Our Public Relations Coordinator recently ambushed the project managers for both the high school and elementary projects with a question: How are we doing on schedules?”

The answer from both Anjanet Collins (CHS Project Manager) and David McBride (elementary Project Manager) was in unison: “Everything is right on schedule!”

The team at Centralia High School has wasted no time starting the demolition of the educational wing interior; and is now a hollow shell. The library, classrooms, restrooms, and administrative offices have all been demolished to make way for the school’s new modern facilities. Next fall, students at CHS will give up their temporary portable villages and return to modern classrooms. Phase one of demolition is nearly complete, according to principal, Josue Lowe.

At Fords Prairie and Jefferson Lincoln, work is also moving forward rapidly and slightly ahead of schedule. Roofing at both schools is nearing completion, and windows are being installed. The drying-in process will begin soon, with large gas-fueled heaters at each school helping that work along. “It looks like things have gone quickly to this point,” said Superintendent Mark Davalos. “The majority of the work is about to move inside, and we’re excited that all three projects are still right on track in our aggressive schedule.”

Our two new elementary schools are scheduled for completion in August 2019. Phase one of the modernization of CHS will also be complete by the time students return for classes in 2019.

You can follow construction progress on our Bond Blog at www.CentraliaSchools.org/Bond_Blog.
This year at Centralia High School, students are going through major changes with the old school being torn down and the remodeling process in full swing.

“Walking through portable city is like walking through a maze,” said sophomore Devon Brown of the new grouping of portables that now occupy what was the student parking lot. He does have advice for his CHS peers. “Memorize where all your classes are because you will get lost,” he said.

With 18 new portable buildings scattered through the south parking lot, it makes it hard to find your classes. Additionally, classes are harder to get to because the construction zone is in the center of the campus.

“The walk between classes is even worse because the three main parts of the campus are scattered on the three most opposite ends of the campus, and you pretty much have to walk at least a mile a day just to go to your classes,” said senior Maddie Watson. But she emphasized the need to keep her eyes on the prize. “I’m optimistic about the new look of the school because it might bring better attention to Centralia as a whole,” she said.

“The portables themselves don’t bother me, but the crowds and all the shoving do,” said freshman Emma Brown. She also said that the only thing about the portables that really bothers her is walking between the old “P” portables and the new “T” portables.

Weather presents another challenge: Winter is coming. Jovanah Navarro is one of those students who struggle with having white shoes and walking in the rain. “The portables wouldn’t be too bad if the weather wasn’t bad,” the CHS junior said. “It ruins my shoes with the mud traveling back and forth from across the school.” Jovanah also doesn’t really mind the renovations because, “…it’s all going to be worth it for the new kids that come into the school and bring new memories in it.”

Centralia High School has been named a School of Distinction for the third time. The recognition comes for sustained and substantial improvement in graduation rates that place CHS in the top 5 percent for growth statewide. The award is sponsored by a consortium of state educational associations, and it considers data from a five-year period.

From 2013 to the Class of 2017, the on-time graduation rate at CHS has grown from 71.8 percent, to 87 percent. A dramatic increase that Principal Josue Lowe attributes to a lot of hard work by both staff and students. “The effort by our staff to accomplish what we have in terms of graduation rate is beyond impressive,” Lowe said. “They’re connecting with and tracking every student from day one to make sure they cross the finish line. Not just on time, but prepared for success in college or the workforce.

This is the second year in a row that CHS has earned the School of Distinction recognition. CHS is the only high school recipient in Lewis County this year.
District Launches New Mobile App

Students, parents, staff, and the general community now have a new resource for information about the Centralia School District in the form of a new mobile app. Anyone with an iPhone or Android can download the app. Development involved a six month process in conjunction with Blackboard. “Our board and our Superintendent felt that providing easier access to information via mobile devices was important,” said Public Relations Coordinator, Ed Petersen.

Parents can log in to the app and check student grades, attendance, account balances, transportation info (coming soon), and even contact teachers, all through one convenient portal. “Users can even get push notifications about attendance or school events, like any social media app,” said Petersen. “This makes it even more easy for our schools to help parents stay well-informed. Users can select which of the District’s schools they wish to follow and opt out of other schools, if they wish.

K-6 Transition Makes Sense

By: Amy Buzzard, CSD Board President

As we move closer to the reconfiguration of five of our schools here in the Centralia School district, I wanted to take a moment to talk candidly about a few of the reasons we made this decision. Through extensive research and visiting successful schools, we have discovered that the main advantage to change it to a k-6 model is minimizing the transitions for our elementary students. Fewer transitions means stronger relationships by giving each school a longer opportunity to work with families.

Children who have had less transitions during elementary school have been shown in studies to have higher GPA’s, higher math and English scores, lower dropout rates and even a significant improvement in social emotional development through opportunities to mentor younger students. Strong neighborhood schools create a family atmosphere that strengthens children and the communities they belong to.

Students have lengthened relationships with more adults and thus have access to multiple sources of support and counsel, siblings can attend school together and parent involvement remains healthy in higher grades. This model will balance class sizes, increase the effectiveness of PLC’s and give our district and opportunity to be more cohesive in our curriculum and discipline practices. Students will feel connected to their schools because of their long tenure, and able to grow with a deep sense of rootedness.

Every decision made for this district is done through careful collaboration. Striving to strengthen our families, this community and give our students the best opportunities to truly love learning.

Please take some time to study the boundary maps proposed by our Boundary Change Committee. The Board will be voting on the adoption of their recommended boundaries in January.

Foundation Partnership Adds College/Career Counselors

Thanks to a partnership between the Centralia Community Foundation (CCF) and the Centralia School District, students at CHS and CMS are benefiting from the addition of career and college counselors at each campus.

Last Spring, the CCF secured a $2 million community development grant from TransAlta. Part of those funds have been used to support the creation of the career counseling positions at each school. “We believe that a better future for Centralia starts with education,” said CCF Board President, Dan Rich.

At CHS, Lisa Wilson’s role is to help get the school’s new Naviance program running. Naviance will help the school ensure that every student has a plan for education and/or career after high school. “I’m working on reviewing every senior’s plan for education and training after high school,” Wilson said.

Amy Hendrickson is CMS’ career and college counselor. She’s working to develop connections with students to help make them aware of what possibilities exist for them after graduation. “There are many different paths to make future plans a reality,” she said. The new program at CMS provides “additional 1:1 support, real life experiences, mentorship, and partnership between students, parents, and the community,” Hendrickson said.

The Centralia Foundation recently announced the launch of their Schools of Excellence initiative. The foundation is “committed to creating more opportunities for students in Centralia,” said Rich.
Students and staff at all of our schools celebrated and paused to honor U.S. Military veterans on November 8th and 9th.

Centralia High School junior Dylan Altona was surprised by his grandfather, who traveled secretly from Spokane to see his grandson at the CHS assembly.

Members and staff at TwinStar Credit union recently donated food and nearly $813 to the Centralia School District homeless program.

The food and money will be used to provide additional support for Centralia’s homeless student population.

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Our series of K-6 boundary change meetings is now complete. We visited each of Centralia’s elementary schools to gather parent feedback.

The Boundary change committee will now prepare a final recommendation for our Board of Directors.

Forma Construction donated shiny new toy trucks and other toys for the playgrounds at Fords Prairie and Jefferson Lincoln. Our kids wasted no time in getting those trucks nice and dirty!

Washington Elementary 4th grade students took a visit to Lakeside Industries asphalt plant on Nov. 16. They got a hands-on look at how asphalt is made, and the equipment involved.

Mike Young (left), Centralia’s Food Services Director, was recognized as General Manager of the Year by Sodexo at the annual WSSDA conference this month. Congratulations, Mr. Young!

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