

Open Line

Spring 2019-20



Continuous
Student Learning
in a Caring,
Engaging
Environment



This beautiful building is ready for move-in thanks to our voters for approving the bond in 2014. The new Tumwater Learning Center, located on the New Market Skills Center campus, will be home to Cascadia High School (formerly Secondary Options) and the LINCS program (18-21 transition program) starting this fall. Until we can come together for a building dedication, a virtual tour is available on the District website as a way to celebrate this beautiful building.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Tumwater Families,

First, I want to say THANK YOU Tumwater voters! Although February was just a few months ago, it seems like a lifetime has passed with all that our region, country, and world has experienced. I would be remiss, however, if I didn't thank our voters for heartily approving (over 60.5%) both the Educational Programs & Operations Levy and the Capital Levy. We sincerely appreciate our community and the ongoing support shown for our public schools!



Sean Dotson,
TSD Superintendent

Springtime... as an educator, it is a time I have always enjoyed. The sun shines and the flowers and trees bloom. Excitement and hope are in the air as students anticipate what is next, celebrate accomplishments, and look forward to a new grade level, new school, or the broad horizon of their future.

This springtime, due to COVID-19, has brought dramatic changes to our lives and our society. The way we live, work, and play have completely changed, at least temporarily. Virtually every aspect of our lives has been affected, including the way we educate our children. In Tumwater School District, we have worked hard to adapt to the changing conditions and provide the support students need to keep learning. Our teachers and staff care deeply for our students, and through these unique circumstances, our commitment to every student remains unchanged. We continue our mission of providing continuous student learning in a caring, engaging environment—just through a changed landscape for now.

Through the challenges we have faced, I have witnessed many examples of our staff's creativity and commitment to our students and families. For example, I have watched school parades, staff delivering materials during distribution events, and seniors picking up their caps and gowns while staff socially-distanced *continued on back page...*

Staying Well During a Pandemic

While all of us are familiar with the recommendations to stay physically healthy – wash your hands, cover your cough, practice social distancing, sanitize high-touch areas - we quickly realized that we also need to tend to the social/emotional health needs of our staff, students, and their families. Being hurled into completely unknown territory - some dealing with the stresses of a lost job, sick loved ones, anxiety, and more - our district quickly partnered with **Lyndsay Morris**, Founder of Generation Wellness and BHHS alumni, to address these important aspects.

Wellness is the foundation for learning and thriving. With our commitment to staff, student and community wellness, we are utilizing a phase-in system to provide ongoing resources, utilizing grant funds, as we endure the challenges of the pandemic:

Phase 1 – Staff Wellness: All of our staff members have access to Workplace Wellness Academy, an online course, as well as Zoom



Generation Wellness founder Lyndsay Morris (Black Hills High School graduate) provides professional development to Tumwater staff focusing on emotional health/wellness during a global pandemic.

