

HOLLIS SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 11, 2020
SISD BOARD REPORT

PO Box 803
Craig Alaska 99921
Telephone: 907-530-7108
FAX: 907-530-7111
E-mail: jvasquez@sisd.org
lcates@sisd.org

The Hollis Crew on the first day of the 2020-2021 school year:



Three weeks in and we have found 2020 to

be a great year for learning and for growing and for seeing the possibilities. We have a great crew of:

- nineteen (19) students,
- two (2) teachers – Julie and Lisa,
- Karen, our amazing cook and creative paraprofessional,
- Sabrina our science loving AmeriCorps volunteer,
- Hayden, our artistic book and nature loving Pre-K & K Para educator
- Nick our careful driver (and a good fisherman), and
- Bobbi, our kind and thorough janitor extrodinaire.

We want to thank the many, many Hollis Community members who have been showing up for all of us all summer in a myriad of amazingly thoughtful ways. We have been planted several times by Deena and now we have elephant ears and baba trees in addition to the other plants we strive to grow to keep our classrooms fresh and green. We cannot list them all but no one will fault us for giving a HUGE shout out to Cathy Starkweather who was here all summer doing the little things that need to be done to make this place special. And then there is Lynn Burnett who has, with her gentle guidance, helped us to take our greenhouse to an entirely new level. The jungle is evident from the road and this week our students will be eating zucchini, tomato's, kale, peppers and lettuce they helped to grow in a greenhouse they helped to build.

Southeast Island School District Vision, Mission, and Goals

Vision: Students are equipped to realize their dreams and aspirations.

Mission: Together we will foster student skills to achieve their goals and adapt to an ever-changing world.

Goals:

► Prepare students for post-secondary life



It has been one busy first three weeks of school. We have spent the time and learning what we need as individuals and as a group to create a learning environment with trust so that everyone has the is able to take the risks necessary that lead to real learning and that includes making mistakes. In fact next week will have our annual reading of the book “Beautiful Oops” followed by seeing what all of us can learn from watching Austin’s butterfly.



Every year we have a word that seems to be the thread that ties all the learning of that year together. The words have included community, Keystone, Bridge, balance, agency, perspective, story and now this year we started out discussing the word flexibility given all that’s happening and then we talked about the word grace because we felt like we needed to acknowledge that everyone was doing their best and we should make sure that that’s something we keep in mind but as with all grade learning as the few days that we’ve been together have unfolded perhaps the best word to tie all of our education together is connection.

The learning may take us to a new word but for now our guiding word for 2020 2021 is CONNECTION. Connecting our stories, connecting our cultures, connecting our world history, connecting with each other, connecting with our community, connecting with our elders. We can’t wait to see where this exploration goes.

The first day of school was a glorious Southeast Alaska downpouring, drenchingly perfect day for a low tide walk along the shore. It was the best first day ever! Of course everyone ponchoed and booted up up because we don’t go out unless we’re properly dressed because we take care of each other and a permanent one of us goes out without the right gear and gets cold and all of us have to come back. We were there for hours and we let the kids response determine how long we would stay. They were so engaged as they looked under rocks, walked with different adults all the while asking questions and exploring while others took their sketchbooks out and drew and others found things to smell and touch and look and enjoy the quiet for the moment.

Everyone brought back one thing, whether a story or a rock or a picture and we

curled up with some hot chocolate and shared, using our presentation skills with respectful discourse and active listening skills and with that, we started learning from and with each other.



Covid has necessitated our reexamination of our traditions; traditions we have worked hard to establish – greeting other, shaking hands, making introductions seemed to have all gone by the wayside. We tried tapping our feet or elbows but we noticed that when we tap our feet we're not looking at each other anymore, but rather our feet. Then we had our goodbye tradition where we would line up and take a moment to touch base about our day and shake hands can't do that anymore either.

We struggled with this Covid brought us other new opportunities to connect. So when you visit Hollis school you'll find our kids will stand 6 feet away, will look you in the face, say welcome to Hollis school and slowly, discreetly, nod forward or give a nod of the head and guess what, we are amazed at how good and connected it makes us feel.

