

December 3, 2021

Hello,

I certainly hope everyone was able to enjoy the recent Thanksgiving Holiday. My wife, Joey, and I enjoyed some quiet time, and my son, Rick, was able to orchestrate a brief visit from his home in Seattle on Thanksgiving Day. While my family is settling into our new life on Lopez Island, the school district continues to move forward.

The most exciting district news is the pending initiation of a strategic planning process. After board review and approval, we have selected Education Elements to help us facilitate the strategic planning process. We will begin planning this month and hope to start phase one of the process early to mid-January. Everyone will have the chance to be involved somehow, so don't miss your opportunity to have some input into the future of the school district. Elements of information collection will include interviews, small focus groups, larger group meetings (to the extent allowed by COVID protocols), and staff, student, parent, and community level surveys. We will share more details and timelines as we develop them.

As of Thursday morning, December 2, 2021, the district is COVID-free with no positive cases and no current quarantines of either students or staff. Still, there is a lot of fear and anxiety surrounding COVID-19, which concerns regarding the new Omicron variant will likely heighten. We constantly review our practices and procedures related to COVID, and we learn from each unique experience. We continue to update our [Safe Return to School Plan](#) to reflect any changes in practice or procedures based on our experiences and the recommendations of San Juan County Health, the Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control. The best prevention protocols remain masking, social distancing, proper handwashing and hygiene, staying home when you don't feel well, getting tested, and vaccinations (including boosters).

As you read this, we have two weeks of school before the winter break. I encourage everyone to stay focused and safe. If anyone has a particular interest in being part of a focus group for the strategic planning process or if you might like to serve on a committee looking at modified/balanced school calendar options or school safety, please reach out to me at emurray@lopezislandschool.org.

Thank you!

Ed Murray

Superintendent