



# Voice of the Vikings



Shaw Middle School

June 2020

## From the Principal's Desk

Dear Shaw Families,

At Shaw, we value our diverse community of learners and families. Shaw is the most diverse middle school in Spokane Public Schools, a distinction we embrace. It has never been more important than now to differentiate our support and interventions to meet the needs of each of our students and community.

Our school offers a variety of programs to support our students. In 2019-20 we launched a continuum of services program called Viking Personalized Learning (VPL). This program offers a full or partial Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) tailor made to meet student and family needs.

Shaw also serves the largest population of English Language Learners through leveled instruction and includes the district's only Newcomer Center at middle school. Special Education services at Shaw include Autism Behavior Learning Environment (ABLE), Designed Instruction (DI), Behavioral Intervention (BI), and Resource Services.

We support students and families with wraparound services through our Communities in Schools center, our mentoring programs, our Two-Generation Whole Child Study, the Zone Project, and partnerships the N.E Community Center, Gonzaga University and a wide array of community partners.

We are committed to ensure that each of our students are represented in the coursework they experience at Shaw. In their English experience using the Summit Learning platform, Shaw students examine cultural narratives as well as informational texts and narratives written by diverse authors. This includes reading of Dr. Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise," Queen Lili'uokalani's "Letter of Protest to President McKinley," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and an article titled "At Brown's funeral in Ferguson, calls for a national movement for change." (Article continues on page 2)

## Summer Learning at Shaw

All SPS secondary summer schools are being held virtually this summer. Shaw is offering online ELA and math support for students entering 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Shaw between June 29 and July 9 (Mon-Thurs). Please contact Amy Sleeth ([amysl@spokaneschools.org](mailto:amysl@spokaneschools.org)) for information on our incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade summer English course, Sydney Bushnell ([sydneyb@spokaneschools.org](mailto:sydneyb@spokaneschools.org)) for information on our incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, or Kristen Parker ([kristenpa@spokaneschools.org](mailto:kristenpa@spokaneschools.org)) for information on summer Math courses for our incoming 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

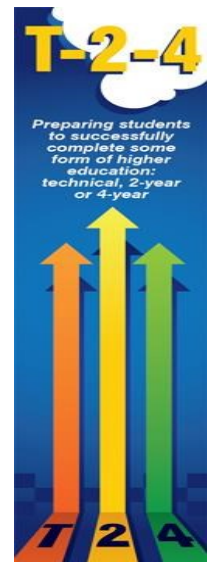
The mission of Shaw Middle School is to prepare all students academically and socially for High School and beyond.

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## Shaw is a Title 1 School

Title 1 Funding "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education..." Shaw uses our Title 1 dollars to help improve student performance at Shaw. We purchase additional materials, pay for intervention teachers and instructional coaches, and provide professional development opportunities to our staff to better serve our students, and to actively involve the parent community.



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Our History experience in 7<sup>th</sup> grade focuses a semester of learning on Washington State History. This learning draws heavily from "Since Time Immemorial," the tribally-developed curricular content. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade content focus is on US History; this course guides students in using a critical lens to examining different experiences of westward expansion, including the perspectives of Native Americans, blacks, and women. Students also dive into the concept of "All Men Are Created Equal" both from a historical and modern perspective. Additionally, students critically explore symbols of the Civil War and artwork. In social studies, math, and science, students have opportunities to create artifacts and research individuals that reflect their personal interest and heritage.

More information on the programs we offer can be found at [www.spokaneschools.org/Shaw](http://www.spokaneschools.org/Shaw). Please do not hesitate to call the office at 509-354-5800. We officially begin returning the second week of August and we will be periodically checking email and voice mail throughout July.

We continue to strive to enhance the variety of diverse perspectives and improve our school culture for all Shaw students. Even though we do not know exactly what school will look like in September, we do know that we will get through the challenges by working together, socially & academically. Spokane Public Schools is in the process of developing options for a "Safe Start" to school in the fall. Please watch for information as it becomes available. My staff and I will reach out to you with our most recent information in a Back to School Newsletter sometime in August.

Stay safe and have a great summer.

