

Community Connections

SPRING 2021



Small group learning provides specialized student support

Students have been filling the classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds of Washougal schools after more than a year of at-home learning. But approximately 200 Washougal students have been meeting in school buildings in small groups part-time since last September for personalized education.

"A number of our learners needed specialized instruction that could not be offered effectively through distance learning," said WSD Director of Special Education Penny Andrews. "Some students had a formal Individual Education Program (IEP), while others either were not able to connect to the internet or couldn't successfully learn online. We brought in as many students as possible to support them with their learning goals, their assignments, and even some tutoring thrown in."

Noah Dentler, a sixth-grade student at Canyon Creek Middle School, is an example of the significant progress these students were able to make during the pandemic.

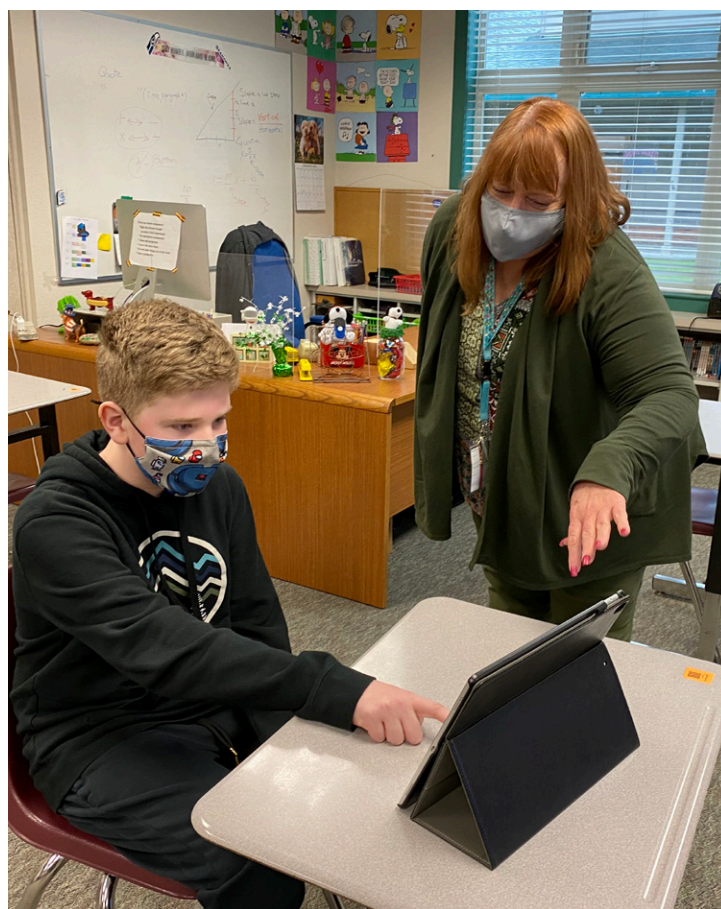
"It was hard with everything online," Noah explained. "Now I feel more confident in my regular classes and I am working hard to keep up on all of my work."

"The end of last year was really rough with the sudden move to online learning," said Noah's mother, Anni Dentler. "It was so stressful for him that I decided to keep him home at first. The start of this year was also difficult, with the change to a middle school schedule with more teachers teaching different subjects." But thanks to improved communication between parents and teachers, the development of a learning plan, and access to small group instruction, Noah is doing much better now.

"He now only has a few missing assignments," said Anni Dentler. "And that is such an improvement. I'm proud of him."

With the move to hybrid learning, Noah and others continued their small group instruction two or three days a week, as well as attend school in person with peers two days per week. "Continued access to one-on-one teacher support is important to providing our small group learners with a focus on their learning goals to prevent them from losing ground," said SPED Director Andrews. "We have also had an increase in communication with families as teachers develop support plans to meet the needs of each individual student and family."

"I am proud of our entire special education staff in Washougal," said Andrews. "And by watching the work that our teachers are doing and how they advocate for students, I can see she feels strongly that students do best when there is a human connection and when the students know that they have an adult who is cheering them on and supporting them."



