

Vaughn Municipal Schools



2022

Earlier this month, the Journalism class asked the staff a set of five questions. These are the questions that each person was asked. Below the questions, you will see how each staff member responded.

1. What is one thing that went really well for you and your students?
What is one thing that you and your students can work on together?
2. How do you motivate your staff/students?
3. What are some of your expectations for next semester?
4. Can you describe your classroom/school in one word? And why?
5. What would your wish list be for this school if you could choose something?

Superintendent Lyndsey Padilla

As a superintendent, I work with both staff and students everyday. I would like to start off by saying that the students here at Vaughn Municipal Schools are very respectful and responsible.

Inside the classroom, I believe that all students need to work on their math skills in order to succeed. To help keep my staff and students motivated, I offer incentives, field trips, support, encouragement, empowerment, and shared decision making. Some of my expectations for next semester are to continue improving in all areas, such as better teaching, project based learning, emotional and social support for staff and students. If I were to describe Vaughn Schools in one word, it would be “Awesome” because we have a great staff at Vaughn schools as well as exceptional students. My wish list for this school is for all students to leave Vaughn Schools ready for any challenge that life throws at them, including being ready with life long skills.

Michael Velasquez (Counselor)

We are off to a great start. We moved the sixth grade students up to the high school building. The students and staff have really enjoyed the change. This is my second year here and it has been great that the students are more open with me and are coming in to visit with me more. Our staff here is pretty great. They are very self-motivated. A lot of time all the student needs is someone different to talk to them about the issue at hand and they see it in a different light. They are pretty self-aware. Next semester, we will be doing our summative assessments for our students in grades 3-8 and 11th grade. We expect to see growth in all areas. The students and staff have been hard at work covering the entire curriculum. This school is awesome. All the staff work great together as a team and are always ready to help out in any way possible. The students are a joy to be around and work with. I believe it would be very beneficial to our students if we could have a full-time social worker that would be present at the school. We have one that comes down once or twice a week and she does a great job, but it isn't like having one here all the time.

Principal LaQuita Wheeler

One thing that has gone well this year is having new staff and veteran staff working together to provide for the needs of students. Many changes happened before school started and the entire staff has worked hard to adjust and grow together. We also added some new class opportunities for students, which has been very exciting and good for students. Based on my experience and background, I have found that keeping staff and students motivated is of utmost importance. For staff, I feel like it is important to not only provide approval and appreciation through feedback, but also to empower them to step up and take on additional responsibility within the school. For next semester, I would like for us to continue the path we started for this school year. We need to sustain and improve on the high-quality education that we are providing for students. We have many new teachers and staff this year and they have had the first semester to become acclimated to Vaughn Schools. Change can sometimes be good, although I believe we need to continue to improve on what is already working well. If I had to describe our school in one word, it would be potential. There are so many great things going on here in Vaughn Schools, but the administration and staff are always striving to make things better for students. With this dedication, determination and the funding we have available, things will only improve as far as opportunities and facilities. My wishlist for this school would be to increase student enrollment. Vaughn has always been a small school district, but we had enough students to have sports and other programs for students to be involved in. If enrollment went back up, at least to what it was a few years ago, then student opportunities would increase as well. Sports and extra-curricular activities are such an integral part of a student's experiences in both middle and high school, and it would be amazing to implement.

Back to School
January 10th, 2023

Michael Velasquez (Athletic Director)

One thing that went really well for me and my students this year is the fact we are playing sports. We had our girls play with Corona for volleyball and did very well. We had a couple of our girls get all district honors, Aracely Caraveo (defensive specialist) and Jordan Perez (setter). As of today, we have boys and girls playing basketball with Corona. We also have our own middle school co-ed basketball team. One thing that my students and me can work on together is hopefully having more buy into playing sports. On the other hand, our staff here is pretty great. They are very self-motivated. Our students are also very great and at times all that is needed is just a little encouragement. Some of my expectations for next semester are hopefully next semester we can finish up strong in basketball and then on to track. If I could describe my school in one word it would be awesome. All the staff work great together as a team and are always ready to help out in any way possible. My wish list for this school would be to have enough students running track, and also getting the track resurfaced.

Mrs. Julie Sanchez (Math Interventionist)

One thing that went very well with me for this semester was building the intervention schedule. With this routine, I will be able to support kids with extra math time. One thing that I would like to work on with my students is making the best use of our time. I motivate my students/staff by positive relationships. My expectations for next semester is to cover more content. If I could describe my classroom in one word it would be intriguing. I want kids to be curious on how I teach and express things. My wish is for each student to realize how important they are, and to find value within themselves and believe in the opportunity of tomorrow.

