

# Wenatchee Learns Special Edition

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY



April 2016

# INSIDE

## WENATCHEE SCHOOLS

*Dentro de Wenatchee Escuelas Públicas está disponible en español.*



Wenatchee School District Superintendent Brian Flones with kindergartners at Columbia Elementary School.

A community and school district advisory team then took these change ideas and developed the Wenatchee Learns vision. The vision has four strategies and sixteen benchmark objectives to guide our work. The major strategies and objectives include:

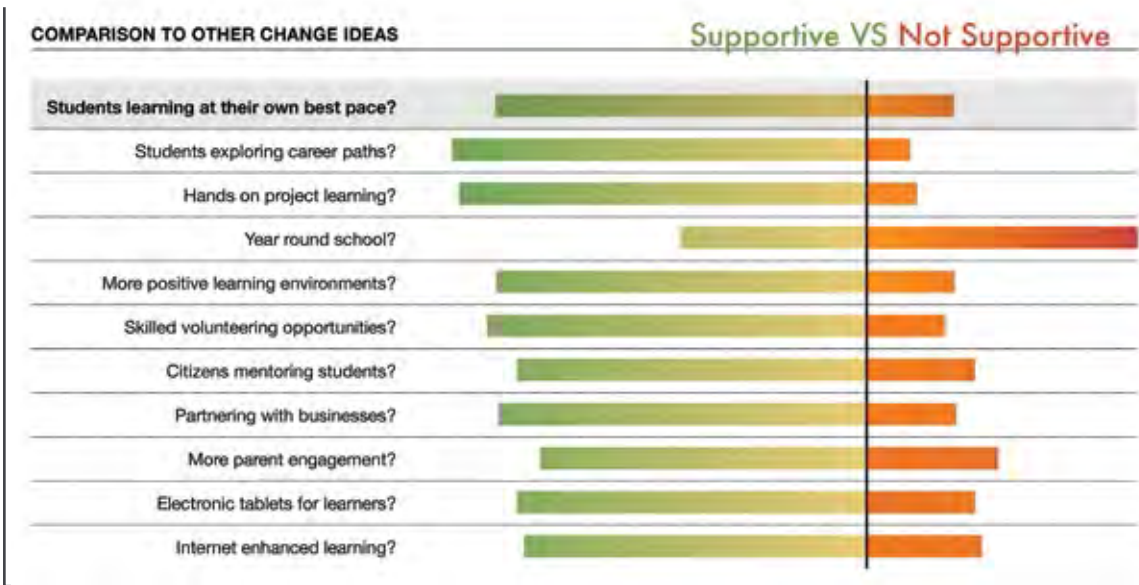
1. Designing the personalized learning system of the future to include flexible learning schedules, authentic learning opportunities through STEAM and Project Based Learning, and expanding career awareness opportunities to all students.
2. Tapping the power of our whole community by creating a Partnership Center (Wenatchee Learns Connect) that will expand opportunities for business partnerships, volunteering in schools, citizen mentoring, student internships/job shadows, parent engagement, and student volunteering and service projects.
3. Utilizing technology to create a digital platform that will enhance personalized learning through 1:1 devices for students, online and blended learning models, and moving towards digital and open source curriculum materials.
4. Balancing Change for All with Excellence for All by improving our customer service and work processes, providing sound fiscal and human resource management to ensure that resources are aligned to our vision, making sure that our students are college and career ready when they graduate, and having a highly trained and engaged staff.

Our journey is underway to create a 21st century learning environment for our students. A learning

### A Letter From Superintendent Flones

FOUR YEARS AGO WE BEGAN OUR QUEST TO INVOLVE OUR COMMUNITY IN ONE OF THE biggest stakeholder engagement processes ever attempted in our community. The result of those efforts was the birth of Wenatchee Learns, a unique and futuristic approach to local education that includes the voices of everyone who lives, works or studies here. It brings students, citizens and learning professionals together to design the future of learning, and to participate in building and supporting that future.

In this special edition of Inside Wenatchee Schools, we are excited to share with you the progress we have made on the major change ideas that were identified by our community. The following graph outlines the level of support for the change ideas that were submitted:



environment that is moving away from the barriers and restraints of the industrial model of education to a learning environment that will transform the manner in which we deliver education to our students. You will read updates from our staff that include examples of our progress and highlights of the incredible work being done by our students. You will see creativity, innovation and real world examples of students work in solving problems and creating new opportunities for learning in the 21st century.

As you read through the stories and information, I would ask you to stop and reflect on the work we have accomplished in the last three years, and then provide us with feedback on how we are doing. Your voice is important

to us and we ask that you please provide your comments in writing on the mail-in postcard, or go online to provide your comments. Online sharing will allow you to see the results and stay involved in the prioritization of ideas.

We appreciate your support in helping us to create a personalized learning environment that will help to ensure success for all students.

Thank you.

*Brian Flones*

Superintendent  
Wenatchee School District

# INSIDE WENATCHEE SCHOOLS

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Strategy One: Design the Personalized Learning System of the Future.

Create a flexible learning model where students learn at the level of their ability – not age or grade – as they work to meet learning standards.

Wenatchee High School Studies  
New Schedule

⌘ Status: In Process

By Eric Anderson, Principal, Wenatchee High School

When the state recently increased the graduation requirements to 24 credits we, as a district, found we were not prepared to immediately apply this change in a manner that would meet the needs of our students properly. Because we desire to implement the increased credit requirement with thoughtful intention, we requested and were granted a two-year waiver. With the extension, the focus zeroed in on having a complete system in place for the graduating class of 2021. A volunteer staff committee has begun the process of creating a new bell schedule that provides students an opportunity to earn more than the required 24 credits beginning the 2017-2018 school year and includes the following priorities:

- Provide a system for intervention and extension
- Define the school day in a way not constrained by days and minutes
- Provide many alternative learning opportunities for students
- Connected relationships between students and adults
- Explore different start and end times to meet student needs
- Create an environment accessible for project/problem based teaching
- Interaction with real world problems

The December committee meeting focused on reviewing possible scheduling options and searched for those that allow for more than 24 credits. Three options stood out to the committee, a 7 Period schedule, a 4 Period Block ,

Objective 1.1 - School schedules that accommodate personalized learning.

and a 5 Period Block. After a thorough review, a decision was made to further explore the option of a 4 Period Block, feeling that it met the priorities outlined by the committee. The committee acknowledges that there is no perfect schedule; it is the instruction within a given schedule that has the greatest impact on student learning.

Below is a brief outline of the identified advantages and challenges of a 4 Period Block.

Advantages of the 4 Period Block include:

- Fewer number of class transitions within a day
- Increased teacher prep time (85-90 minutes per day)
- Pinpointed student focus on 4 classes per day
- 85-90 minutes of consistent classroom content
- The student daily load per teacher reduced to 90 students per day
- Increased opportunity to build relationships with smaller daily load
- Increased elective offerings
- Decrease in time spent on administrative tasks (attendance, etc.)

The identified challenges of the 4 Period Block include:

- Reduced total instructional time in each class
- Increased difficulty in placing transfer students
- Increased difficulty to make up absences
- Scheduling of AP courses based on AP exam dates
- Sequencing of Foreign Language courses
- Special Education course alignment
- Concurrent Music course offerings
- Timing of State Testing requirements



Eric Anderson, Wenatchee High School Principal

We are in the process of researching the identified challenges with schools who have successfully implemented a 4 Period Block. The committee's timeline includes implementing the new schedule in the 2017-2018 school year.

The hard work and dedication of the bell schedule committee is greatly appreciated. Together we can personalize learning and prepare every student for college and career.



Jon DeJong, Deputy Superintendent

Increasing Educational Pathways and Middle School Schedules

By Jon DeJong, Deputy Superintendent

⌘ Status: In Process

Educational Pathways

As we wrestle with the challenge of personalizing learning, we are confronted with the fact that the space limitations at Wenatchee High School make that challenge even more difficult. A team of administrators has been working on a plan that would not only provide students with new pathways to earn credits toward graduation, it would also reduce enrollment at Wenatchee High School. We are hoping to implement Phase 1 of this plan in 2016-17. Phase 1 includes creating a daytime ALE (Alternative Learning Experience) at Westside High School that would accommodate around 50 juniors and seniors from Westside's day program, which would in turn provide space for freshmen to begin attending WSHS before they become credit deficient. Another aspect of Phase 1 would be the start of 9th grade program at Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center that would provide approximately 75 students with the opportunity to participate in a program that would provide opportunities to learn core subjects in an applied setting, as well as enrolling in the Skills Center's Career and Technical Education courses. This option will be ideal for students who prefer hands-on learning to traditional paper-pencil learning.

Middle School Schedule Study

The current schedules at Pioneer Middle School and Foothills Middle School have instructional periods that are approximately 50-55 minutes in length. To attain our vision of providing more project-based or applied learning opportunities, it is critical that instructional periods are longer to accommodate these approaches. Both middle schools are currently looking at schedule options for 2016-17.

Orchard's New Block Schedule

✓ Status: Completed

By Teri Fink with Taunya Brown, Orchard Principal, and Erin Coyle, Science Teacher

Eight times a day the hallways of Orchard Middle School used to teem with students rushing from one class to the next. It was hectic for kids and teachers. With seven 45-minute classes each day plus an additional enrichment/intervention period at the end of the day, changing classes was frequent and the sheer number of students each teacher taught each day was large. "I was up to 210 kids per day," says science teacher Erin Coyle.

In 2013 Orchard adopted a new flexible block schedule, changing from eight periods a day to four periods of 80-minutes plus a 44-minute RTI (Response to Intervention) class at the end of the day for enrichment and intervention.

The hallways emptied out, the pace slowed, and there was time during class for deeper learning in a more relaxed environment. The results: improved student growth and improved student teacher relationships.

"Our kids are getting more instructional time," says principal Taunya Brown. "They all have electives, and our teachers have prep and team time everyday."

Students are scheduled on one of the two teams at each

grade level in order to meet their academic needs. Some students need more support in math while others are ready to work on high school courses, and the flexible block allows more time to master concepts. For some students extra time to improve in reading, math, or writing and that time is provided in the last period of the day. Those that don't need the extra time are not held back; they can be enrolled in enrichment courses such as advanced fitness, advanced orchestra, Spanish, engineering design, art, and more.

For teachers, the block schedule includes an individual preparation period in addition to thirty minutes daily for team collaboration. Teachers of math, language arts, and either social studies or science work together during this collaboration time, and also work with a common cohort of students throughout the day.

Teachers are able to spend 30 minutes together as a team each day for planning, looking at data, and working on any discipline or behavior issues. The teachers say it's one of the best parts of the flexible block schedule.



## Strategy One: Design the Personalized Learning System of the Future. (cont.)

Objective 1.2 - Students exploring career paths. Increase opportunities for students to explore career paths, to bring relevance to learning and spark interest and personal responsibility.

### Career Cruising ✓ *Status: Completed*

By Dennis Conger, Director of Career & Technical Education

Career Cruising is the software platform used in Wenatchee School District to assist in delivering career education for students grades 7-12. Career Cruising engages students to learn about themselves, explore their options, create a plan, and bring that plan to life. Helping students build a plan that connects their schoolwork to real life—to their futures—positively impacts academic achievement, retention, transitions, career and life success. Studies have shown this over and over.

Career Cruising connects the real world to the classroom at every opportunity. Whether it's interviews with real people in real jobs, or allowing students to role-play life as an adult, students connect to the type of life they want to live.

The program offers students a variety of activities to help guide them towards careers that match their abilities and interests. Match Maker is an assessment that matches careers with students' interests. Ability Profiler identifies students' abilities and how they compare to careers of interest. The Learning Styles Inventory suggests how students' learn and retain information, and offers tips on improving study habits to suit learning styles.

A college database that includes most public and private post-secondary schools in the United States is part of Career Cruising, including four year universities,community colleges, and technical training schools. Side-by-side comparisons of schools look at costs, courses of study, housing, and more. Career Cruising links students directly to college web pages to apply. Financial aid information is also part of the program, linking students to the FAFSA application as well as local scholarships. The program also offers a resume builder and interview information.