Principal Jon Swett



## **Back-to-School Open House**

**Monday, August 31, 2020**

**5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Connecting with families is a priority for our Shaw staff, and we know that our families have many demands on their time. We previously have hosted a Back-to-School night just before the first day of school and an Open House just a little later in September. This year, to kick off the school year, our Shaw Leadership Team has decided to combine those two into one event. Students will receive binders and supplies, a tentative class schedule, and locker information. Families will learn about opportunities for student and parent involvement, academic and behavior expectations and supports, and the Summit Learning Platform. Students and families will meet their grade-level team of teachers, four content teachers and

one who supports all content areas. The team shares a common group of students from a single grade level and a common planning period, so they can work purposefully and cooperatively to help students learn. Our goal for this evening is to connect and begin a partnership between families and Shaw at the very beginning of the school year. As we move into the 2020-2021 school year, each team will hold either monthly or quarterly parent meetings. And, student-led conferences November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> will be another opportunity to connect. We invite you to join us in building a partnership that will support students and become stronger as the year progresses.

### **Stay Informed**

We use various forms of communication to keep you informed. Please stay tuned by consistently checking into the following sites. [Shaw website](#). [SPS website](#)

Like and follow Shaw and SPS on Facebook. [Shaw Facebook page](#). [SPS Facebook page](#).

During the school year, please email any of your child's teachers to keep up to date on school work and enrichment opportunities.

## **MTSS Building Community**

High achieving schools are built on strong relationships. Shaw uses MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) as a set of ideas and tools to support academic and social student growth by establishing and maintaining positive school culture. MTSS addresses the needs of all students through a multi-tiered intervention system, which creates a positive school environment for both teaching and learning. This system intertwines with a focus on restorative practices which allows students to repair any harm they may have done to learning community. The Shaw school culture expects students to focus on three things: Students are asked to be safe, responsible, and respectful. When students violate any one of these norms, they are expected to restore/repair the damage that was done to the other members of our learning community. Such strategies employed are students removing themselves from class for a short time to reflect and write down how they caused harm and what they can do to repair the harm. Some students will be referred to a success coach, counselor, case manager or other significant caring adults in the Shaw community to process how to restore relationships harmed by unsafe, disrespectful or irresponsible behaviors. Shaw also has a support team that meets weekly to discuss and problem solve how students can restore violations of the school norms. Parents are asked to partner with staff and their student to restore any harm done to the learning community.

## **Construction Continues!**

Lydig construction has been hard at work on the new Shaw campus. The Shaw gym is towering over the job site and things are moving forward to build our brand new Shaw Middle School / On Track Academy / and Hillyard Library. We look forward to fall of 2021 when we will be able to be inside this beautiful building. Thank you to the entire team working to build this exciting campus, and especially to our community for its support!

## **Grade Level Teams**

As we venture into the 2020-21 school year, we are changing to grade level teams, all 7<sup>th</sup> or 8th graders in one team instead of mixed grade level teams, to best support our Shaw Vikings. Grade level teaming provides four content teachers (English, math, science, and social studies) and support teacher the ability to deeply know their students. At Shaw Middle School, we value a team of teachers working closely together to support student success. We also know that middle school students benefit from consistent routines, and our grade level teaching teams develop procedures and expectations that are implemented in every class. The grade level team of teachers share a common set of students and a common planning period, an approach that allows for greater communication about student needs. Students can feel safe to focus on learning because they know routines/procedures will not change with every teacher or class period. When the learning environment is consistent across content areas, students are more likely to thrive and experience personal and academic growth. Grade level teaming also allows for positive relationships among peers and with adults, and students are highly supported as they progress both academically and socially. Teachers can discuss and plan lesson focusing on what they learn about individual students and leverage that information to build stronger relationships with students, determine appropriate and effective curriculum, and address different study skills and learning techniques for the specific grade level. By moving to grade level teams, teachers and students have opportunities to collaborate throughout their entire school day. When teachers can focus on the planning for a single content area and just one grade level, they are better able to differentiate instruction to meet the various needs of the grade level students in their classes.

The Shaw mission and vision statements establish our intent to prepare students for academic and social successes in high school and beyond by providing them with a safe, responsible, and respectful learning environment. Grade level teaching teams are one of the models we are utilizing to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision.