

the SCHOLAR CHRONICLE

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



WINTER 2025

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



A NOTE FROM DR. DANI PFEIFFER, SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings FWPS Families and Community!

How amazing is it that we have reached the halfway point in the 2024–2025 school year? Our scholars have been hard at work in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, and out in the community, and I've picked a few to share with you in our Peek in Our Schools section!

Over the past two months, I've had the privilege of sharing our State of Education presentation with community organizations like the Federal Way Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Federal Way, and Kiwanis Club. Our theme, We are Better Together, highlighted the importance of our community organizations, businesses, and

individuals who partner with us in support of our scholars. I also shared several positive data points worth celebrating:

- The Class of 2024 earned more than \$12 million in scholarships to pursue their post-secondary dreams.
- 222 students earned the Seal of Biliteracy by passing a rigorous test that requires proficiency in reading, writing and speaking in a language other than English.
- 5,839 secondary students have enrolled in one or more Career and Technical Education course, gaining real-world skills directly related to a chosen career field!
- Attendance rates across twelve grades have increased and our overall regular attendance rate rose by 4%.
- Positive student survey results show scholars have a greater sense of belonging, feel safer at school, and are fostering stronger student-teacher relationships.
- 8 FWPS schools earned recognition from the Washington State Board of Education for their efforts in closing the achievement gap in the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 school years. Congratulations to Adelaide, Brigadoon, Camelot, Green Gables, Rainier View, Sunnycrest, and Twin Lakes elementary schools, and Federal Way Public Academy!

You can check out the full presentation on our website at www.fwps.org.



Lakota Middle School students led visitors from the Puyallup Tribe on a tour of the school's garden, demonstrating their work with the Tend, Gather, and Grow curriculum. The visit highlighted FWPS's commitment to incorporating the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State (STI) curriculum, showcasing the district's ongoing efforts to celebrate Native American heritage and culture.



Illahee Middle School students dressed in orange for Unity Day on Oct. 25, standing together against bullying and promoting kindness and inclusion. Along with their show of support, the school engaged in lessons and activities led by the school's WEB crew, fostering a positive and unified school community.

As you know, this year we have been focused on our work in defining a Portrait of a Graduate. A Portrait of a Graduate is a defined, collective vision for all students within a school district around a set of key competencies identified by stakeholders in the community, including parents, staff, students, and community members.

In January, we held our third Design Team meeting, with nearly 160 participants, working together to identify and define the key competencies we want FWPS scholars to possess by graduation. With one final meeting scheduled for March 6, we're excited to present the finished product at our annual Community Connect event on April 30.

As we look ahead, there's so much to be excited about—from upcoming events like Kinders to College field trips where every kindergartener in Federal Way Public Schools gets to experience a college campus visit to our STEAM Exploration Night in March, filled with engaging and informative panel discussions to interactive activities, to what we all look forward to every year, GRADUATION!

We hope you will continue our journey with us by checking out the articles and information in this publication, following us on social media, and by subscribing to my weekly e-newsletter!

Thank you for your continued support that drives us closer to our shared goal of ensuring every scholar has a voice, a dream, and a bright future.

In Partnership,

Dr. Dani Pfeiffer



Wildwood Elementary scholars kicked off Mileage Club Opening Day with energy and excitement! Rain or shine, 1st–5th graders jogged around the playground, embracing this fun tradition that promotes fitness, teamwork, and school spirit.



Brigadoon Elementary scholars smile big at the school's Math Night this January. Families enjoyed hands-on activities like estimation jars, 3D shape building, card games, and snowflake symmetry art—all making math fun and engaging!



Todd Beamer High School scholar explores one of the advanced computer systems provided by the Army STEM Robotics Truck, which brought hands-on technology and innovation to their campus. Scholars engaged with cutting-edge robotics, coding programs, and interactive simulations, gaining firsthand experience with real-world STEM applications.



During Rainier View Elementary's Veterans Day Assembly, band students from Sequoyah Middle School took the stage with pride and dedication, to honor those who have served in the armed forces.

Decatur High School physics scholars put their learning into action as they conduct a hands-on experiment measuring the motion of falling objects. Collecting data to analyze concepts like gravity, velocity, and acceleration, this hands-on experiment helps scholars develop critical thinking skills and their understanding of physics in real-world applications.



