

DECEMBER 2019

# INSIDE WENATCHEE SCHOOLS

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Castle Rock Early Childhood Learning Center paraprofessional Lila Carta and Mario Farias, age 3, enjoy time together at the sensory table in a preschool classroom.

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Enjoying lunch during Summer School at Lincoln Elementary

**As the superintendent of the Wenatchee School District, I am writing to you with a vast amount of gratitude and appreciation for the warm, sincere welcome the district and community have afforded to my wife, Marianne, and me as we have started our new journey.** We are both so impressed with the individuals we have met and the incredible beauty of the valley. We both look forward to meeting more people and becoming ingrained in the community.

## Transition Plan

The Board tasked me with one goal after I was hired and that was to develop a comprehensive Transition Plan. I am very proud of this plan and the efforts we have put in place to achieve our ambitious theme of Listening, Learning and Leading. The first order of business was to work with our Board to develop operating norms and principles that would guide how we engage each other in our efforts to improve the academic and social-emotional outcomes for every student. District administration and the board came together on July 10 and created a path toward becoming a highly effective team: a team that respects the opinions and perspectives of every member; a team that treats everyone with dignity and respect; a team that holds each other accountable for performing our work at the policy level; a team that

respects the role of the Board and the role of staff. We were all very proud of the work we accomplished and more importantly we are proud that we are adhering to our agreements.

## Community Engagement

I have also been engaging our community in conversations about our school district.

**To date, I've met community leaders, staff, students, parents and have had the opportunity to speak to school staff at opening day, at service clubs, and cultural events such as Fiestas and Parque Padrinos Cherry Festival.**

I also made it a priority to visit each one of our schools on the first day to welcome children and parents to a new year. As part of my community engagement work, I'm Listening. Learning. Listening to our stakeholders' concerns, aspirations and visions for the future of learning and learning about our diverse community, our people, our history, our strengths and our challenges. As I go through this process, I'm collecting the feedback I receive and will look for overarching themes, topics and issues. A summary report of this data will be shared with the board and the community later this winter and will help inform our new strategic plan.



## Strategic Plan

Over the next year, we will be seeking to partner with our stakeholders on the development of a new strategic plan. We start sharpening our pencils for this work in January. Our community will be invited to participate in this survey to help us discover our district's strengths and challenges.

**Our new strategic plan will be done with you, not for you.**

In the spring, we'll lean in and offer intentional opportunities for you to help craft the direction of this new plan and be part of helping us clearly define and articulate our purpose.

This work will begin in earnest toward the beginning of spring with the creation of intentional opportunities for all of our community members to help develop and own our strategic plan. An effective strategic plan clearly articulates an organization's "Why", which allows us to ensure our "What" has the greatest impact because we are leaning in and toward our purpose.

## Diverse Voices Matter

One theme that has already surfaced during my listening sessions is the notion that the Wenatchee School District has so much potential.

In order for us to harness all of this potential, we need everyone. We need to hear your voice and your perspective. We need to work from a point of positive intent. We need to commit ourselves to work together to ensure every student has all the opportunities to become who they want to become.

Thank you for your strong support of our school district. Together, we can turn potential into excellence for every student, every day, in every classroom.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Paul Gordon

**We need to hear your voice and your perspective.**



Hearing from our Migrant-Bilingual Parent Committee (PAC)



Speaking with staff during opening day



Phoenix Woods, and Amarius, Diaz, and Amelia Brown practice stacking magnetic tiles in the Leap style classroom program.



## CASTLE ROCK INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL PROGRAM BENEFITS ALL KIDS

One can't help but smile when walking down the halls of Castle Rock Early Childhood Learning Center. The sounds of laughter and learning fill every corner of the school. Four years ago the Wenatchee School District consolidated preschool services upon construction of the school which shares a parking lot with Washington Elementary. Both buildings were built through a capital bond in 2014.

The new building has created enhanced learning spaces for students and supports the school's unique developmental preschool model. Half of the 150 students that attend the school have disabilities. "We're all preschool, with tiny chairs, sinks, and toilets," the difference is that we offer an integrated model in our classrooms," says Trisha Craig, Wenatchee School District Special Education Director. A full inclusion model advances the idea of having all students, regardless of disabilities, learning together as part of the general education classroom. All preschool classes at Castle Rock are inclusive.