And then our goodbye well that's turned into a whole new production. We still get to talk to each child as they load the bus in pods but now, we turn on the music and the dance party starts till the bus goes out of the driveway it feels good at the end of each day it's strange but we're seeing more and more opportunities for good and positive change and that's the other thing we were working for this year to not go back to the norm but to move forward and take this to where we can go.



We have spent our first days working as a community as we explore who we are, as well as defining our norms and ensuring we know why we do the things we do and that they have purpose. We found that not everyone has an agreed definition of the words they convey as the norms – respect, kindness, etc so this year we are unpacking those words and really defining them so all are coming together with the same shared understanding. We are so excited to see what they propose.












Julie is completing renaissance testing and Lisa will complete the school wide AIMS Web benchmark assessments next week. Next week we will our fall benchmark assessments and students are preparing to review their data trends. They will also be completing some reflections and scales and review those findings, their assessment data and their portfolios as they create their academic and character goals for the coming year.




This year's integrated academic exploration is a world's studies exploration. Elementary will explore different places and cultures, foods and art, basic, stories and celebrations while middle and high school humanities will investigate world literature and history through a lens selected by each high school student. Watch for and please contribute to our survey of your favorite selection of world literature.

► **Provide sufficient/effective staff support**

-  We are expanding our volunteer area with a new limited scope that will honor the necessary physical distancing to keep our kiddos safe.
-  We have gratitude for the time we were given for Bus-driver Nick to help us with small maintenance projects last spring – it made a huge difference.
-  Thank you to Branzon Arena for his continued work to keep our boiler and water system working.
-  Thank you. Charles for coming out to meet with her high school students who are going to take science and math on ingenuity. They appreciated the time you took to make the personal introduction and a good connection to support both them and our paraprofessionals AmeriCorps volunteers who will be in there to support them.
-  Thank you Amy Madonal for Coming to Hollis School to support our students and staff as we seek connection.
-  Thank you Kara McCoy for coming to our school and just being a kind and calming presence, answering questions and listening to our kiddos concerns to reassure them and help them to process what they are hearing about Covid.
-  Thank you Bus Driver Nick for not only driving us for our outdoor adventure but for bringing extra poles, helping with rigging and patiently coaching our fishermen and women!
-  Thank you Trooper Ben Mank for researching our students questions and joining us for our outdoor adventure day. The students were all appreciative of your kindness and your time. It showed that you cared. Also, thank you for bringing the fishing manuals. We're going to be using those in our reading class in the next two weeks so we can read the regulations and find our own answers. They also loved the tape measures so they can make sure the "fish stories" are accurate!
-  Huge thank you to our community who has come out of the woodwork to support our American our student volunteer and AmeriCorps volunteer. Committee members have come up with furniture, dishes, kitchen items, treats and healthy meals and even time to paint. We live in a great place and the girls feel welcome and their home is going to be pretty darn special because of all of the people coming together. And we hope with that they will want to stay.

► **Improve communication district and community wide**

-  Our students did a remarkable amount of work over the summer to plan the possible new school. We continued on our path following the directions we were given for creating the planning process to serve as a model for other small Alaskan communities to build a cost effective 22nd century learning

community school. We may look are publishing that work to support other districts and school leadership communities.



The school continues to report as an official part of the Hollis Community Council agenda and we have been added to the town's website.

► **Increase visibility to share lifestyle and increase enrollment**



Hollis staff and students started the planning to establish our service projects for the year. We have already started using our gratitude bags to clean the road. They want to take their "Alaska Kids Don't Float " work to a new level as well as a communication concern that they have long wanted to address.



They are in the processing of establishing their citizen science projects to include only standbys like the weather, butterflies and wolves and we are particularly excited about our recruitment to adopt and important salmon stream.



For updates and ongoing information please feel free to check out our Hollis School Facebook Page. We are committed to keeping that current and students and all staff will be pitching in to share all perspectives. It is a tool for us to document our learning, access resources and provide school information to our target audience – our parents and community. The link is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1483681851918203/>



High school and middle school students will submit articles to local papers to share their learning while practicing quality writing for authentic audiences.