goff, who [recently received the D. Joan Collison Distinguished Service Award](#) from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peo-

ple (NAACP) Corvallis/Albany branch, sees Johnson's selection as a significant moment in our community.

"I believe the significance when a 'first' leader of color is elected, it is a reflection of the community seeing fully the candidate and not denying them the position because of their race." Goff said. "In Alex's case, clearly Albany sees him for all of what he brings to the position. For our educators, this means they are able to point to the mayoral and city councilor positions in Albany, both of which Alex has occupied, as being accessible to people of color."



**Mayor Alex Johnson II**

Courtesy [alexforalbanyor.com](http://alexforalbanyor.com)

The Corvallis/Albany branch of the NAACP is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021 and held multiple events during the month of February, including a virtual event called "Around the Kitchen Table: 50 Years of Black History" on the final Saturday of February.

Jason Dorsette recently became the new president of the NAACP Corvallis/Albany branch and has [set forth ambitious plans](#) to grow the organization and launch new focus areas, taking advantage of this time when racial equality has come to the forefront in Oregon and throughout the United States.

## Art on the Rise

In December, a group of students from South Albany High School's RISE class gave a presentation to the GAPS Board proposing the creation of three new murals focused on embracing and celebrating diversity in our community.

The Art on the Rise class outlined the need for the visual representation of unity and inclusivity on district campuses, stating "People in our community are discriminated for things out of their control. Our mural(s) would encourage a sense of community and inclusion. All people belong."

The students, under the leadership of teacher Rose Zoellner,



plan to collect submissions for design ideas from students and staff in the district. Their proposal is to digitally print the selected designs on vinyl, which would allow them to create the design without having to meet in person, and they have received budget estimates. They hope to receive sponsorships from the local community to create works

that will embrace diversity and make everyone feel welcome.

The GAPS Board and district leadership were thoroughly impressed by the presentation and proposal.

"Great work everyone and we are excited to see where this goes," Board Chair Kim Butzner said. "This will be a fun and important project for all of us to see you guys be able to implement."

For more information and to view and submit art pieces, check out [@Art OntheRISE](#) on Instagram.

## GAPS Models and Timelines

**Elementary School (Grades K-5)**

**Middle School (Grades 6-8)**

**High School (Grades 9-12)**

## GAPS Doing Good



On December 30, four students from South Albany High School led a blood drive as part of the Red Cross High School Scholarship program! The drive had a goal of 31 units of blood and ended up with 40, with the students securing 45 donors to give blood in the event held at the Albany LDS church.

**Cheyenne Freeman, Jenna Holcomb, Hannah Dempsey, and Ziah Barron** (pictured L-R above) found donors by posting on their personal social media accounts, the school's Instagram redhawknews account, and staying persistent with spreading the word. On the day of the drive, the Red Cross set up their equipment and the students ran two check in stations, assisting with taking temperatures, signins, and making sure donors were eating and drinking and not falling ill.

About 20 percent of donated blood comes from young donors in school settings and the COVID-19 impact on schools has a profound effect on the blood supply as well, according to Red Cross Salem representative Julie Troedsson. She commended the students for finding ways to help during this global pandemic.



During last summer's devastating wild fires, Santiam Elementary School in Mill City, Ore. suffered significant fire damage. Some of the damage was to the library, and North Albany Elementary School wanted to do their part to help.

NAES had held a Read for My School fundraiser in the fall, and, rather than keeping all of the funds to expand their own library, chose to donate over \$700 to the Santiam library to help purchase books! In a letter along with a check sent to the Santiam Elementary Principal at the end of January, NAES Parent Teacher Partnership Treasurer Jennifer Beathe said "We are so pleased to make this wildfire relief grant to your library program and we are excited to promote reading for our youth."



## Oregon Sub of the Year

For the second consecutive year, the Oregon Substitute Teacher of the Year came from GAPS!

The 2019-2020 honor was bestowed to **Mary Hummer** by the Oregon Substitute Teachers Association. Ms. Hummer was nominated by Sunrise Elementary teachers Amber Logan and Susan Corder. The award was presented by Ms. Corder and OSTA award coordinator Sally Sue Cellers during a GAPS Board Meeting ([Watch](#))



"It is such a privilege and an honor to get this award," Ms. Hummer said. "I know there are a lot of things that are on the kids plates...but I know I can acknowledge them and make them feel important and wanted. When I substitute, I try to make sure that the kids get to have an important role."

## Mid-Valley STEM-CTE HUB



The Mid-Valley STEM-CTE Hub recently awarded their first round of Educator and Community-Based Organizations microgrants. Five GAPS Educators received grants! Congratulations to **Babette Grunwald, Ricky Hall, and Dolly Victorine** from West Albany High School and **Amanda Miles and Duece Phaly** from South Albany High School for earning microgrants to help serve their students!

Many community-based organizations also received grants totaling over \$58,000. The Albany Public Schools Foundation, FACT, Calapooia Watershed Council, Mid-Willamette Valley YMCA Early Learning Center, FIRST Robotics league, and others received grants to help fund projects and supplies to benefit GAPS students and families.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Upcoming Dates

Mar. 5-13: [iRun for Kids Virtual Race/Scavenger Hunt](#)

Mar. 22-26: No school (Spring Break)

Mar. 29: Hybrid begins (Timelines: [K-5](#) | [6-8](#) | [9-12](#))

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**GREATER ALBANY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**