Career Cruising is delivered to students by the Gear-up SOAR program in all three of the



Students learn about a career as a radiology tech from Jason Sherwood of Confluence Health.

middle schools. It is also the backbone of the High School and Beyond Plan at Wenatchee High School, where it is delivered in a blended learning model, part online and part by direct instruction with a classroom teacher. At Westside High School all students of the day program are led through the Career Cruising curriculum in their Grad groups. At Wenatchee Valley Technical Skill Center all students receive the Career Cruising curriculum as part of the technical skills course work.

About 3,300 students are currently engaged with Career Cruising curriculum, giving them the information and opportunities they need to explore, create a plan, and bring that plan to life.

Objective 1.3 - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) and Project Based Learning (PBL). Integrate subject areas in ways that allow students to apply what they are learning to projects and real-world challenges.

### The Seeds that Planted the Apple STEM Network ✓ *Status: Completed*

By Sue Kane, PhD - Apple STEM Network Planning Director/Wenatchee Valley College

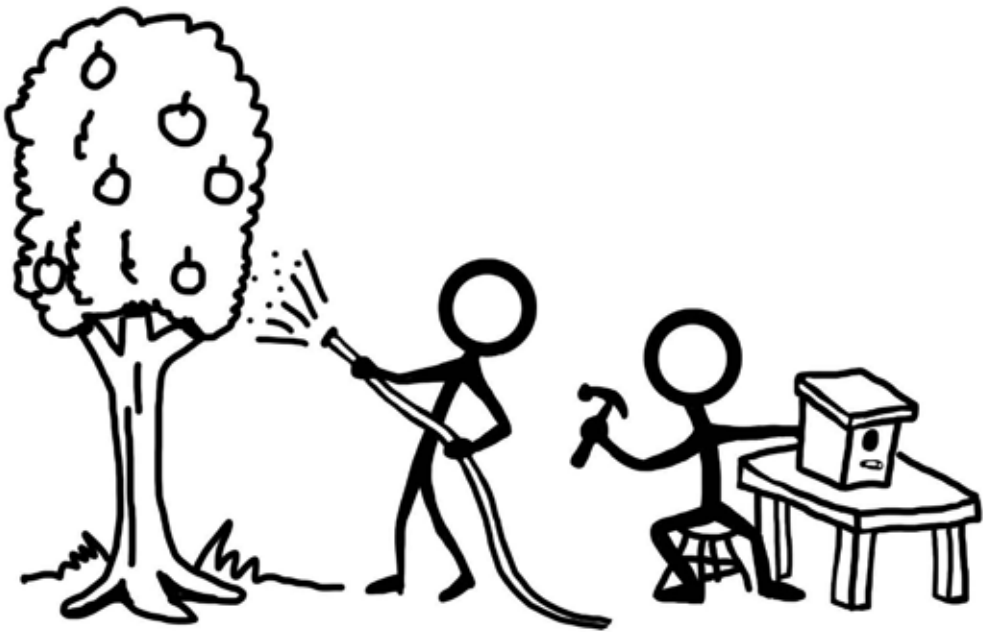
Wenatchee Learns Connect engaged partners and educators in a way that caught statewide attention! In fact, last year, this incredible local effort intrigued a Seattle-based, private, non-profit called Washington STEM. Washington STEM has a mission to improve awareness and access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education for all Washingtonian students. They've now challenged us to extend our community investment into building regional STEM awareness and opportunities for students through collaboration.

Roughly one-third of the jobs in our region require STEM literacy skills, with more emerging each year; and while the STEM subjects are not new for educators, the approach to teaching and learning these disciplines is being reevaluated. These subjects have historically been taught through content and learning facts, and we know that students often struggle to apply the content in meaningful ways. STEM educators want this to change. STEM in itself is not a curriculum; it's a way of organizing and delivering instruction through project based learning and application. The hope is to engage students in the process and help them master 21st century skills like critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning.

In December 2015, Washington STEM invited a team of local educators and community partners to the Microsoft STEM Summit and awarded our community a \$30,000 planning grant to assemble a coalition of K-12 and Higher-Education partners to meet this challenge. The Apple STEM Network began planning immediately.

The Wenatchee, Eastmont, and Cashmere School Districts, Wenatchee Valley College, the Greater Wenatchee Area Technology Alliance (GWATA), the North Central ESD,

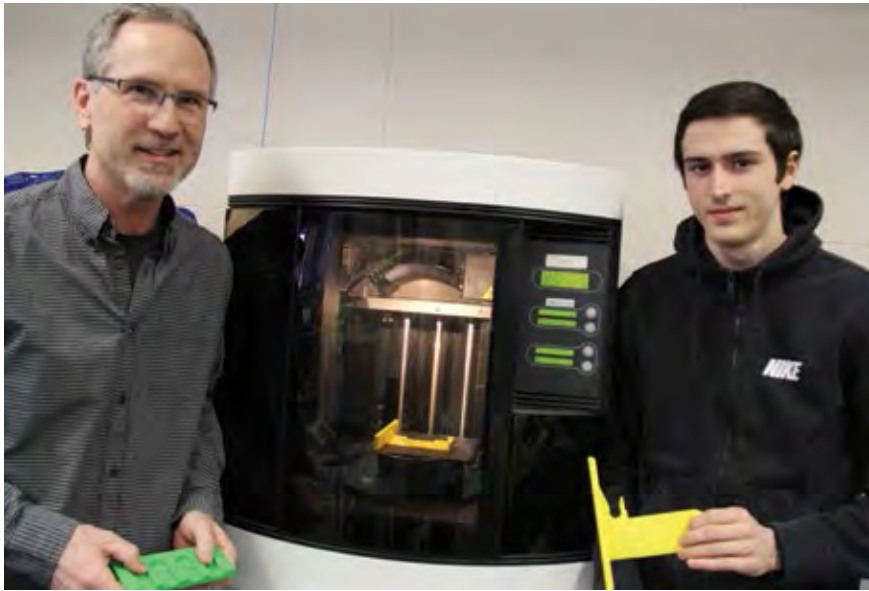
(Continued on page 3)



Hands on projects



## Strategy One: Design the Personalized Learning System of the Future. (cont.)



Doug Merrill and Theo Marshall stand in front of a 3D printer at WHS, holding items Theo designed and created to help special education students. Doug is holding a change counter that helps students add coins up to equal a dollar. Theo is holding a jig he created to help a student guide batteries into a Ziosk.