In the last year, the Castle Rock team added a new type of inclusive preschool experience





that is modeled after an evidence-based program for children with autism called LEAP. LEAP is an educational program in which small groups of children on the autism spectrum are taught alongside a small number of typically developing children. The program is based on the idea that children on the autism spectrum will learn better in integrated settings alongside their typically developing peers, provided that those peers have been taught how to help them.

*The goal of the inclusive Castle Rock preschool program is to help both children with autism and typically developing children reach their full potential while preparing them for kindergarten.*

When we remove children with disabilities from the classroom they don't have the opportunity to practice skills like sharing, playing and lining up in a natural environment, Craig explained. The inclusive model provides an opportunity for students with autism to develop those skills.

Research suggests this inclusive approach may be an effective way to improve the social communication skills of some preschool children on

...continued on pg 6



Teacher Katie Hupp, reads a story to her class during carpet time.



Caleb Kunz, age 4, sports a super smile during superhero day at Castle Rock.

the autism spectrum. “Research is saying that one of the strongest predictors of reading by third grade is your social skills. When it came to our students we really had to step back and say, is our main goal to get them to learn their whole entire alphabet or is our main goal to get them to be social peers; to engage with other students, to sit down and attend to an activity, to participate in an activity,” said Craig.

Castle Rock currently offers two sessions of their LEAP style inclusive preschool program with 10 peers and five autistic children. “It’s really exciting because our autism specialist Heidi Schroeder and teacher, Wendy Graves, are already seeing some really exciting things with their children socially. It’s promising as we work to prepare them for kindergarten,” says Amy Evitt, Castle Rock’s Early Childhood Coordinator. Typically developing “peers” are making gains in learning as well. In addition to academic learning, peers are developing leadership and communication skills as well as empathy by being buddied up with autistic students.

I think every parent wants their kid to be included and to have friends and to make progress. And I think when you hear, “My child has a disability at a young age,” you go to a place where you’re not sure that’s going to be the case,” said Craig. “I think intentionally teaching those skills with peers, every parent can see those skills and that’s what they want for their child.”

For information on the Castle Rock Early Childhood Learning Center go to  
**[wenatcheeschools.org/cp](http://wenatcheeschools.org/cp)**



# New Summer School Experience Develops STEM and Leadership Skills in Migrant Students



By: Shelly Jelsing  
Pioneer Middle School  
MTSS/Instructional Coach  
Migrant/Bilingual Summer School Principal 6-12

For many of our Migrant students, the month of August was spent exploring opportunities. Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) helped them develop leadership skills and education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) through a summer school program developed by the District.

Incoming 6th-grade students were given the opportunity to team up with Wenatchee Valley College's Continuing Education Department and get hands-on with 3D learning and technology using Nintendo Switch to build virtual reality through Nintendo Lab kits. They flew drones and immersed themselves in the engineering of airplanes and flight by navigating drones through a complex obstacle course.

11th-grade Migrant students partnered with Wenatchee Valley College's College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The CAMP Program enriched the students' learning with leadership activities to assist them in seeing their potential with goal setting. WVC's CAMP program empowers students by helping them build a strong foundation to assist them as they transition to college. The students were also able to connect with the Central Washington University GEAR UP program in the area of STEM to further their knowledge through projects in the Wenatchee community. In addition to the leadership and STEM skills gained through this summer experience, students earned two high school credits and gained momentum to start the new school year with rigor and grit.



Students operate drones through an obstacle course on the Wenatchee Valley College





# MEDICAL OCCUPATIONS, A PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

The U.S. is projected to experience a shortage of healthcare workers that is expected to intensify as Baby Boomers age and the need for health care grows. The impending shortage of public health workers has been a major topic of conversation over the last decade. Locally, Career and Technical Education offerings like Wenatchee High School's Medical Occupations program are working to create authentic learning experiences for students to become exposed to a breadth of in-demand medical career pathways.

Students enrolled in Medical Occupations can earn upwards of 10 -13 college credits and their Washington State Certified Nursing Assistant License while learning valuable medical skills. "Our program prepares students to sit for the Certified Nursing Assistant State Board exam which is a pretty big deal for high school students," says Mitzi Southard, medical occupations instructor. Through the program, they [students] develop technical and communication skills and build confidence through clinical experience and real-world delivery of care in the community and with the geriatric population.