Ms. Mariah Madrid (Pre-K)

One thing that went really well for my students is that they worked really hard on learning schedules and routines. They have also practiced using good manners everyday and are very respectful. We are still working on transitions together, but are making great progress. I motivate my students by singing a welcome song everyday and also do a daily emotion check. Once we are done, we talk about the day and how we are going to accomplish all of our daily tasks. My expectations for my class would be that the students are kind to others and are inclusive. I would also expect that their knowledge of writing and numbers improve, as they are already very smart. One way I would describe our classroom is "loving" because my students are very sweet and sensitive kids. Our school is awesome because we have amazing students and staff. My wish list for this school would be more options for individualized learning. Some children learn differently than others and incorporating different learning styles with kids might help to let the material stick easier.

Ms. Pam Roybal (Special Education)

As a special education teacher, one thing that went really well for me and my students was the transition to a new school and getting to know the staff and students. I motivate my students by showing the gains my students are making and they are capable of achieving more. Some of my expectations for next semester are for my students to show growth in their individual areas of need. If I could describe my classroom in one word it would be welcoming, because everyone (staff and students) have been so friendly and helpful.

Ms. Loretta Castillo (Student Council)

One thing that went well this year is that we were able to start a new Junior High Student Council. However, the drawback is that we need more time for meetings to plan for the year. In order to keep the students motivated, we try and offer as much activities as possible. Right now, we offer few activities. Hopefully by next year, we can offer more to our school. My expectations for next semester are to have more meetings to plan for activities such as spirit weeks, assemblies, projects, etc. One way I would describe my school and students is family. The members in the Student Council work together to get things done. We do what we can, when we can, together. My wish list for this school is to have more time and have more activities.

Mrs. Judith Byrd (Interventionist)

As a returning interventionist, one thing that went really well for my students and me is, for the most part, that all students work well and are diligent when working. However, after lunch sometimes they get a little sleepy. The way I motivate my students is with kind words, smiles, and words of encouragement! This semester I would love to do a book study. I would describe my school/classroom in one word as a Learning environment! When students are with me it's 100% learning. My wish list for this school would be a tunnel or skywalk between the high school building and the elementary building that is temperature controlled and wind free.

Mrs. Eva Owens (Kindergarten)

One thing that went really well for me and my students was the transition from one teacher to another. My students and I work very well together. I motivate my students by reminding them what they can achieve when they do well in and out of the school setting. My expectations for next semester are for the kindergarten students to continue with their self-motivation for learning and to start reading. If I could describe my classroom/school in one word, it would be "family" because we all work together regardless if it's staff with staff or staff with students. My wish list for this school year would be to have more students and for there to be more classes to offer since everyone has different learning styles.

Mrs. Michelle Abriol (1st & 2nd Grade)

In my class, I think that building relationships is by far the thing that went really well with me and my students. This makes our class work together with respect, being ready to accept rules and follow procedures in class. For me, motivating students in a fun manner makes their love of learning possible. I also use positive reinforcement by continuously giving praise and affirmation. We celebrate each little milestone because they have worked well in my class. I am expecting that we can expand more on our strengths and improve on our weaknesses. Next semester, we plan on reaching our goals and making the most out of it. I would describe my class by using the word combo. I am happy with what we have in school and believe that it is perfectly planned as it is. On the other hand, I am wishing that every lesson in this school year enriches everybody.

Ms. Deanne Garduno (5th Grade)

One thing that went really well for my students and I this semester was how they produced a lot of quality work. Even though they are doing great academically, one thing my students can work on is behavior. One way I motivate my students by encouraging them to meet their potential. I try to tell them something positive everyday. Some of my expectations for this semester are for my students to meet the higher standards I will set for them in the next semester. I would describe my classroom as fun loving. My students and I share a good laugh daily. My wish list would be to get a SMART board for the art classroom. I think a school marquee would be helpful for parents and other members of the community. We should have it placed right in front of the school.

Mrs. Florinda Gauna (EA)

This year I am working in the 1st and 2nd grade classroom alongside Mrs. Abriol. One thing that went really well for me and my students is that they are working on classroom management. This is helping with our learning process. The way I motivate my students is to give them incentives when they do well. Some of my expectations for next semester are that the students grow in their academics. In one word, I would describe my classroom as busy. Our students are young and are learning how to behave in a classroom. My wishlist is to learn educational strategies so that I can help the students more and in different ways.

Mrs. Kylie Crist (3rd Grade)

As a first year teacher here at Vaughn, one thing that went really well for my students and me was their reading performance and meeting their AR goals. One thing we can work on together is staying on task and completing our work. I motivate my students by using positive reinforcement and rewards for good behavior or improving scores. My expectation for next semester is to see improvement in test scores. Diverse is the word I'd use to describe my classroom because the students are all different in their own unique ways and may be at different levels academically, but we come together and learn together. One thing on my wish list for the school is a better way to have indoor recess during winter days.