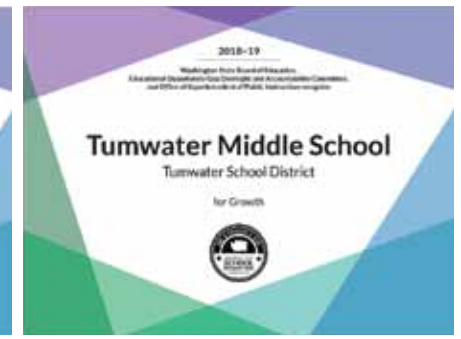
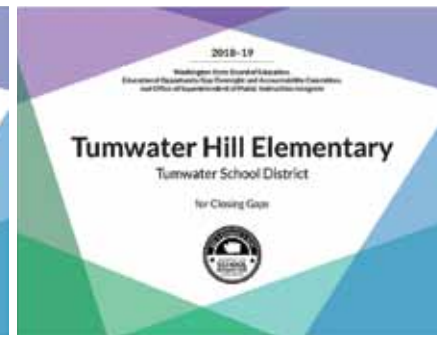
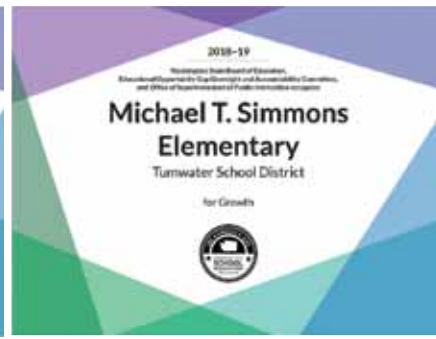
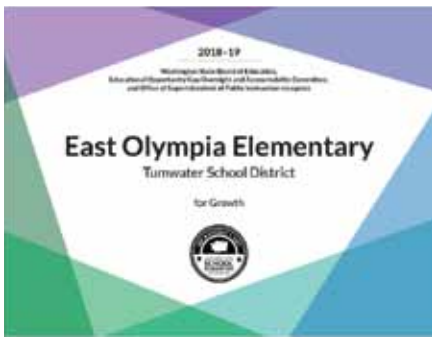
reflection calls. We have received positive feedback and remarks of appreciation.

Phase 2 – Family Wellness: All families will soon have access to the Family Wellness Toolkit which includes morning messages, social/emotional mini videos, audio

relaxations, sample plans, and more.

Phase 3 – New School Year Preparation: Every staff member will experience a one-day Generational Wellness training at the beginning of the school year to set staff and students up for success when we re-start school.

Lyndsay states, "Well-being is not a program, it's a practice. Providing tools and creating space for students, staff, and families to practice these tools is the key to sustainable change. I'm excited to be a part of TSD's holistic approach to wellness, especially during this time. Coming back to the District that supported me from kindergarten on has been a dream come true."



Four Tumwater Schools Receive State Recognition Awards

The state recently recognized four Tumwater School District schools for growth, closing achievement gaps, and demonstrated achievement in specific areas during the 2018-19 school year. We celebrate and congratulate the staff and students at:

- **East Olympia Elementary** - growth for students who receive special education services
- **Michael T. Simmons Elementary** - growth for students identifying as Asian
- **Tumwater Hill Elementary** - closing gaps for one or more student groups at a targeted support school
- **Tumwater Middle School** - growth for students identifying as Black and students who are English learners

Superintendent **Sean Dotson** states, "We are thankful for the ongoing commitment and hard work of our staff, teachers, and students that have resulted

in these honors. Our staff continue to work together with a focus on helping all students grow. It is exciting to see Tumwater's commitment to improving educational equity is making a difference."

Throughout the State, 391 schools were recognized for closing gaps, showing growth, and demonstrating achievement according to new data released by the State. To learn more about the awards and see a list of recognized schools, visit the State Board of Education website.

In a press release announcing the school awards, State Superintendent of Public Schools **Chris Reykdal** states, "Right now, the whole world is understanding the significance of our public schools. Public education provides each student with an opportunity for success; it's the foundation of our democracy and our society. Next week, we are honoring our educators who are committed to continually improving outcomes for their students. Thank you for all of your amazing work."



This year, we took our FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability and Health) Spring Plant Sale to an online/pre-order platform. Thank you to our volunteers and supportive community for making this the best year yet!
—Photo credit Kathy Strauss



Our Food Services staff quickly jumped into action and after only one day of closure, were prepared to serve grab 'n go meals for our students. Since March, over 360 volunteers have been involved in ensuring that nutrition is available during these hard times. As of mid-May, over 58,500 meals have been served from our schools.

Do you have a New Student to Register?



Last Fall, this Tumwater Hill student was ready to take on the world as she arrived for her first day of Kindergarten.

Are you new to the area? Moved to a new school attendance area and need to register your student? Have a new kindergartener that is ready to start in the fall? Our buildings may be closed, but we are still here to help you. You are able to download and print registration materials from the school or District website. Please keep in mind that there are new immunization laws that go into place for the 2020-21 school year. Details of those changes can be found on our website at <https://www.tumwater.k12.wa.us/Page/801>.

