

Tahoma Community News

June 2018

Tahoma School District

Maple Valley, WA 98038

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Next superintendent eager to begin

‘Students first, parents & community heard, educators honored’

New Tahoma Superintendent Tony Giurado has already begun climbing a steep learning curve as a newcomer to the area and as a first-time superintendent. Guiding him are a set of principles that he has developed during his 27-year education career: Put students first; listen to parents and the community; and honor educators.

“I think the most important thing is that students are at the center of all that we do,” he said. “That’s at the core.” He said it is apparent that Tahoma has high quality teachers, administrators and support staff who can meet students’ needs. He wants to build on that success.

Giurado, 53, leaves his native Colorado and his position as Chief Academic Officer of the Mesa County Valley School District in Grand Junction, Colo., to become Tahoma’s superintendent on July 1, when current Superintendent Rob Morrow retires. He spent Monday and Tuesday touring the district’s buildings and departments, meeting with staff for brief introductory sessions.

The new superintendent brings an extensive administrative background to Tahoma, having worked in two large Colorado school districts in school and district leadership for 21 years. That experience will serve Tahoma well, he said.

“I’ve thrived throughout my career working in high-achieving environments, whether as a teacher, as a principal or as a districtwide leader,” he said.

He started in education as a music



Tony Giurado talks with a first grade student during a tour of the district. The new superintendent succeeds Rob Morrow, who is retiring.

teacher, after he decided that his dream of becoming a symphonic musician would not satisfy his desire to “do something that would make a difference.” After a year at a prestigious music conservatory, where he attended on a full scholarship as a performance major, Giurado changed direction to focus on becoming an educator. He taught music for six years and then was recruited into administrative

positions as an elementary school assistant principal and principal before moving into district-level leadership in the Jeffco and Mesa Valley school districts, where he supervised as many as 47 schools. Among his many responsibilities were implementing K-12 curriculum, monitoring school budgets, coaching and supervising school principals, assisting in School Board and community relations, and ensuring school

safety.

Giurado, his wife Rosanne, and son Vincent, 15, are looking forward to exploring their new home. The family enjoys outdoor activities that include hiking, cycling, kayaking, and golf. Giurado said he and his family have looked at moving to Washington for about five years, but Tahoma is the first school district that interested him enough to apply.

“We dug in and I looked at schools, achievement data, read about the district and, of course as a family, we looked at the community, Maple Valley,” he said. “everything about it just felt right.”

As he studied Tahoma, Giurado said he found evidence of a school district that is forward-thinking and has high-performing schools.

“I am really passionate about, and have spent a great deal of time, studying the future and what the future looks like in the workplace, in society and in education,” he said. “The school district’s forward thinking and commitment, to the Future Ready vision so that our students have 21st century skills and have a plan when they graduate, aligns well with my passion and my beliefs about education and what our students need,” he said.

He also applauds the district’s commitment to environmental sustainability. “Our students understand the challenges around sustainability, environment and how we

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Class of 2018 first to graduate from new THS

The Tahoma community gathered with family and friends of Tahoma High School's class of 2018 for the school's 92nd commencement exercises on June 14 at White River Amphitheatre. The ceremony marks the first class to graduate from the new high school, opened last September.

The ceremony included performances by the THS combined Concert Ensemble, the Wind Symphony, the Jazz Choir and Jazz Band. Valedictorian Katarina Zosel and Salutatorian Melia Cleary spoke, as did Principal Terry Duty, School Board President Mary Jane Glaser and Superintendent Rob Morrow.

Cleary spoke of her hope for a world that is kind. Zosel encouraged her classmates to take advantage of their civic rights: "I don't care who you vote for, but please vote!" She also spoke about relationships, stating that friends can help adjust our perspective in life. She exhorted her classmates

"... choose to live for Garrett (Sypole, a deceased classmate); to live for each other; and, most importantly, to live for ourselves," Zosel said. "I hope that we each choose to take it to the max in our future!"

