

the SCHOLAR CHRONICLE

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  FALL 2023

EACH SCHOLAR: A VOICE. A DREAM. A BRIGHT FUTURE.



A NOTE FROM
DR. DANI
PFEIFFER,
SUPERINTENDENT

Hello Staff, Families, and Community,
Thank you for a wonderful start to the 2023–24 school year! In Federal Way Public Schools, we’re committed to continuous learning and improvement at all levels of our district, and this has been evident as we kicked off another new year. From our students in elementary school to our school leaders, I’ve seen the dedication to discovering new things and finding ways to grow.

Over the past few months, we’ve seen our schools settle back into normal routines and we’ve seen scholars dive into their coursework. In kindergarten through 2nd grade, students are engaged with their new English Language Arts curriculum, in 11th grade, scholars have rave reviews of our new US History curriculum, and at all grade levels, we’re seeing students contribute to building positive school communities.

We also recently celebrated the opening of Olympic View K–8 and hosted the first games in the new Memorial Field, marking 8 out of 9 bond projects complete! Illahee Middle School is the final project to be completed under the phase 2 bond, and construction is anticipated to be completed in the winter of the 2024–25 school year. We’re so grateful for our community’s support—thank you again for your investment in our students.

Check out these photos and the stories in this publication to learn more about what’s happening in the district.



Superintendent Dr. Dani Pfeiffer and Principal Helen Babbin welcoming scholars to Meredith Hill Elementary on the first day of the 2023–24 school year.



Our youngest learners started their educational journey with preschool! Our families and staff came together to make sure these little ones felt at ease as they started their new adventure. We can’t wait to watch them thrive and grow as scholars in Federal Way Public Schools.

Our school principals present School Improvement Plans each year to outline current data, school goals, and the strategies they will use to help their school community achieve their goals.



During the first six days of kindergarten, families, teachers and kindergarten scholars participated in Family Connection Conferences to talk about classroom learning and how each party can contribute to a successful school year for their budding scholar.

11th graders in Advanced Placement US History learning about the complexities of national identity and how the United States began defining our collective identity during the founding era. Our 11th grade US History curriculum is new this year and covers major topics in United States history like the American Revolution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, World War II, Modern America, and more.



TJHS students engage in conversation about who they want to be, as part of the new social-emotional learning curriculum for middle and high school students, Character Strong. This new curriculum is designed to empower students to help build safe and healthy communities. Lessons are focused on mental health, taking care of each other, being kind, and how to put these skills into practice.

In Partnership,

Dr. Dani Pfeiffer



COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY: FWHS ALUMNI YUCEF ATTRIBUTES HIS SUCCESS TO HOPE AND COMMUNITY

YUCEF BENNOUR
FEDERAL WAY HIGH SCHOOL,
CLASS OF 2014
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
TACOMA, CLASS OF 2018

Youcef Bennour was born in Washington State where he lived until the age of six, before hatred towards his family following 9/11 prompted a return to his home country of Algeria. There, Youcef connected to his roots, absorbing culture, language, and education. But when the local school system began to fail, his parents, who are both educators, decided to return to the States, and at fourteen, Youcef enrolled at Federal Way High School. Despite the absence of English language skills, he pushed himself into mastery—in English, academics, leadership, and advocacy. His tenacity landed him a high G.P.A. and numerous scholarships to attend UW Tacoma. Now, as a software engineer at Expedia, Youcef’s life goals are to make an impact on others and inspire students like himself to dream bigger, find their community, and have hope to reach their goals.

FWPS: What was your experience at Federal Way High School?

I started off as an ESL (English as a Second Language) student because I didn’t speak English. It was really hard. The only word I knew how to say was “hi.” But, I’ve always been a hard worker and I pride myself in my hard work. I knew I wanted to get out of ESL classes, so I made the point to study extra hours at the library to work on my English and get comfortable going up to people and just talking. Within a year, I was able to make it out and was taking regular classes, which I was super proud of. My second year I took regular classes. My third I took Cambridge English. By my last year, I was taking College Writing with Ms. Ashe—I loved that class.



I started off with no English to getting a 3.9 (G.P.A.) with scholarships to go to UW Tacoma.

FWPS: What kind of programs and activities were you part of in high school?

I was part of the AVID program, and that was able to open up the door for me to really understand what a scholarship is, how to apply for colleges, and what career fairs are. Before AVID, I didn’t even know what college was or that you needed to apply for scholarships. Also, one of my passions has always been advocating for the community, and there were folks that were doing that, so I joined them.

FWPS: What prompted you to get involved and explore different activities and opportunities?

I think the teachers. I had amazing teachers that were there for me since day one. They really paved the way for me to start believing in myself, start looking at my capacity, and make the best that I can possibly make. Like Ms. Ashe, she was always there for me.

The second thing was a chance to build community. When I came to [FWHS], there weren’t a lot of people that looked like me or came from the same walk of life that I came from. I thought, “how can I identify with people that are different than me in so many ways, but are similar to me, too? You have people

coming from all walks of life. The most important part is building community, and that community doesn’t mean people that look like me. They can be people that are different than me, but that I can identify with when I talk about specific issues.

FWPS: You went to UW Tacoma, right? What was your experience there?

When I went to my first class, they were like, “pull up the laptop and let’s write some code.” Everyone was able to do everything. I thought, “Am I misplaced?” That was the first time where I honestly doubted myself. I was slow. But, I just had to trust myself and believe I could make it happen. It was a hard couple of quarters. It wasn’t until I got my internship that I saw the power of what I was learning in the classroom apply to real proj-

ects. At the end of the day, I had so many people that believed in me—people that I didn’t want to let down, and I knew the trajectory of what I was doing was going to change my parents’ life.

FWPS: What jobs have you held since college?

My first job right out of college was at T-Mobile. I was able to learn about that job through one of my connections. I had an amazing mentor who connected me to T-Mobile and helped me get the skills. I was able to join the rotational program for 18 months where I got to rotate through different departments within the company, more on the tech side. I stayed there for four years. Now I work at Expedia as a Software Engineer under their Marketing department. That transition was a little different—I had recruiters reaching out to me because I proved myself and was able to do the work. Now I want to move more into managing and working with people, because that’s one thing that I’m passionate about.

The thing that I’m so thankful for to the Federal Way school district and Federal Way High School is making you believe. I was able to believe. I think that hope, that belief, was the big thing.



Young Youcef, right, in Algeria.

FWPS: What advice would you give current FWPS students?

It’s important to be part of a community and to build up that community. We all have the same G.P.A., the same credentials—but what really distinguishes one person from another is the social aspect. It’s about the network. It’s about the people you connect with

because those are the people that can help you long term.

As a software engineer, I’m probably not the smartest. I’m probably not the hardest worker. But there’s networking, how to talk to and connect with people—those are the skills that make me the person and the candidate I am today, and those are the skills that can help you too.

I see the power of the teacher, the power of the dynamic, the power of education, and the power of even mentors and alumni. Now the question is, “How can we give back?” “How can we make [students] believe more?”

What makes you #FWPSProud?

Our scholars, staff, and community accomplish amazing big and small things every day that we should all be #FWPSProud of. Whether it’s conquering a new reading level, retaking a test and earning a better grade, supporting our classrooms, winning a big game, or simply being a positive role model to peers, every advancement and win is worth celebrating.



#FWPSProud

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE A STAFF MEMBER, SCHOLAR, OR COMMUNITY MEMBER A SHOUT-OUT? SUBMIT YOUR HIGHLIGHT AT WWW.FWPS.ORG/FWPSPROUD.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thank you to our **community-based organizations** that help ensure each scholar has access to equity-driven supports.

This list is not exclusive. We strive daily to grow our partnerships based on the needs of our scholars.

- ★ Build2Lead
- ★ Communities In Schools
- ★ Valley Cities Behavioral Health Care
- ★ Childhaven
- ★ Atlantic Street Center
- ★ Multi-Service Center
- ★ YMCA of Greater Seattle
- ★ Phenomenal She
- ★ Right at School
- ★ Good Shepherd Youth Outreach
- ★ Game of Life



Federal Way Public Schools values strong community partnerships. We strive daily to grow our partnerships based on the needs of our scholars. If you would like to partner with FWPS, learn more at www.fwps.org/community-partners

NOW MORE THAN EVER SCHOOLS CAN’T DO IT ALONE



to the following community partners for their generous donations that positively impact the lives of scholars attending Federal Way Public Schools.

- Red Canoe Credit Union, We Love Our City Federal Way, Brooklake Church, Christ’s Church, Grace Church, Vickie Chynoweth, Curves Federal Way, Expeditors, The Table Church, and Billy McHales for coordinating the Fill the Canoe Back to School Drive event and providing 767 backpacks and 1,019 pounds of school supplies along with hosting back-to-school events for our scholars and families.
- Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer for awarding grants to Federal Way Public Schools in support of FWPS athletics.



This list reflects donations received September 26, 2023.



COMPLETED!



Two more down and just one more to go! It's hard to believe we're almost done rebuilding the projects passed during the 2017 school construction bond! Since our last update, we've added Olympic View K-8 to the roster of completed schools which now come to seven out of eight, and also finished the new Federal Way Memorial Field. Illahee Middle School is the last outstanding school but is already in-progress.



NEWLY COMPLETED

✓ **WILDWOOD ELEMENTARY**
Opened Winter 2021



✓ **MIRROR LAKE ELEMENTARY**
Opened Fall 2020



✓ **LAKE GROVE ELEMENTARY**
Opened Fall 2021



✓ **THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL**
Opened Fall 2021



✓ **STAR LAKE ELEMENTARY**
Opened Fall 2022



✓ **EVERGREEN MIDDLE SCHOOL**
Opened Winter 2021

For more information about each school construction project, visit www.fwps.org/bond.



OLYMPIC VIEW K-8

The Olympic View K-8 construction project wrapped up this summer allowing scholars and staff to start off the new school year in their new building! To celebrate we recently held a ribbon cutting event with self-led building tours to allow families and the surrounding community a chance to celebrate and explore the new learning facility. We were also able to capture some Olympic View scholar reactions to their new building!



First Look Video



First day of school

RAVE court opening

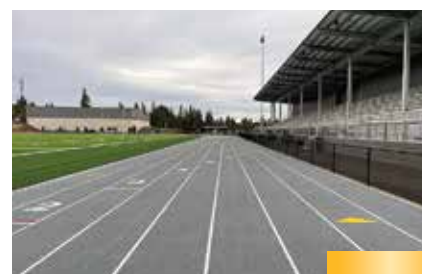


Above, clockwise from upper left: Discovery Lab, Middle School hallway, gym, classroom, Family Connection Center



FEDERAL WAY MEMORIAL FIELD

Memorial Field is complete! The new athletic stadium received a huge renovation after serving FWPS scholars and the community for over 60 years. With the new home and visitor grandstands, a new track and field, plaza with concession stands, and even new team rooms, our student-athletes are now able to compete in a state-of-the-art athletic facility that supports sportsmanship and school and district pride! The completion of this



project was long-awaited, and we were proud to host our first game of girls' soccer on October 18. Save the date and join us for a formal Ribbon Cutting Celebration on November 13 at 4:30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE:
NOVEMBER 13, 2023



Left three, top to bottom, plaza, track and field, and grandstands



First home game



CONSTRUCTION

ILLAHEE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Illlahee Middle School is officially under construction! Much of the tasks currently being completed are in-ground or foundation work, but there has also been a focus on refreshing the gym which will be renewed with updated construction materials, equipment, electrical, and more.



Ongoing work in gym and aux gym



Prefabrication of wood frame walls



Underground utilities, foundation

- Gym replacement roof has been installed and is water-tight
- Ongoing work in occurring in the gym and aux gym
- Irrigation to the Athletic Fields has been restored
- Material for the underground storm drain structures has been delivered
- Excavation of the storm water detention vault is finished
- Underground utilities, building foundation installation, and prefabrication of the wood frame walls are ongoing

the SCHOLAR CHRONICLE

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FALL 2023



Silver Lake Bulldogs gather on the first Friday of the school year, excited to be back together in school.

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The Scholar Chronicle is published periodically throughout the year by Federal Way Public Schools. Write us at 33330 8th Avenue South, Federal Way WA 98003, or call 253-945-2000. Visit our website at www.fwps.org. Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/fwps210 Twitter: @fwps210

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**FEDERAL WAY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**NONDISCRIMINATION
and EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OP-
PORTUNITY STATEMENT**
Federal Way Public Schools does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin or ethnicity, religion, creed, sex or gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, age, marital or family status, veteran or military status; disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal. The District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. For more information: www.fwps.org

ECRWSS

Postal Patron

OUR ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FEDERAL WAY COMMUNITY



We're excited to share our new and improved annual report! We value our relationship with our community, and we want you to see the great work we're doing every day, so they're confident their investment in our schools is having an impact.

You can view our annual report, featuring data from the 2022-23 school year, on our website at www.fwps.org/AnnualReport and learn more about



the progress we've made toward our strategic goals so far and how we're continuing to work toward areas of growth.

Want to learn more about the FWPS budget and how we're making the most of every dollar? Visit www.fwps.org/Budget



WE
ARE
**FEDERAL
WAY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**



In Federal Way Public Schools, we believe our scholars have **limitless potential**. ✨ We hold each other to **high expectations** and always strive for **excellence**. ☀️ We embrace **academic pursuits** and **new learning experiences**. 📖 We encourage one another to show up as our **authentic selves** and **share our unique perspectives**. 😊 We build **meaningful connections** because we know we can't do it alone. We **learn and grow alongside one another**. 🌸 We **celebrate** our wins and view **challenges as opportunities**. ★ We know success does not come overnight—it comes through an **output of effort** each day. ❤️ From the very first day of school, to high school graduation, **we learn, thrive, and succeed**.

Learn more about the scholars, staff, families, volunteers, and community members who make up Federal Way Public Schools in our **WE ARE FWPS** video series, which will be updated throughout the 2023-24 school year.