

# St. John-Endicott Cooperative Schools Cooperative Connections

*"Learning, Growing, Succeeding Together"*



Volume 3, No. 1 | Winter 2019-20

## Building culture, one hand at a time

The inaugural edition of this newsletter two years ago highlighted the work on both campuses to promote good behavior and positive school culture. It was not a temporary or shallow effort. Two years later, the initiative is still under way, gaining even more momentum through a new curriculum known as Character Strong.

It is a program focused on character development (including honesty, commitment and humility) and social-emotional learning (including self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making).

Students engage in twice-monthly training activities with their peers and, on occasion, in combined elementary-high school groups. Activities focus on team building, leadership and other skills, traits and habits associated with career and life success.

Character Strong is a national program with a long track record of improving behavior and bolstering student and staff morale. Also, it's fun. Students learn the power of simple, welcoming gestures such as handshakes and high-fives – known in Character Strong parlance as “webbies,” as in extending the web of one's hand to another person.

Friendly outreach by just one person can have a transformative impact on individual students and entire schools. Yes, Character Strong is working – one student and one webby at a time.



*Face-to-face, hand-to-hand. SJE students engage in team-building exercise.*

## Warm, dry and insulated – thank you voters

Roofs, windows and parking lots.

They're the types of things we don't normally think about. They're just there. We don't give them a second thought unless something goes wrong. When the roof stays tight, we don't notice. When it leaks, we definitely notice.



*Not glamorous, but effective. New roof provides effective shield.*

In education, one of the often under-appreciated aspects of teaching and learning involves infrastructure – the physical environment in which we place our students. Learning is difficult if the environment is not clean, warm, safe and dry.

The challenge always is to stay ahead of the curve, to initiate improvements before disaster strikes.

In St. John, voters have taken care to ensure the school stays ahead of the curve. Recent improvements include a new roof on the entire building, insulating glaze on the gymnasium windows, crack-sealing of the parking lot and new blacktop on the access road behind the school.

“While none of these things are particularly glamorous, or even noticeable, we consider them absolutely essential to a healthy learning environment,” says Superintendent Suzanne Schmick. “Schools need to be pleasant and comfortable, as buildings and grounds directly affect teaching and learning.”

Though infrastructure success can be measured, in part, by no one noticing, the opposite is true about the people who made it possible. The generosity of our voters is definitely noticed – and appreciated. Thank you for your support of our school and the children inside.

## Superintendent's message:

# Learning, Growing, Succeeding Together

Warm greetings to all our families and local patrons. Our schools have much to be thankful for as we focus on our 2019-2020 school year! The support of our patrons makes it possible for us to maintain the quality of our two facilities.

Recent safety and health upgrades have included: 1) new roofing on both the St. John and Endicott buildings; 2) seal coating of parking lots; 3) paving upgrades to the St. John rear safety access road; 4) installation of electronic locking doors in both buildings; 5) districtwide software monitoring to enhance student internet safety; 6) installation of security cameras in both buildings; 7) staffed large-screen camera monitoring in both locations; 8) installation of secure keypad entries at both building entries; 9) ongoing work with NEWESD 101 (Spokane) and neighboring Whitman County schools on training and protocols for emergency situations, threats

and other safety concerns; and 10) creation of single-point building entries (one entry point only) in both locations.

Along with securing our physical plants, high priority also is placed on building positive, meaningful relationships with each and every student. Students need to know that they are valued and deeply cared about not only at home, but here at school every day.

In support of this goal, our P-12 cooperative staff received training in August, which will continue all year on early release days. The training focus is on coaching students to acknowledge and share kindness, create an acceptance of self and others and recognize positive strengths and character traits in one another.

Students in the elementary, middle and high school practice these skills on a weekly basis in their classrooms and in grade bands (elementary/middle/high)

and in big-little student activities each month. You can be proud of the efforts your staff and students are making to create a positive, caring building climate. Please feel free to drop-in and see what's going on or contact me at any time, if you have suggestions on our current goal work. I can be reached at [sschmick@sjeschools.org](mailto:sschmick@sjeschools.org) or by phone: Endicott (509) 657-3523 Ext. 104, or St. John (509) 648-3336 Ext. 132.

On behalf of the entire SJE Cooperative staff, we extend our grateful thanks for the continued support we receive from both our St. John and Endicott communities. Your school partnership keeps us strong and excelling!

