

Community Connections

FALL 2020



Science learning in the field



CRGE music teacher Amy Switzer teaches remotely



A new flexible option for families

The new Washougal Learning Academy (WLA) was developed as an alternative learning environment (ALE) option for families who wanted additional flexibility in their students' learning this year. More than 100 students are enrolled in the K-12 program for students who prefer to learn more independently, but still need and desire regular connection with teachers. Learning modules for all subjects include project-based lessons that teach concepts in English, math, and science, as well as electives like art, PE, and music.

"The flexibility of WLA is wonderful," said parent Michelle Fowler, who has five students enrolled in the program. "They can do their school work from anywhere there is internet and anytime of the day. I really like being able to immediately see how they did on a task, if they are behind or on track. My weekly check-ins with our teacher, Rebecca Woodings, are pleasant, and I like the accountability it creates for our children."

Creative teaching in a remote learning world

This fall, after months of planning and preparation, our teachers focused on making sure students would still feel the excitement and promise of a new school year, even if things do look different than usual. WSD is proud to share great examples of online learning and student engagement that are already happening.

Making music together...at home!

Columbia River Gorge Elementary music teacher Amy Switzer has found ways for her

students to feel connected to her and to each other, even while learning from home.

"Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students traditionally spend time exploring music through singing, listening, and moving together," she said. "I have found it is possible for me to continue a lot of that in our virtual music classes."

During virtual music class, students sing songs together, taking turns adding new movements like clapping or stomping.

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Join the WSD Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Team

As part of its ongoing work on equity, diversity, and inclusion, WSD is seeking community members to serve on its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Team. This team will advise district leaders in identifying and eliminating systems, policies, procedures, and practices that lead to inequities among students and staff.

Once the team is formed, the district will undergo an Equity Audit, supported by WSD Assistant Superintendent Aaron Hansen, who will lead the group. The results of the audit are expected in early 2021, and will shape the plan for the team's work moving forward. For more information, or to apply to serve on the team, visit www.washougal.k12.wa.us/equity.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Washougal Community,

It is always during the fall season that I stop to reflect upon the many gifts we have been given. This year, more than any other, I feel very thankful to be the superintendent of the Washougal School District. As we navigate the challenges of the pandemic, I am heartened by our community rallying to support our schools. I am amazed by the leadership and resilience of our teachers, staff, and principals as they continue to educate our 3,000 children. I am grateful for our parent partners on the “front lines” of distance learning. With this kind of commitment, dedication, and teamwork, I am confident that we will overcome challenges and become a top-performing district in the state of Washington.

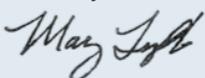


One important goal this year is our work around diversity, equity, and inclusion. My friends, the work to know, nurture, and challenge all of our students must remain at the heart of what we do; and we can only accomplish this goal when we disrupt systems that perpetuate institutional biases and oppressive practices.

We must continue our work towards schools that offer equitable outcomes and opportunities for all students. We must foster hope and resilience in each child. We must have schools where hate, discrimination, and racism are not tolerated. We must demand that each child who enters our school doors is prepared for a successful future when they leave us. We must engage in this work together as we aspire toward excellence for all.

I anchor my optimism for the future in our strong community support, our excellent staff, our dedicated parents, and our collective determination to have equitable outcomes and opportunities for all. This support and dedication, combined with our very public measurements of success, clearly highlight the fact that the Washougal School District is, indeed, Rising!

Sincerely,



Dr. Mary Templeton

Jemtegaard principal named State Secondary Principal of the Year

This fall, Jemtegaard principal David Cooke was named the Washington State Secondary School Principal of the Year for 2020! The award recognizes individuals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, and community involvement, as well as advocating for education. Cooke has fostered a culture of support for students and their families, focusing on equity, positive behavior expectations, high engagement, and the whole child.

“I am honored to be the principal of Jemtegaard Middle School,” Cooke said. “It is an incredible place to work. This award represents the culture and efforts of the staff and students who come here every day.”



Jemtegaard principal David Cooke, the WA State Secondary Principal of the Year

Other recent state awards received by staff and schools

We're beyond proud of our staff and schools for earning the following state-level recognitions this year:

JEMTEGAARD MIDDLE SCHOOL AND GAUSE ELEMENTARY:
Washington State Recognized Schools

WSD COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:
Washington School Public Relations Association Best in Category award for Branding and Marketing

WSD welcomes Chuck Carpenter

Chuck Carpenter was sworn into service on the Washougal School Board on September 22, 2020, to represent District #5. His experience includes more than 40 years as a school administrator and being an active member and leader on a long list of community committees and organizations. “This for me is a culmination of many years working on behalf of young people in schools,” he said.



Board identifies goals for 2020-21

Each school year the Washougal School Board of Directors identifies a set of goals based on the 2019-2025 WSD Strategic Plan. The three goals encompass important themes shared by community members during the development of the Strategic Plan.

