

# Open Line

JULY 2021



Continuous Student Learning in a Caring, Engaging Environment



## Congratulations to the Class of 2021!

This year, over 540 graduates left our high schools to embark on their next endeavor. Three of the Tumwater School District Board of Directors celebrate their graduates and had the honor of handing them their diplomas at graduation. Pictured are BHHS graduate Zachary Sale, Board Member Laurie Sale, BHHS graduate Kainoa Beard, and Board President Melissa Beard. *Continued on page 6...*

## Academic & Student Well-Being Plans How Our Learning Community Will Recuperate

By Assistant Superintendent Shawn Batstone

This past year our students, staff, and families were stretched in ways we never could have imagined. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our school community has been working hard to meet the learning needs of students by creating and implementing remote and in-person learning opportunities, purchasing and distributing Chromebooks and hot spots, providing meals, and incorporating ever-changing public health guidelines to meet a variety of health and safety standards. The effort and dedication of our students, families, and staff throughout the pandemic has been nothing short of extraordinary!

As we look to next school year, it is important to reflect on what we have learned along the way as we create an Academic and Student Well-Being Recovery Plan that accelerates student learning in an environment that accounts for student safety and social emotional well-being. As a first step to learning recovery, we will begin by working collaboratively to review and prioritize grade-level learning standards and determine what is essential for students to know and understand. This will include the creation of assessments that allow us to diagnose individual student learning needs and accurately monitor and accelerate student progress. As a district, it will be important to ensure that each and every student has equitable *continued on page 6...*

### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

## Resilience



Sean Dotson,  
TSD Superintendent

We have been through a year like no other, and as summer begins, it is natural to reflect and begin to look forward to new beginnings. As I look back at this year, a quote from author

**Robert Jordan** comes to mind. "The oak fought the wind and was broken, the willow bent when it must and survived."

This past year has tested our students, families, and staff to find ways to bend but not break. Through the pandemic, everyone has been faced with the challenge of adapting to new ways to work, teach, learn, socialize, and communicate. The constantly changing conditions of the pandemic have required us to learn to live with uncertainty and to be prepared to respond to changes in guidance that required new creative thinking and action.

Through all of this, our students, staff, and families have kept moving forward and working together to find ways to continue school in the best way we could given the conditions. Teachers completely re-learned to teach using virtual tools. Students participated virtually, learning to use new technologies to communicate. It was amazing to see Kindergartners sing and interact together via Zoom or to watch a second-grader ask his teacher to allow him to screen-share so she could show her teacher an assignment and help answer her questions. When conditions allowed us to return, we all adapted to new protocols and schedules so we could return to classrooms and activities that are so important to our health and wellness. These are just a few examples of our schools and community bending like the willow tree to weather the storm.

When a tree bends in a storm, something unseen yet important happens to the structure of the tree – the roots grow stronger and deeper, giving the tree the strength to weather future storms. Our students *continued on page 2...*

# Tumwater's Continuing Commitment to Educational Equity



Black Hills High School Student Equity Team members Natalie, Aynsleigh, and Makenna worked with the student body to craft the BHHS Equity Statement, which is on display all around the campus. The goal is to achieve the four A's (Acknowledge, Accept, Appreciate, Assist) on a daily basis.

Tumwater's students, staff, and community have demonstrated a shared commitment to equity this year. Our District Equity Advisory Committee continues to bring staff, students, and parents together to learn and plan actions to ensure our schools are a welcoming place for all students to learn and grow. If you are interested in participating in this important work, e-mail [becky.powell@tumwater.k12.wa.us](mailto:becky.powell@tumwater.k12.wa.us) to be added to communications about upcoming meetings. This summer, Tumwater School District will hire a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to lead and support our work to build a culture of opportunity, equity, and inclusion for all students, families, and employees. This position will provide leadership to help us organize and implement professional development, recruit and retain a diverse staff, support work to create a welcoming and inclusive culture in our schools, prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and harassment, lead our Equity Advisory Committee, strengthen our accommodations and support for students with disabilities, and much more. We are excited to add leadership to sustain our focus on ensuring continuous student learning for all students in a caring, engaging environment.

