

# Operations Departments Newsletter

*From the desk of the Chief Operating Officer...*

Volume 7 – Winter 2016 – Portland Public Schools



## Congressman Blumenauer Visits Lent School

Representative Earl Blumenauer visited Lent School on November 12, 2015. His visit focused on school gardens and farm-to-school programs. The Representative spent about two hours at the school touring the garden and cafeteria, and reading to students. When Representative Blumenauer came to the cafeteria for lunch, Nutrition Services staff were excited to showcase fresh salad with kale from the garden as well as locally grown roasted butternut squash.

The Nutrition Services Department takes great pride in offering a variety of local foods. The butternut squash that Representative Blumenauer tried was grown by Case Farms in Albany, Oregon. Supporting local farms and food businesses is important, but what really gets the students interested in trying a vegetable is when they grow it themselves. Last year, the Lent garden harvested over 100 pounds of produce that was then served in the cafeteria. In turn, students saw things like beautiful salads and pizzas topped with herbs and tomatoes from their garden beds in the lunch line.

The school garden has been supported and championed by community partners like Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), Growing Gardens, Ecology in the Classroom and Outdoors (ECO), teacher volunteers and parent volunteers. Nutrition Services was honored to help host the Representative for lunch at Lent

and to share such a wonderful story of partnership and community with him.



*Congressman Earl Blumenauer with Lent School kitchen staff.*

## Operations Departments Support Enrollment & Balancing Work

The PPS and community-led Districtwide Boundary Review Advisory Committee (DBRAC) is working diligently to look at ways to “right-size” our schools given the steady increase in enrollment. The success of this enrollment balancing work depends on departments across the district providing assistance, including Operations. Enrollment & Transfer is a lead department in this effort, but other Operations departments are also supporting the work. Here’s how:

Facilities & Asset Management (FAM):

- FAM staff provided Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other

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software support, including translating enrollment modeling results into user-friendly map formats for public consumption, using the Supplemental Transportation Planning Update model to develop an average walk distance metric for each scenario to help calculate transportation costs by scenario, and lending operational support to software tools used by Data and Policy Analysis staff.

- Numerous FAM staff worked to verify the number and type of classrooms in all non-high schools, including walk-throughs of about 30% of those schools.
- FAM staff have been responding to various public records requests and questions from DBRAC members, such as inquiries related to education specifications for facilities and building capacities.

## Nutrition Services:

- Nutrition Services staff provided free and reduced price lunch student information for each of the schools, which was helpful in determining potential boundary changes.
- Community Eligibility Program schools may be impacted by boundary changes and Nutrition Services staff is ready to adjust their services depending on the final decision made.

## Security Services:

- Security Services staff have been working closely with DBRAC organizers to ensure listening and informational sessions provide a welcoming, yet orderly and safe environment. In order to do this, staff determine whether there needs to be uniformed security officer or police present and take note

of ways to improve the meeting environment for next time.

## Student Transportation:

- Student Transportation staff presented to DBRAC about mandated transportation and other types of services provided for eligible students.
- Proposed boundary scenarios are being built out in Transportation's routing software to determine transportation impacts and average student ride times.
- Student Transportation staff have also provided data to DBRAC regarding current transportation services including walking boundaries, bus stop locations and average student ride times.

## Staff Introductions from Facilities & Asset Management

Facilities and Asset Management (FAM) has hired on multiple new employees in their project management and planning divisions over the past couple seasons, including Project Managers Kai Lewars, Mike Smithey and Steve Simonson, and Document Control Coordinator Nicholas Sukkau. Kai and Mike started in late spring, and Steve and Nicholas started this past fall.



From left: Steve Simonson, Kai Lewars, Mike Smithey and Nicholas Sukkau.

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Kai Lewars was born in Brooklyn, New York, but was primarily raised in Portland and graduated from Benson High School. He attended Oregon State University, where he studied Construction Engineering Management and Business Management. Prior to joining the FAM team at PPS, Kai worked as a Project Manager for a multi-family and commercial contractor that specialized in construction defect building envelope work in Oregon, Washington and Utah. When he has free time, Kai enjoys hanging out with his family, spending time with his dog, traveling, playing and watching sports and listening to music.

Mike Smithey went to high school and college in McMinnville, where he earned his Bachelor's degree from Linfield College. Before coming to PPS, Mike was a Project Manager for Leonard & Associates, where he worked on the total renovation of the Beaverton Toyota campus. Mike enjoys sports and spending time with his children and grandchildren. He also teaches supervision classes at the Northwest College of Construction.

Steve Simonson joins PPS after working for two different design/build mechanical contractors here in Portland and up north in Seattle. Steve grew up in Mandeville, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Construction Management from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and a Master's Degree in Construction Management from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. In his free time, Steve likes cycling, rock climbing and hiking.

