

Message from the Superintendent



Dear families and friends ~

As we near the end of autumn and welcome winter, I am continually inspired by what I see in our schools. Students are deeply engaged in learning, and our dedicated staff leads them with passion and commitment. The atmosphere of our schools is evidence to the hard work happening every day.

The support from our community is essential to student success. In early November, the Snohomish Education Foundation (SEF) hosted its annual auction. Funds raised support scholarships and programs that enrich our students' education. Since 1986, SEF has provided more than \$1.1 million in classroom grants and funded essential programs. Last school year, 144 classroom grants were awarded at each of our schools, supporting projects such as Valley View Middle School's Story Lab and vocational learning materials at Glacier Peak High School. I encourage you to read more about SEF's impact in this issue of School Views.

I'm also thrilled to share that our Special Education Services team has made strides in inclusivity by installing communication boards across schools. Read more in this issue about how those boards and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices are helping non-verbal or minimally verbal students express their needs and ideas, fostering a supportive environment where every student is known and empowered.



The Snohomish Education Foundation (SEF) recently donated \$70,000 to the district's summer programming including the elementary Summer Academy, Book Café and summer literacy programs, secondary summer school programs, and more. This gift was made possible through generous community donations to the SEF through the annual auction and their other fundraising campaigns.

I'd also like to share highlights from the 2023-2024 Snohomish School District Annual Report, which provides important data on demographics, budget, facilities, and student achievement for the 2023-2024 school year (September 1-August 31). A printed report was mailed to residents in mid-November, and it's available online at www.sno.wednet.edu/annualreport.

Key highlights from that report include:

- Student enrollment: Our enrollment continues to grow post pandemic. More than 9,600 students are currently enrolled.
- Student achievement: Our students continue to outperform state averages, and strong graduation rates reflect our collective efforts.
- Financial stewardship: District spending supports classrooms and students, and voter-approved levies provide essential funding.
- Support services: Our commitment includes 868,000 miles traveled by school buses and 586,000 meals served to students last year.

Our success is possible because of you - our community. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to make strides in ensuring all district students have the opportunity to thrive.

Warm regards,
Dr. Kent Kultgen
Superintendent

Communication boards help create inclusive spaces



Colorful communication boards across the district are fostering inclusive, supportive environments for all students.

“The boards provide an opportunity for inclusion,” said Kaitlin Duffy, district speech-language pathologist, (SLP). “When placed on the playground or in the gym, they allow all students, including those using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, to communicate even when they may not have their personal devices.”

Made up of pictures, symbols, or words representing common items, feelings, and requests, communication boards and ACC devices enable students with speech delays, autism, or other disabilities to point to images to express themselves. These symbols mirror those on tablets used in classrooms, giving students a consistent communication method, and encouraging engagement in school activities and social interactions.

Duffy initiated the project in 2023, proposing the installation of physical boards in gyms and playgrounds. Staff supported the idea, recognizing its potential to improve student engagement. By early 2025, boards will be available in all district elementary schools and Valley View Middle School.

“These tools help ensure every student can express themselves, learn, and grow,” said Jennifer Zadow, district director of elementary Special Education Services.

Duffy and her colleague, fellow SLP Molly White shared examples of the boards’ impact, such as a non-speaking student excitedly pointing to sports he enjoyed and preschoolers using the boards to manage communication breakdowns. They also noted that students with typically developing communication skills are using the boards to explore alternative communication methods.



“The boards and AAC devices give voice to students who might otherwise be or marginalized on the playground,” White said, adding that they help foster conversations and promote new ways of interaction. “I can’t wait to see how their use grows as the students become more aware of their use!”

Learn more about how communication boards and AAC devices are helping students inside and outside the classroom at www.sno.wednet.edu/news/communicationboards.

Snohomish Education Foundation

empowers students and staff through community support



For nearly four decades, the Snohomish Education Foundation (SEF) has been a source of support for the students, staff, and programs in the Snohomish School District. What began in 1986 as a small, community-driven effort to support local education has grown into an integral partnership of resources and opportunities, which have helped transform the lives of thousands.

“We are proud of our vision to inspire, excite, and empower all students,” said Erica Cenci, SEF Executive Director. “Our mission is about more than just providing resources – it’s about elevating possibilities and expanding horizons for every student in the Snohomish School District.”

Community volunteers Marian Berge and Mal Harding co-founded the SEF in 1986 with a shared vision to support students and provide scholarships to graduating seniors. Since its inception, SEF has raised millions in donations and engaged countless volunteers, resulting in nearly \$3 million in student scholarships, \$1.1 million in classroom grants, and \$500,000 in district-wide program funding. From supplying new shoes to students in need through the Hansen Shoe Fund to supporting innovative classroom projects, SEF’s mission continues to be a force for positive change in the community.