## Less ME, More WE

- Respectful** We respect everyone's unique strengths and challenges to make THS a safe space for all.
- Responsible** We stand up for one another and speak out against bias and hate in all its forms.
- Present** We listen from our different perspectives and experiences with empathy and curiosity.
- Kind** We recognize that our words and actions have power, so we choose to be kind.

The Social Equity Club evolved from the Cultural Awareness Club, which was a staple at THS. Over the course of the 2020-21 school year, SEC students developed the "Less Me, More We" statement in collaboration with staff. Students of the SEC are dedicated to making their school and community a truly accepting, supportive, and equitable place to grow.

## Superintendent's Message *continued from page 1...*

and teachers have likewise grown stronger through this experience. Everyone will take forward lessons they learned about persistence and facing adversity, and they will use those lessons throughout their lives to weather future adversity.

I want to call particular attention to our outstanding graduating seniors – the students in the Class of 2021. In their final year of high school, they have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and determination. They experienced a senior year like none before, and they kept bending with the wind through the constantly changing conditions. While their senior year looked very different than usual, it has been exciting to see them participating in the classroom, in sports and activities, and taking part in senior events. We were happy to celebrate the achievements of our graduates at Tumwater District

Stadium with their families during commencement ceremonies. I am so proud of these young adults and hope that the winds that helped make them stronger over the past 15 months will now take them in a direction that helps them find their joy.

I leave this year hopeful and optimistic about the future for Tumwater's students and community. As we return to school in-person five days-per-week in the fall, we will do so with new tools to learn, collaborate, and communicate. We will look forward to building upon the foundations we have set this year to improve educational equity. We will be ready to support our students with academic and wellness recovery. We will look forward to resuming more and more of the activities that define the school experience.

In the meantime, I want to extend my sincere

thanks one more time to everyone for your patience, resilience, and your willingness to adapt through the changing conditions. Tumwater is strong because of the many great people who work together to support each other. This year, examples of that spirit of community were all around us. We are thankful for your support and look forward to welcoming you back for the 2021-22 school year in September! Enjoy the sunshine and beauty of summer.

Sincerely,

Sean Dotson, Superintendent

# Early Learning in Tumwater Schools



A Littlerock Elementary 2nd grade student in Mrs. Allen's class examines her seed marker before completing her planting project.

## How Tumwater is Using One-time Federal Funds

School districts throughout the country are receiving one-time federal funds to help school systems recover from the impacts of the pandemic. Beyond using funds to reimburse for personal protective equipment and preparing our facilities for students and staff to return in the midst of a pandemic, here are some of our other plans moving forward:

- Summer programs and enrichment opportunities for grades K-12
- Learning recovery interventions at all grade levels
- Support for special needs students
- Support for mental health needs of students
- Support for unique behavioral needs
- Professional development for staff to prepare for reintegration and post-pandemic support for students
- Additional PPE, supplies, and materials for our schools to be compliant with DOH and L&I requirements
- Additional staff necessary to operate during and post-pandemic
- Schools will receive designated funds for unique additional needs in their buildings that align with our recovery plan



Students at the Early Childhood Learning Center enjoy time playing with their sensory toys. We are thankful for a generous donation from a community member that provided funding for additional sensory toys at the ECLC for children to enjoy for years to come.

We are pleased to announce our Child Find Screenings at the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC). The screenings, which occur several times a year, are for children aged 3-5 who are referred by doctors and/or family who have concerns about a child's developmental skills. Screenings are performed by our team of specialists and focus on the areas of cognition/academic readiness, communication (speech and language), physical development (fine and gross motor), social/emotional/behavioral, and adaptive self-help skills. The screenings are an important tool to help determine areas of strengths and potential weaknesses, and which areas may be further evaluated. We also consider students with typical patterns of development for our Peer Model Program, and prepare a list of potential students. (Peer models must turn 4 by August 31st and there is a nominal fee for participation.)

For more information or for dates of the screenings, please call Special Services at (360) 709-7040.

## STUFF THE BUS



## Saturday, August 14th

**10 am – 3 pm**  
**at Walmart & Safeway stores**  
**on Littlerock Rd in Tumwater**

Tumwater Public School Employees of Washington, along with other community partners, will be collecting donations of school supplies and hygiene items at the Tumwater Walmart and Safeway stores located on Littlerock Road. You can also stop by Tumwater Middle School with your donation on this date.