Nicholas Sukkau is a Portland native, having attended Binnsmead Middle School (now Harrison Park) and Marshall High School (currently Franklin High School). Following high school, Nicholas joined the Navy, where he studied and received his Submarine qualifications as a Nuclear Watchstander on a Trident Ballistic Submarine out of Bangor, Washington. Nicholas later earned an Associate's Degree in Architectural and Engineering Technology from Mount Hood Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in Housing Studies from Oregon State University. Nicholas holds a LEED AP BD+C Accreditation and a Certified Sustainable Building Advisor Accreditation. Before coming to PPS, Nicholas worked as a Technical Writer for an aerospace publication company in Sandy, Oregon. Besides work, he enjoys attending sporting events, reading, gardening and barbequing (when weather permits!).

## **Inclement Weather Decision-Making Process**

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In the event of predicted inclement weather, the Student Transportation Department Inclement Weather Teams meet and begin their evaluation process. Normally, discussions with weather experts have been happening over the previous few days to plan early morning activities for the next day's routes. Depending on the predicted weather, the Student Transportation Department will have a minimum of four staff driving roads. These individuals will often be up by 2:30am in order to prepare and be in their assigned areas by 4:00am to begin evaluating conditions. They evaluate the ability of cars and buses to safely

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navigate roads, school bus stop conditions, whether students can safely walk to school, and the condition of school loading zones. This field evaluation is paired with constant forecast information provided by a local weather service, information on local TV stations, websites and other related sources. The process has many challenges as the PPS boundary includes almost 160 square miles and ranges in elevation from sea level to 1,300 feet. The topography within some school attendance boundaries varies drastically.

Inclement Weather Teams must drive and recommend delays or closures based on the conditions in each individual attendance area that is impacted by the event. Typically this involves PPS schools on the west side of the Willamette River, due to their higher elevations. But occasionally, such as the event on January 5, 2016, this evaluation includes the entire District, with reports from all of the high school clusters.

The goal is to have an evaluation completed by 5:30am, at which time a recommendation is then discussed with the District's Chief Operating Officer. Once the recommendation is decided upon, the Superintendent is advised of her options and she makes the final decision. Leadership strives to have a call made and announced prior to 6:00am so that families and staff have a chance to adjust to the possible impacts.

It can be particularly difficult evaluating conditions when weather events do not unfold according to the desired timelines outlined above. Often, events can worsen after a call

has been made. Whether it is freezing fog occurring at sunrise or heavy snowfall that begins right at the morning commute time, each and every event is unique as well as the District's response and recommendation. It is common for teams to stay in the field well after a decision is made until morning routes are completed, assisting buses with chaining, delays and/or responding to accidents. This makes for long days and sometimes long weeks for the Inclement Weather Team staff during prolonged events.

Making the decision to delay or close PPS schools and offices during inclement weather is always a difficult task. The Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer and Student Transportation staff view their responsibility for students' safety as the highest priority and evaluate each inclement weather incident individually keeping that safety priority foremost in mind.

## Emergency Preparedness Tips from Security Services

Disasters and emergencies can happen at any time. Procedures are outlined and drills are practiced in PPS schools and offices, but it's also important to know what to do if you are at home or in your car. Here are some tips to help you stay prepared:

Get a Kit –

Having emergency supplies readily available could save you in the event of a disaster. Home emergency preparedness kits should include the following:

- Food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)

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- Water (one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days)
- Radio (battery-powered or hand-crank with NOAA weather and tone alert)
- Flashlight, headlamp, extra batteries (for radio and lights)
- First aid kit
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (or cotton t-shirt to filter air)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities – know where and how to shut off valves)
- Manual can and bottle openers, plates, utensils, paper towels
- Maps and documents (insurance information, contact information, family emergency plan, etc.)
- Coats, shoes, clothing
- Unique family needs (prescription medicines, glasses, infant formula, diapers, pet supplies, etc.)

Emergency preparedness kits for your car should include:

- First aid kit
- Jumper cables
- Flares
- Full tank of gas
- Tow rope
- Tire chains or snow tires
- Bag of sand or cat litter
- Shovel, ice scraper, snow brush
- Blanket
- Boots, gloves, warm clothes
- Flashlight
- Water and snacks
- Cell phone and charger

Make a Plan –

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so be sure to plan how you will

communicate and meet up and where you will go.

- Everyone should know where the emergency supply kit is located and be prepared to take it in case you need to evacuate your home.
- Set up family meeting points where you can find each other and leave messages if you are separated since cell phones may not be working.
- If you have students in school, identify adults who live or work near the school who could pick up your student. Be sure those adults are listed on your student's emergency contact form.
- Have an out-of-state contact that all family members can call because it may be easier to make a long-distance call than to call locally. Be sure everyone knows this phone number.
- Practice fire drills, earthquake drills and getting to your family meeting spots.

Stay informed –

Below is a list of multiple websites that can help keep you notified of emergency situations:

- [www.publicalerts.org](http://www.publicalerts.org)
- <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/>
- <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/article/483656>
- [www.ready.org](http://www.ready.org)
- <http://www.redcross.org/ux/take-a-class>

*Portland Public School's Mission:*

*By the end of elementary, middle, and high school, every student by name will meet or exceed academic standards and will be fully prepared to make productive life decisions.*

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