Morrow talked about the large investment that the graduates' families, along with the community and taxpayers made to get them to that point. "Let me be clear, graduates: We think you're worth every penny." He said that all the well-wishers would love to see a great return on their investment, mentioning the ways the world has changed since Sept. 11, and the increase in school violence. Morrow pondered whether perhaps one or more of this year's graduates holds the answer or answers to the needed change, and also encouraged them to use the tools at their disposal for good.

"Instant access to information is a great tool, as long as you use it appropriately, just



These seniors search the audience for familiar faces prior to the start of commencement exercises.

like a hammer is a great tool if you use it appropriately," Morrow said. "My dad used to tell me that you can use a hammer to build a house or to break a window."

Glaser talked about challenges overcome and the changes the graduates have weathered, urging them not to be afraid

of further adjustments and adaptation.

Duty acknowledged some of the graduates' many impressive achievements. "Now it's time to take your talent, skills and aptitude on the road of life," Duty said. "Give up the good life for the life that is good."

Superintendent

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can work together to solve some of the challenges related to that to make sure our planet and our community have the resources they need to be sustainable for the long term," he said.

Giurato credits strong leadership and commitment, beginning with the School Board, for Tahoma's traditions of excellence. "Having a good vision, a good plan, and having stability and leadership really is critical to accomplishing great things," he said.

"The heart of success is when we ensure that every Tahoma student has a highly effective teacher who provides high quality instruction, cares about them, believes in them and inspires them to do more than they think is possible," he said. "And that every teacher be supported by a great visionary leader who collaboratively supports their teachers with resources, time for professional learning, and making sure the school can clearly focus on goals."

As incoming superintendent, Giurato said he has provided the School Board with a preliminary transition plan but has not yet had the opportunity to discuss it in detail and work collaboratively to ensure that he and the Board have the same vision. In addition to establishing a good working relationship and communication with the Board, Giurato's plan includes community outreach, providing leadership and support to district administrators, learning how the district operates,



Tony Giurato talks with Maple Valley Chamber CEO Erica Dial, while chamber members Jim Flynn, Bill VanRuff and Sue VanRuff listen. Giurato visited with community leaders and Tahoma staff during a brief visit to the district in June.

and making sure the school year begins smoothly.

Whether he is talking to community members, students or district staff, Giurato will frame his conversations around three main questions.

"There are questions I'd like to ask when I have opportunities to engage all our stakeholders," he said. "What's working well? What's working but needs improvement? The third would be what's not working and

should be discontinued. I'd like to do that and develop multiple engagement opportunities in the first three or four months."

Answers to those questions will help shape changes and improvements that are focused on optimizing learning opportunities for students.

"I have a big learning curve," he said. "I have a lot to learn from all of our students and staff, board of education, our administrators, parents and community."

THS seeks engineers to assist tech students

Professionals who work in the computer science or software engineering field are wanted for the TEALS (Technology Education and Literacy in Schools) program at Tahoma High School. The Microsoft Philanthropies program recruits, mentors and places passionate high tech professionals into high school classes as volunteer instructors.

The experts bring their subject knowledge into the classroom, where they join a Tahoma teacher in a team teaching model. The program provides training, curriculum and support for the volunteers and the classroom teachers.

Tahoma High School has applied to this program for the 2018-19 school year. We are looking for volunteer Teaching Assistants (TAs) to assist the classroom teacher in teaching "AP Computer Science A: Introduction to Java Programming," which is based on the University of Washington's CSE 142 course. These classes will be held first period so that volunteers can get to their regular jobs.

Anyone who is interested may contact Marty Barber, Tahoma's CTE Director, at mbarber@tahomasd.us or submit a volunteer application at tealsk12.org/volunteers. For more information about TEALS, visit their website.

Tahoma School District receives clean audit

The Washington State Auditor's annual review of Tahoma School District's finances and accountability shows that the district is in full compliance and there are no negative findings.

