



*The Gorge is our classroom*

# SCHOOLHOUSE NEWS

Fall  
2023

## Skamania School celebrates increased enrollment and new staff

Student enrollment at Skamania School has increased by approximately 14 percent this year when compared to last school year. When many districts are seeing a decline in enrollment, Skamania is seeing growth and we're excited to share this news! We love adding new students and their families to our school family.

### WHY CHOOSE SKAMANIA?

When asked why families choose to send their children to Skamania, the common themes are the small class sizes, flexible support for students, and the close-knit family feeling throughout the school. With five classrooms and an average class size under 17 students, each of our 83 students has an individualized learning plan that celebrates their uniqueness.

And it's not just families who choose Skamania for these reasons. Teachers and staff do, too!

Music teacher Lori Caccavo came to Skamania having previously taught music in Montana, Maine, and the greater Spokane area in both public and private schools. She loves being back in a small school: "I love that I get to see the kids three times a week, I get to



Skamania teachers & administration (L to R): Katy London (ELA), Kim Cunningham (Science/Social Studies), Lori Caccavo (Music), Jessica Shumway (TK/K), Camille Schauble (1/2), Milt Dennison (Supt.), Michelle Miller (PE/STEAM), Katie Chavarria (Head Teacher), Raymond Chavarria (Math)



Skamania staff (L to R): Amy Cornish (Paraeducator), Jess Davis (Paraeducator), Amber Warren (Office Manager), Boyd Becker-Nunley (Head Chef), Heather Whitman (Admin Assistant), Franki Shipman-Kardinal (Paraeducator/Kitchen), Sandra McKenzie (Paraeducator) Not pictured: Amanda Nguyen and Mary Nolan (Bus Drivers), Twyla Young (Custodian), Ashley Becker-Nunley (Counselor)

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Mrs. Cunningham's 7-8 grade class adds the flags to the school flagpole to start the school day.

WHY CHOOSE SKAMANIA? continued from front page

know them much better than in a larger school. I also love the amazing staff and the gorgeous views!" says Caccavo.

Kim Cunningham (Science/Social Studies/Health, 7-8 grade Homeroom) has been a firefighter, paramedic, and CPR/first aid trainer since 2010. For the last 6 years, she was a substitute and full-time teacher in Camas School District before joining Skamania this fall. Not only does she love that "we are more like a family, rather than just a workplace," Cunningham enjoys the variety of teaching multiple grades each day and the daily interactions she has with students and staff. She also loves the amazing meals prepared by Head Chef Boyd and his kitchen staff—they make healthy and

nutritious meals from scratch every day!

Counselor Ashley Becker-Nunley has been a family and child mental health practitioner for over 25 years, an occupational therapist in schools for the last decade, and has had her own parent coaching practice to support parents. When asked why she chose to work at Skamania, Becker said "Skamania is unique and special. I've witnessed an incredible sense of community, where people willingly go above and beyond in contributing to a welcoming and supportive school environment. This inclusive approach promotes overall physical and mental health and well-being in the school."

Please join us in welcoming all our new students and staff into our school family and the community!

SKAMANIA SCHOOL FOOD IS DELICIOUS AND NUTRITIOUS!

Did you know each Tuesday at Skamania School is Fresh Snack Tuesday? Delicious and nutritious snacks are served to every student every day. Tuesdays are extra special, as snacks are made with fresh fruit or vegetables. All food for Fresh Snack Tuesdays is donated by Skamania families and community members to support the healthy brain development and well-being of all our students—thank you for your support!



Head Chef Boyd Becker-Nunley serves peaches and fresh-baked blueberry muffins to eager students at breakfast in October.



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AUTUMN Vibes Fall festivities at Skamania School connect the community



Schools are the heartbeat of communities, and Skamania School is no exception. The greater Skamania community has always been a large part of our school's success, and we love it when we have opportunities to connect with, celebrate, and thank those who make a difference to our school.

A We held our 2nd Annual Back to School Open House and Barbeque on September 5. This is a chance for school staff and families to get to know each other and enjoy great food together. This year, students led their families on scavenger hunts to tour the school and show off their classrooms.

Thank you to the Skamania County Fire District 5 for grilling hamburgers and hot dogs for guests, to the school board members who served delicious side dishes, and to the many hands that helped set up and clean up!

B Throughout the fall, STEAM and PE teacher Michelle Miller has worked with students on a variety of STEAM activities both inside and outside the classroom. Outside, students had hands on experience in the school garden: planting seeds, weeding, and harvesting fresh vegetables and flowers to share. Inside the classroom, students learned about engineering and building using a variety of materials and how

colors interact with and complement each other.

C On October 28, our awesome PTO arranged for a delightful Trunk or Treat in the school parking lot! Open to Skamania School families and the community, it was a great evening of gorgeous clear skies, fun with families, games, treats, and very creative costumes. We had fire trucks, EMS, police cars, and the Bookmobile on site. Thanks to everyone who participated, and a big thank you to the Skamania PTO for putting on such a fantastic event!

D Skamania students honored our brave veterans at our Veterans Day Assembly on November 8. Open to the community, students celebrated and thanked our veterans by performing patriotic songs they learned with music teacher Mrs. Caccavo. Thank you, veterans, for your service!



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NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT Skamania School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employee has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Milt Dennison (mdennison@skamania.k12.wa.us), Section 504/ADA Coordinator Compliance, Coordinator for 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW | Katie Chavarria (kchavarria@skamania.k12.wa.us), Title IX Coordinator | 509-427-8239 | 122 Butler Loop Road, Skamania, WA 98648



## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

As I begin my second year as superintendent of Skamania School, I reflect on our many successes from the 2022-23 school year. Now looking forward to the 2023-24 school year, I can focus on building upon those successes while looking at new challenges ahead.

Last year we welcomed a new group of teachers and staff members who are incredible. While we lost one teacher to retirement and one to new opportunities, we filled both positions with highly experienced teachers.

Due to continued increases in enrollment, our financial situation is solid. Receiving approval of a new 3-year levy last February adds to our financial stability.

With the completion of our building modernization project, we've been able to focus on several safety projects including adding cameras around the main building and outside areas. A new entry system has been installed that allows law enforcement and fire departments immediate access to the building if necessary.

Under the leadership of Head Teacher Katie Chavaria, we have adopted new reading and math curriculums. While post-COVID gains have been difficult for some students, recent standardized scores in Language Arts have shown our students are outperforming their state counterparts.

All our work is guided by a fantastic school board. They are active participants in school activities and provide exceptional governance. They recently authorized a project looking at the condition of our portable classrooms and estimating the reasonable life span of our decade's old facilities. We will also be exploring replacement options.

And I can't end my comments without recognizing the 83 superb students that attend our school. They are the main reason that after all these years, I continue to have difficulty entering retirement!

*Milt Dennison, Superintendent*



*Students Mady and Kyla gather flowers from the school garden this fall to share with staff, spreading sunshine and joy on a Friday.*

**Skamania School District info is online  
at [skamaniashooldistrict.org](https://skamaniashooldistrict.org)!**



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Click the snowflake for updates, snow routes and early dismissals.



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