All items will help support families in our school district.

# District's Tumwater Virtual Academy Continues to Build on Its Successful First Year

**TVA  
now enrolling  
for 2021-22  
school  
year!**

Before COVID-19 and the District-wide transition to remote learning, TSD was in the process of creating a virtual school that would allow students the flexibility they wanted in learning.

"A review of our data indicated that many of our families were leaving the District to pursue online learning opportunities," said **Shawn Batstone**, TSD Assistant Superintendent. "We felt we could meet this need by creating an online school of our own."

And so, Tumwater Virtual Academy (TVA) was launched in the fall of 2020. TVA looks a lot different than the remote learning that TSD students experienced with their local schools. "TVA offers students a really unique opportunity to learn from caring Tumwater teachers at a pace that works for them," said **Kyle Grunenfelder**, TVA Principal. "At the same time, TVA students can still be a part of their school community and participate in athletics, clubs and extracurriculars. It's the best of both worlds."

Unlike the fully remote learning model where students were expected to be online the same hours as a traditional school day, TVA offers students the flexibility to plan their day and work at a pace that suits them. Students complete 1-2 hours of online live lessons a day and can spend the remaining time working independently or with their learning coaches.

The learning coach model – often a parent, grandparent, or other caregiver – is a unique part of TVA. For elementary students, the learning coach spends much of the day helping facilitate learning. For older students, the learning coach helps with accountability and checking in to make sure the student is following the schedule and turning in work.

**Jamie Escobar** is both a TVA teacher and parent of three TVA students. She shares that her children are thriving in TVA, thanks to their grandmother who serves as their learning coach. "The students who are the most successful are the ones who have family support at home," she said. "TVA works for all students, I have seen all kinds of kids be successful -- medically fragile, anxiety issues, some of the real high achievers, and struggling students. There's less pressure, and it's just more flexible."

TVA is currently enrolling for the 2021-2022 school year. Find out if TVA is the right choice for you at <https://www.tumwater.k12.wa.us/domain/2086> or call at 360-709-7055.



**TUMWATER VIRTUAL ACADEMY**  
A flexible, caring learning community  
by Tumwater School District



At TVA, the learning coach plays a key role in the success of their child's education. Elementary coaches spend time each day to facilitate learning. For older students, they help with accountability to make sure the student is following the schedule and turning in work.



Two of our TSD retirees, BMS' Kevan Hagen and Linda O'Shaughnessy, celebrate their retirement at an end-of-the year get together.

## Celebrating and Saying Goodbye to our Retirees

This year, many of our TSD family – teachers and staff – are retiring from education to start on the next leg of their journey. Will you please celebrate with us the following 2021 retirees:

1. **Heidi Beattie**, THS Campus Supervisor
2. **Jim Brittain**, Exec. Director of Finance
3. **Steve Brooks**, BLE Teacher
4. **Diane Cronin**, BLE Paraprofessional
5. **Deborah Dahlen**, BLE Teacher
6. **Teresa DuBois**, THS Teacher
7. **Tracy Eisenberg**, MTS Teacher
8. **Kevan Hagen**, BMS Teacher-Librarian
9. **Laura Hawthorne**, LRE Teacher
10. **Victor Kores**, THS Teacher
11. **Dee Ann Larsen**, LRE Paraprofessional
12. **Pamela Leonard**, BMS Cook
13. **Anne Lux**, EOE Teacher
14. **Linda O'Shaughnessy**, BMS Principal
15. **Debbie Ramstad**, LRE Teacher
16. **Monica Reed**, THS Teacher
17. **Ann Rettenmier**, THS Teacher
18. **Wendy Roberson**, THS Network Technician
19. **Dean Sawhill**, BHHS Teacher
20. **William Smith**, MTS Teacher
21. **Starr Wyatt**, ECLC Teacher

Please visit our website at [www.tumwater.k12.wa.us](http://www.tumwater.k12.wa.us) and look for the Celebrating our Retirees headline to watch a video in honor of these remarkable educators.