Southard started her career as a nurse in 1992 working in various aspects of nursing from floor to administration and even private vocational training. She taught for Wenatchee Valley College for a period before joining the staff at Wenatchee High School as the Medical Occupations teacher in 2013. "It's so rewarding to watch these young minds... just expand," explained Southard.

*"Our program prepares students to sit for the Certified Nursing Assistant State Board exam which is a pretty big deal for high school students,"*

"I'm having so much fun, helping them explore different avenues for what they want to do. What a great thing to do when you're still in high school." A public health workforce shortage is an issue that has long been at the forefront of the health care industry. Local employers who are experiencing the pinch of a tight labor market like Confluence Health are taking innovative approaches to fill the gaps. Confluence Health has created a variety of unique Career Connected Learning opportunities for students to get an inside look at jobs with the hope of cultivating their own local talent.

Despite changes in patient privacy laws that have made access to observation and learning experiences difficult in a clinical setting, Confluence Health has risen to the challenge, developing events and partnerships with schools that deliver high-quality learning. Casey Vogt, Confluence Health Student Services Coordinator, is in charge of all student activities from high school to medical school. Together Vogt and Southard have developed a number of different ways to do clinical rotations, tours, and hands-on learning. "We've done a heart dissection with students and had them go into an operating room," explained Vogt. Confluence also offers two Careers After School events each year that highlight different career paths and coordinate the Confluence Mentor Program which pairs students with staff. "It's been kind of a fun challenge to try to figure out what we can do and to see staff get really engaged and being able to show what they do, said Vogt.



The Confluence Health mentor program, now in its 20th year, is starting to see employees who went through the mentorship program in high school volunteer to become mentors. “We definitely see the return on investment and this is a great example of how we’re trying to grow our talent,” said Vogt. Confluence has created an environment that is open, welcome and supportive of learning and sees the value of investing in the workforce of the future.

The program is making an impact from a student’s perspective too. “Medical Occupations gives students an edge and competitive advantage,” Southard points out recalling a former student’s story. “I had a student who was doing a college visit observe a class where they were discussing disease processes and the professor asked the class a specific question and no one knew the answer except her and she was in the back going “I know, I know!”.

“We’re going to need these kids in 10-15 years working in healthcare positions. And so if we’re not starting them now, then we’re just wasting time,” says Vogt.

### Medical Occupations Program Information

Average class size: 50

Offered at WHS 1st and 2nd semester

Open to juniors and seniors

Students can earn 10-13 credits of college-level course work which is articulated with Wenatchee Valley College.

Students can sit for the Certified Nursing Assistant State Board Exam

For more information about the medical occupations program email Mitzi Southard at [southard.m@wenatcheeschools.org](mailto:southard.m@wenatcheeschools.org) or speak to a high school counselor.

### Confluence Health Career Connected Learning

Medical Occupation Student Tours and Rotations

Sports Medicine Tours and Rotations

Other High School and Middle School Tours

Caring Student Intern (CSI) Camp for 14 and 15-year-olds

Confluence Health High School Mentor Program

Scholarships for High School Students

Interview Prep and Mock Interviews for High School Students

For more information about Confluence Health career connected learning programs contact Casey Vogt at [Casey.Vogt@confluencehealth.org](mailto:Casey.Vogt@confluencehealth.org)



PHOTOS: 1. At Careers After School students were able to control the di Vinci surgery robot with the guidance of surgeons and nursing staff. 2. Casey Vogt and Mitzi Southard. 3. Students drill into simulated bone and hammer in pins during a Careers After School event. 4. Looking over the instruments used during surgery. These tools are cleaned and prepared by a skilled team of professionals.



# MEET NEW SRO JARED SHEPARD



SROs Officer Jared Reinfeld (left) and Officer Jared Shepard (right)

New Student Resource Officer (SRO) Jared Shepard reported for duty with the Wenatchee School District on October 1. In August the school board approved adding the second SRO position, taking the city of Wenatchee up on its offer to split the costs of two officers.

SROs are members of the law enforcement community who teach, counsel, and protect the school community. When SROs are integrated into a school system, the benefits go beyond reduced violence in schools. The officers often build relationships with students while serving as a resource to students, teachers, and administrators to help solve problems. Keeping our young people safe and healthy is a prime motivator for all of us. And properly trained school resource officers can play an important role in creating a school community where young people thrive and are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



**Q. Tell us about your personal history.**

My family and I moved to Wenatchee from Nebraska after being a Deputy Sheriff for five years. I've been an officer with the Wenatchee Police Department since July 2016. My family and I enjoy the outdoors and Wenatchee is a beautiful place for outdoor recreation. We spend a great deal of time walking on the trail and enjoying all that the community has to offer.