ABOVE: Canyon Creek Middle School teacher Katherine Baxter gives in-person instruction to 6th grader Noah Dentler.

LATEST REOPENING INFORMATION

Washougal School District expanded its hybrid learning program for students in grades 6-12 to four days of in-person learning on April 19, 2021. The change was made possible by the State of Washington Department of Health adoption of the three-foot physical distancing guidance for students in classrooms that was announced in March by the CDC.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Washougal Community,

This year, spring is particularly welcome, with a renewed sense of hope for our future. We have all been through so many educational, personal, and professional challenges due to the impacts of the pandemic, and we are ready to return to a sense of “normalcy.”



The news that our schools are open right now for in-person learning four days per week is a significant step. It is my hope to reopen all of our schools for full-time in-person learning this fall, with Washougal Learning Academy supporting students who need a more flexible option.

I would be remiss if I did not stop to acknowledge the courage, strength, vulnerability, and resilience of the entire Washougal School District community: teachers, parents, support staff, leaders, students, school board, and our community partners.

The strength of our community is that we authentically care about each other, and when things get tough, we stay together as a team. My optimism about our district rising under adverse circumstances is anchored in my confidence that we have the best educators, the most supportive parents, the most engaged community, and the best students in the state!

Through it all, we maintain our commitment to ensuring that equity is at the heart of what we do, and that ALL of our students are known, nurtured, and challenged to rise.

I see staff, students, parents, and community members speak their truth about how our students experience our schools, and honestly share where we can improve. The work that we are doing together to disrupt systems which perpetuate bias is not easy. In fact, it is some of the hardest work I have done in my professional career. I am committed to listening and, with humility, working together to find solutions where each child who walks into our classrooms is valued. Our commitment to this work is one of the reasons we are an educational destination.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary Templeton



SCHOOL BOARD CORNER

The school board reviewed patron feedback on the district's reopening process, looking at surveys from spring 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021. Parents and guardians shared a variety of suggestions about ways the district can continue to support families through the pandemic.

Staff highlighted the ways the comments and suggestions shaped the fall reopening plan and our impactED hybrid learning model, as well as the steps the district has taken to reopen quickly as health metrics have allowed. The surveys indicated that the vast majority of families felt the steps taken to ensure student safety were keeping students safe, and that most families were interested in returning to in-person learning as soon as it was safe to do so. The surveys also indicated 20% of families were not ready to return, preferring to continue distance learning for their students.

District staff have worked to support both in-person and distance learners, and to provide childcare, meal programs, and technology supports identified as needs in the surveys. A summary of the surveys is posted to the district website, under the COVID-19 FAQ page. The board thanked district families for participating in these surveys, adding that more surveys will be issued soon to gather feedback from students.

BOARD MEETINGS

May 11 & 25. Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. at the District Office and via Zoom. Visit our website for information on how to participate.

2021-22 CALENDAR ADOPTED

The Washougal School District 2021-22 school year calendar has been adopted by the Board of Directors.

The first day of next school year will be August 31, 2021. When Labor Day falls later in September (such as it does this year), the start of school typically shifts to one week before the holiday. Starting next school year on August 31st allows the district to keep the school year from extending too late into the month of June. Starting school on September 7 (the day after Labor Day) would mean that school would not end until June 22, 2022, or later if there are snow days.

Please note that October 9, 2021, is a non-student attendance day, set aside for staff professional development. This work is funded by the State of Washington and provides the opportunity to continue teacher learning into the school year to ensure district training is useful and effective.

As in past years, there are snow days built into the 2021-22 calendar. The emergency rules that applied in 2020-21, which enabled us to quickly shift to remote learning, won't necessarily be an option in future years. Also, large weather events often cause families to lose power, which can impact students and staff trying to work remotely during severe weather.

The calendar is available in English, Spanish and Russian on our website.

Culinary program offers healthy meals made from scratch to students, staff across district

Washougal students returning to school buildings have been greeted with the mouthwatering smell of fresh baked goods and simmering sauces. Since late summer 2020, Washougal School District Culinary Services has been taking a new approach to meal service, with restaurant style, scratch-made, healthy, and nutritious food available for all students and employees.



The new culinary program began while serving takeout meals for families in need during full remote learning. Now, thanks to continued USDA funding, all meals are free to students who are 18 and under through the end of the 2021-22 school year.

Meal entrée options read like a menu at a local restaurant featuring delicious items such as Hawaiian Pork Chop, Chicken Black Bean Bowl, Chicken Caesar Salad, and Korean Turkey Sandwich.

“We see our students enjoying the food with less of them bringing lunches to school,” said Margaret Rice, WSD Director of CTE and Culinary Services who leads the new culinary program. “We know it can be a chore for parents to pull together a healthy, yet delicious, meal every day for their child. We want parents to know that we have their backs and can offer a great meal option for their children at school.”

There is also a following of WSD staff who are enjoying the convenience and quality of the meals and purchasing them for their own lunches. In October of 2019, 65 adults purchased lunches through schools. In October of 2021, when most staff were working remotely, approximately 150 adults purchased school lunches! Staff have complimented the taste and convenience. As more children return to in-person learning, we anticipate more students will enjoy the changes in meals.



BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS!

Washougal High School athletes returned to the field, track and court this spring following WIAA guidelines for safety at practices, competitions, and for event attendance. “It is wonderful to have our athletes back!” said Angela Watts, WHS women's tennis coach. “You can just see the joy it brings them. Although we can't really see their faces with masks, you can see the happiness in their eyes.” Season 3 sports, including basketball, cheerleading, swimming, and wrestling, started on Monday, April 26. Follow us on Facebook @WashougalHS for the latest info on sports practices and games in Washougal this spring.

WSD Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory team update

The district's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory team, consisting of staff, students, families, and community members, has been meeting since November and is crafting a recommendation to the school board for an Equity Policy. This new policy, which will include a decision making tool called an equity lense, will provide guidance and support to district staff in implementing the equity goal in the 2025 Strategic Plan, which commits the district to eliminate the achievement gap by building on student strengths, creating inclusive environments, and disrupting systems that perpetuate inequities.



WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

#WashougalRising

SUPERINTENDENT: Dr. Mary Templeton

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

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT: The Washougal 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, gender 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: Civil Rights Coordinator: Aaron Hansen, 4855 Evergreen Way, Washougal WA 98671, (360) 954-3050; Title IX Officer: Gary McGarvie, 1201 39th St., Washougal WA 98671, (360) 954-3104; Section 504 Coordinator: Penny Andrews, 4855 Evergreen Way, Washougal WA 98671, (360) 954-3020.

Exciting new early learning options available for Fall 2021!

AGE 4: NO-COST TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

Eligibility requirements for enrollment (must meet all):

- Turn four years old by Aug. 31 (students who are five years old on August 31 will enroll in Kindergarten)
- Reside within the Washougal School District boundary
- Not be otherwise identified for participation in Head Start and/or ECEAP preschool programs

Additional qualifying criteria for TK enrollment (must meet at least one):

- Experience lack of access (financial, availability, or other significant factor) to a licensed preschool opportunity
- Qualify for free/reduced meals
- Qualify for bilingual education
- Exhibit underdeveloped social and/or academic skills based on a WSD administered screening

Visit www.washougal.k12.wa.us/transitional-kindergarten to learn more about this program and to apply.



Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a new state-funded early learning program designed to help close the opportunity gap for students entering Kindergarten. TK classrooms focus on developmentally appropriate skills and social emotional development. Building these skills helps students make sense of the world around them while learning to self-regulate, follow

expectations, and how to work with classmates, which in turn helps ready them for Kindergarten.

TK is available for students who have a demonstrated need, or when a family cannot afford access to a community preschool program. Students must be four years old by August 31st to participate.

AGE 5: DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING AT HATHAWAY

Students and families enrolling for Kindergarten in the 2021-22 school year have an exciting opportunity to be part of our new Dual Language program. This program will start as a Kindergarten cohort at Hathaway Elementary School and will promote high levels of academic achievement for students while enabling them to become fluent in both English

and Spanish.

The Dual Language program is focused on language learning, academics, and cultural diversity, and is taught 90% in Spanish, and 10% in English. The immersion model works best with young learners who are primed for learning a new language, and is guided by research that shows a number of positive outcomes

for participants.

Families of students who enroll in programs similar to Washougal's Dual Language program see higher academic achievement in both languages and learners who are more engaged in the curriculum and have a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and respect. Research shows that students in dual language programs are happier, more motivated, and more likely to graduate than their peers.

Dual Language will be housed at Hathaway Elementary School. Students participating in this program will receive instruction in art, music, P.E., and reading, along with their dual language Kindergarten curriculum. Dual Language is supported by the voter-approved 2020 Washougal Educational Programs and Operations levy.

To learn more about the program and find out how to register, visit our website at www.washougal.k12.wa.us/dual-language.

Priority is given to those families applying before June 1.



Lenguaje dual



Washougal's newest K-8 learning option here to stay

Faced with the unknowns of what the current school year would look like and problems encountered with the quick jump to Zoom classes in the spring of 2020, Washougal School District parents Kalle and Tony Fletcher enrolled Emerson, grade 7 and Elliot, grade 5, into the new Washougal Learning Academy online school.

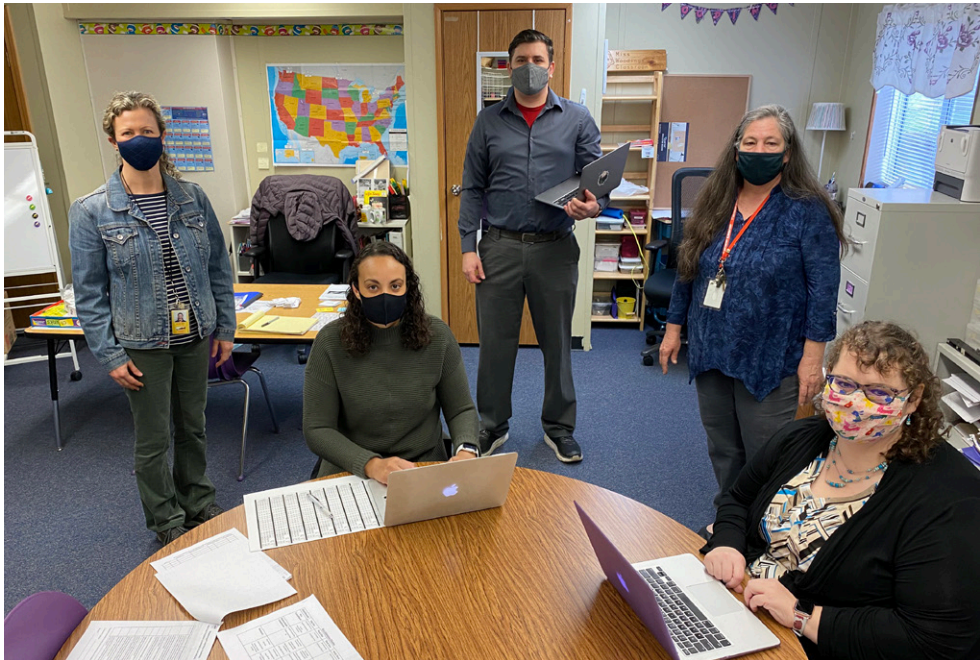
"It's not exactly traditional school, and not exactly homeschool," explains WLA principal Jason Foster. "WLA is an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE), which means we provide a different learning environment than the usual classroom education. WLA teachers are responsible for assessing and supporting student learning, while much of the work happens at home with family using district curriculum options and supplemental materials."

"I didn't know how in-person school was going to go with COVID-19 and I did not want it to feel chaotic for my girls," said Kalle Fletcher in a recent survey of WLA families. "I like that our family can move at a pace that works for us. Both my girls are doing well, yet do miss being in a physical classroom."

Denise Tate, another WLA parent, has enjoyed the ability to choose a learning schedule that works for her family. "I needed something more flexible, and something that I could have more control with teaching my son," she said. "I can set our own learning schedule. My son is doing great. I am so proud of him. He's progressing well."