To our retirees ~ May your new beginning be filled with many happy memories of the years you spent contributing to the success of the students of Tumwater School District!

*We wish you all the very best!*

# Your Bond & Levy Dollars at Work

By Mel Murray, Facilities Director



Technology Department employees prepare Chromebooks to be checked out to each student in the District.

The Tumwater School District capital fund pays for construction projects at our schools and support buildings. These funds are a combination of proceeds from the sale of bonds, State construction grants, impact fees and property tax collections for the capital levy. Below is a project update:

The THS Performing Arts Center (PAC) renovation and addition is the last of the large projects funded by the voter-approved 2014 bond projects. The remaining work on the PAC is installation of new seating and to commission the new theater technology to ensure that it is functioning properly. The new lighting, audio and video systems in both THS and BHHS Performing Arts Centers are comparable to those found in college and commercial theaters. Learning how to operate these systems prepares our students for careers in the stagecraft industry. Also on the THS campus, additional steel beams were added around the press box in the District Stadium to provide additional structural support.

A study to consider relocating the preschool programs from the New Market campus into the old library building on the Peter G. Schmidt campus was completed. What we found is that the cost to do so exceeds the capital funds we have available at this time. With the information we gained, we may continue to consider moving and expanding the early learning programs in a future bond proposal.

Thanks to our supportive community, projects authorized by the 2020 capital levy are continuing:

- Installation of fire sprinklers at BLE. This will increase safety at the school.
- New classroom furniture at BLE.
- A new intercom system was installed at THS last fall and will be installed at BHHS over the summer. These new intercom systems feature emergency alert components.

- Emergency alert components were added to the MTS intercom system last summer and will be added to the LRE system this summer.
- Work at THS this summer includes replacing the old power poles in the student parking lot, replacing the library lights with LED fixtures and re-roofing Building 'C' that houses the gyms, commons and locker rooms.
- Parking lot repairs will be made at THE and MTS schools.
- The interior hallways at BHHS are being repainted and a laminate wainscot added.

- The roof over the kitchen at BMS is being replaced.
- The Technology Department utilized the capital levy funds to purchase Chromebooks for the student device replacement cycle in Tumwater (about 1,200 per year) and all students had a device assigned for remote and in-person learning. We also added network switches and installed wireless access points for remote learning. The District network storage was increased; a new video security server and back-up appliance were added to the District data center.

A District Facilities Advisory Committee was formed and held two meetings in May. The Committee discussed capital funding options - bonds, capital levies, impact fees and state construction grants. They also reviewed enrollment trends and possible future projects. Because of uncertainty in enrollment and the effects of the pandemic on facilities next year, it was decided to pause planning for a new bond and re-direct efforts to possibly running a replacement capital levy in February. This could fund more safety improvements, major maintenance on existing buildings - such as roofing, painting, lighting and HVAC systems - and continue to upgrade learning technology. In the meantime, a planning consultant will be inventorying our schools for size, physical condition and learning environment. This information will be given to the committee when meetings start again in September. If you are interested in being on this committee, please send an email to [tsd.facility.advisory@tumwater.k12.wa.us](mailto:tsd.facility.advisory@tumwater.k12.wa.us).

We thank our community for your ongoing commitment to your schools and support of our students! Strong schools make strong communities!

**2021 TSD FREE SUMMER MEALS**

<b>JUN 28 - AUG 27</b> <b>Peter G. Schmidt Elem.</b> 11:00 am - Noon Mon-Fri (no Jul. 5) 237 Dennis St SE, Tumwater	<b>JUN 28 - JUL 22</b> <b>Tumwater High School</b> 10:30 - 11:00 am Mon-Thu (no Jul. 5) 700 Israel Rd SW, Tumwater
<b>JUL 6 - 29</b> <b>Bush Middle School</b> 11:00 - 11:30 am Mon-Thu 2120 83rd Ave SW, Tumwater	

- Free grab 'n go meals available for anyone 18 and under
- Locations and times subject to change

## Our Learning Community continued from page 1...

access to the essential learning standards.