**Q. When did you become involved in law enforcement?**

I always wanted to go into law enforcement and even took some classes in high school, however, I never took the steps to fully pursue a career as an officer. I was a waterfowl guide and a friend of mine was a deputy sheriff, he encouraged me to apply for an open position and that's how I got started.

**Q. What made you decided to become a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the school district?**

When the Wenatchee Police Department started talking with the school district about adding a second SRO I talked to Officer Jared Reinfeld about this job as the current SRO. I've done a lot of patrol work over the last eight years so this would be a shift for me. Jared painted the position as one with great potential. I've worked with Special Olympics and enjoy working with youth. The SRO position is a good fit for me because it's all about forming bonds and developing relationships with kids. I'm excited to part of helping to enhance the role of law enforcement in the eyes of our students and community as one that's not just about enforcing the law, it's about people.

**Q. What are your goals as a School Resource Officer?**

There are a lot of people that I need to get to know and my number one goal is to meet everyone from administrators to students and staff. I also need to become familiar with the layouts of our schools and really be visible.

**Q. How will you work together with Officer Reinfeld?**

Right now I'm learning from him through shadowing and observation. We'll be working in tandem to develop a system and respond to the needs of the district. We're collaborating on the work to be done and will be partnering with our schools closely to develop safety plans that create safe school environments.

**Q. How will you spend your time?**

Officer Reinfeld and I will be working closely with the schools to develop a system that works best for all involved. I think the ultimate goal is to provide all schools in the district with consistent SRO presence and we hope to accommodate that as best we can. There is a lot of engagement and outreach that needs to happen, I think that's something that not everyone is aware of. As law enforcement officers, we spend a great deal of time doing community engagement— It's an important part of our jobs.

**Q. Any final thoughts?**

I'm excited to be part of the Wenatchee School District and to enhance student safety, which is a priority for our community. I'm happy that Wenatchee PD was able to enter into a partnership with the District to fund a second SRO to provide proactive law enforcement services.

# COYOTE COMFORT CLOSET:

## Care and Compassion for Lincoln Elementary Students and Families

In a quiet corner of Lincoln Elementary, staff is busy stockpiling and organizing supplies. "There is a little bit of everything here," says Lincoln 3rd grade teacher Kristina Mason as she points to shelves full of clothes, cleaning supplies, and toiletries. The corner, lovingly named the Coyote Comfort Closet, was created to fill learning gaps that students were experiencing due to unmet basic needs.

Lincoln has a high percentage of students in poverty who may have difficulty finding adequate food, housing, hygiene, and clothing.

**"There was definitely a corner here in our school that wasn't being utilized in its fullest potential,"** explains Mason. After seeing a story about a school on the East coast that had a closet full of supplies for kids, Mason started making plans for the closet at Lincoln and launched it during the 2018-2019 school year.

Starting with the most immediate needs first, Mason recruited Lincoln's Office Manager, Flor Mendoza and Family Advocate, Francine Alvarado to collect basic supplies, like toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, and shampoo. The trio quickly realized that while there were needs among students, there were also unmet household needs for families for things such as cleaning

supplies, clothing, food, feminine hygiene products, diapers, and wipes.

The Coyote Comfort Closet has created a unified way to support Lincoln's families. Community organizations, churches, businesses, and the Lincoln PTA have all stepped in to help stock the shelves. "This way nobody falls through the cracks. Everybody is served and we can help families when needs arise," said Mason. An important aspect of the Closet is serving families with dignity. Many families that would not otherwise feel comfortable asking for help from outside agencies feel a level of trust with school staff and have utilized the comfort closet. This school year, the team is focusing on increasing their food supply. Non-perishable foods for family meals and kid-friendly items such as peanut butter and jelly are high on their list of requests.

Open every other Tuesday after school, students and families can shop for up to five non-food items at a time. There is no limit to the amount of food they can take. Lincoln staff can also refer students to the closet for support by filling out an online form. "A teacher might notice a student walking down the hall and their shoes are falling apart. Once they fill out the form, the three of us get a notification and the student is quietly called out of class. They come down and pick out a new pair of shoes. It's super easy," says Mason.