For the District Equity Goal, staff identify disparities that create opportunity and achievement gaps and develop steps to close them, ensuring all students have the skills they need to succeed in career, college and life.

The second goal, Partnerships to Support Students, develops student opportunities through work-site learning, apprenticeships, volunteer opportunities, and connections with community members who become role models for success.

The third goal, Stewardship of Resources, focuses on a transparent budget process that prioritizes opportunities for students while aligning expenditures with revenue.

For more information on these goals, visit www.washougal.k12.wa.us.

Reopening safely: District increases small group instruction

WSD is expanding in-person learning opportunities for students, to include small groups of kindergartners. Since late September, preschoolers, English Language Learners, and students with special needs have been participating in some small group in-person instruction.

The district is working closely with Clark County Public Health and is planning programs that can be implemented safely based on their guidance.

“Under our small group learning model, WSD students will split their learning time between remote and in-person learning,” said Renae Burson, WSD Assistant Superintendent.

As students are welcomed back into the classrooms, social distancing, masks, hand hygiene, and other safeguards will be in place. The ultimate goal is to return to in-person instruction as soon as it is safe. For that to happen, the entire community must follow state safety guidelines to

reduce the spread of COVID-19 cases. The district’s full-time online option, Washougal Learning Academy, will still be available for families who prefer distance learning.

Safety measures for in-person learning

To ensure the health and safety of all WSD students, staff, and family members, safety protocols must be followed by all students and staff in school buildings, including:

- Daily wellness checks
- Frequent hand washing
- Social distancing among all students and staff
- All staff and students wearing facial coverings
- Increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures
- Formation of student cohorts to minimize contact with others

Remember the 3 Ws:



1 Wear your mask.



2 Wash your hands.



3 Watch your distance.

Let's stay healthy and safe in school.



Signs and posters like this one in Washougal schools keep safety top-of-mind for students and staff alike.

Teachers connect virtually with peers

Virtual learning schedules have had at least one unexpected pleasant surprise this year: teachers at Canyon Creek and Jemtegaard Middle Schools have been meeting virtually every week for Professional Learning Community meetings (PLCs). PLCs offer a chance for all levels of WSD staff to connect and collaborate over reviewing instructional practices and student data, as well as to monitor outcomes

to ensure success.

“The combined CCMS/JMS PLCs has been one of the few positives to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Tim Davis, JMS math and robotics teacher. “With more minds working together, we are able to see multiple ways to address students’ needs,” he said. “We frequently even work past our planned meeting time because it’s so refreshing to have new ideas to explore.”

WHS ASB continues to unite and inspire

Washougal High School Associated Student Body (ASB) members, including president Ethan Mills, work from home organizing virtual and socially distant activities for their peers. “This is definitely a challenging year, and everything is harder to get done since we are not all together in person,” said Mills. “I am learning a lot about leadership and resilience that should help us all prepare for our futures.”



WHS ASB President Ethan Mills working remotely

Creative teaching

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They’re all smiling and having fun together, even though they’re not physically in the same room.

“It’s great to see the students once a week in live video lessons,” said Switzer. “I’m so glad we’re able to connect in this way.”

Gause: At-home field science

A classroom can be almost anywhere during this time of remote learning. For second grade students at Gause Elementary, a science lesson took them on individual field trips to their home’s yard or a nearby outdoor space. Their challenge was to collect and examine rocks, and take a photo or draw a picture of a local body of water to identify possible signs of erosion.

“We felt that this unit was a good opportunity to ‘unplug’ and have students apply what they are learning in real life,” said teacher Marina Guevara. “Taking some time away from their devices gives students a much-needed change of pace. We could see them excited and engaged in the project.”



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Firefighter Matthew Miller accepts a thank you card from Cape Horn-Skye student Ada Berg

First responders recognized at CH-S Elementary

Cape Horn-Skye Elementary first grade students had the opportunity to say thank you to some local heroes. On October 9, families drove by to meet Camas-Washougal firefighters in the school parking lot. Students give them handmade thank you cards and, in return, firemen distributed red plastic fire hats. Although no one could actually see the smiles behind masks, all could feel the joy and appreciation for these local heroes. The project was a follow up to a lesson on the impact of wildfires in our community.

No-contact library checkout services now available

It's important for students to have access to reading materials and other media, especially while learning from home. WSD Libraries are now operating contactless checkout service. Students can reserve books and find pick-up information from their school website. The requested books will be labeled and waiting for them.

"We are so happy to keep providing books to students, and continuing our work developing a love of reading in our learners!" said Hathaway and Gause librarian Dawn Heap.



Librarian Dawn Heap prepares book packets for pick up.

SUPERINTENDENT
Dr. Mary Templeton

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Cory Chase, President
Angela Hancock, Vice Pres.
Donna Sinclair, Legislative Rep.
Jim Cooper
Chuck Carpenter

Online Board Meetings

November 24 & December 8
Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m.
via Zoom. Visit our website for
information on how to participate.

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