In addition to focusing on accelerating student learning, social-emotional learning (SEL) will play an integral role in our plan. To do this well, we will implement screening tools, protocols, and instructional resources that allow us to identify and respond to the social-emotional and behavioral needs of our students. For our most vulnerable students, we will provide support and inclusion by coordinating services with our community partners dedicated to this work. Through incorporating these tools and resources, we can ensure we are on track to provide intervention and prevention supports that meet the needs of every child.

While the pandemic has presented us with many new challenges, we are in position to respond to those challenges in a way that allows us to accelerate learning and account for the social-emotional well-being of our students. Together, we can create the conditions needed to ensure we are on track to meet our goal to provide continuous student learning in a caring, inclusive, and engaging environment.



**Congratulations to the Class of 2021!**

Pictured from THS we celebrate Madison Langbell with her step-dad Board Member Casey Taylor.



Black Lake Elementary 1st grade teacher Mrs. Locken and her student laugh together while working on a math problem involving place value.

Our Schools: Black Hills High School (BHHS), Tumwater High School (THS), Cascadia High School (CHS), Bush Middle School (BMS), Tumwater Middle School (TMS), Black Lake Elementary (BLE), East Olympia Elementary (EOE), Littlerock Elementary (LRE), Michael T. Simmons Elementary (MTS), Peter G. Schmidt Elementary (PGS), Tumwater Hill Elementary (THE), and Tumwater Virtual Academy (TVA).

Board of Directors: President Melissa Beard, Vice President Casey Taylor, and members Darby Kaikkonen, Scott Killough, and Laurie Sale.

Superintendent: Dr. Sean Dotson

Writing, editing, photography: Laurie Wiedenmeyer, Communications and Community Relations

Graphic Design: Barbara Bayer, iDesignStudio

Tumwater School District will provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person of disability. The District will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.

The Tumwater School District offers classes in many career and technical education program areas under its open admission policy including courses in the Business and Marketing, Horticulture, Skilled and Technical Sciences, Family and Consumer Science, and the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

program areas. Some advanced level classes have prerequisites and/or specific criteria through an application process that is non-discriminatory. More information about participating in one of these program areas is available by contacting the school's counseling office. English language proficiency is not an element of the admissions and participation requirements for career and technical education classes. This notification can be provided in the appropriate language for communities of national origin by calling 360-709-7000. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Shawn Batstone, Title IX and Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator 360-709-7030, 621 Linwood Ave. SW, Tumwater, WA 98512. Kelli Ehresmann, 504 - Special Services Supervisor 360-709-7040, 621 Linwood Ave. SW, Tumwater, WA 98512.

El Distrito Escolar Tumwater brindará igualdad de oportunidades educativas y de tratamiento para todos los estudiantes en todos los aspectos del programa académico y de actividades sin discriminar por motivo del sexo, raza, credo, religión, color, nacionalidad, edad, estado de veterano o militar, orientación sexual, expresión de género o identidad, discapacidad o el uso de un perro guía o animal de servicio entrenado, y brinda igualdad de acceso a los Niños Exploradores y a otros grupos de jóvenes designados.

El Distrito Escolar Tumwater ofrece clases en muchas áreas del programa de educación vocacional y técnica conforme a su política de ingreso abierto, incluyendo cursos en las áreas de Negocios y Marketing, Horticultura, Ciencias Especializadas y Técnicas, Educación para el Hogar, y Ciencias, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas. Algunas clases



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de nivel avanzado tienen prerequisites y/o criterios específicos mediante un proceso de solicitud que es no discriminatorio. Encontrará más información sobre la participación en una de estas áreas del programa si se comunica con la oficina de asesoramiento de la escuela. La competencia en inglés no es un elemento de los requisitos de ingreso y participación para las clases de educación vocacional y técnica. Shawn Batstone, esta notificación puede proporcionarse en el idioma pertinente para las comunidades que tengan otra nacionalidad al llamar al 360-709-7000. Kelli Ehresmann, las siguientes personas han sido designadas para atender las consultas relativas a las políticas de no discriminación:

Coordinador de Cumplimiento de Título IX y Derechos Civiles, 360-709-7030; 621 Linwood Ave. SW, Tumwater, WA 98512;

504 - Supervisor de Servicios Especiales, 360-709-7040; 621 Linwood Ave. SW, Tumwater, WA 98512.