"To summarize the results, the district had no significant weakness in internal controls, and did not have any material misstatements," according to a letter to the district from Jason Cole, Assistant State Auditor for South King County. The audit covered the 2016-2017 school year.

Cole complimented district representatives, including Superintendent Rob Morrow, Assistant Superintendent Lori Cloud, Chief Accountant Bridget Malaspino, and Admin-

istrative Assistant Barbara Roessler for their "dedication and professionalism throughout the audit process. The assistance I received from the Tahoma School District's staff made the audit go quickly and smoothly."

The audit was divided into two parts: Tahoma's financial statements and compliance with federal laws and regulations; and independent accountability in five specific areas that include basic enrollment, procurement, self-insurance, bid law for public works projects, and IT security controls protecting financial systems.

In comments to district officials during the audit exit conference, Cole and Audit Manager Sandra Groshong

said the district's handling of federal funds and programs is especially noteworthy, given the intricacies of federal requirements.

School Board President Mary Jane Glaser, who attended the exit conference, reported at this week's board meeting that the district "passed with flying colors," and noted that the auditors "could not praise Tahoma School District enough." Glaser thanked Cloud and the finance department for their work.

Final copies of the completed audit are posted on the state auditor's web page (<http://portal.sao.wa.gov/Report-Search>) and on Tahoma's Financial Services web page.

Schools set summer operating hours

Here are the dates and times that staff members and offices will be available. Hours and dates of operation will vary during the summer months. All locations are closed on Sept. 3, Labor Day; School starts Sept. 4.

- **The Central Services Center** will be open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. June 21-28, and 8 a.m.-noon on June 29. The office will be closed from July 2-6. Between July 9 and Aug. 31, hours are 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

- **Tahoma High School:** open from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. June 21-29. From July 2-31, the office is closed. Between Aug. 1 and 31, the office will be open 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Bear Days are Aug. 22 for juniors/seniors; Aug. 23 for sophomores; Aug. 24 for freshmen.

- **Maple View Middle School** will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. June 21-26. June 27-29, hours are 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m. Between July 2 and Aug. 10, the office will be closed. From Aug. 13-22, the office will be open from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m. On Aug. 23-31, the office will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

- **Summit Trail Middle School** will be open 8 a.m.-2 p.m. on June 21 and 22. From June 25-29, the office will be open 8-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2 p.m. The office will be closed July 2-Aug. 10. Between Aug. 13 and 17, the office will be open 8-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2 p.m. Between

Aug. 20 and 31, the office will be open 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

- **Cedar River Elementary** will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. from June 21 to 28. The office will be closed from June 29-Aug. 7. Hours on Aug. 8-23 will be 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed on Fridays). Between Aug. 27-31, the office will be open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

- **Glacier Park Elementary** will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. from June 21-28. The office will be closed June 29-Aug. 7. Between Aug. 8 and 23, office hours will be 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed on Fridays). From Aug. 27 to 29 and on Aug. 31, the hours will be 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The office will be closed on Aug. 30.

- **Lake Wilderness Elementary** office will be closed from June 21-Aug. 3. Between Aug. 6 and 23, the office hours will be 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed Fridays). From Aug. 27-31, the office will be open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- **Rock Creek Elementary** will be open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 21 and 22. Between June 25 and 28, the office will be open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed Fridays). The office will be closed July 2-Aug. 7. Between Aug. 8 and 23, the office will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed Fridays). On Aug. 27 and Aug. 29-31, the office will be open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The office will be closed on Aug. 28.



Tahoma High School students were greeted with warm weather on the last day of school.

- **Shadow Lake Elementary** will be open 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. June 21-28. The office will be closed June 29-Aug. 7; and also closed on Aug. 27 and 28. From Aug. 8-23, office hours will be 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. (closed Fridays). On Aug. 29 and 30, the office will be open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Hours on Aug. 31 are 8 a.m.-noon.

