

Spring 2022

# COMMUNITY *Connections*

News of Cheney Public Schools



*For our children, our world, our future*





Rob Roettger  
Superintendent  
rroettger@cheneysd.org

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**On the Cover:**  
Cheney High School track athletes running in late March

# LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Community Members,

On March 13, 2020 it was announced that Washington state schools would be closing due to COVID-19 concerns. I distinctly remember this day and where I was seated in a meeting with regional leaders as I first heard the news that a school closure was a possibility. Later that afternoon, the rumored closure became official as Governor Inslee held a press conference and made a formal announcement.

Although the COVID pandemic has presented significant challenges to our community and school system throughout the past two years, there has been an increased sense of normalcy in recent weeks as COVID case rates have dropped, masks have become optional, and many pre-pandemic activities have resumed.

The pandemic created several years of “doing the best we can” and managing countless challenges and unforeseen circumstances. It also inspired the exploration of options and opportunities that might not have been part of our thinking if everything had remained the same. As we transition from a pandemic to an endemic, it is time to refocus our effort and energy by leading our growing district forward and building upon the great aspects of our system that currently exist as we prepare for the future of Cheney Public Schools.

To that end, in recent years our district has spent considerable time and resources implementing the concepts of true Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within each of our schools. Moving forward it will be critical that the four questions which guide PLCs remain at the center of our collaborative work (standards, assessment, intervention, and extension). Each grade

level and content area must have a guaranteed and viable curriculum and utilize common formative assessments (CFAs) and end of unit assessments (EOU) to measure student progress toward mastering identified standards. In addition, it is essential that every school in our district creates a system within the school day that guarantees timely intervention and extension support for each student.

High levels of learning for all students can only be ensured when the members of a school system possess a strong sense of community. It is imperative that each student and family feels supported and has a true sense of belonging within our education system, and a continued focus on the important equity work that is underway in our district will be critical to ensuring our schools meet the unique learning and social and emotional needs of every student.

During the pandemic, Cheney Public Schools experienced an enrollment decline in the 2020-2021 school year, yet has seen enrollment rebound slightly and increase in the 2021-2022 school year to a current level of approximately 5,055 FTE (full time enrollment). It will be extremely important that the district continues to look toward the future, analyze growth potential, and plan for future school sites and facility needs. As part of the ongoing planning process the district purchased 11.5 acres in Airway Heights in 2020 (Craig Rd.) and 51 acres in 2021 on the West Plains (off of Thomas Mallen Rd). While this is a great start, additional property will be needed, including in Airway Heights, as the district plans for the future which will likely include additional secondary and elementary schools and a new

*cont'd on page 3*



Mark Scott  
School Board Member  
District 1



Zachary Zorrozuva  
School Board Member  
District 2



Henry Browne  
School Board Vice-President  
District 3



Stacy Nicol  
School Board Member  
District 4



Mitch Swenson  
School Board President  
District 5

## MISSION STATEMENT:

Cheney Public Schools exists to guarantee a safe and caring environment where ALL students learn at high levels and graduate with options for post-secondary education, careers, and civic engagement.



### (Superintendent continued)

transportation facility. As we transition out of the pandemic an updated capital facilities plan will be an essential part of an overall district-wide strategic planning effort.

Ultimately, a transition away from pandemic management toward a focus on intentional district strategic planning will be essential to achieving our mission of guaranteeing a safe and caring environment where all students learn at high levels and graduate with options for post-secondary education, careers, and civic engagement.

The future of Cheney Public Schools is extremely bright and undoubtedly exciting opportunities lie ahead for our school district and the community we serve. Thank you, our community, for your steadfast and continued support of our students, staff, families, and school district!

*Robert W. Roettger*

Robert W. Roettger

Superintendent, Cheney Public Schools

## New Cheney High School Principal

Following a rigorous interview process, Cheney Public Schools is pleased to announce that Mr. Brett Hale has been selected as the next principal of Cheney High School, effective July 1, 2022.