The staff says the small things like a toothbrush, comb or deodorant make a big impact on how the students feel about themselves. "You can see it in their face, they're going to feel successful in the classroom when they feel good about their appearance," says Mendoza.

The motivation to keep growing and expanding Lincoln's Coyote Comfort closet comes in the form of smiles and the knowledge that students are being cared for. "When the kids feel important, they feel appreciated, they feel like they matter. And that's important because they do matter," exclaimed Mendoza.

Donations to the Coyote Comfort Closet can be made at Lincoln Elementary during school hours or by contacting the school at 509.663.5710. Lincoln Elementary families and students can access the closet by contacting the school's office.

**PHOTO:** Kristina Mason, Francine Alvarado and Flor Mendoza stand inside the Coyote Comfort Closet.





# District Receives 120K in State and Federal Funding to Serve Increasing Homeless Population

Wenatchee School District's student homeless population is growing. During the 18-19 school year, McKinney-Vento Liaison Suzanne Stanton served over 530 students who were experiencing a housing transition. Based on preliminary estimates, that number is expected to increase. Compounding the issue is a housing crisis in the Wenatchee valley. Stanton applied for and was awarded \$120,000 in state and federal grants to expand McKinney-Vento services. These funds will also support the hiring of a bilingual McKinney-Vento liaison to meet the needs of this growing population and improve educational outcomes for children and youth.

The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless. The act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

"When students experience non-stable housing, it creates fear in them. They wonder where are they going to go to school? How are they going to see their friends? How are they going to get to school? It creates real-life fears which act as a barrier to their academic learning," explained Stanton.

Through the McKinney-Vento program students are supported with more than just resources, they're able to access transportation, school supplies, clothing, school fee payment assistance, graduation support, hygiene products, and food. Through the act, students can also continue to attend their school of origin regardless of their current transitional housing location until they are situated in stable housing. For many students experiencing homelessness, school is the one stable consistent thing in their lives.

Carmela Solorio was recently hired as the bilingual McKinney-Vento liaison. Solorio has worked for the District for over 10 years as the migrant records clerk where she worked closely with families who qualified for McKinney-Vento services. "I'm excited to get to work," said Solorio. "Over the years I've created relationships with school personnel and in the community. I look forward to implementing some new ideas and ways to assist families."

The McKinney-Vento law puts students' educational needs first, explains Stanton. Over the last 17 years, she has created a network of community agencies such as the Women's Resources Center, Serve Wenatchee Valley, churches and shelters to make connections and leverage resources for students and families in need.



**McKinney-Vento Liaisons Carmela Solorio (left) and Suzanne Stanton (right)**

## Special thanks to the following groups for their financial support of the McKinney-Vento program:

- Women's Service League
- Chelan-Douglas School Retirees' Association
- Apple Valley Kiwanis
- Wenatchee Valley Follies Guild
- Confluence Health
- Windermere Foundation
- And many numerous individuals and organizations



## COURAGEOUS CARE: WHS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL STUDENT NEEDS

**The social-emotional wellbeing of our students is foundational to their ability to learn. When students feel safe and supported learning can flourish.** This fall, Wenatchee High School (WHS) staff acted courageously to help identify students who may be struggling with mental health. By partnering with local behavioral health agencies, the school conducted an optional Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ) with the freshman class.

“We’re looking at the whole person, we’re here to help establish care, both academic and social,” said WHS Assistant Principal Molly Butler of the collaborative effort. After conducting a pilot survey with WHS students during the 2018-2019 school year, WHS staff joined the efforts of the Confluence Health Suicide Prevention Coalition of NCW (SPCNCW) to bring risk prevention to

their school. A screening workgroup was formed with partnerships from Eastmont High School, Catholic Charities, Children’s Home Society, Columbia Valley Community Health, and Confluence Health Behavioral Health to begin planning a one-day screening of the freshman class. This project directly supports the social-emotional work happening at WHS and across the Wenatchee School District.

The freshman class was chosen because their 8th-grade data from the Healthy Youth Survey indicated that students were struggling in silence. The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) is a statewide survey that provides important information about the health of adolescents in Washington. “Based on the HYS data, we realized there was a real problem and we needed to intervene and create a system in schools that points to mental health



concerns and creates a supportive, trusting environment,” explained Dr. Julie Rickard, Director of SPCNCW. Rickard helped to coordinate and align social services and healthcare providers to assist with the screening.

The screening happened in late September, with 233 of the 580 total freshmen completing the questionnaire. The PHQ used for the screening is considered a best practice tool that is routinely given out in doctor’s offices as a way to recognize symptoms of depression. While the questionnaire is not diagnostic, if someone has a positive screener on the PHQ it is an indicator that further evaluation is needed. Clinicians and social services staff from local agencies were on hand to help facilitate the PHQ and provide on-site support or referral services for students identified as needing additional support. Confidentiality and trust were significant considerations by the team of professionals as they interacted with students and parents.

“We need to normalize the conversation with our kids around mental health”, said WHS social services specialist Bob Sanford. Both Sanford and Rickard would like to see mental health screening become as routine as vision and hearing screenings in schools. According to Rickard, this was the first time in the state that a PHQ had been administered to a student group of this size. It

**“WE NEED TO  
NORMALIZE THE  
CONVERSATION  
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AROUND MENTAL  
HEALTH”**

was also the first-time local agencies had collaborated on a project of this scale. “These agencies believed in this vision, and the students commented on how supported they felt during the process. As for the staff at WHS, they were so dedicated and willing to push the bar for the good of kids,” said Rickard.

The staff at WHS believed in the why behind social-emotional learning and were involved in supporting and encouraging students to participate in the PHQ. “This was hard, and we as a building acted courageously. There were plenty of opportunities for us not to do this,” explained WHS Assistant Principal Donna Moser. While the group felt that the PHQ was a tremendous success, they did experience a range of emotions. **“AT THE END OF THE DAY, I WAS EMOTIONAL. WE WERE ABLE TO PROACTIVELY REACH STUDENTS THAT WOULD NOT HAVE COME TO US OR WOULD HAVE TAKEN US A LONG TIME TO FIND,”** said Sanford.

“This is critically important to us. Our kids need services and together we’re able to fill that gap,” said WHS Principal Eric Anderson. The WHS administration and agency partners are actively working together to continue to strengthen social-emotional supports and systems for Wenatchee students while creating a culture of safety, trust, and care.



Social services specialist Bob Sanford, Assistant Principal Molly Butler, Assistant Principal Donna Moser, and other school personnel preparing for the screener.



# awards & recognition

## Lopez Receives National Recognition for State Principal of the Year Award

Lewis and Clark Elementary Principal Alfonso López was honored in Washington D.C. as part of the National Distinguished Principal of the Year program, which is sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education.

López was named this year's Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington, a component of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). All state winners participated in a series of events and activities at the nation's capital over the course of two days, culminating in a formal awards banquet.

López was recognized along with delegates from 49 states and two international school delegates from

Ecuador and Panama. During an address to fellow delegates, López stated: "I am thankful to work

in the Wenatchee School District, a place that believes in diversity and supports our need to prepare students to become citizens of the world by teaching them two languages." He later met United States Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and briefly discussed the importance of bilingual programs as an asset for students. López invited DeVos to drop by his school the next time she was in Washington state.







López shakes hands with United States Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos after hearing her speak at the White House.

López's career at Lewis and Clark is like a storybook tale, from Para-Professional to Principal. His leadership has been instrumental in the success of his dual-language school, and this award truly represents his devotion and commitment to the staff, students and parents at Lewis and Clark.

A highlight of his experience in D.C. was meeting principals from around the country and sharing experiences and challenges faced by school leaders. "This opportunity helped me put my job into perspective and has made me a better principal," said López. Connecting with

award-winning principals reinforced the importance of developing school leaders for López. "I have an unbelievable team in Wenatchee and at Lewis and Clark. It's amazing what we can do together when we have a shared vision of what we want to accomplish."

López hopes to continue creating awareness of the benefits of dual-language through his platform as Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year. He will be speaking at several state and national conferences on bilingual education and will continue serving on the State's Steering Committee on bilingual education.



## WHS Senior Elizabeth Tchitchkan Named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

Wenatchee High School senior Elizabeth Tchitchkan has been named as a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist. Award semifinalists had the highest scores on the 2018 PSAT, a test taken by 1.5 million juniors this past year.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) was established in 1955 — a time in which there was concern that the United States was lagging behind in the cold war scientific race, but the public was indifferent to rewarding intellectual accomplishment. In response, the National Merit Scholarship Program was founded to identify and honor scholastically talented American youth and to encourage them to develop their abilities to the fullest. Through this nationwide competition, National Merit Scholarships are awarded to program Finalists and Special Scholarships are awarded to other high performing participants who meet a corporate sponsor's eligibility criteria.



## Wenatchee Recognized as National Board Accomplished District

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards unveiled a new program that recognizes school districts across the country that work hard to promote student learning through accomplished teaching. The National Board Accomplished Districts program will initially honor 81 districts in which at least 20% of its teachers have achieved National Board certification, encouraging teachers to be their best and effectively driving student learning.

Wenatchee School District was recognized for having 20% of teaching staff who have earned National board certification. That equates to approximately 110 out of 553 certificated teachers. National Board certification is the highest and most rigorous certification process for teaching in the nation.

## Mariachi Huenachi Receives Top Univision Seattle Latin Music Award

Mariachi Huenachi was honored in August at the Univision Seattle Latin Music Awards. Director Ramon Rivera says they were up for the Best Song of the Year, an award they won last year, but didn't claim that particular award.

"This year, because of all the community work that we do, we perform nationwide and represent Washington State, they gave us the Salon de Fama, which means Hall of Fame Award which is the biggest award that they give in this ceremony," said Rivera

Rivera says they were unaware that they would win the award which is determined by some of the top Latino musicians in the state.

Six members of the band went to Seattle with Rivera for the awards and he says they figured, after they lost for Best Mariachi Song, they would just enjoy the show.

"When we did not receive the honor of the Best Song of the Year and we got the Hall of Fame Award, we were just floored. The kids were so excited. We were on Cloud Nine to be chosen as the top award at this ceremony with the best musicians in the state there. Also to be featured on TV on the Univision Network is just unreal."

Wenatchee High School Junior, Angela Blanco,  
Vice President of Mariachi Huenachi





# BUS DRIVERS NEEDED



## **Driving the bus is a great part-time job.**

Wenatchee School District is hiring bus drivers and substitute bus drivers. Bus driving is a rewarding experience that is ideal for retirees, parents with children in our school district or anyone looking for additional income.

## **Benefits of Driving**

- Flexible schedule
- School holidays & vacations off
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- Competitive wages

**Apply online at [wenatcheeschools.org/transportation](http://wenatcheeschools.org/transportation)**

Wenatchee School District Transportation Department  
Phone: (509) 662-6168



# Notice Of School Board Opening and Application Process

The Wenatchee School Board is currently accepting applications from interested candidates for the board position #5 vacated by Sarah Knox. Knox resigned from her position on the Board in November after accepting a position in Seattle and relocating.

In a written statement to the Board, Knox stated, "Amazing things are going to be happening in Wenatchee schools, and while I selfishly wanted to be a part of them, I know that our schools are in incredible hands with our staff. I hope that the board takes this opportunity to build a board that more adequately reflects the diversity in our valley. Thank you for the growth opportunities I have had in the past two years and I look forward to following the achievements and growth of our great schools."

Applicants must be United State citizens and registered voters residing within the district boundaries to qualify as valid candidates. Applications will be accepted until filled or otherwise noted and may be turned into the Wenatchee School District central office at 235 Sunset Ave. Applicants will be contacted regarding the interview process timeline.

The board will appoint one of the candidates to serve the remainder of Knox's term which expires in November 2022.

More information about the Wenatchee School  
District Board of Directors and application  
materials are available at  
[wenatcheeschools.org/board](http://wenatcheeschools.org/board)





Former school board member Sarah Knox enjoys tea with a preschool students at Castle Rock during a board visit.

# 8th Grader Makes a Difference at the Bruce Hotel

by Laurel Turner



Wyatt Kinnebrew is an 8th grader at Foothills Middle School and has been educating and entertaining the kids at the Bruce House since spring. The former Bruce Hotel, now the Bruce House at 206 Palouse St. was purchased by the Women's Resource Center in 1993 to house homeless single people and families. Since then, it's become a safe haven for victims of domestic abuse and people whose lives have been shattered by drugs, alcohol and mental health problems. Others find themselves without a home due to loss of job, loss of income and medical problems. It's been a safe harbor for thousands of children while their parents find their way.