- **Tahoma Elementary** will be open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. June 21-28. The office will be closed June 29-Aug. 7. From Aug. 8-23, the hours will be 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Thursday (closed Fridays). From Aug. 27-31, hours will be 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

District obtains middle school mental health grant

This fall, Summit Trail and Maple View middle school students will benefit from added mental health screening and supports, along with middle school students from more than 40 schools in King County, thanks to a grant from Best Starts for Kids. Countywide, \$12.6 million will be invested over three years to expand Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Services (SBIRT) and will reach as many as 35,000 students each school year. Best Starts for Kids is King County's comprehensive funding strategy for supporting healthy child development, and invests an average of \$65 million per year in total to support families and children.

Tahoma received a \$280,000 grant designed to help provide mental health support and help students cope with stress and

social pressure. There is potential for the grant to extend two additional years.

"Middle school is a unique and exciting time of exploration, identity formation, and development. Coupled with this is a vulnerability to mental health issues and at-risk behavior. We are so excited to have additional support to help identify students early, assist them to capitalize on strengths, connect them to resources and in turn, increase protective factors in their lives," Summit Trail counselor Naomi Whyllie said. "Additional services at this pivotal time can greatly influence one's present and future success, health and happiness."

The Tahoma grant was developed with input from many stakeholders over a three-month period, said Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning.

"Our counselors, building administrators, district leadership, and community partners all had such wonderful ideas on ways to provide new supports for our students," Wakeley said. "Our middle level team is eager to begin this work in the fall, and we have some wonderful beginning pieces in place at both the building and community level that we can build upon."

The grant will help pay for a mental health and wellness coordinator at each middle school. Plans also call for:

- Continued professional development and coaching on implementation of Life Skills curriculum in grades 6-8 including wellness concepts.

- Use of assessment data to refine integration of health and wellness concepts with the fitness curriculum.

- Training for teachers in trauma-informed practices and mental-health strategies.

- Development of a training program for mentors in collaboration with the Maple Valley Community Center.

- Development of a Walking for Wellness STRETCH class that will include peer to peer support as well as weekly mentor Walk and Talk support.

- SBIRT calls for three to four meetings with students, at least one of which will include the student's parent or guardian. The meetings help students identify and access their strengths to support areas of concern, as well as coaching to help increase the student's capacity to problem solve. If additional supports are needed, then a referral would occur to any one of a wide range of options.

Class of 2018 gives back with big bear

Tahoma High School has a new symbol for its mascot, thanks to the Class of 2018.

For its senior gift, the outgoing class purchased a 10-foot-6, 4,000-pound carved wooden bear that will be displayed inside the high school commons.

The giant bear required the assistance of a forklift and a tall ladder during installation.



Volunteers needed for September technology model review group

The district is looking for staff, student, parent, and community volunteers interested in serving on a technology model review committee.

“We recognize that technology is a driving force for change in how people communicate and acquire knowledge in a rapidly changing world,” Dawn Wakeley, executive director of Teaching and Learning, said. “Today, technology is an essential tool that allows our students and staff opportunities to communicate, collaborate and create content as a community of learners to ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to live, learn and work in the 21st Century.”

The technology model review will begin early in September. There will be at least four meetings: Sept. 20, Oct. 11, Nov. 1 and Nov. 29. The work of this team will

help shape the Tahoma Technology Plan, which provides the lens for evaluating and determining technology equipment, software, and support levels required to meet the productivity and learning needs of staff and students. Any gap between state funding and local needs then forms the basis for a potential technology levy. The school board has asked for the team to complete their work by December 2018.

Parents, community members, students, and staff who would like to be involved are asked to call the Teaching and Learning office at 425-413-3430 or apply online by Sept. 1 at this link:

<http://bit.ly/TSDtechModelReview>

The district seeks balanced representation across stakeholder groups and will do a random selection if there are more volunteers than needed.