Mr. Brett Hale is currently an assistant principal at Mt. Spokane High School in the Mead School District. Prior to working at Mt. Spokane, Mr. Hale served as an assistant principal at Rogers High School, leading both teaching and learning as well as student services departments. Mr. Hale taught high school biology in Spokane and Kennewick, Wash. before working as an administrator.

As a teacher and administrator, Mr. Hale has been extensively involved in professional development leadership and student support programs. He is a graduate of Eastern Washington University, obtaining his bachelor's degree. Mr. Hale also holds an MS Education degree from Walden University and Principal Certification from Eastern Washington University.



Mr. Hale brings extensive experience from Mt. Spokane and Rogers high schools and is eager to begin at Cheney High School. "I could not be more excited about being selected as the next principal of Cheney High School!" said Mr. Hale following his interview process. "I am so appreciative of all of the staff, students, and community members who made this such an incredible week for me. Your passion for the school and the school community is inspiring, and it makes me all the more excited to have the opportunity to serve you all! Go Blackhawks!!!"

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Brett Hale to Cheney High School and Cheney Public Schools!



April is the Month of the Military Child, a celebration initiated in the 1980s to recognize the unique challenges and sacrifices military families face, especially children. Roughly seven percent of Cheney Public School children have a parent serving in the military, with over 60% of those being active duty. We are proud to serve these families and work collaboratively with the Fairchild School Liaison Officer to support students with parents in the military.

*To learn more about the district's support for military families and children visit: [bit.ly/cheneymilitary](http://bit.ly/cheneymilitary)*

## Cheney Students Nominated for Spokane Scholar Awards

Six Cheney High School seniors were nominated for Spokane Scholar Awards, they are among 158 students nominated from 31 schools throughout the Spokane region. The Spokane Scholars Foundation was founded in 1993 by community members and business leaders to recognize academic excellence among students in the Spokane region. Students are nominated in one of six academic areas.

- Jenae Potter - English
- Alexander Bowman - Fine Arts
- Joshua Whiteley - Mathematics
- Dylan Thornburg - Science
- Parker Cagle - Social Studies
- Jenna Mansfield - World Languages

Congratulations to our six Spokane Scholar Nominees!



# An Eye to the Future

## *Property Acquisitions Signal Future District Growth*

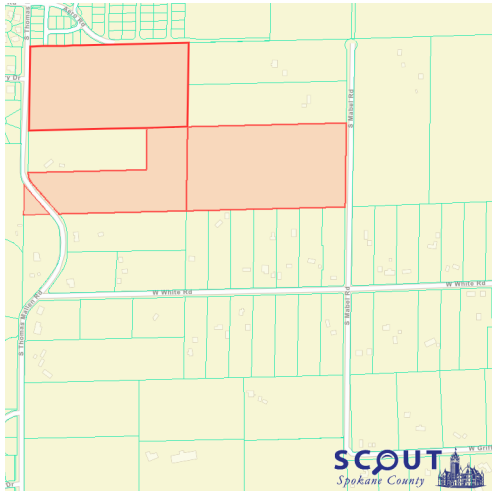
While the school district saw a brief dip in enrollment during the pandemic, the number of new students enrolling has rebounded to a similar pattern of growth as we experienced before the unrest of the last two years.

Property development is rapidly increasing within the district, especially in Airway Heights and the West Plains area.

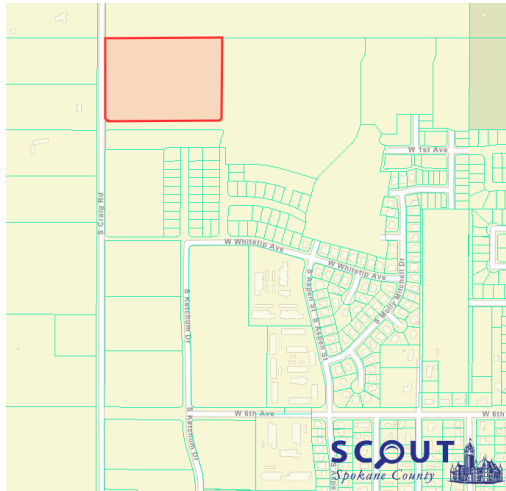
Planning for future development, the district is looking to proactively purchase property to meet the expected future needs of our students. To that end, two properties were purchased over the last two years.



*Aerial view of Thomas Mallen property on the West Plains*



*Three parcels purchased on Thomas Mallen Road in the West Plains*



*Parcel purchased on Craig Road in Airway Heights for future elementary site*

The first property is in Airway Heights on Craig Road. The property is well suited to serve as an elementary school site and sits near planned and expanding housing developments in the northwest of Airway Heights. This 11.5-acre property was purchased for \$650,000 in February of 2020 using funds set aside for land purchases.

The second property is three parcels on the West Plains not far from the Fairways Golf Course. The property faces Thomas Mallen Road to the west and Mabel Road to the east. The property is approximately 51 acres and was purchased for \$1.25 million in December of 2021 with funds from 2020-2021 Capital Levy collections.

The district continues to look to purchase more property to keep pace with the growing population of the Airway Heights, Cheney, and West Plains communities. The district is looking to build additional elementary and secondary schools in the coming years and possibly relocate the transportation facility to a centralized location.



*Craig Road property in Airway Heights*





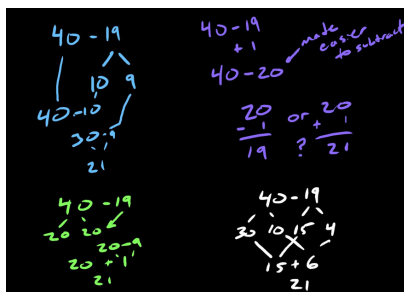
## Success in Math Elective at Westwood Middle School

One of the many electives offered at Westwood Middle school is a class called Success in Mathematics. The idea of this class is to challenge our mathematicians in ways they don't often see in our general math classes. Use of team work, problem solving, and communicating about mathematical processes is the core of this class. Students quickly find that this is not just another math class but something to look forward to, as the challenges and questions asked are possible to do by all, but the journey to get to the answer is the exciting part to share out to the classroom.

A simple example could be a "number talk" we have done: **40 minus 19**

Students would solve this mentally and need to come up with two strategies to solve and share their thinking with the classroom. At surface value this seems easy, and it is; the learning happens when we as a class find there are many ways to break apart numbers and solve in ways other than the standard stack and subtract method. If you are reading this, try to solve this problem mentally and if you did solve it, can you use a second method?

Over the year sixth graders have found answers like 39, 29, 31, 21. Why? Take the answer 39. How can 40 take away 19 be 1 less? When you analyze the thinking, you see the mistake! They stacked and subtracted in their head, 0 minus 9 is 9 in their head, and 4 minus 1 is 3, so it must be 39. The teacher accepts the answer, keeps it on the board and would then have students discuss if the answer would be reasonable, or where in the description that the student gave a mistake was made. Others share and give different ideas to solve; below are some pictures of different ways that students have solved this:



In the four examples from the picture, you can see all sorts of thinking, some more efficient, some raising more questions. In particular the purple example where you add 1, to get an easy  $40 - 20$ , but then as a class discussing if we didn't know the answer was 21, why if we add 1 to 19 do we again add 1 to 20? Why not subtract the 1 we added at the beginning?

Finally, I will leave anyone reading this a wonderful question we wrestled with this week. I gave this question, and all students proceeded to struggle through it for the entirety of the 45 minute class. Watching and working alongside 6th grade students as they formulated their own strategies, found new information that we'd share to the class then adjust our previous methods to try and solve just this one question for the entire period, was truly an enjoyable moment as a math teacher.

Here's the question:

"A book has 600 pages which are numbered 1,2,3 and so on. How many times does the digit 5 appear in the page numbers?"

Some students took an extreme method in solving! Many started by dividing 600 by 5, but then we dove into how many 5's are between 1-100? Well 50-59 has 11 5's, counting 55 twice for each individual 5. Students heads started to burst after that, and then the problem of the 500's realizing that each number in the 500's has a 5, on top of 555, which has three 5's. Trying to figure out a clean equation was too difficult and many succumbed to writing every 5 digit on white boards!