Third-grade scholars at Lake Dolloff Elementary engaged in a hands-on math lesson with guidance from their teacher, Ms. Markus. Focused and determined, scholars worked through problem-solving exercises that strengthened their understanding of multiplication and division.



Superintendent Dr. Pfeiffer kicks off the second Portrait of a Graduate Design Team Meeting in December at the Evergreen/Star Lake campus. The Design Team, including members of the community, parents, and FWPS staff members, have done an amazing job identifying key competencies that are important for our scholars to possess when they graduate.



KEY ENROLLMENT DATES FOR THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

Must be five-years-old on or by August 31, 2025

OPENS **JANUARY 21, 2025**

CHOICE ENROLLMENT

To attend a school different from your neighborhood assignment, you must apply through Choice Enrollment.



REGULAR LOTTERY:

FEBRUARY 3-MARCH 17, 2025

(For FWPS residents and scholars with a FWPS employee parent/guardian)

POST-LOTTERY: **MAY 1-AUGUST 29, 2025**

(For FWPS residents AND Non-FWPS residents)

PRESCHOOL

Must be three or four-years-old on or by August 31, 2025. Multiple programs available.

OPENS **MARCH 1, 2025**

ANNUAL VERIFICATION

Required for existing, returning FWPS families

OPENS **AUGUST 1, 2025**



Enroll in Federal Way Public Schools, where you'll find:

- 37 safe and welcoming schools, focused on providing rigorous instruction.
- A culture focused on culturally responsive, data-informed continuous improvement, aligned to the district's Strategic Plan goals.
- Nearly 3,000 staff wholly focused on ensuring each scholar has a voice, a dream, and the tools they need to embrace their bright futures ahead.
- 21,000 scholars, representing over 100 home languages.

What school will my child attend?



Visit www.fwps.org/SchoolBoundary and enter your address in the search tool to find your neighborhood school. You can also choose to apply to attend another school in FWPS through the annual Choice Enrollment process.



For more information about enrollment, please visit www.fwps.org/enrollment or email grades@fwps.org.

EDUCATORS
RECEIVE
"BECAUSE
OF YOU"
AWARD
AT BOARD
MEETINGS



Educators do extraordinary things for our scholars and schools each day. To recognize these difference-makers, scholars nominate Federal Way Public Schools staff for the "Because of You" award who have had a positive influence and impact on scholars, their school, or their community. Nominations are reviewed and selected by the Superintendent's Scholar Advisory team, and staff members are honored at a board meeting.

Check out the educators who recently received the "Because of You" award! For information about how each of these educators is making a difference, go to www.fwps.org/becauseofyou.



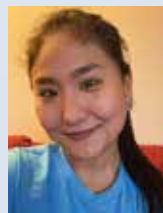
Rick Bogatay



MaCaylie Braden



Kailey Harem



Crystal Lee



Theresa Lee

Closing the Hunger Gap

When we think of breakfast at school, we imagine lines in the cafeteria, a rush to eat before hitting the playground, or even skipping the cafeteria altogether. But step into any classroom at Lake Grove Elementary and you'll find scholars calmly seated at their desks, enjoying a nutritious meal as they gear up for the day's learning.

This shift from the cafeteria to the classroom is thanks to Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC), a program now in place at seven Federal Way Public Schools. Under this model, every child begins the day well-fed and focused, leveling the playing field for all learners regardless of their circumstances.

"Before breakfast in the classroom, scholars needed to arrive to school early, self-select to eat breakfast and then finish before school started," says Lake Grove Elementary Principal Amanda Wilde. "We had staff working to hurry children along so that we could clean the gym and prepare for PE. It was noisy, there were power struggles, and it was a chaotic start to the day."

Now with Breakfast in the Classroom, she says, all students start the day calm and ready, share a meal together, and can focus more quickly on social emotional instruction and core content.

"The incredible level of detailed planning has ensured that Breakfast in the Classroom is clean, efficient and positive," Wilde notes. "There is no mess or smell, and children feel comfortable eating a good meal that helps fuel their learning."



Last year at the program's pilot school, Rainier View Elementary, a student is all-smiles while enjoying a new morning routine including breakfast served in his classroom.



