



Press Release
May 6, 2022

Update from San Juan Island School District Superintendent

The month of May is always a busy time in your school district. Each of your schools administer the State exams, organize year end field trips, and work diligently to keep all students focused as the sun and warmth return. This is an exciting time of year as schools move toward that last day in June while at the same time preparing for the fall of 2022 opening.

We have learned much over the last two years. The COVID pandemic created pressures not seen before and the students and staff in this district showed resiliency in the face of these challenges. I can assure you this great staff is committed to serving these children and supporting their academic, social, and emotional growth.

As we end one year and prepare for the next, there is some important information that all of us in this community should know.

1. This past week, May 2-6, was Professional Educators Appreciation week. The entire staff, no matter the role or responsibility, are integral parts of an efficient and excellent school system. Please take the time to reach out and thank them for the work they do.
2. We were going to have to extend the school year by two days due to the closure of school because of the town water crisis in January. State law dictates 180 days of school. We submitted an emergency waiver, and it has been approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This means that school will end on **Friday June 17** as shown on our calendar.
3. San Juan Island School District will recognize seven people at the May school board meeting who have chosen to retire. We cannot thank them enough for their service to our schools and this community.
4. One of those who retired is Maude Cumming. After many years as the executive assistant to the superintendent, and in many ways the face of consistency in San Juan Island Schools, she has made the decision to retire. Her last day in the office was April 29th.

We have hired Diana Fearn as the new executive assistant to the superintendent. Originally from Friday Harbor, Diana has spent the past 19 years living and working abroad. For the past 7 years she has been working in Student Services at North Island College on Vancouver Island. Before that she lived and worked in various educational settings in the United Arab Emirates, Japan, and Canada. Diana has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Puget Sound.



5. In late February, current high school principal, Martin Yablonovsky, made the decision to move on in his career. We wish the very best to our outgoing principal and thank him for his hard work here during the pandemic.

We are very excited to introduce Andrea Hillman as our new principal. Andrea, currently a principal in Edmonds School District, is a 20+-year educational professional with over 15 years administrative experience at the secondary and elementary levels and over 9 years teaching experience at the secondary level. Ms. Hillman has served in schools with as few as 100 students and as many as 1,600, with staffs of 20-100. She began her career by student teaching in an International School in Mallorca, Spain. She also earned her first master's degree at the University of Salamanca, Spain and is a fluent Spanish speaker. Ms. Hillman has managed school operating budgets, up to over \$1 million and has successfully sought grants for students when public school allocations have fallen short, all while fostering positive community relationships.



Ms. Hillman believes in the transformational power of education. She believes that the paramount duty of schools, particularly in the current atmosphere, is to foster a sense of community and belonging after a prolonged school interruption due to COVID and to produce graduates who love learning and discourse and have the stamina and confidence to foster success in whatever pathway they choose

There will be other new faces when we return in September, and we hope to highlight them all in the future and welcome them to our community.

Even though there appears to be a return to normalcy in our schools, we do recognize that COVID still exists, and we must remain dedicated to safety

measures. The Department of Health guidelines provide clarity and direction for the district. We will stay diligent as we move toward the end of the year.

It is important to note as we prepare for the 2022-23 school year that the State Department of Health voted to NOT mandate COVID vaccines for all students next year.

What is important at this very moment are the events scheduled in the last month of school. Students are excited. Graduation is just around the corner. Our seniors are about to embark on the next stage of life. We have graduates who will be attending college next year as well as others who have chosen to enter the workforce. Either choice is right. The district remains committed to preparing students for college or career. And although the pressures of COVID did create new concerns, we are all committed to ensuring students receive the best.

Fred Woods
Superintendent