Although WLA was in the planning stages years before the pandemic, the challenges of COVID-19 accelerated work and grew the need. "While we had intended to start small, with one teacher and a few dozen students, we quickly grew to three teachers, a paraeducator and a principal to serve around 120 students," Foster said. The WLA educational team includes Foster and teachers Rebecca Woodings, Sara Genova, Kynnedey Mosley, and para educator, Shellie Osentowski.

WLA is having school at home with the benefits of a district program. It features



ABOVE (L-R): WLA staff Sara Genova, Kynnedey Mosley, Jason Foster, Shellie Osentowski and Rebecca Woodings support families who prefer to do learning at home with district resources and materials.

WSD curriculum options, offers support from certificated teaching staff and provides standards-based assessment. "Families really appreciate that connection to WSD and the ability for students to work self-paced to fit the needs of families with different schedules," Foster said. "We offer lots of supplemental materials and individualized instruction planning."

The program continues to develop and grow. "In addition to serving a larger student population, we quickly learned we needed to diversify our learning model," Foster said. "We added two new curriculum options, began distributing paper copies of learning materials for families without reliable internet (or who preferred pencil and paper), and moved to a more comprehensive progress reporting structure that gives parents and students more information about their growth towards their goals."

According to Foster, WLA's future is exciting. "The school will continue long past the pandemic crisis and grow with expanded classes and materials offered, more electives, including in-person options, improved growth monitoring and reporting and a more robust student community, bringing local students who may be enrolled in other ALE programs back to Washougal," he explained.

For information on how to enroll, grade K-8 Washougal students contact your school principal, or if new to the district, contact Foster at 360-954-3833. High school students can contact their counselor for information.



How WLA works with families:

- Weekly two-way communications to support student learning and ensure students are on track to meet their goals.
- Monthly progress monitoring comparing growth to standards and setting goals for the next month.
- Real-time meetings.
- Written Student Learning Plan, a living document that can be revised to set student goals.

Who should sign up?

- Students and families who need more flexibility
- Families with high-risk members at home who have concerns about exposure to COVID-19
- Students who prefer to work at their own pace, including ones who want to accelerate learning
- High school students with other commitments, like work or childcare
- High school students who need additional courses to meet graduation standards

For information, contact the program at WLASupport@washougalsd.org

2019-20 District Report

Known...

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

3,143 as of Oct. 2019

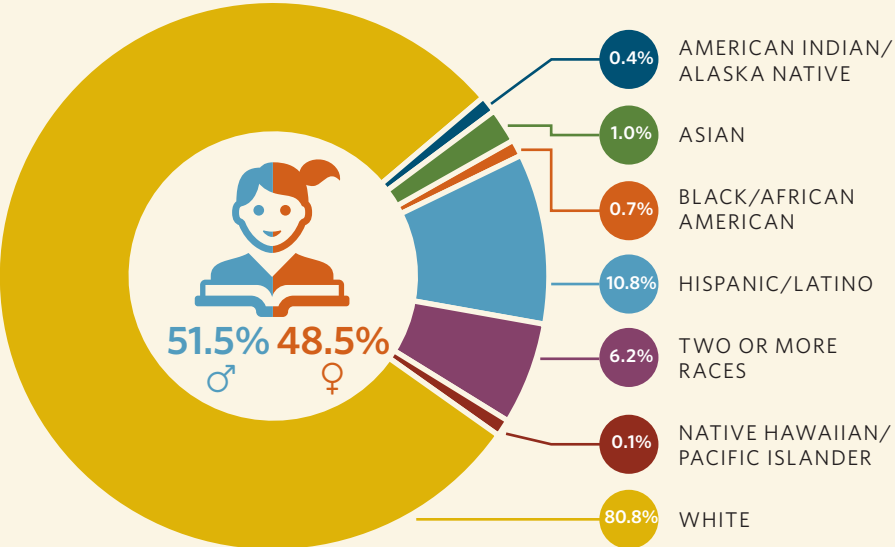
FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

Percentage of students who qualify:

39.3%



STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Nurtured...