If you have questions about registration, please contact our Student Learning Office at 360-709-7030 or tsd.registration-withdrawal@tumwater.k12.wa.us. We look forward to seeing you soon!

School Board Member Rita Luce Retires



Rita Luce announced her retirement at a School Board meeting in March. We thank her for her loyal service and commitment our district!

In March, longtime Board Member representing District 1 announced her retirement. Rita began her service in this role in 2005, however her years of volunteering in our schools goes back many years before that. Rita and her husband, Steven, have two daughters who both

graduated from Tumwater schools; she actively volunteered during their years in school. One of her focuses while on the Board was to expand community partnerships to ensure all students have choices and flexibility in programs.

As she retires, Rita reflects, "Looking back on my years on the Tumwater School Board, the whole experience was very gratifying. I worked with wonderful people who always put children first. Tumwater is lucky to have dedicated staff – everyone from food services staff to administration. Having a community that supports their students and their schools always reaps benefits. I'm very proud of the strides our district made in vocational and technical training and I hope we continue to look for multiple pathways for our students. I loved being in the schools and hope to continue to volunteer. The last few months have presented a new reality for schools, it's going to take a lot of work and creativity to find a way that works for everyone. With everyone working together you will find a way and learn a lot on the journey. Thank You for letting me be part of this great District." Rita has served this district proudly, loves our community, and we look forward to celebrating with her as she starts the next part of her journey. Thank you for your service, Rita!

A new School Board Director will be appointed to serve District 1 until the next election cycle in 2021.

We Salute our Graduating Class of 2020!



The class of 2020 will have unique memories and the building closures due to the pandemic won't stop the celebrations. These seniors were excited to pick up their caps and gowns while enjoying other socially-distanced senior activities coordinated by Jostens and their high school staff.

Congratulations to the 520 graduates that will receive their diplomas from Black Hills High School, Cascadia High School, and Tumwater High School! We acknowledge that the loss of events that are usually considered "rites of passage" ... prom, awards assemblies, senior sports nights, graduation ... have been difficult for our seniors. We are fortunate to have a multitude of creative staff members, students, and families that have come together to create new and innovative ways to celebrate these resilient students.

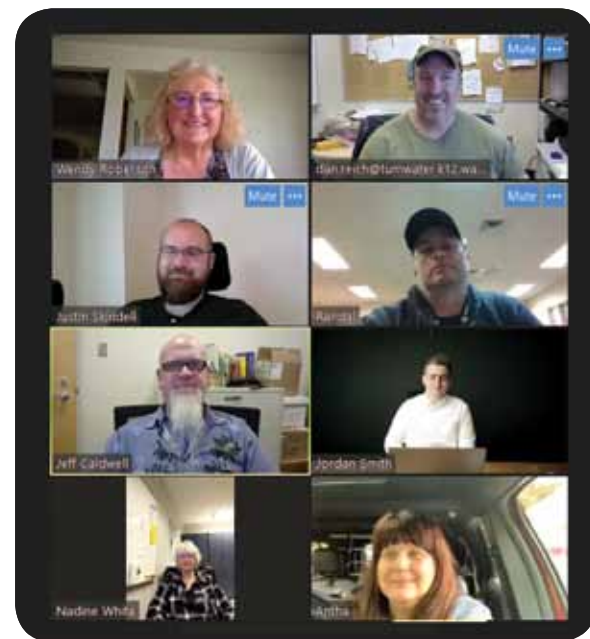
In April, our high schools (along with others in the state) turned on stadium lights at 8:20 pm (20:20 military time) to show support for and honor the Class of 2020! Yearbook staff encouraged students to continue with the tradition of special prom invitations (prom-posals), to dress up and take photos to share for the yearbook. Seniors at BHHS and THS received a "senior sign" to be placed at their home. Staff are looking for new and meaningful ways to present honors/awards in place of an assembly. High schools provided a day for seniors to pick up their caps, gowns, and celebrate their accomplishments with signing opportunities.

