

# Welcoming Environment

“Small things are the big things. You never know what small thing you do for someone can make all the difference with them.” - Jayne Smith, Seahurst

We begin by acknowledging that we are on the ancestral land stewarded since time immemorial by the Salish peoples of the Duwamish, Green, White and Upper Puyallup Rivers, many of these original peoples' giving birth to the contemporary citizens of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. We honor and give thanks that we are able to collectively engage in this conversation in their sacred homelands about the future of teaching and caring for our sacred children and youth.

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Symposium Wide Agreements (Lita) (5 minutes)
- ICE Breaker – turn to your neighbor and share something you are looking forward to this upcoming year (10)
- Our Promise/Strategic Plan (Lita) (5 minutes)
- Video (Rosa) (5 minutes)
- PowerPoint (20 minutes)
- Family Panel – good experience/not good/how do they want to feel/questions (30 minutes)
- Tools/Walkthrough/offer additional PD (5 minutes)
- Closing reflections (10 minutes)



# Symposium-Wide Agreements

**Stay Engaged**

**Speak Your Truth**

**Experience Discomfort**

**Expect and Accept Non-Closure**

**Listen to Understand**

Adapted from From Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations about Race*

## OUR PROMISE

Every student in Highline Public Schools is known by name, strength and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose.

## OUR GOAL

### School Culture

Our schools are welcoming and safe places where students and staff are respected and supported to succeed.

## OUR FOUNDATION

### Relationships

We will know our students by name, strength and need and have open, two-way communication with students, families and community partners.

<https://vimeo.com/135506454>

# Front Office Staff

Front office staff are friendly – recognize visitors right away, provide information easily and answer the phone in a way that makes people glad they have called.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



## Tip from Des Moines:

Smile. If you are on the phone when a parent comes in, make eye contact and show that you will help them when you are off the phone. Smile when you are on the phone, the person on the other end can hear it. Put smiley faces around desks to remind office staff to smile.

- Candy Yarbrough



# Standards of Welcoming Behavior

The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including bus drivers, security guards, custodians and cafeteria workers.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard





## Tip from Tyee:

We have our receptionist counter in the main office foyer so when guests arrive that's the first person they see; a smiling face and a cheerful "welcome". While guests wait, we have an expectation that all office staff acknowledge our visitors with a smile and a check in to make sure someone has helped them.

- Gail Korakis



## Tip from Sylvester:

Acknowledge visitors immediately. Always smile and make eye contact. It can be overwhelming for families, so we want them to feel welcome. Be sensitive to their needs and try to determine how best as a school we can assist.

- Jr. Fiso



## Tip from Evergreen:

Acknowledge and assist immediately upon arrival. Do not let a visitor, student or family feel as if they are being ignored.

- Kristy Jeffers

# Friendly Signs

- There are friendly signs inside and out. Giving a welcome to families and visitors and explain how to get around the building.
- Signs are in multiple languages.
- Security measures are clearly posted and communicated to all families.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



# Parking

Faculty, student and community parking is well marked and understandable by all.

Handicapped parking is clearly marked.



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- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



# Knowing our Students by Name

In our school we learn the names of our students and pronounce them correctly.

A person's name is important. It gives a unique identity. It brings satisfaction and a place of belonging.



- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard

## Tip from Cheers:

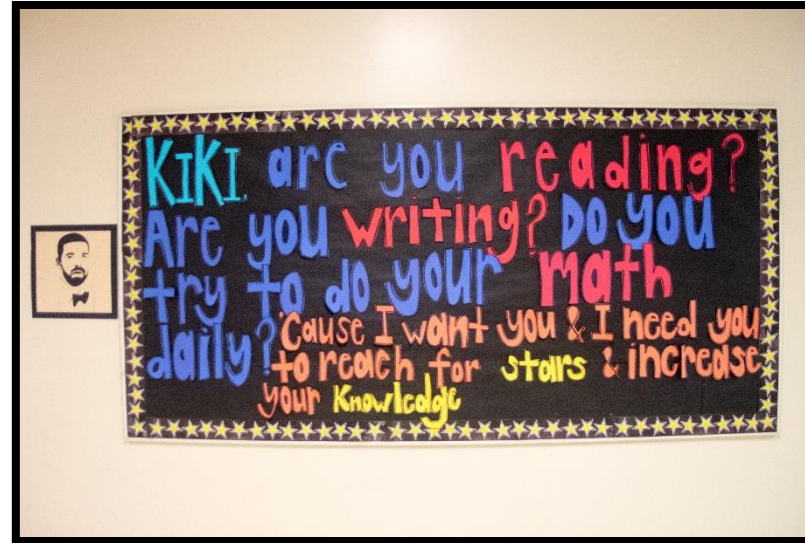
Sometimes you want to go  
Where everybody knows your name  
And they're always glad you came  
You want to be where everybody  
knows your name

- From Cheers Theme Song



# Little Touches

- Bulletin boards
- Staff pictures
- Making connections
- Family handbook
- Positive phone calls
- Focus on learning names
- Classroom and hallway images show diverse family structure, people of different races, gender expressions, ethnicities and abilities.



- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



## Tip from Security:

I have created a bulletin board with our officers in uniform along with them as coaches for our schools, working with the shop with a cop program, and other activities in and out of the district to show they are more than just security officers—they are working with staff and students to build positive relationships.

- Debbie Deladd



## Tip from Gregory Heights:

We ask student's name and shake hands with parents. Have an administrator meet them if they are available. Share about the neighborhood and talk with them. Introduce PTSA parents if they are in the office. We also offer resources like our Family Handbook, etc.

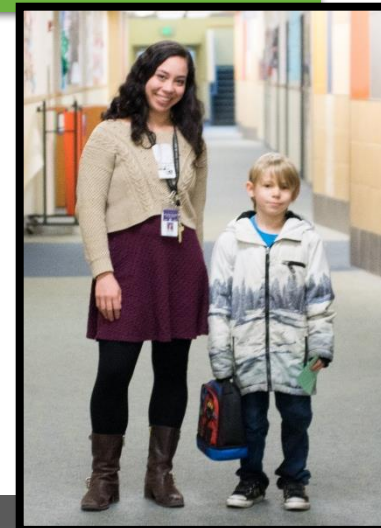
- Cheryl Smith



## Tip from Salmon Creek:

Teachers make phone calls with positive messages to parents regarding their students. There is also a focus on learning names.

- Parveen Ericksen





# Family Resource Area

There is a comfortable family resource room stocked with books, games and educational information that families can borrow and where parents can meet.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



# Joining Process

A “joining process” welcomes families to the school, offers tours, makes bilingual speakers available and introduces them to staff and other families.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard



## Tip from Seahurst:

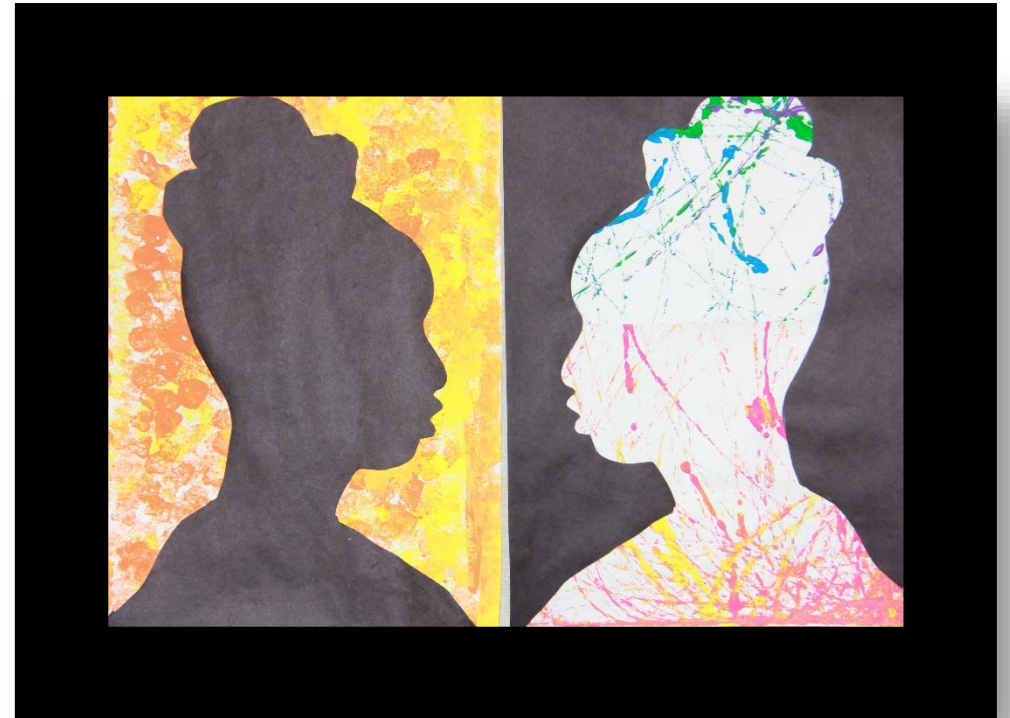
Offer tours of the school. Our family liaison calls and checks in with our new families.

- Jayne Smith

# Student Work on Display

Current student work is displayed throughout the building. Exhibits clearly explain the purpose of the work and the high standards it has to meet.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard





# Appealing Environment

- The interior of the school is clean and well kept
- When graffiti appears at your school, it is promptly removed
- Your school has a standing beautification committee



- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard

## Tip from Shorewood:

We try to keep our lobby clutter free and welcoming. We try to keep the entrance gardens groomed and inviting.

- Vicki Treakle

# Access

The school is open and accessible. It is easy for parents to meet with the principal, talk to teachers and counselors, and bring up issues and concerns.



- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
- ☐ This will take time
- ☐ This will be hard

## Tip from Hazel Valley:

Everyone wants to be understood and have some sympathy for problems or difficulties. Our office looks and feels best when we know what direction to take, or have an answer when confronted with a problem or asked a question.

- Roxanne Halvorsen

# Opportunities for Partnerships

A core belief of our schools is that families and school staff are equal partners. Our families have skills, ideas and knowledge about their children and community that are of value to you.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
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# Translation/Interpretation

If a family needs an interpreter, school staff understand how to access services if help is needed with communicating with a family.

- ☐ Already doing this
- ☐ Could do this easily
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## Tip from Evergreen:

Smile and greet.

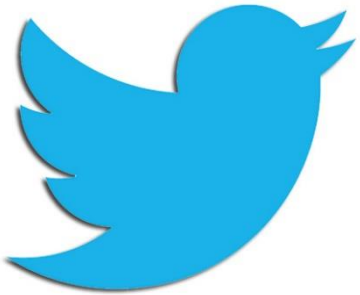
Welcome to Evergreen bulletin board.

Interpreting available.

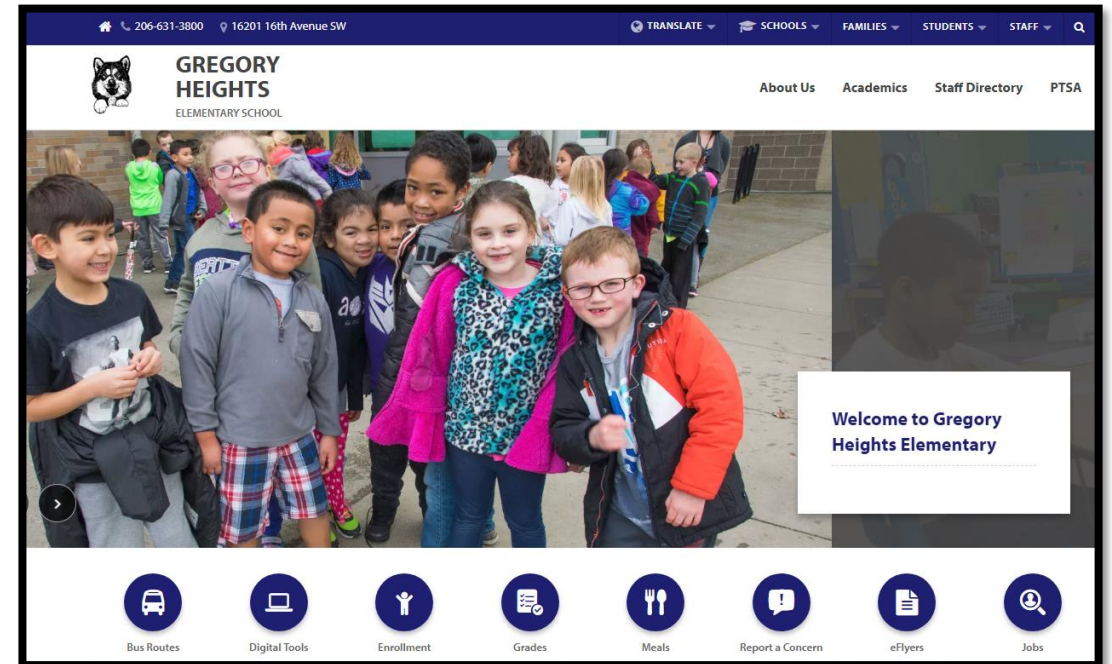
- Kristy Jeffers

# Website/Social Media

- The school website is engaging.
- The school uses social media tools to communicate and welcome families.



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# Family Panel

- Guiding questions

# Group Work

Slides on poster paper/participants can reflect in an area they feel strongly about

# Reflection

What areas are you doing well in?

Which ones need more work?

What steps could you take to help your school become more family-friendly?

Right Away?

Over the long term?

What are your concerns?

What will be your commitments?

# Closing Reflection

In your booklet/handout, please take a few minutes to respond to these questions. Later today at your school/worksite debrief, you'll have a chance to share this with your team:

- I used to think \_\_\_\_\_. I am now thinking \_\_\_\_\_.
- This week I will \_\_\_\_\_. The first quarter I will \_\_\_\_\_. This year I will \_\_\_\_\_.
- What will get in the way of what you want to do? (What are the hurdles?)
- What support or resources will you need to be successful?
- If you could ask your supervisor and/or colleagues for one thing to push this work forward, based on this presentation, what would it be?



# Presenter Feedback on Sched

- Please take a few moments to provide feedback on Sched
  - If you don't have the app downloaded, please take a moment to do so now
  - If you prefer a paper copy, let me know
- Information from the feedback will help me reflect on my presentation and be used to review the overall experience of participants at the symposium