



Greetings Teachers, Staff, Parents, Students and Community Members:

Happy Chinese New Year!

I love the word **new** because of its meaning. A new year, new beginnings, new semester, and new knowledge. In 2017, we are starting off the year with new learnings!!

In January, we launched ParentLink. The District has partnered with Blackboard (Education and Technology Services) to expand its communications outreach with a mobile app that is now available in the online iTunes® and Google Play® app stores for free. The latest district news and information is now available on smartphones and mobile devices. Amazing!

I would like to publicly recognize the sixth grade committee. They did a remarkable job presenting to the school board the reasons why our current fifth grade students should transition into the middle school next academic year. A financial plan will be presented to the school board in February. Below you will read one of the reasons the committee favored moving the sixth grade to the middle school:

□ Sixth graders in middle school have greater access to extracurricular activities. In one Michigan school district, the sixth grade will be moved to middle school beginning the 2008-2009 school year. The officials noted that at middle school the sixth graders would have access to more extracurricular activities, such as art, band, music, and athletics (<https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/should-sixth-grade-be-in-elementary-school-or-middle-school>)

On Saturday, February 4, a comprehensive emergency services drill will be enacted at Friday Harbor High School. This exercise is being developed through the cooperative efforts of the San Juan Island EMS, the San Juan County Sheriff's Office, San Juan Fire and Rescue, Peace Island Medical Center, Skagit Valley College, Stillpoint School, Paideia Classical School, the local Red Cross membership, San Juan County Department of Emergency Management (DEM), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the San Juan Island School District. The drill will consist of several mock exercises and activities intended to provide first responders experience in a multi-organizational response to a school based disaster or tragedy.

The United Way of San Juan County is assisting us with an after school tutoring pilot program and we will be recruiting seven or eight reading tutors for third and eighth grade students. If you are interested, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The Rotary Club of San Juan Island has decided to co-partner with United Way and other agencies to pilot a backpack program for students at Griffin Bay School. I am so thrilled about the collaboration and the services we are providing for our students.

There are so many new initiatives starting in our district and I am learning something new every day. If you have any questions or are interested in serving with us, you may contact me at 360.370.7905 or email dannadiaz@sjisd.wednet.edu. Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,
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Superintendent

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