The results of a survey sent to seniors and their families show that an in-person graduation is very important to our community. A Graduation Task Force made up of students, parents, and staff has been meeting to make plans for a graduation that can honor their desires while following state orders and sound practices to protect community health. We will announce formal plans as soon as they are made.

Thank you to our local business owners, community members, and families for finding ways to make sure the Class of 2020 knows that not only are they not forgotten – but rather they will always be remembered!

Tech Team Responds to Covid Closures

With the quick change to how we are doing school and business at this time, here is a glimpse of how most of our meetings take place via **Zoom**, one of the platforms we are utilizing for classroom instruction and check-ins, team meetings, School Board meetings, leadership meetings, and much more. Our Technology Team discusses the next steps for providing resources to our staff and students to enable continuous student learning. Since March, this team, along with building staff, have deployed over 1,600 Chromebooks to staff and students (elementary and middle school). Prior to the closure, one of our middle schools and both traditional high schools had 1-1 technology signed out to students. We are fortunate to have such a skilled and dedicated team guiding the technology efforts of our district!



Superintendent's Message continued from page 1...

across the school parking lot to make personal connections with students.

I have witnessed my own children participating in Zoom meetings with classes, asking questions and hearing from others about their learning. Teachers are using platforms to continue teaching and supporting their students that some of them have never used before – video, Google Classroom, and a variety of other online tools. They are providing paper packets to those who are unable to access technology. To stay connected with students, staff have made home visits to drop off materials, used phone calls, mail, and every bit of their creativity to let students know they care. As time goes on, we are getting better at this, and we will do whatever it takes to keep students learning. That said, we are all excited for the day when we can have students back in our classrooms and learning in the ways we know are most effective.

Beyond day-to-day teaching and learning, there are several topics that are equally important as we navigate this uncharted territory:

Graduation: We have approximately 520 seniors in our district who have been unable to enjoy some of the traditional experiences that would be considered “rites of passage.” I am incredibly proud of our students and the resiliency they have shown. While events such as prom, awards assemblies, and more cannot take place in their regular form given the extended stay at home order, we really wanted to hear from our seniors and families on the topic of graduation. We asked them to participate in a ThoughtExchange survey and learned that families want us to make every effort to hold an in-person graduation, even if that means delaying the event into the summer. A Graduation Task Force of students, parents, and staff representatives has met to make plans for graduation that honor the

feedback from our community while also aligning with state orders and sound practices to protect community health. Graduation plans will be communicated to seniors and families as they are made.

Last Day of School: To recover some lost learning time and to meet state expectations, our school year has been extended by five days to June 19th. Students are expected to continue to participate in continuous learning to the best of their ability during this time.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we have made a monumental transition to continue teaching and supporting students during this closure. I promise you that we will continue to work hard, both within our district and with community partners, to keep improving our ability to provide the best quality education possible this spring. We don't know yet what options will be available in the fall, but we are looking ahead and preparing to offer safe, high quality educational options that will allow us to respond to a wide variety of circumstances.

Please take good care and stay safe!



Sean Dotson, TSD Superintendent



Tumwater
School District

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Student Learning and Family Resources During Building Closures

To find out more about Family Resources, the District's Continuous Learning Plan and other learning resources available to our students and families, please visit our website at www.tumwater.k12.wa.us and click on the Covid-19 Headline.



Staff have been finding ways to stay connected with students and families. One way they have been able to gain some “face time” is by driving through their attendance areas in unofficial parades. This PGS family is excited to let their teacher know how much she is missed! –Photo credit Jordan Doughty.



The T-Bird has been appearing throughout Tumwater with encouraging messages for our community.

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

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

Superintendent: Dr. Sean Dotson

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

Photography, writing: Tami Collins, Executive Assistant

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 de nivel avanzado tienen prerrequisitos 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.