### OBJECTIVE 1.3 (Continued from page 2)

Chelan and Douglas PUDs, Port of Chelan and Douglas County, City of Wenatchee, the North Central Regional Public Library, the WSU Tree Fruit Research, and a number of other professional partners have weighed in to establish five regionally specific objectives to supercharge STEM literacy and education for the students in our valley.

Collectively, the Apple STEM Network will (1) advocate and raise awareness to increase STEM community engagement and understanding, (2) promote personalized, hands-on and project based learning experiences and STEM career exploration opportunities for students, (3) bolster student transitions from high school to higher education, and college to career, (4) support educators by encouraging teachers to continue to develop expertise in STEM teaching practices and methodologies and explore professional development options, and (5) seek community input through established and maintained relationships with local community partners.

In the coming months, the planning committee will leverage the expertise of 50+ educators and community partners to outline a business plan to maintain our collaboration and upon the development of a regional network business plan, the Apple STEM Network will apply for implementation funding through Washington STEM in October. There is a lot of work to be done, but the collaboration has already begun making a difference in raising awareness and building new bonds between educators.

Objective 1.3 - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) and Project Based Learning (PBL). Integrate subject areas in ways that allow students to apply what they are learning to projects and real-world challenges.

### Field Experiences and STEM ✓ Status: Completed

By Jill Fineis, Science Coordinator

The Science field experiences have been a long standing tradition at the Wenatchee School District. They are rooted in the natural sciences and have an interdisciplinary, place-based approach. Each full day in nature uses art, music, science and discovery in order to answer an essential question. We have recently begun to infuse the human element of problem solving (STEM) into the trips. All experiences are guided by an essential question from the Next Generation Science Standards, and each activity weaves together a bigger picture that builds understanding toward an essential question. This model has students exploring a question, writing hypotheses, engaging in experiments, and engineering solutions to problems. They use vocabulary, write in science journals, and sing music that reinforces the vocabulary used at that field experience. Current Field Experiences are:

- Kindergarten "Habitat Walk" Horan Natural Area- May
- First Grade "Shrub Steppe Hill Hike" Jacobsen Preserve- April
- Second Grade "Wenatchee Landforms" Dry Gulch- October
- Third Grade "Salmonfest" Leavenworth Fish Hatchery- September
- Fourth Grade "River of Power" Rocky Reach Dam- June
- Fifth Grade "Shrub Steppe'n Up Saddle Rock" Saddle Rock- April



Students collect samples in the field as part of their Science Field Experience.

Objective 1.4 - More positive and safe learning environment. Design a new approach to creating positive learning environments based on healthy relationships and behavior support.

### PBIS: A Framework for Engagement and Learning

✓ Status: In Process

By Cori Pflug-Tilton, Assistant Director of PBIS

A little over three years ago, Wenatchee School District officials started examining a widely popular model for behavior management and student support, a framework called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). It was clear that PBIS had proven effective in promoting student engagement while decreasing disruption and time diverted away from teaching and learning.

At the heart of the PBIS framework is the establishment of school-wide expectations and a common language for social and learning behaviors, followed by a process of teaching, prompting, and practicing those behaviors. When all students understand what is expected of them, and all staff teach to and reinforce those expectations, the result is decreased disruptive behaviors, increased academic achievement, and improved school climate and safety. Yes, discipline, up to and including suspension, will still occur, but the PBIS framework provides for additional interventions and supports for those students who are unable to manage their behavior within the bounds of school-wide expectations.

Today in Wenatchee schools, students are learning and practicing the behaviors for success for school and beyond, as teachers, administrators and PBIS teams work hard to establish a predictable, consistent, positive, and safe environment for all.

In addition to the work that is occurring with school and district staff, we also know that parent involvement with this initiative is key. Parent Involvement has a positive effect on student behavior. When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior. When students report feeling support from both home and school, they have more self-confidence, feel school is more important, and they tend to do better in school.

### Project Lead the Way ✓ Status: Completed

By Dennis Conger, Director, Career & Technical Education

Wenatchee School District's Career and Technical Education Department has implemented a STEM Engineering Pathway through the Project Lead The Way (PLTW). Starting in all three of the middle schools, 7th and 8th grade students have the opportunity to take two PLTW courses. About 188 students are currently enrolled. At Wenatchee High School two courses are currently offered with 86 student currently enrolled. A plan is in place to complete the engineering pathway by adding two more courses over the next two years.

Middle School Courses: Design & Modeling; Automation & Robotics.

High School Courses: Introduction to Engineering Design; Principles of Engineering.

The new courses to be added to complete the pathway: Civil Engineering and Architecture; Computer Science Principles; Capstone Course - Engineering Design and Development.

The program will end for seniors with Engineering Design and Development. The knowledge and skills students acquire throughout PLTW Engineering come together as students identify an issue and then research, design, and test a solution, ultimately presenting their solution to a panel of engineers. Students apply the professional skills they have developed to document a design process to standards, making them ready to take on any post-secondary program or career.



## Strategy Two: Tap the power of our whole community.

A major aspect of this transformation will involve forming learning partnerships with local businesses and other organizations, using citizen volunteering opportunities that tap into the talents and interests of community members, and increasing parent engagement opportunities within our schools.



Wenatchee School District Superintendent Brian Flones and Wenatchee Mayor Frank Kuntz cut the ribbon at the Wenatchee Learns Connect office, as school board members, administrators and the Wenatchee Education Association look on. The office is now located with the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce at 1 South Wenatchee Avenue.

### Objective 2.2 - Citizen student mentoring: Expand the number of citizen-student mentoring relationships to support students in making smart learning and life choices.

#### College Mentor Program ✓ Status: Completed

By Angela Prater, Program Coordinator

Wenatchee High School's College Mentor Program is a community partnership success story. Volunteer-run since its inception in 2003, the program began receiving funding through College Spark and the Fordham Street Foundation in 2008. Consistent success, particularly with low-income Hispanic students, resulted in the district adopting funding for the program's half-time coordinator this school year.

