

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Canyon Creek Middle School was named a School of Distinction. Read more on page 3.



UNITE! receives grant to prevent youth substance abuse

The UNITE! Washougal Community Coalition has been awarded a \$625,000 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant to involve and engage the local community to prevent substance use among youth. The grant will fund a variety of prevention activities, which use research-based strategies to help youth make healthy choices.

The Washougal School District has hired UNITE! Director Margaret McCarthy to coordinate the grant, which will be administered by WSD.

“Our goals for this grant are to increase partnerships in our community and to work together to keep making Washougal a wonderful place for youth,” said Margaret McCarthy, Drug Free Communities Grant Coordinator. “When we all work together we all win!”

“A primary goal of the grant is to reduce substance use among youth,” said Superintendent Mike Stromme, Ed.D. “Over time this work is intended to reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.”

For more information, contact Margaret at margaret.mccarthy@washougalisd.org



WHS students witness the construction process first hand with visits to nearby Excelsior School site.

Site visits offer unique perspective

Several high school students recently had a unique opportunity to see how the work they do in class is applicable in real world situations.

Students in Brent Mansell’s WHS wood-working classes visited the Excelsior construction site to learn about the construction process, and also had the opportunity to talk with employees working at the site. It is

the first of several visits they’ll make during the semester.

Mansell, who is new to teaching, came up with the idea after dealing with the logistics of attempting to coordinate an offsite field trip.

Added Mansell, “I am hoping that the kids will be connecting what they learn in the classroom to the workforce,” he said.

Board welcomes new member

After interviewing three qualified applicants, the Washougal School Board selected Cory Chase to fill the Director District 4 position, succeeding Karen Rubino, who resigned in September.

Chase is a police lieutenant for the Port of Portland Police Department and has children attending Washougal schools. He brings skills and knowledge in the area of government agencies, labor and contract negotiations, and public finance. Chase will serve until the next school district election, November 17, 2017, at which time a successor shall be elected for the unexpired term ending December 31, 2019.



Cory Chase (left) was sworn in by Superintendent Mike Stromme October 25.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Washougal School District patrons,

The school year is well underway and students and staff are deeply immersed in learning. I would like to share with you some of the main areas of focus for our district this year. I am very pleased with the important work happening in our schools and I think you will be too.

One key area of focus that is making a big difference for students and families is the creation of our Family Resource Center (FRC) to provide needed assistance that reaches all the way into homes. Some statistics from the FRC's first year:

- 92 families received clothing
- 63 families were served through food assistance and Friday backpacks
- 31 families received assistance with health referrals, health care navigation, and support over the holidays
- 21 families received housing assistance

What a great start to a program that is really making a difference for children and families!

Technology continues to be a focus across the district and this year 1:1 devices are being introduced at four additional grade levels: 3, 4, 11, and 12. This is in addition to grades 5-10, where this technology is already in their hands. The plan is for grades K-2 to be added 2017-18. The integration of technology into our classrooms continues to evolve and enhance student learning in ways we couldn't have imagined.

Last spring, the Washougal School Board approved the purchase of a new English Language Arts curriculum for grades K-5. A big thank you to the hard work of our Curriculum Adoption Committee, whose work involved months of research and data collection.

The adoption is part of the district's commitment to providing classroom materials aligned to state standards. Teachers began familiarizing themselves with the new curriculum and professional development was provided last summer.

Our schools opened their doors this fall with remodeled secure entrances; better lighting, and additional security cameras. Classroom doors can now be locked from the inside during emergencies. The safety of our children and staff continues to be a district priority.

Sincerely,
Dr. Mike Stromme, Ed.D.

Families connect and learn together through new program for young children

A free weekly parent and child play group at Hathaway Elementary is bringing parents and children ages birth-five together for a fun learning experience. The 1-2-3 Grow and Learn group provides early social and educational experiences that are aligned with state standards to lay the foundation for later school involvement.

Families participate in circle time, individual play time and a group activity. They also take home activities and learning tips.

After observing the program's success at other schools, Developmental Preschool Coordinator Leslie DeShazer and Family Resource Coordinator Nancy Nass-Boon wanted to bring the learning groups to Washougal. "We are hoping to ease the transition to elementary school and give parents an opportunity to see what they can be doing at home to help prepare children for future success," said DeShazer. "It has been really fun to see how much the children like it and the parents enjoy it too. It's a great way for families to begin an early relationship with the Washougal School District."

In addition to socialization and school readiness, the program is involved in



Local preschool children and their families enjoy the free early learning opportunity provided at Hathaway Elementary each Wednesday morning.

leading-edge child development research, having partnered with a researcher at the University of Washington as an innovation cluster site for Frontiers of Innovation--a Harvard study designed to use science to improve the daily lives of families and children.