It started out as a 7th-grade social studies class assignment in which the students were asked to "make a difference" by helping in the community. When asked why Wyatt chose the Bruce for his assignment he responded "I knew I wanted to help animals, children, or the homeless. After talking it over with my mom and learning about service organizations in Wenatchee, we decided to talk with Mrs. Turner about helping the children at the Bruce House. I thought that would be a way to serve two out of the three groups I wanted to help." Monthly, Wyatt (and family) bring snacks and lead a fun science project with the kids. They have made slime, elephant toothpaste, magic milk, and stress balls. Making slime was a big hit, so next on the agenda is glow in the dark slime and then glitter slime. The class is long over but Wyatt chooses to come back because as he puts it "I like the way I feel when I help others. I enjoy making the kids happy. Seeing the kids smile and have fun, knowing that I've made a difference in their lives, even if it's just a small one."

Laurel Turner is the Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center. The Women's Resource Center of North Central Washington provides individuals and families experiencing poverty and homelessness with the housing and services.





## Wenatchee High School **PANTHER HOUSE**



## **SUPPORT WHS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN NEED**



The Panther House provides resources to WHS students and families when they need it most. Donations of food and **new items** including: toiletries, clothing, backpacks and school supplies are accepted. Cash donations are also greatly appreciated and help pay student fees, transportation costs and misc. expenses.

### **HOW TO DONATE**

**Online:** Fill out the donation form at website below

**In-person:** Drop off items at WHS Main Office

**Cash Donations:** Make in person at WHS ASB Office

**WENATCHEE HIGH SCHOOL**  
509-663-8117  
[WENATCHEESCHOOLS.ORG/WHS/THE-PANTHER-HOUSE](http://WENATCHEESCHOOLS.ORG/WHS/THE-PANTHER-HOUSE)



## **School Board Kicks off Community Conversations Series with School Facilities Discussion**

In October the School Board held their first two community conversations on the topic of school facilities. Community Conversations is an event series created by the Wenatchee School District to better listen and understand the underlying values, concerns, and priorities of district residents, school families, students, and staff.

Board members attend the conversations and take notes and listen in a small group style setting. The Board and district administration can use feedback and data collected during these conversations to aid future planning efforts and policy.

The Community Conversations series is hosted in Wenatchee schools and at local community venues quarterly. The School Board and administration will provide updates about the school district and pose questions about various topics for stakeholder input. Community Conversations are free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served and translations services will be made available.

### **Upcoming Community Conversations**

**January 2020** - Social-Emotional Learning

**April 2021** - Post Secondary Pathways

More information on the  
Community Conversation series is  
available at [wenatcheeschools.org](http://wenatcheeschools.org)



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Our electronic newsletter  
WSD Weekly includes  
a roundup of news,  
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## Sign up at [bit.ly/31kAid7](https://bit.ly/31kAid7)

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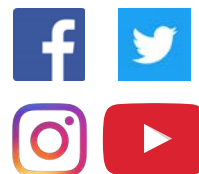
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### **WSD Vision:**

We envision a Wenatchee renowned for making education personal and a local culture that values learning and committed to success for all.

### **Purpose Statement:**

Our purpose is preparing students with the knowledge and skills for life in the 21st Century. Our goal is to create student-centered learning environments, nurture and inspire innovation and creativity, create flexibility within structure, and nurture collaborative relationships that inspire learning.

### **Wenatchee School Board:**

Laura Jaecks - Vice President, Board Position #01  
Vacant - Board Position #02  
Martin Baron - President, Board Position #03  
Michele Sandberg, MD - Board Position #04  
Vacant - Board Position #05

### **Superintendent:**

Dr. Paul Gordon  
(509) 663-8161  
[gordon.paul@wenatcheeschools.org](mailto:gordon.paul@wenatcheeschools.org)

Inside Wenatchee Schools is a newspaper published quarterly by the Office of Communication and Community Engagement, Diana Haglund Editor (509) 663-8161.

The Wenatchee 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 have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX Coordinator, Section 504 Mark Helm, Assistant Superintendent  
Civil Rights Compliance and ADA Coordinators Mark Helm, Assistant Superintendent (for students) [helm.m@wenatcheeschools.org](mailto:helm.m@wenatcheeschools.org) Kelly Lopez, Executive Director of Human Resources (for staff) [lopez.k@wenatcheeschools.org](mailto:lopez.k@wenatcheeschools.org) 235 Sunset Ave, Wenatchee WA, 98801 (509-663-8161).