

Newcastle Schools overcome 2020s challenges

By Jayson Knight

Newcastle Schools Superintendent Melanie Hau said Wednesday that 2020 “certainly was challenging. Probably, the most challenging that any of us educators or any of our support employees have experienced in our careers.

“However, we’re very proud of the fact that we have been in face-to-face instructions, which we began in August. We’re hearing from some of our high school students and from some of the other districts around the state that we should be very pleased with the way that we’ve handled this year, and even though we’ve had some conflict about student’s quarantines, or the two weeks that we went to distance learning back in the fall, I think overall, most everyone: teachers, students, and parents, are happy that we made a commitment to staying in school.”

Newcastle Schools will kick off 2021 by planning for the next school year, implementing a strategic plan and focusing on a more enriched experience. Hau went into detail, saying, “So, we’re starting planning for next school year, and I would have to say in the last few days, I’ve had amazing conversations with teachers and students about planning for next year,” Hau said. “We’re getting ready for enrollment and looking forward to a

normal next year.”

Superintendent Hau mentioned in last year’s Tri-City Today special section that the school system had implemented a strategic plan. That plan has become a vision.

“We have a strategic vision,” she said. “It’s on our website and we have a lot of great plans for master planning because growing we have some instructional plans that were implementing to just make sure students are getting the types of intervention that they need or extension or enrichment, if they happen to need some extra help with anything. I’m really proud of how responsive we’ve been during the pandemic.

“So, I’m looking forward to everything we’ve learned about virtual education and putting that in place in an environment that the more normal year I think been a game changer just in terms of our relationship with students and parents. I would say there are really exciting things happening on our high school campus too. We have a coordinator in place and a college career advisor who is implementing students’ internships and we’ll have more kids working in the community and getting the experience that they need for careers.”

School system will be implementing a intern program that will give students the opportunity



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to experience the workforce, preparing them for a future following their graduations.

“I’m so impressed with our students and they’re so smart and capable, and I think relevance is a big key to keeping them engaged and just giving them as many experiences as we can give them so that they can plan sooner,” Hau said.

“It saves parents money because

if they move on into college right after high school, they have a better focus for what they want to do and if they move on into the military or into a career field having those experiences help build those skills, like those life skills and personal relationship skills that they need to have. So, I think the great things for our kids is really working hard and getting them out there.”



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