“The SEF is an invaluable partner to our district, ensuring that every student has access to essential tools and opportunities that shape their future success,” said Dr. Kent Kultgen, Snohomish School District Superintendent. “Whether it’s funding for cutting-edge classroom tools or supporting outside activities, the SEF makes it possible for our students and staff to reach new heights.”

SEF’s mission is anchored in a set of core values that have remained steadfast over the years.

- **Equity** ensures that all students, no matter their circumstances, have access to the resources the SEF provides.
- **Innovation** by embracing creativity and new ideas to improve student learning and meet evolving needs.
- **Vision** reflects SEF’s forward-thinking approach, always looking for ways to expand, grow, and adapt to the challenges of the future.
- **Connection** highlights the importance of bridging the gap between the community and its schools, fostering a stronger, more integrated support system for students.
- **Integrity** in guiding SEF’s operations with transparency and responsibility.

“These aren’t just words on paper,” Cenci said. “These values shape how we approach every initiative, every grant, and every partnership.” She highlighted STEM innovation through grants, supporting school drama productions, and organizing book drives for the district’s Book Café program as just a few examples of the ways the SEF is constantly working to create meaningful, lasting change throughout our community.

“The SEF is committed to enhancing education, whether it’s by funding innovative classroom tools that augment learning or ensuring that students can explore their passions beyond traditional academic settings,” Kultgen said.

During the 2023-2024 school year, SEF funded 144 individual classroom grants, benefiting every school in the Snohomish School District. Beyond the classroom, SEF’s contributions to initiatives such as the district’s Summer Academy and Credit Recovery Program help ensure that all students can thrive.

“We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished, but there’s always more to do,” Cenci noted. “This is about more than just funding. It’s about inspiring the next generation to dream big and realize their full potential. For nearly 40 years, SEF has been changing lives, and with the continued support of our community, the possibilities for Snohomish students and staff are endless.”

The SEF is entirely funded through private donations and contributions. The SEF’s two primary fundraising events are the annual fall auction and spring breakfast.

To learn more about the SEF or discover ways to get involved, visit www.snoed.org.

Since 1986, the SEF has empowered teachers and staff by providing grant funds for innovative materials and experiences, staying true to its mission to “elevate opportunities and possibilities for Snohomish School District students.” Here are just a few examples of how those classroom grants are helping make a difference:



Birthday books – Thanks to a SEF grant, each Machias Elementary student receives a book on their birthday, creating a special and memorable experience. This not only celebrates students’ special days but also fosters a love of reading and helps build personal libraries at home.

The Story Lab – The Story Lab is a student project of Valley View Middle School’s Book and Podcasting Club. Students learn to write and produce their own podcasts and use the equipment that was purchased through a SEF grant to compose, edit, mix, and record.



Vocational learning – Glacier Peak High School students use cash boxes and pretend money purchased through a SEF grant to help with their vocational learning. This hands-on financial literacy experience helps students learn to calculate the cost of goods, process retail transactions, and practice making change.



The IDEA Project – Grant funds were used to help bring The IDEA Project to Cascade View Elementary. Students attended grade level-based assemblies where they discussed different disabilities and participated in interactive group activities. Classes rotated through activity stations that gave students hands-on activities to experience the world through six types of disabilities.



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Did you know the majority of people who live in the Snohomish School District do not have school-aged children? The purpose of School Views is to let our community know about the programs,

events and activities happening in their Snohomish School District. To reduce the cost of postage we use a bulk mailing process that delivers to every residential customer on a carrier's route.

District senior citizens invited to join **Golden Kla Ha Ya Club**



Snohomish senior citizens are invited to attend district home athletic events and drama productions free of charge. Snohomish School District residents who are 65-years-old or older are invited to apply for the district's Golden Kla Ha Ya Club.

For athletic events: Present your Golden Kla Ha Ya Club membership card at the gate. Athletic event schedules are available at www.wescoathletics.com.

For drama productions: Call the appropriate number to reserve your seat. Bring your

membership card to pick up your ticket at will-call. Your complimentary ticket will not be available at the box office without this prior arrangement.

- Snohomish High School: 360-563-4008
- Glacier Peak High School: 360-563-7504

Golden Kla Ha Ya Club forms can be picked up and should be returned to the district's Resource and Service Center (1601 Avenue D in Snohomish). Seniors will be contacted when their membership cards are available for pick up.

Learn more about Golden Kla Ha Ya Club and download a registration form at www.sno.wednet.edu/klahaya.