Respectfully,

*Suzanne Schmick*  
Superintendent

## SJE Cooperative Connections

Volume 3, Number 1  
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### St. John-Endicott Cooperative Schools

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#### St. John Board members

Alan Blumenshein  
Val Brewer  
Kelli Melhus  
John Hergert  
Dallas Loomis

#### Endicott Board members

Nancy Anderson  
Linda Greenhalgh  
Debbie Schlomer  
Marv Schmick  
Greta White

## They got their money's worth

The purchase of a dishwasher wouldn't normally constitute a newsworthy event ... that is, of course, unless there is something extremely rare or unusual about the purchase. Such is the case in Endicott, where rare circumstances indeed surround the sparkling new dishwasher installed in the school kitchen last summer.

The story actually begins outside the kitchen door in a display of historic school photos. One of them is an old black-and-white image of the food service team of Lizzie Scheurman and Wilma Schierman standing beside the school dishwasher. While the photo is undated, most guess it was taken in the 1960s based on the pictures around it.

This is where it gets interesting ... the dishwasher in the picture is the same one the school replaced last summer. That means the sturdy machine was in service at least 50 years, maybe longer.

Suffice it to say the school got its money's worth, way beyond the warranty period.

The new dishwasher bears a striking resemblance to its predecessor. If it has the same durability, it should be good until at least 2069. Check the Fall 2069 newsletter for the next update.



*Rachell Anderson and Lorraine Salzman, who now lead Endicott food services, show off the old photo and the new dishwasher.*



# New year, new faces

St. John and Endicott are pleased to welcome six new staff members who joined our team in the fall:

**Maya Aune:** The recent Washington State University graduate comes aboard as the new high school Career and Technical Education/Agriculture teacher. Aune grew up in Lind and was a state FFA officer. Her classroom offers a blend of technical training, math and science, supplemented by a strong leadership/citizenship component.

**Hailey Bridges:** Hailey is serving as a long-term substitute in the Endicott K-1 classroom, filling in during Megan Dorman's leave. Hailey is a graduate of Eastern Washington University who did her student teaching in Idaho's Lakeland Joint School District.

**Barbara Hahto:** The new St. John school counselor brings a wealth of experience in both the K-12 and higher education arenas. After starting her career as a teacher and counselor in Spokane's West Valley School District, Barbara spent 11 years at Spokane Falls Community College, where she administered the Running Start program (college courses/credits offered to high school students).

**Jessica Kile:** A familiar face has been leading the St. John first-grade classroom this fall during Sara Henning's leave. Jessica has been one of the school's most reliable and effective pinch-hitters, substituting at all levels the last 10 years.

**Chris Melhus:** When something breaks, sticks, leaks or needs a tune-up, Chris is the man to call in Endicott. With a background in farming, he holds the requisite ability to fix anything and everything – an ideal background for his new job as director of custodial and maintenance services.

**Jenny Miller:** With a newly minted degree from Eastern Washington University, Jenny assumes teaching duties in the St. John kindergarten classroom. With a husband who is also a teacher (in Sprague), education and kids are a staple of conversation, even outside of work.



Maya Aune



Hailey Bridges



Barbara Hahto



Jessica Kile



Chris Melhus



Jenny Miller

## Students recognize their peers

The new year has brought a new tradition to SJE High School. Starting in September, the school began selecting an athlete of the week. Selections are made by fellow students who honor their peers for exemplary attitude and effort.

The first two winners of the award were junior cross country runner Ellie Tollett and senior cheerleader Nicole Jones. Congratulations to both – and all who follow.



Honored by their peers: Nicole Jones and Ellie Tollett.



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# Introducing our 2019-20 ASB officers



**St. John Elementary:** Jacob Melhus, Emma Quigley, faculty adviser Missy Kjack, Lyla Kjack.



**Endicott Elementary and ESJ Middle School:**

*Front row:* Sarah Quigley, Sophie Anderson, Kate Hergert.

*Back row:* Katlyn Hough, Cami Larsen, faculty adviser Tricia Hilt, Sherry Molina, Dakota Fox.



**SJE High School:** Jonathan Logan, Dawn Maureen Adsitt, Rachel Larsen, Drew Brewer and Chais Anderson. Faculty adviser, not pictured, is Heidi White.



## Reading Buddies

In Endicott, love of books is instilled through a reading buddies program pairing elementary students with middle school contemporaries. The successful program builds reading skills and confidence ... just ask David Nelson, Stacy Hernandez and Madison Anderson.