Special guests tour a Lake Grove classroom to see the Breakfast in the Classroom program in action.

Lake Grove Elementary is an example at the heart of why Federal Way Public Schools received the first-ever Closing the Hunger Gap Award from United Way King County.

.....
Now with Breakfast in the Classroom, all students start the day calm and ready, share a meal together, and can focus more quickly on social emotional instruction and core content.
.....

As part of the award recognition, FWPS Board Vice President Trudy Davis, Director Luckisha Phillips, and representatives from United Way King County, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), No Kid Hungry, the City of Seattle, and the Seattle Public School Board joined a scholar-led tour at Lake Grove Elementary to see the program in action this past January.

"United Way King County and No Kid Hungry were instrumental in helping launch Breakfast in the Classroom here in FWPS, through financial contributions for classroom meal transportation dollies, cleaning tools, and

additional refrigeration space," says Executive Director of Nutrition Services Alisha Barlow. "Their support in other districts provided us with best practices and procedures, ensuring our program launch at six more schools this fall was successful."

United Way King County also recognized Federal Way Public Schools for the Second Chance Breakfast program, which has been implemented with great success at four of our secondary schools. Second Chance Breakfast provides carts with nutritious items placed in key locations throughout the school, so students have a grab-and-go option between 1st and 2nd period.

FWPS leadership credits not only the logistical ingenuity of BIC and Second Chance Breakfast, but the support of community partners like United Way King County. With its strong backing, the district hopes to expand the programs further, extending the success seen at Lake Grove Elementary to even more schools.

By honoring FWPS with the Closing the Hunger Gap Award, United Way King County underscores the critical role that nourishment plays in education.



Main building exterior



Courtyard



Bus loop and ADA ramp

LAST ONE ALMOST DONE!

ILLAHEE MIDDLE SCHOOL is the last of eight school construction projects approved by the 2017 school construction bond, and we are excited to share that the school is near completion with just a few months of work left to go! The building team is now in the final phase—adding finishes to the expansive campus. As you may know, Illahee’s main building has been completely rebuilt while the gym facilities were gutted then completely remodeled.

Check out some of the work that has been recently completed!

- Addition of 360th Street which will provide additional access to the school
- Concrete courtyard and curbs at bus and car loops
- Carpet, resilient flooring, and polished concrete floors
- Light switches and fixtures
- Doors and hardware
- Painting and wall coverings



Main gym



Library Resource Room

The school’s new spaces will enable scholars to collaborate, innovate, and engage in deep learning. We’re excited to bring a renewed sense of pride to Illahee scholars through their new and improved campus!

SAVE THE DATE:
WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 2025

ILLAHEE RIBBON CUTTING!

Join us as we celebrate the completion of the new Illahee Middle School! The ribbon cutting celebration happening on Wednesday, April 16 will include a formal ribbon



cutting program followed by optional tours of the new school buildings.

For more information on the event, visit www.fwps.org/RibbonCutting.

Learn more about our recent school construction projects at www.fwps.org/bond.

SUPPORTING EVERY SCHOLAR:
MTSS
IN ACTION
AT FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



At Star Lake Elementary, second-grade scholars engage in small-group instruction as part of the district’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Using flashcards to practice word recognition and phonics, scholars receive targeted support to strengthen their literacy skills.

small-group instruction. Taking on the challenge of fitting time into scholar schedules without taking away from their other classes, the school used time during Advisory to bring small scholar groups together, usually eight to ten at a time, to receive focused support twice a week.

“It’s not only improving math skills and scores, but also their confidence in math,” says Decatur Principal Jamie Tough. “We know it’s successful because other students have noticed and are asking how they can join.”

By layering interventions—small-group instruction, one-on-one support, or additional resources—and continuously evaluating their effectiveness, MTSS helps create a culture where all learners feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed.

“We are seeing encouraging growth through these efforts across Federal Way Public Schools,” says Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Melissa Spencer. “Two-thirds of our scholars made typical or high growth on the state Smarter Balanced Assessment last spring, and all of our elementary and middle schools demonstrated accelerated growth in reading on the winter iReady assessment.”

As Federal Way Public Schools continues to refine and expand MTSS, the focus remains on ensuring that every scholar receives the right support at the right time—helping them grow, thrive, and build the confidence to reach their full potential.