The College Mentor Program supports low-income seniors who are the first in their family to go to college or any postsecondary education, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees. Students are matched with community volunteer "mentors" who walk them through the college and scholarship search, selection, application and decision-making processes. The program begins in the spring of the students' junior year with a series of four workshops, preparing the student for the fall college admissions process. Students and mentors meet during weekly College Mentor Night, and workshops are held throughout the year for students, parents and mentors on topics like financial aid, scholarship applications and college success.

The data over the course of the 10 years shows large gains in college-going rates amongst the program's target demographic. In 2015, of the 76 students taking part in the program, 92% (67 students) went on to accept admissions to 2- or 4-year colleges. Even more impressive was the number of students (47) who received financial aid in the form of federal, state need grants and private scholarships totaling \$451,607.

Brenda Medina, a 2015 graduate, is the first in her family to go to college. As an 8th grader at Pioneer Middle School, Medina never thought she was "college material" and danced on both sides of the disciplinary line. "I remember those times were pretty difficult for me," she recalls.

High school brought a new perspective. Her mentor, Assistant Principal, Donna Moser, says, "The process of selecting colleges, applying for admission, FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and scholarships is daunting. Watching [Brenda] tackle the process with gusto demonstrates the value that a little guidance can do for ALL of our students."

### Objective 2.1 - Skilled volunteering opportunities: Provide more citizen volunteering opportunities that tap the particular skills, talents and interests of community members.

#### Skilled Volunteers ✓ Status: Completed

By Diana Haglund, Wenatchee Learns Coordinator

In August 2014, Wenatchee Learns Connect Partnership Center was launched in downtown Wenatchee. Wenatchee School District created the new center and retooled the wenatcheelearns.com website with the goal of tapping the power of the whole community. For businesses, that means sharing opportunities for job shadows, internships and mentoring. For volunteers, it means finding ways to use their talents more effectively. For students, it means being able to get real-world experience and support.

In addition to launching the physical office space, an online partner application and tablet based school check-in system were developed to streamline the district's volunteer process. Since 2014, over 2,500 community members and parents have created accounts, and 120 businesses added company profiles. The new online partner application allows users to create an account, manage their contact information and involvement preferences. It simplifies and strengthens the background checking process and provides clearance for all Wenatchee School District buildings instead of just one.

Each school was outfitted with a tablet-based solution that provides instant check-in for volunteers and visitors. Upon check-in, the system verifies that the volunteer has been cleared through the background checking process and provides them with a personalized name badge that includes photo and name. On the back end, this system allows the district to track the number of service hours spent in our buildings by volunteers.

In the 2014-2015 school year, volunteers racked up a staggering 29,877.31 hours in support of our kids. The amount of time shared by volunteers with our students and teachers is a point of pride, and valuable information that can be used when applying for grants and other funding. Additionally, the system allows our office managers and school administrators to quickly run real-time reports to see who's in the building in the event of an emergency.

When schools, families businesses and community groups work together to support learning, kids tend to do better in school, remain in school longer and like school more. Thank you to all of our partners for contributing your time and talent.



Medina continues: "Being a first-generation college student terrified me! I knew [the College Mentor Program and my mentor] were going to help me with things that my parents couldn't help me with. It gave me the courage to proceed because I knew I wasn't alone. It's something pretty valuable and life changing that I appreciate now and will, for sure, in the long run. Thanks to all the help, I'm here at Washington State University."



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## Strategy Two: Tap the power of our whole community. (cont.)

**Objective 2.3 - Partnerships with businesses: Form partnerships with businesses to provide students with opportunities to gain career experience and jump-start their futures.**

### Business Partnerships ✓ Status: Completed

By Diana Haglund, Wenatchee Learns Coordinator

In today's world, partnerships are an essential ingredient for building a strong, healthy talent pipeline of students who are college and career ready. Wenatchee School District and the business community are creating new and different relationships in an effort to respond to the needs of the labor market. To better facilitate these partnerships and cultivate new ones, Wenatchee Learns Connect relocated to the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce in November 2015.

The Chamber of Commerce and business community have a vested interest in and an unparalleled understanding of community and workforce needs. By leveraging this partnership, education and business can work together to establish learning priorities and supports.

A great example of partnership in action is our partnership with North Cascades Bank (NCB). The bank is a strong supporter of financial literacy and sees this as a critical college and career readiness skill for youth. They have partnered to provide: funding for teacher training, curriculum and transportation of ninety middle school AVID student to Junior Achievement's Finance Park in Yakima; a \$2,000 technology grant to purchase Chromebooks and licensing for 4th grade classes at Lincoln Elementary to use the EverFi online financial literacy program; and they partnered with Career & Technical Education and GEAR UP to host a free income tax night where Wenatchee High School IRS certified Accounting students prepared taxes. NCB helped students and parents set up bank accounts for direct depositing tax refunds and provided educational information on savings.



Apple Leaf Editors Bridget Dowd and Bryce Newbery learn onair broadcasting with KOHO Radio's Dan Langager and Clint Strand.

In January of this year, we integrated the Wenatchee High School, School-to-Work Liaison two days a week at the new chamber office with the goal of growing work-based learning opportunities in the community such as internships, job shadows and classroom presentations, to expose students to career options and connect what they're learning in the classroom with the world of work.

We hope to create more opportunities for business involvement, establish a greater understanding of the skills and knowledge needed in the 21st Century workplace and create a compelling return on investment for employers who participate in work-based learning. Preparing students for their futures is our most important job as educators. By working together we can prepare students to grow and thrive in today's economy.

## Objective 2.4 - More engagement of parents: Increase parent engagement by providing opportunities for parents and schools to work together collaboratively.

### Parent Engagement in Action ✓ Status: Completed

By Melissa Hernández – WLC Parent & Volunteer Coordinator

As a child's first teacher, parents by far have the biggest impact on a child's education. Wenatchee School District has long led the way in efforts to support parents' role in the educational process. The district has introduced strategic initiatives that develop parents' capacity to be a partner in the education of their children. The district has leveraged strategic partnerships and tools to achieve a high level of parent engagement on multiple levels. We see amazing engagement of parents volunteering on booster clubs, the arts, supporting student clubs, leadership development and PTAs or PTOs across the district.

It is also well recognized that many parents struggle to make ends meet and have to work two or more jobs. Some have limited education or language barriers making it difficult and even intimidating to effectively navigate our complex educational system. These diverse and multiple barriers challenge a parent's ability to contribute to the educational process and put their children at a disadvantage. For these reasons, the WSD made a strategic investment more than a decade ago in deploying Family Advocates in most of our schools. These capable Family Advocates have developed trusted relationships with students and parents, help them navigate the system challenges, connect students and parents to in-district and community resources.

Partnerships with non-profit organizations have helped bring parenting education curriculum to our parents in Spanish and English. Key community partners like Together for Youth, WSU Cooperative Extension, Wenatchee Rotary club, Wenatchee Community Foundation, Community Choice Health and Education Institute have brought parenting courses such as Love and Logic,

PASSport Parent Academy, and Strengthening Families program in Spanish & English to families, especially at the elementary and middle school levels. Spanish radio and other media outreach continually reach parents with system navigation knowledge and guidance on the opportunities to engage and support the education of their children.

This work is never done as new parents continuously enter our education system. The overarching goal is to build parent leadership and capacity supporting children's education by volunteering in the classrooms and schools.



Parent Engagement



## Strategy Three: Use the best tools and resources to advance learning.

Technology provides fundamental structural changes that can be integral to achieving significant improvements in productivity.

**Objective 3.1 - Personal technology devices for learners: Begin using electronic tablets as a tool to make learning more interesting, relevant and interactive and improve access to up-to-date content.**

### Personal Technology Devices for Learners

By Ray Birks, Instructional Technology Facilitator ✓ Status: Completed

When students have instant access to all of the world's collective knowledge at their fingertips, the teacher's job changes from being the one with all of the answers to a learning guide to help them ask questions, solve problems and create avenues for their own learning.

Student and parent surveys strongly show that having electronic devices in the classroom is increasingly engaging for students. Nearly 80% of students in classes with tablets surveyed are more excited when they can use technology at school and say that their learning has improved because they have a tablet. Parents' results also strongly show that they believe their children are more engaged and learning is enhanced with tablets.

Teachers are creating interactive, relevant and interesting classrooms that are connected to the rest of the world.

Mrs. Nicpan-Brown has created an interactive 5th grade classroom at Abraham Lincoln Elementary using a tool called Mystery Hangouts. Students participate in a video call with another classroom somewhere in the world but they don't know the location of the other students. Their goal is to take turns asking each other yes and no questions and be the first to guess the location of the other classroom. In turn, they learn a lot about other regions of the country, other students and other cultures.

Learning has become more relevant in Mrs. Tanneberg's Social Studies classroom at Orchard Middle School where students use their tablets to

(Continued on page 6)



Strategy Three: Use the best tools and resources to advance learning. (cont.)

OBJECTIVE 3.1 (Continued from page 5)

watch a daily news program called Channel One to learn about current events. They then share their observations and questions using a Google Form which, in turn, guides classroom discussions.

Learning and sharing has expanded beyond the walls of the classroom and become more interesting in Mr. Hansen's classroom at Foothills Middle School. His students are writing an eBook that will soon be published electronically to the iTunes bookstore and available to anyone with an electronic device anywhere in the world. Students write stories and collaborate on the editing process using Google Drive, and lay out the final product using iBooks Author.

Students across the district have been using digital devices to learn about computer coding. Many classrooms participated in a national event called the Hour of Code, and have begun to learn about the backbone of our electronic reality and future jobs which is the language of coding. In Mrs. Knipfer's and Mrs. Wilson's Science classes at Pioneer Middle School students explained their knowledge of the water cycle by using an app called Hopscotch that allowed them to write code that ran a presentation that demonstrated their learning. These students and teachers are modeling what a tablet can do to enhance student learning in the 21st century.

Technology Planning    ⌘ Status: In Process

By Ron Brown, Director of Technology

One of the themes that continually comes up in our community outreach is the use of technology to enhance and accelerate teaching and learning.

Over the last three years we have piloted programs, field tested devices, trained our teachers, and incorporated current technologies into teaching and learning cycles within our schools. This has enabled us to stay current with technology in some of our classrooms and understand the implications of using technology for learning. We don't have all the answers, but over the last three years we have tested the efficacy of using technology in the classroom. We are in the process of developing a long-term vision and plan for the capital outlay needed to bring all of our classrooms into the 21st century.

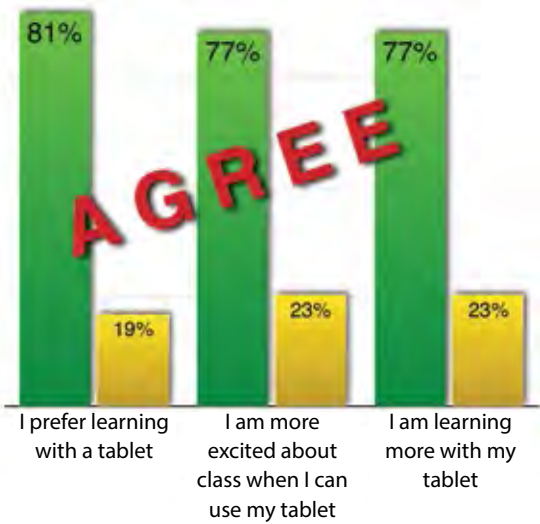
The twenty member Technology Planning Committee will identify and prioritize issues related to the following target areas:

- a) new technologies to foster 21st century skills in students, teachers, and administrators
- b) assess the needs of the district to identify specific goals and targets for technology integration and support systems
- c) draft recommendations to address selected areas related to technology funding integration access support and staff professional development.

The broad cross section of membership on this committee will be an asset to our long-term plan. The team is reading and discussing the current research to understand the implications of technology and learning and advocate for its use in our classrooms. Representation on the committee is critical to its success and currently serving on the committee are: librarians, administrators, teachers at all levels, community leaders, Educational Service District representatives, parents, students, support personnel, and technicians. We feel that the representation on this committee is integral to building a sustainable long-term plan

for technology and to keep Wenatchee schools at the forefront of current educational technologies. Look online for the draft plan in late spring/early summer of 2016. We will have a document outlining the capital outlay, training, implementation, and support to carry out our vision of using technology to get our students ready for their future. You can find information about this work at <http://bit.ly/wsdtechplanning2016>.

What students say...



Students share their work at our Annual Educational Technology Showcase. This year's Showcase is May 14th at the Pybus Market.

Kindergartners in Patty Cone's Columbia Elementary School use Osmo with iPads. Osmo fosters learning in key areas such as: social-emotional skills, creative thinking, art, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and common core.



Objective 3.2 - Blended learning environments (face-to-face & electronic): Provide internet-based instruction that moves at the ideal pace for each student and allows teachers to track and support progress.

Blended Learning Environments

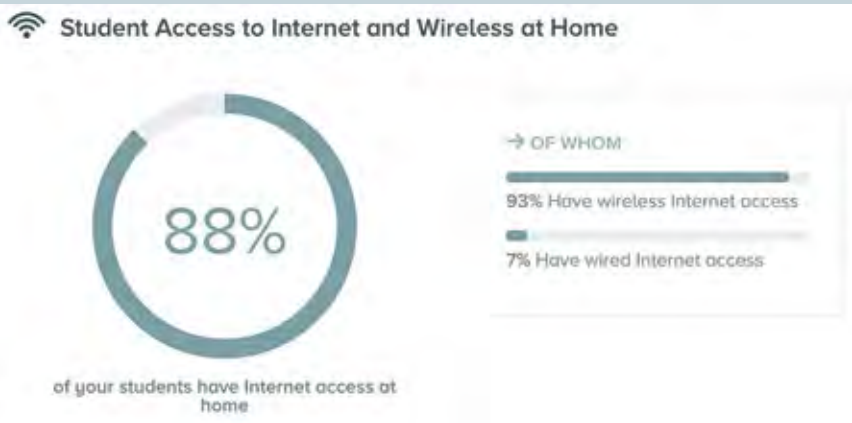
By Ron Brown, Director of Technology    ⌘ Status: In Process

Blended learning is the ability for students, staff, and parents to access content and communication related to course work in the traditional classroom 24/7. Over the last few years we have introduced several systems to accommodate blended learning. Teachers have the ability to post content for their students online, allow students to turn in assignments, enable students to discuss in a virtual environment, and to provide students the opportunity to show learning in different ways through the use of technology.

Blended learning allows our students to learn when they learn best. Some learn best at night, some in the morning, while others learn best during the school day. What a blended learning environment allows us to do in the classroom is ensure that all content and information is available to students when they will do their best work.

We're doing our best to incorporate communication tools, website tools, social media tools, and safe online content tools, allowing a more robust system

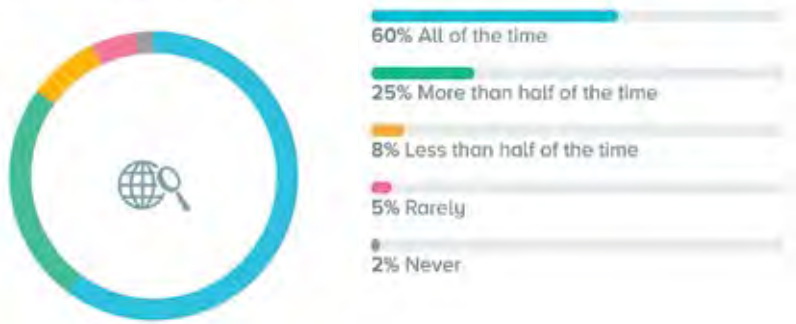
(Continued on page 7)





## Strategy Three: Use the best tools and resources to advance learning. (cont.)

To research a topic, students search the Internet  
(Google, Yahoo!, Bing, YouTube, ...)



### OBJECTIVE 3.2

(Continued from page 6)

for communication. We're doing our best to incorporate current technology while keeping consistency as the technology changes so rapidly.

One of our largest adopted systems has been Google Apps for Education (GAFE). Google Apps for Education is a free unlimited storage version of the Google online suite of tools that has enabled us to standardize our collaboration and document sharing across all staff and student populations. GAFE allows students and staff to collaborate, communicate, share ideas and content in a blended learning environment.

Objective 3.3 - The right tools and resources for staff: Providing the right tools and resources for staff to do their best work is a significant contributor to strong employee satisfaction and commitment.

### New K-5 Reading and Math Curriculum Adopted

✓ Status: Completed

By Sarah Hanchey, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Last summer, the district adopted a new English Language Arts reading program called Reading Wonders/Maravillas for grades K-5. Reading Wonders can be taught from the traditional books, from digital books, or a combination of the two. All K-5 students have a digital license to can access hundreds of reading books online, along with online activities. The new curriculum is aligned to the [Common Core State Standards](#), has a Spanish language version, called Maravillas, and a reading intervention program called Wonderworks.

We needed a complete language arts program that provided all of the materials that were necessary for kids to learn how to read, write, and gain strong literacy skills. When students learn how to read, the whole world opens up to them. Reading is the one content area that all other subjects build upon. Students have to be able to read in order to become successful at many other things.

It's the first time the district has had a comprehensive Spanish curriculum that

is like the English language curriculum. We're fortunate that we were able to adopt a comprehensive reading curriculum that provides as many resources as Reading Wonders does, and that it is aligned with current educational research on how kids learn to read. There are a lot of engaging materials for students.

This year, our curriculum adoption focus is Mathematics at the middle and high school levels. Math teacher representatives from each secondary school and grade level are serving on a team to review a variety of math programs. Their main goal is to identify high quality math materials that align with the learning standards that Washington State has adopted, which are the [Common Core State Standards](#). Curriculum adopted as a result of this process will be used by teachers and students beginning in Fall, 2016.

The Common Core Standards for Mathematics outline skills that students must understand at each grade level in order to be ready for college or the workplace when they graduate from high school.

The Curriculum Adoption Team recently recommended that the district adopt Big Ideas Math for use at our middle and high schools. Putting a new Math program into practice will take time for staff and students. However, we're excited to have a math program that will provide teachers with quality resources to teach math well and that gives our students the support they need to become strong mathematicians over time.

We want to use the best teaching and learning materials that are available to help today's students learn. Educational research continues to reveal better methods for teaching children. This research helps guide curriculum development companies as they create resources that, when used by masterful teachers, help support student learning.

Objective 3.4 - Facilities that support optimal learning: Facility design for the 21st century must be adaptable to our changing world, technologyrich, learner-centered, personalized, sustainable, and integrated into our community.

⌘ Status: In Process

School Board members tour Washington Elementary's new school construction. Lincoln Elementary is undergoing additions and modernizing. Both school projects are on schedule, made possible by passage of a \$66.5 million capital improvement bond in 2014. Both projects are proceeding smoothly.



## Strategy Four: Balance Change for All with Excellence for All.

We balance our capacity to address change initiatives by aligning them to key objectives, action plans, and timelines. Continuous improvement efforts also reinforce the school district's process management system and model the principles and values of empowerment, learning by doing, innovation, and performance excellence.

Objective 4.1 - Continuous improvement of service quality: Continuous Improvement is integral to efforts to improve products, services, and processes to the highest standards.

### Food Service Strives for Continuous Improvement of Service Quality

⌘ Status: In Process

By Kent Getzin, Director, Food Services

WSD Food Services has some very exciting projects in the works, aiming to create a culture of wellness in our schools. Nutritious school meals have a positive effect on attendance, behavior and test scores, thus promoting overall student health and wellness. One of the main objectives of Wenatchee Learns is to "use the best tools and resources to advance learning." Good nutrition is equally as important as state of the art technology when it comes to your child's education. Research shows that freshly prepared, healthy school meals make an almost immediate difference in academic achievement, according to the Journal for Health Economics. Wenatchee Schools prioritizes scratch cooking in school lunches which feature real foods with minimal processing and a diversity of food choices.

(Continued on page 8)



Governor's wife Trudi Inslee visits John Newbery Elementary on Taste of Washington Day, where produce and meat were provided by local farmers and ranchers.



OBJECTIVE 4.1 *(Continued from page 7)*

Another Wenatchee Learns objective is to “tap into the power of Community.” WSD Food Services has been pursuing this objective wholeheartedly through its Farm to School Program. Last year, the Food Service department purchased over \$100,000 worth of locally grown foods from a dozen regional farms. According to an EcoTrust study, every dollar spent purchasing local foods equals \$1.86 added to the local economy. Wenatchee’s Farm to School program is nationally recognized for its farm fresh meals and support of local agriculture. This program builds on the strengths of our farming community by inviting farmers to visit school cafeterias and teach students where their food comes from. Farm to School programs use the cafeteria as a classroom to help students learn about good nutrition, healthy food choices, and the seasonality of various crops. A combination of nutritional education and hands-on experiential learning help children to develop long-term healthy eating behaviors.

Objective 4.4 - Highly trained and engaged staff: In order to attract, retain, and develop highly trained and engaged learning professionals in the Wenatchee School District we will do the following:

- ❑ High quality, ongoing professional development must become a district priority.
- ❑ Instructional and support staff must engage in professional development that is continuous and systematic.
- ❑ Professional development must include focused practice supported through coaching and feedback.
- ❑ Professional development must align to the evaluation system.

Professional Development    ⌘ *Status: In Process*

By Jodi Smith-Payne, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Professional learning for teachers is ongoing. Research enlightens, standards evolve, expectations increase, and curriculum/instruction changes. In addition to traditional teacher training in the summer, during, and after school, Wenatchee School District is using embedded opportunities for teachers to try new instructional strategies in classrooms while their students are learning. Three professional learning systems in Wenatchee actively engage teachers in “doing” the teaching in order to increase their understanding of instruction: the Container Challenge, the Learning Lab, and Phases of GLAD.

The Container Challenge is designed to support implementation of PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support), a research-based framework for transforming school culture through proactive prevention and positive feedback. Teachers work collaboratively with a peer, an instructional coach, and/or an administrator to demonstrate and discuss implementation of each of the five PBIS containers: structure, procedures, acknowledgement, engagement, and response to behavior.

Learning Labs team two or three grade level teachers and their instructional coaches. They meet in the morning to co-plan a lesson they will co-teach later that afternoon. The lesson is taught as a shared responsibility, with members of the team taking turns both instructing and offering live feedback, so the lesson can be improved on the spot. Reflection follows instruction, and staff members leave the experience with a deeper understanding that they can apply to future lessons.

Phases of GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) emerged as an opportunity for GLAD trained teachers to implement a small, specific collection of strategies in three different phases, with reflection and feedback on each strategy offered by a certified district GLAD trainer. By limiting implementation to common strategies that start simple and grow in complexity, teacher confidence and enthusiasm increases dramatically.

Teachers report that embedded professional development models like these three are more authentic because they are able to try new strategies with students present, receive immediate feedback from colleagues, and reflect on effective implementation. These models support professional partnerships and encourage open classrooms.



Instructional Coach Alicen Gaytley is teaching a “Brain-Friendly” Teacher Academy, a class based on *The Seven R’s of Learning Beyond Content*, in a professional development class for teachers.

Wenatchee Learns Invitation to Continue our Conversation

Wenatchee Learns is an approach to local education that includes the voices of everyone who lives, works or studies in our community. It brings students, citizens and learning professionals together to design the future of learning – and to participate in building and supporting that future. It’s based on open communication and it’s designed to become an enduring part of our community. Please join us in transforming Wenatchee from a city with schools to a whole learning community.

The world is changing fast around the globe and here in Wenatchee, forcing many of us to adapt the way we live and work to shifts in technology, culture and economics. Our school district is no exception. We know that if our students are to thrive after graduation, we must do a better job preparing them for the future.

But we can’t do it alone. We need the help of our community to expand our vision of what’s possible and focus our efforts on what matters most. You are in the position to understand not only what students are experiencing but what life and work are about beyond high school.

Currently there is a way for us to learn what you care about and why – which will allow us to guide our district based on what’s important to our community. This community input is our way of collecting feedback on our current progress toward our vision and will guide further development of our strategic plan. It’s all part of our community-driven approach to planning for and supporting education, called Wenatchee Learns.

Please reply online at <http://wsd.thoughtexchange.com/invitation> by May 20th or drop the enclosed postcard in the mail by May 13th so we have time to read your input, align the feedback into themes, and allow you to contribute to the next round of feedback in May.

Thank you for your help!

