

Superintendent Message: July 15, 2020



Hello Kamiah #KREW

I wanted to send out a community-wide email to introduce myself and provide a summary of updates and information regarding fall back-to-school planning. I can not begin to explain how excited I am to be joining your community during what will likely be a year of many firsts. I hope that I will get the opportunity to meet each of you throughout this school year. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out to me.

### A little about me

I am a proud father of two wonderful young people. Kaylee (10) and Kellen (8) are the absolute light of my life. My daughter Kaylee is involved in competitive dance and my son Kellen competes in Wrestling & Football and spends the remainder of his time irritating his sister. Kaylee is my serious, quiet, & more academic child. While Kellen is my comedian and confidant athlete. I also want to introduce my brilliant wife Nanette. Nanette started her career teaching elementary school and was named the Oregon Teacher of the Year in 2013 and NEA National Global Fellow in 2014. She has now completed her pre-doctoral coursework and serves as a school principal.

### Personal Philosophy

I want to share a personal message about my philosophy of education & leadership. Some of you may have noted the #KREW introduction above. The term crew (now KREW) is very personal to me and steers my efforts and passion each and every day. I have read and borrowed from national speakers, educators, and coaches to form my own personal mission that I use to drive me to be a better person, educator, and partner in learning. I will begin with a quick story that helps explain what #KREW is and how you will see it throughout this year and beyond. **It is my 'WHY'.**

*During a visit to the NASA space center in 1962, President John F. Kennedy noticed a janitor carrying a broom. He interrupted his tour, walked over to the man, and said, "Hi, I'm Jack Kennedy. What are you doing?"*

*"Well, Mr. President," the janitor responded, "I'm helping put a man on the moon."*

*To most people, this janitor was just cleaning the building. But in the more mythic, larger story unfolding around him, he was helping to make history.*

The point of the story is simple, no matter your role, you are contributing to the larger goal of our organization. That goal is and should always remain student success. Regardless if you are a parent, student, teacher, teacher partner, trustee, or member of the support staff, you are a #KREW member. Without you, we would not be able to reach our greatest goals.

It is critical to recognize that we all have incredible importance in the Kamiah school district. We are all #KREW members, including our students. I will often say that we do not want passengers in our schools (idle staff or students, just along for the ride). We want everyone to be active, contributing members of our organization. We want everyone #RowingTheBoat (hence, #krew) so that we can reach our goal of student success. When everyone is #Rowing, and we all focus on student success, our school will thrive!

### Return To Learn Planning

Upon my arrival, I have been steadfastly focused on the work associated with planning to 'Return to Learn' in the fall. It is my goal for students and staff to return to the classrooms at the end of August. In order to do that, we need to develop systems to ensure our students and staff remain safe and healthy in our buildings. A committee of 20 educators, students, board, and department heads are currently working on a draft protocol that will help facilitate learning regardless of what type of situation we find ourselves. That plan will be fueled with data from community and staff surveys, guidance from local, state, and national health officials, and will focus on student and staff safety at all times. It is our goal to have that draft

protocol presented to the school board in the next two weeks and then presented to the public immediately after.

In the case that we can not return face-to-face in the fall, we are developing plans based on community surveys that will best accommodate community needs while ensuring our students have exceptional learning experiences either in hybrid learning environments or with online learning.

I will ensure that the Kamiah community is kept in the loop on the process of our planning and hope to get feedback from you on those plans once they are available for review.

On that note, I will wish you all a safe and happy week. I am very proud to be a member of this #Krew and can not wait to meet you all.

Please keep an eye out for updates regarding our 'Return to Learn' plans, along with a new multi-media communication protocol that we are working on to improve updates and information to community members, families, and staff.

#RowTheBoat

Dr. Merrill

