

## Miller retires after 36 years at Skamania School

For 36 years, Barbara Miller commuted from Portland to teach at Skamania School.

"It's 35 miles, door to door," she says. "Forty minutes."

Certainly there were closer schools, but Skamania is special.

"I like the community, the small school, the feeling of family," she says.

Miller began her teaching career with three years in White Salmon. When she got married and settled in Portland, she wanted something closer. That's how she found Skamania.

Over the years she taught grades three through eight, most recently landing in the fifth and sixth grade classroom, where math has been her passion. She also served as the school's technology coordinator.

Many Skamania School alumni have had the opportunity to learn from Miller—including current teacher Cherri Locke, who was a student in Miller's fifth grade class her first year at Skamania.

"I learned a lot that year," Locke says. "Times tables ... the order of the planets—My Vest Eats Marshmallows Jumping Sandwiches Under New Potatoes!"



*Teacher Barbara Miller says Skamania School has been a special place to teach, with its family atmosphere and small classes.*

(Miller had encouraged the class to pick memorable words beginning with the first letter of each planet. It proved unforgettable.)

After working with Miller for more than 25 years, music teacher Jeannette Hodapp reflected on what Miller has brought to the school, which she says "feels like an extended family."

"I've always looked up to her because of her professionalism," Hodapp says.

"She always had such a strong grasp of her material and marvelous classroom management."

Asked what has given her the most pleasure in her teaching career, Miller talked about being able to work with students in small, two-grade classes.

She recalled one student in particular who had struggled, especially in writing.

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## Superintendent's message: So much to celebrate, this year and next!



As we wrap up the 2018-19 school year, we have so much to celebrate at Skamania School! Here's the short list:

- **Six students take their next steps.** Congratulations to Adrienne, Dani, Daniel, Demitri, Hermione and Kyle, who graduated in June from our eighth grade and are moving on to various high schools. We're excited for you!
- **Skamania is a district to watch for STEM education.** The state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and other districts are taking note of our engaging education program, which incorporates science, technology, engineering and math in classroom and field studies.
- **Student engagement is on the rise.** Immersing students in their environment, where they can collaborate on complex problem-solving, is improving learning.
- **Partnerships and trainings are fortifying STEM instruction.** Our relationships with U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the Pacific Education Institute, ESD 112 and the Department of Natural Resources have injected new resources into our education program.
- **Grants have boosted our budget.** Our district benefited this year from more than \$300,000 in state and federal grants that enabled us to provide enriching student experiences and teacher trainings, purchase a new bus and improve facilities.

As we look ahead to the 2019-20 school year, we anticipate:

- **Adding more field and project-based learning.**
- **Evaluating our reading program.** Grant money enabled us to hire consultants to help us evaluate our current model and adopt a new instructional program.
- **Increasing our focus on social skills.** Learning these "soft skills" is necessary for our students to become successful adults. To enhance our work in this area, we've partnered with 6 Rivers Mediation for teacher training and have hired a part-time counselor to support our students' social and emotional needs.
- **Celebrating Skamania School's 150th anniversary!** Our school has a rich history and a continuing reputation for providing quality education in the Gorge.

I wish each of you a safe and enjoyable summer!

*Dr. Ralph Pruitt, Superintendent*

## Miller retires (continued from page 1)

The small class size enabled her to work with him one on one, and she noticed that as he began to understand writing better, "He perked up and had new confidence in himself."

That's the best, she says, "Seeing that light go on when they persisted."

What's next for Miller? She plans to focus on grandkids, gardening, reading books, and traveling with her husband and friends.

"Barbara Miller has given 36 years of dedicated, outstanding service to the Skamania School community," says Superintendent Ralph Pruitt. "We will miss her!"

### Skamania School District information is online at [skamaniashooldistrict.org](http://skamaniashooldistrict.org)!



#### **Seeking STEM info?**

Learn more about our STEM Lighthouse status at: [tinyurl.com/SSD-STEM](http://tinyurl.com/SSD-STEM)



**Curious about calendars?** Look under the "Resources" tab.



**Interested in district business?** Find the Board of Directors and meeting schedules under the "About" tab.



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# Outdoor classroom extends to the Coast

Skamania's motto is "The Gorge is our classroom," but this spring the fifth and sixth graders ventured all the way to the Coast for a three-day "outdoor school."

OMSI (Oregon Museum of Science and Industry) and Skamania School staff, and parent volunteers accompanied the students on the trek to Camp Meriwether, north of Pacific City, Oregon, where they focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) applications in the coastal environment.

Activities included orienteering, working through group problem-solving challenges, exploring coastal ecosystems and participating in campfire programs.

"It was excellent to see students building camaraderie and showing their curiosity about the environment," says Superintendent Ralph Pruitt.

The adventure was made possible by a \$10,000 Title IV allocation from the Small,



*From Gorge to ocean—Skamania School students find many opportunities to study science in the field and collaborate on solutions to complex problems.*

Rural School Achievement Program.

This year, Title IV money also helped fund swimming lessons for the third and fourth graders, and a day using the

ropes course at Skamania Lodge for the seventh and eighth graders.

"It all fits nicely with the STEM initiative," Pruitt says.

## Garden brings life lessons, fun and funds to school

*"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust."*

—British horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll

Now in its second year, the Skamania School garden—a joint project with the PTO—has taught students many lessons.

Each class has its own raised gardening box, built by parent volunteers. On a recent garden tour, seventh grade students Brody and Parker described battling pests—"Something was digging up

and eating all of the seeds."

They also shared that their garden produces things that cost very little to plant—such as succulents—but bring in a surprising amount of money.

Their efforts recently culminated in a plant sale, which raised more than \$300, so the seventh and eighth graders could go and enjoy some time at the Stevenson Community Pool.

The school's produce will be making appearances this summer in Stevenson at the Saturday Farmer's Market.

"It was pretty fun planting it," Brody says.



*Brody and Parker present a tour of Skamania School's garden boxes.*



## Congratulations to our 8th grade graduates!