STUDENT : TEACHER RATIO

Average number of students per instructional staff member by grade.

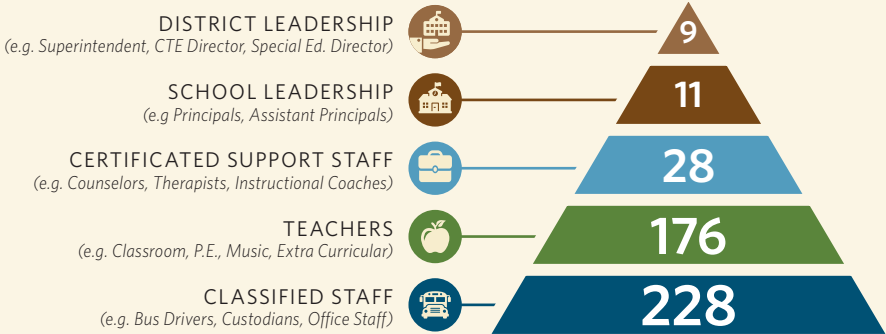
K-1 16:1
2-3 17:1
4-5 20:1
6-8 24:1
9-12 25:1



Includes classroom teachers as well as specialists, such as art, music, P.E. and library instructors.

BREAKDOWN OF DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

as of Oct. 2019



Challenged to rise!

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

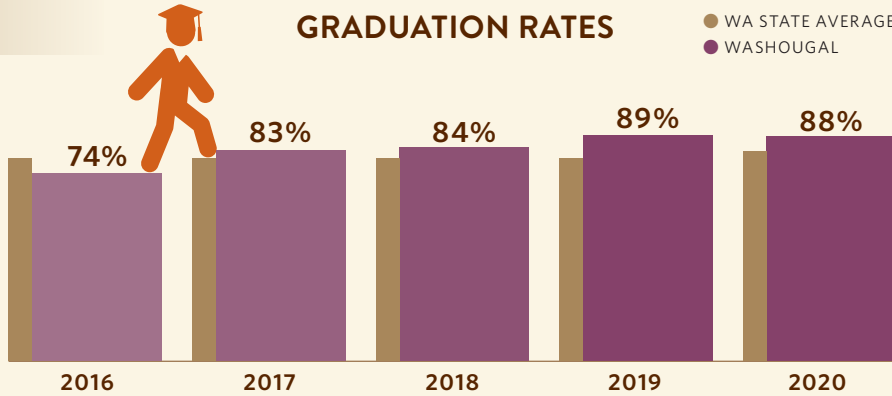
- 204 CERTIFICATED STAFF
- 12.5 AVERAGE YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE



For more info on the professional qualifications of your student's teacher, please contact your school principal.

GRADUATION RATES

● WA STATE AVERAGE
● WASHOUGAL



STANDARDIZED TESTING DATA: Washington State suspended the Smarter Balanced Assessment in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, 2019-2020 assessment data is not available.



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It's time to register for Kindergarten!

It's time for five-year-old children to begin dreaming of big yellow school buses with the annual Kindergarten Round Up for the 2021-22 school year. Washougal School District offers free, full-day,

every day Kindergarten to students at all elementary schools. It is important for parents to register their children early to allow schools to accurately plan for appropriate staffing and class sizes in the fall.

To register, students must be five years old before September 1, 2021, and have an original birth certificate and current immunization records.

If your student is six years old and did not attend kindergarten as a five-year-old, your family is encouraged to enroll your student in Kindergarten this fall. The foundational skills students develop in Kindergarten set them up for academic, social, and behavioral success throughout their educational career.

If a parent/guardian feels that their student would be better served by attending first grade, they should meet with their school principal to review their student's educational background and steps to ensure readiness for first grade. Teachers and school staff evaluate Kindergarteners several times through the school year. Six-year-olds who are identified as ready to move to first grade would be contacted by their child's teacher and school principal to talk about the option of moving them up a grade.



If your child will be 5 years of age by August 31, 2021, it's time to register for Kindergarten. Visit our website for more info: www.washougal.k12.wa.us/new-student-registration