Ms. Patricia Martinez (EA)

As an EA this year, I have more responsibilities added to my plate. One thing that went really well for me and my students was the Veterans Day Program. I really enjoyed it and so did the students. The students worked really hard and gave 100%. I would love for us to work on the students being a little more independent. I motivate my students and staff by coming into work with a positive attitude and a smile on my face. Some of my expectations for the next semester are to exceed their A.R. goals and learn to enjoy reading. One word I would describe my classroom as is "amazing" because our students are amazing. My wishlist for the school is to have more activities for the students during recess time.

Mr. Clinton Factora (HS Science)

In order to have a successful classroom, one thing that we work on is goals. Goals are very important things to have for my students. If you don't have goals in life then you have nothing to achieve. One way that I motivate my students is by building relationships. I believe that this is the first step. When we build relationships, we get to know each other, and always give them some verbal praises for success. We treat them as we would our own family. My top three expectations for next semester include that every student is responsible for their own actions, respect one another, and for students to be excited to learn. If I could describe my classroom and school in one word it is home. I say home because we know that a home is a place to live with family. This school is my home because each person I work with in this school has treated me like family. If I could have one thing on my school wish list, it would be new models of microscopes.



Ms. Papia Arora (HS ELA/Math)

In my classroom, I have taught my students to explore for 10 minutes at the beginning of class to improve any previous assignments or incomplete work on their own without having me to remind them. So far this has gone pretty well. Although the students are doing great in this area, I think that one thing that my students and I can work on together is to extensively use critical thinking and apply that in their expository writing to explain reasonableness. I keep my students motivated by giving them ownership of their own learning targets and to continuously improve their standards. I work with individual students to strengthen their skills and overcome their weaknesses with a growth mindset by maintaining respectful relationships. Some of my expectations for the next semester include better academic excellence for all learners than their present level. Students should be able to apply and extend their learning skills in all their daily life activities to become informed individuals of the global society. One word for my classroom is attainable. The classroom is organized with all required resources for meaningful learning. The daily schedule is planned to “Remember, Reinforcement, Reward” for achievable learning goals to become the better version of themselves than the previous day. For this school, I wish for some prescribed time for each class to develop some hobbies, and to engage students to be aware of current affairs around the globe.

Mr. Michael Alarid (HS History)

This semester has gone by so fast. One thing that went really well for me and my students this year is we learned about the Navajo Code Talkers and about Thomas H. Begay and his life’s journey as one of three code talkers still alive today. We also were fortunate enough to experience a presentation featuring Mr. Thomas H. Begay. For my students, I motivate them by setting high expectations and goals, and introducing my students to new historical concepts and ideas. For next semester, I would like my students to write more, so I will be assigning more essays and research papers. “Fantastic” is how I would describe my classroom/school because they are both an awesome and superb place of learning and growing as they become responsible citizens of our community. My wish list would be small because I believe we already have some of the best students and staff in New Mexico.



Mrs. Leslie Perez (HS Math/Agriculture)

It is really great to be back at Vaughn Municipal Schools. I am excited to be working with the high school students. Most of these students were my former preschool and kindergarten students, so it is wonderful to see them growing up and becoming who they are. The students and staff have been very welcoming to me and we have had a great nine weeks. I motivate my students by trying to provide positive encouragement as possible. I acknowledge student’s efforts and praise them, even when they achieve just a little progress. It is also a goal of mine to help my students see the reason why school is important and why they should try hard. One thing that helps with this is making learning as hands on as possible and connecting the lessons with the real world. The brain is naturally curious and once students understand the application of their learning in their life and how having the knowledge can help them later in life, they will become more motivated. My expectation for next semester is that the students and I continue to work hard and learn. One of the quotes I use in my math classes is “The only way to learn mathematics is to Do mathematics.” This really applies to all learning, but especially math. It is not a passive subject. I expect students to try their best and learn from their mistakes. It is important for them to understand that some of our best learning comes from our mistakes. One word to describe my classroom would be “busy”. There is lots to do and learn at the end of the hall. My wish for VMS is that we continue to be able to serve the children in the community.

Ms. Loretta Castillo (HS English)

As the semester winds down, I would like to reflect about what worked, what didn’t, and my expectations. One thing that went really well for me is how the classes were set up at the beginning of the year. This year my classes were smaller in size, so that the students and I can work on more of a one-on-one basis. I was also able to teach three electives. However, one thing that we can all work together on is staying on task and keeping up with our work. This can be a challenge, but I believe that we all can do this, including myself. I motivate the students in my class by having more engaging lessons, and some small incentives that are meaningful. I also encourage the students to try hard on their lessons. Throughout the class, I provide positive feedback. I believe that a student who hears how they are doing, gives them the confidence to keep going. My expectations for the next semester include higher test scores for I-Ready testing, more writing, and more engaging projects with the students. If I were to describe my classroom in one word, I would say that it is unpredictable. I only say this because even though I plan for lessons or activities, I never know what is going to happen. Conversation on topics can change, as well as the class itself. I can say though that we always get back on track and adjust to any changes for the day. My wish list for this school would include more educational field trips, assemblies, and more opportunities for students to explore their career path.