*Ethan Unland is a 6th Grade Math Teacher at Westwood Middle School*



*Students hard at work in Mr. Unland's Success in Mathematics Class at Westwood Middle School*

## Washington Music Education Association Regional Outstanding Music Educator



*Congratulations to Mike Horrocks, Sunset Elementary Music and Band Teacher, for being selected the 2022 WMEA Regional Outstanding Music Educator! Sunset Falcons Soar!*

## Cheney HS Band Booster Club wins KREM - STCU Award

STCU and KREM2 news partner to do an annual "Who do you love?" non-profit award each February, with awards announced in March. CHS Band Booster won second place in the public vote and received a \$2,500 donation. Mr. Wisswell and the Wind Ensemble were presented with the award during the school day and were filmed for an evening news segment. Congrats CHS Bands!





## MJ Murdock Charitable Trust Grant Extended at Three Springs

Drake Haren, the science teacher at Three Springs High School, received a two-year extension on his MJ Murdock Partners in Science grant. This grant has allowed Mr. Haren to work with Dr. Krisztian Magori at Eastern Washington University to conduct research on ticks. Students have been able to assist in field research, gathering ticks at the the Three Springs Nike Center site.

The grant extension will help purchase equipment and allow for additional opportunities to involve students in research projects. Congrats Mr. Haren and Three Springs High School!



Mr. Haren demonstrating a simple tick collection method in the field near Three Springs High School.



## FFA Greenhouse Sale off to an Early Start

Students from Cheney High School's Greenhouse Production and Hydroponics course have worked hard in the school's greenhouse starting thousands of plants from seeds or small cuttings this year. The plants grown in these classes are sold as part of an effort to support the Cheney Future Farmers of America Club. Plants range from houseplants to tomatoes and hanging flower baskets.

FFA Advisor Heather McLagan shared that this year the sale is starting early with a limited selection of winter veggies and houseplants. This allows more student to gain experience in selling products. The greenhouse is open for sales on Thursdays 9 am to 3 pm.



The Annual Spring Plant Sale will take place on Wednesday May 18, and Thursday May 19 from 9 am to 5 pm. Flowers, veggies, succulents and more will be on sale! Come check out the beautiful plants grown by our green thumbs!

## Seniors to wrap up year with activities and celebrations

### Cheney High School

- **May 14th - Prom**  
7 pm; Centennial Ballroom, Spokane Convention Center
- **June 8th - Seniors' Last Day of School**
- **June 8th - A Time to Honor**  
6 pm, Cheney HS Auditorium
- **June 9th - Commencement Rehearsal and Senior Cruise**  
8 am, CHS Main Gym
- **June 10th - Senior Breakfast**  
TBD
- **June 10th - CHS Commencement**  
6 pm, Northern Quest Casino
- **June 10th - Senior All-Nighter**  
10 pm, CHS Main Gym

### Three Springs High School

- **June 9th - Seniors' Last Day of School**
- **TBD - A Time to Honor**
- **June 10th - Commencement Rehearsal and Senior Activity**
- **June 11th - TSHS Commencement**  
2pm, Northern Quest Casino

## Together, we uplift lives.

Cheney Public Schools

Seeking substitutes in all areas...

- including teachers, custodians, bus drivers and aides, nutrition services, and paraeducators.
- Set your own schedule.
- Benefits eligible at 630 hours.
- Continue other work.
- Network and expand your skills.
- Earn \$15-\$22/hr. dependent on position.
- Questions? Call Leigh Lubbers at 509-559-4542.

Hiring Multiple Positions

- Positively impact the lives of students.
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- Questions? Call Angela Moses at 509-559-4509

Visit [bit.ly/cheneyhire](https://bit.ly/cheneyhire) to see all open positions and apply!





# Superstar: Classified Employee of the Year

From painting offices, to touching up exteriors of schools, Charlie Pyke expected to traverse the district when he started as the district painter. His can-do attitude and willingness to step in wherever there was a need is what stood out most to his coworkers and supervisors.

In 2021 Mr. Pyke stepped up to train as a substitute bus driver on top of his other duties. Taking on this role was a huge help to the transportation office. The transportation staff noted that without his help, a route likely would have been eliminated.

On March 16th, Mr. Pyke was surprised by district staff at the transportation office after he completed his morning bus routes. Superintendent Rob Roettger made the announcement that Mr. Pyke was named classified employee of the year and PSEC President Robin Miller was also in attendance to congratulate Mr. Pyke.

The award celebrates a classified staff member who has exhibited outstanding work performance and has contributed significantly to student or program success and to the betterment of the school district.

Charlie Pyke serves as a painter in the maintenance department, took on the role of a substitute bus driver, and beyond that is known to step into a variety of custodial and maintenance roles. Mr. Pyke's work ethic impresses and motivates his coworkers.



*Charlie Pyke was surprised with the Classified Employee of the Year Award in the transportation break room*

Mr. Pyke was nominated by Transportation Assistant Director Ellen Holland and the business office staff, who wrote the following in their nomination letter:

"Charlie's willingness to do anything and everything that is needed to support our district and our students on many different levels is above and beyond. There is no request or job that needs to be done that Charlie isn't willing to do."

Transportation Assistant Director Ellen Holland said Mr. Pyke is known for his positive and happy attitude, and that any department is lucky to have his help.

"Charlie does whatever is asked of him. He drives a school bus most mornings, fills in

as a janitor, or delivers the district mail. Charlie's 'regular' job is in the maintenance department as the painter. Charlie is always ready when needed. He is competent at whatever he does. As a bus driver he does an amazing job. He is great with the kids and is always calm and collected."

Congratulations to Mr. Pyke. The district is fortunate that he has chosen to share his dedication and expertise in support of the children and staff of Cheney Public Schools.

*Thank you!*



*Charlie Pyke greets his family who surprised him at the announcement.*



**Interested in becoming a  
Bus Driver Substitute or  
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Substitute?**

For more information call  
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## Important Dates

### April 27

School Board Meeting, 6 pm  
 Cheney High School

### May 11

School Board Meeting, 6 pm  
 Cheney High School

### May 25

School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm  
 Cheney Middle School

### May 30

Memorial Day Holiday - No School

### June 10

Cheney High School Commencement

### June 11

Three Springs High School Commencement

### June 17

Last Day of School



## Class of 2022



## Post-Graduation Plans

Cheney High School Students are sharing their post-graduation plans with fellow students through Instagram and Facebook pages, check them out at

[www.instagram.com/cheney\\_classof2022/](https://www.instagram.com/cheney_classof2022/)

[www.facebook.com/CheneyClassof2022](https://www.facebook.com/CheneyClassof2022)



Cheney Public Schools @cheneyschools



@CheneySchools

Cheney Public Schools 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 or identity, economic status, pregnancy, familial status, marital status, disability, or the use of a trained guide dog 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.

Title IX/Chapter 28A.640 Officer/  
 Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator/ADA  
 Coordinator  
 Tom Arlt, Assistant Superintendent  
 Cheney Public Schools  
 12414 S. Andrus Rd. Cheney, WA 99004  
 Phone: (509) 559-4550  
 Email: [tarlt@cheneysd.org](mailto:tarlt@cheneysd.org)

Section 504 Coordinator  
 Franklin Day, Director, Student Support Services  
 Cheney Public Schools  
 12414 S. Andrus Rd. Cheney, WA 99004  
 Phone: (509) 559-4507  
 Email: [fdlay@cheneysd.org](mailto:fdlay@cheneysd.org)

Requests for Disclosure of Public Records  
 Helen Page, Public Records Officer  
 Cheney School District  
 12414 S. Andrus Rd., Cheney, WA 99004  
 Phone: (509) 559-4502  
 Email: [hpage@cheneysd.org](mailto:hpage@cheneysd.org)

Are you a member of a military family?  
 Please visit [bit.ly/cheneymilitary](https://bit.ly/cheneymilitary) for  
 more information.