

# Sustainability and Pullman Public Schools

Joe Thornton  
Executive Director of Operations

Pullman Public Schools has made a commitment to sustainability in school facilities. A recently formed committee of staff and students has been meeting to discuss and consider different programs and projects that can be implemented to reduce the use of energy, carbon footprint and water use, and reduce the waste generated by the district.

## Energy:

The commitment to reducing energy consumption in the district takes many forms. No one project or program has a significant impact on energy savings, but the collective impact can be substantial. Improvements we have implemented include:

### Building Energy Use

- Occupancy sensors in classrooms
- LED lighting at PHS, KES and the new addition at LMS
- Installation of LED lighting in the gyms at FES, JES and SES
- High efficiency boilers in new construction

### Transportation

- Investment in an Electric school bus (delivery in fall 2021)
- Purchase of 10 passenger vans for use with smaller groups to avoid using a bus
- Continue encouraging walking and biking to school

Additionally, the new transportation facility under construction at the north end of town is being built with the structural capacity to receive solar panels. These will be installed when grant money and funding is available. In the future, we hope to increase our fleet of electric school buses and power those buses with as much solar energy as possible.

## Water:

New construction (PHS, KES, LMS and WCTC) all have low flow bathroom fixtures and meet new code building requirements. The district is systematically replacing older fixtures in other buildings as budget is available. A student-led project at JES installed aerators in all classroom and bathroom sinks to reduce water use. Irrigation is monitored and metered. School turf areas (playgrounds and athletic fields) receive a minimal amount of water in the summer. Irrigation is increased in the late

summer and fall to prepare fields for student use and safety. The amount of watering that is done in the summer is always a balance between water conservation and weed control. We need to keep the turf healthy enough to keep weeds out and reduce the use of herbicides. In as many areas as possible, a dry land seed mix is used that does not require irrigation once that vegetation is established. Unfortunately, because of student safety, playgrounds and athletic fields are not areas suitable for dry land seed.

## Waste:

Although the changes we have had to make for nutrition services during COVID has put these plans on hold (because of the way in which we have had to serve meals in schools) plans are in place to reduce the dependence on disposable items in the school meal program, such as trays and plastic silverware. Schools will be working with students to encourage the use of reusable water bottles and reusable lunch containers.

Sustainability will be an ever-changing and evolving topic for the district as demand, use, technology and resources change. The school district is committed to this as a continuity topic and conversation for staff and students. Our intention is to not only reduce the district's impact on the environment, but to also provide our sustainability goals and programs as a teaching opportunity with students.

### INITIALS KEY:

- FES - Franklin Elementary School
- JES - Jefferson Elementary School
- KES - Kamiak Elementary School
- LMS - Lincoln Middle School
- PHS - Pullman High School
- SES - Sunnyside Elementary School
- WCTC - Whitman County Transportation Center