All children (not just Hathaway families) are welcome to attend the free classes, each Wednesday from 9-10:30 a.m. through June 7 at Hathaway Elementary. No registration is required, parents and children may drop in each week or as they are available. For more info contact Nancy Nass-Boon at 954-3809.

Committee will review boundaries

Washougal School District is beginning the process to revise current elementary and middle school boundaries to address increased student enrollment and prepare for future growth with construction of several new schools.

WSD will open a new elementary school, Columbia River Gorge Elementary, in Fall 2017, as well as a new Jemtegaard Middle School. These new facilities will require the district to revise current boundaries beginning with the 2017-2018 school year.

The school district has hired a consultant, FLO Analytics, to support and facilitate the boundary review process. A boundary review committee, comprised of two parents and the principal from each elementary and middle school, will be formed. Two open house events are set

for February 8 and March 1 and will allow the public the opportunity to provide input to the boundary review committee and to comment during the process. The committee will produce a final recommendation to the Washougal School Board by March 28, 2017.

"The process of reviewing our boundaries is key to the successful opening and operation of our new schools," said WSD Superintendent, Dr. Mike Stromme. "I'm looking forward to the recommendation of this committee and appreciate community support and interest in this important work."

Patrons with questions or concerns about the boundary review process can contact the committee facilitators at boundary.review@washougalsd.org, or call the district office at 360-954-3000.

News in brief

ASL students earn college credit

Washougal High School American Sign Language students are now eligible to earn college credit through Mt. Hood Community College for their high school class work.

"I am thrilled that our students have this opportunity and I am thrilled to see Washougal working with community partners to make the educational bridge between high school and college stronger," said WHS ASL Instructor Tami Grant.

Washougal Schools Foundation launches new website

The Washougal Schools Foundation has a new website, designed to better serve local faculty, teachers, community and students.

The foundation supports classroom projects and enrichment opportunities through donations from foundations, private individuals, and fundraising events like the STRIDE. Recent grants have supported purchasing additional musical instruments at Hathaway Elementary and e-book content for Jemtegaard Middle School to support Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) classes such as Robotics.

Learn more about the foundation and check out the new site here: www.washougalschoolsfoundation.org.

Canyon Creek receives School of Distinction Award

Canyon Creek Middle School has been named a School of Distinction for sustained improvement in English language arts and math over a five-year period. The school is among the 5% highest improving schools in the state of Washington.

Principal Sandi Christensen says the award represents a team effort among students, teachers, staff and parents to support student learning and school attendance.

"To me, the award represents consistent improvement and growth," said Christensen. "This applies to student, teacher, and principal learning. We are all in this together," she said.

CCMS teachers learn together in their Professional Learning Communities and work hard to identify what individual students need to learn and to make sure that they are teaching the critical skills and content that students need.



District staff & students celebrated the new playground equipment at a ribbon cutting ceremony Nov. 2.

Preschool playground installed

Washougal preschool children participating in programs at Hathaway Elementary School now have age-appropriate playground components to play on. The project was led by Educational Opportunities for Children & Families (EOCF) who operates their state-funded early learning programs from a Hathaway building alongside the Hathaway Elementary preschool.

All the new equipment is approved

for children ages 2-5. The existing school district play equipment is designed for children ages 5-12.

The approximately \$25,000 playground was made possible through a gift from the EOCF Board of Directors; a \$10,000 grant from the Nike Community Impact Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation; a donation from local Keller Williams broker Shannon Saylor and work by the EOCF facilities department.



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School Construction Progress Update

SAFETY & SECURITY REMODEL AND UPGRADES

- Remodel school front entrances to increase safety.
- Upgrade classroom door hardware to increase security.
- Replace and add security cameras.
- Add vehicle gates and security fencing.
- Repairs roofs and upgrade HVAC at Hathaway and Gause.



Washougal schools feature more secure entrances.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

- Build a new 400-student Columbia River Gorge Elementary School.
- Build a replacement 600-student Jemtegaard Middle School.
- Build a new Excelsior to replace portables.



Work is underway on the new Excelsior facility.

Childfind Notice

Washougal School District is committed to addressing the unique needs of students with disabilities age birth through 21 residing within the boundaries of the district. This includes children with disabilities enrolled in private and religious schools as well as children who are homeless. Disabilities can be in any one of several areas that ultimately affect a child's

learning, such as the ability to think, to express oneself, to see or hear clearly, to get around, or understand instructions.

If you have a child who you think might have a disability requiring special education instruction or significant accommodations at school, or if you know of such a child, please call the Washougal School District Special Services Office, (360) 954-3020.

WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
www.washougal.k12.wa.us

SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Mike Stromme

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