School board using reserve funds for technology, buses

The Tahoma School Board approved two proposals, May 29, that use reserve funds to maintain critical technology and transportation needs.

The board authorized purchase of six school buses, using \$300,000 in state depreciation funding and \$500,000 from the district’s fund balance reserve. Three buses will be equipped with luggage compartments that can be used to transport equipment, such as for sports teams or marching band. The purchase makes it possible to replace several older buses.

The decision to use reserve funds came as a result of the failure of a \$2 million bus levy in February, which would have provided funds to purchase more than a dozen new buses to refresh and enlarge the fleet. There is no state funding available to add buses but funding is available to help replace old buses. Prior to February, the district had not asked for a bus levy since 2002.

The School Board also approved the use of fund balance reserves to maintain district classroom technology next school year, though at a reduced level because of the failure of February’s technology levy. Fund-balance dollars will not replace all of the funding from the technology levy. There will be fewer technical support positions and replacement of computers and other devices will be delayed in order to cut spending by more than \$1 million.

Technology spending will be \$1,375,992 for the 2018-2019 school year, which is more than \$1 million less than what is currently allocated. There will be a review of the district’s technology model next fall that will serve as a guide for classroom technology beyond next school year.

At a special May 1 School Board meeting, the board heard from Dawn Wakeley, Teaching and Learning executive director, who presented a plan that would use money from the district’s \$15 million fund balance over the next three school years to maintain classroom technology. Wakeley stressed that the proposal is much different than the plan that would have guided how technology levy funds would be spent over four years. Instead, Wakeley said the proposal given to the School Board is intended only to keep

Voters approve 2-year EP&O levy measure

The April 24 Educational Programs and Operations levy passed with 63.86 percent approval. The final vote count was 8,166 “yes” and 4,621 “no.”

“We’re grateful the levy passed and we thank the community for its support,” Superintendent Rob Morrow said. “This will provide some financial stability for the district over the next two years. The new state model is still a long-term funding problem for Tahoma that we need to address with our legislators.”

When the three proposed levy measures failed in February, the district halted nonessential hiring for open positions, reduced spending districtwide and canceled or put on hold noncurricular field trips and nonessential travel. The Human Resources department is now working to fill open positions left by employees who have resigned, and budgeted spending has resumed.

Now that the levy has passed, the district Finance Department is beginning its regular budget process, Lori Cloud, assistant superintendent and finance director, said.

Cloud and her staff will work with other department heads to assess and predict enrollment numbers, class sizes and staffing needs. She will also meet with administrators to examine their proposed budgets and verify that the requests are necessary. Another part of the regular process involves setting fees for the coming year for Nutrition Services, the Extended Enrichment Program, Facility Use and more. The budget process culminates in July, with a public hearing and budget adoption.

existing classroom technology functional. Using reserve funds to support classroom technology is not sustainable, she said.

Applicants sought for bus-driving positions

Applications are being accepted for bus-driving positions. Tahoma Transportation Department officials say there are openings for substitute and permanent drivers next year, due to retirements and usual attrition.

The department will host training opportunities and invites people who are interested to contact the school district’s Human Resources office by calling 425-413-3400 or check the employment page on the TSD website, www.tahomasd.us.



Tahoma Community Report is produced by the Tahoma School District Communication Office and mailed to all school district residents four times a year. Contact the Communication Office by calling 425-413-3409 or by email to Kevin Patterson, communication director, at: kpatters@tahomasd.us

The Tahoma School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following employees are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

Title IX Officer

Director of Human Resources
25720 Maple Valley Highway
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-413-3400
TitleIX@tahomasd.us

ADA Coordinator

Director of Human Resources
25720 Maple Valley Highway
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-413-3400
ADA@tahomasd.us

Section 504 Coordinator

Director of Special Services
25720 Maple Valley Highway
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