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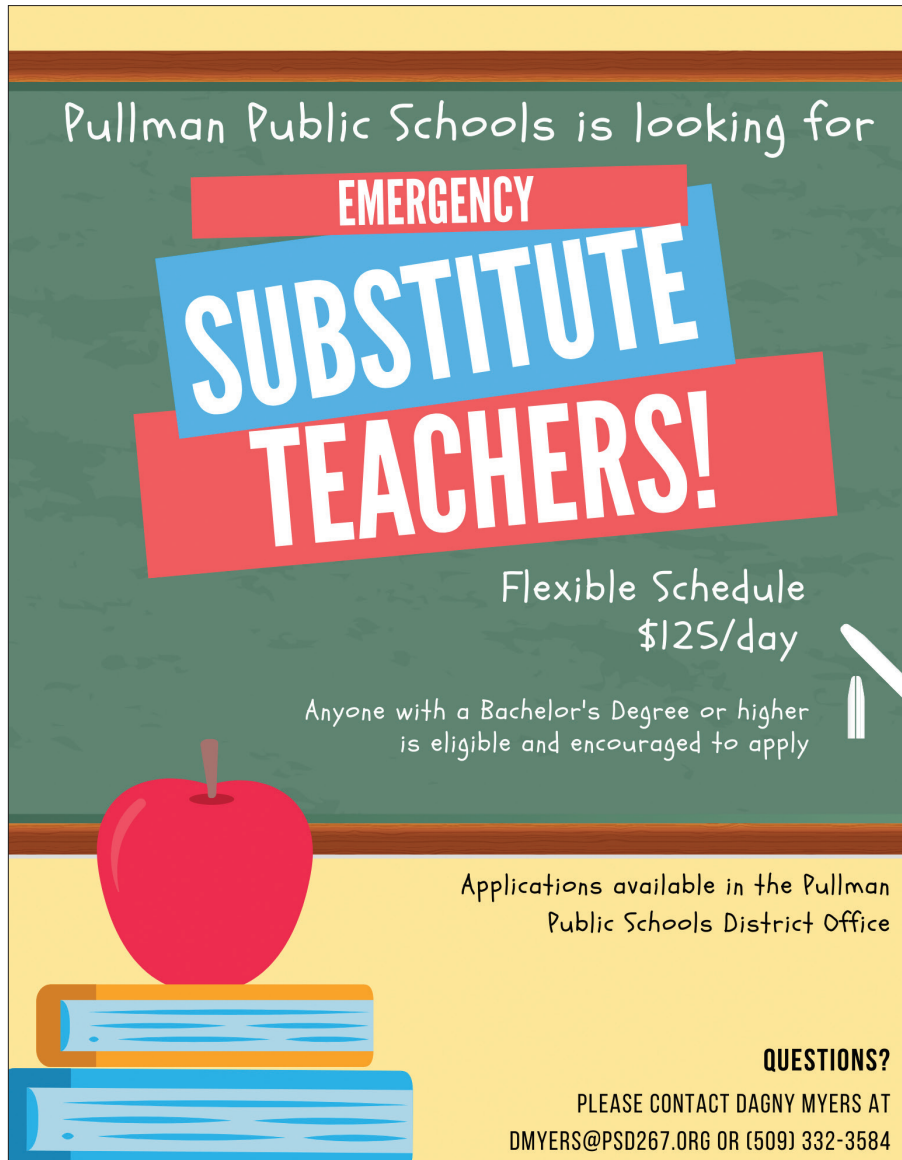
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# Equity Still at the Forefront

*Evan Hecker  
Kamiak Elementary, Principal*

While Covid-19 continues to disrupt many aspects of our “normal” home, school, work, community relationships, expectations, and routines, a lot has changed in Pullman Public Schools since I wrote my last article this fall. Now as we head into spring, all of our K-12 students who chose to return to in-person school have the opportunity to learn in person at least two times a week. Our K-5 students have the opportunity to attend school in person five days a week. As more and more students return to in-person learning, the core of our work is increasing the sense of belonging our students feel within their school communities.

We know that each students’ sense of safety and knowledge that they truly matter will allow us to unlock achievement. Our administrative team has spent a great deal of our school year reflecting and reshaping equity initiatives. Many of our school and district wide professional development opportunities have been equity-focused and centered on what is and is not working, which has forced us to look beyond common solutions and turn to inclusion. Our administrative team is currently diving deep into *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* by **Floyd Cobb** and **John Krownapple**. Our book study will support our work of fostering learning environments where stakeholders feel that they belong, and that who they are will be celebrated, respected, and valued. With each chapter our team reflects on concepts like equity initiatives, inclusion advocacy, belonging, school culture, and dignity.

As we continue to focus on equity, we realize we have the capacity to transform our schools, and provide students, families, and educators in Pullman Public Schools with inclusive, relationship-first learning opportunities rather than focusing solely on content. While we all know content is incredibly important, we do not want to lose sight of “who” we are teaching. We are partnering with families to help develop human beings, not just points on a spreadsheet. We will continue to center our focus on inclusion, dignity and belonging in our professional practice and equity work because we know that restorative practices, culturally responsive teaching, and contextually appropriate decision making will work best if we grow learning environments where all stakeholders feel that they belong.

Our work toward dignity and belonging will require more than being positive with one another. We must take a look at our current conditions, and our own beliefs and attitudes, as well as dig deep into the socio-cultural and socio-historical lives of our students, families, and greater community as we continue to create teaching and learning environments with a multi-tiered system of support framework that aim to meet the unique and individual needs of all.

The Pullman School District Board of Directors and the Pullman School District shall provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities programs without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation (including gender expression or identity), marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, participation in the Boy Scouts of America or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment.

The following employee has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: **Roberta Kramer**, Assistant Superintendent, Pullman School District Administrative Offices, 240 SE Dexter Street, Pullman, WA 99163, 509.332.3144. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in the application process by contacting the Personnel Coordinator at (509) 332-3584.



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