Imagine a learning environment where every scholar gets the support they need—precisely when they need it. That’s the guiding principle of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), which Federal Way Public Schools adopted to ensure that academic interventions are meaningful, timely, and tailored to each student’s unique needs.

Depending on the level of need, identified as Tier 1, 2, and 3, support can include small-group activities, individual interventions, —always with the goal of boosting achievement and helping scholars reach their full potential.

At Star Lake Elementary, the school’s Core MTSS Team meets with their grade-level teams on a six-week rotation to analyze student assessment data and determine skill-specific groups. For example, after the

third rotation, the school’s 2nd and 3rd grade teams realized a need for more focused instruction and began combining students into small groups based on their specific learning needs.

“What’s exciting about this approach is that when you walk into a classroom, you’ll see three to five scholars working directly with a teacher around their specific learning needs, another group of students applying what they learned the day before independently, and the rest engaged in Lexia—an adaptive literacy program that reinforces key reading skills,” says Star Lake Elementary Principal Kris Rennie. “MTSS provides so many opportunities for scholars to build their skills in a structured, supportive way.”

At Decatur High School, the MTSS and math teams used assessment data to identify students who needed more individualized math intervention, going above

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:



This list reflects donations received as of January 14, 2025

- Red Canoe Credit Union and We Love Our City Federal Way
- King County Green Schools Program
- FORMA Construction
- Turner & Townsend Heery team
- Saba Williams and Amazon
- Federal Way Lions Club
- JTM Construction and Garner Construction WBE
- We Love Our City Federal Way, Brooklake Church, Family Life Community Church, Federal Way Church of the Nazarene, and LifeWay Church

- St. Luke’s Church Needlers from St. Luke’s Lutheran Church
- Community partners who helped put on the annual Federal Way Cares for Kids Holiday Giving Event
- Mentors in the Mentor and Me Program, Inspiring Girls Now in Technology Evolution program, Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Program, INCUBATOR Entrepreneurship program, the Youth Employment Support Network program, and Truman’s Barber School, AJAC, and Internships

A special **thank you** to the mentors and community partners who empower our scholars through programs like **Mentor & Me, IGNITE, YES Network, FWHS Pre-Apprenticeship, INCUBATOR Entrepreneurship, Truman’s Barber School, and AJAC Internships.**

Community-based organizations, including **African Young Dreamers Empowerment Program International, Black Equality Coalition, El Centro de la Raza, Phenomenal She, Treehouse, and UTOPIA,** further inspire scholars with access to opportunities, cultural connections, and leadership development.

Your unwavering dedication and support create lasting impacts on our scholars, helping them achieve their goals and thrive. Together, we are **#BetterTogether**, creating bright futures for every student!

the SCHOLAR CHRONICLE

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WINTER 2025



A Federal Way High School student in the Human Body Systems class adds clay muscles, bones, and cartilage to a skeleton model.

INSIDE

MID-YEAR CHECK-IN

Dr. Pfeiffer shares an update on how the year is progressing.

P1

KEY ENROLLMENT DATES

Mark your calendars for these dates as we look to next year.

P2

CLOSING THE HUNGER GAP

Learn how FWPS is ensuring more students can access a nutritious breakfast for a smooth start to the school day.

P2

MTSS IN PRACTICE

Learn how the district implements tiered supports so all students can succeed.

P3

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 X: @fwps210

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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

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SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Sign up for our newsletter to stay in-the-know with weekly district updates at www.fwps.org/subscribe.



JOIN TEAM FWPS!

Find a rewarding career at FWPS! Our district is the second-most diverse school district in Washington State and is home to nearly 3,000 staff and over 21,000 students, representing over 100 languages from around the world! Thrive in an equity-driven culture with high-quality professional development, support, and resources. Together, we can help scholars succeed!

FEATURED JOBS:

Bus Drivers • Clerical • Counselors • Custodians • Guest Employees (Substitutes) • Health Workers • Nutrition Services • Paraeducator/Teacher Assistants • Special Education Teachers

Learn more at www.fwps.org/careers

UPCOMING EVENTS

CTE Month

Explore how scholars can take advantage of Career and Technical Education courses in middle and high school. **February 1–28, 2025**

Learn more at www.fwps.org/ctemonth

Choice Enrollment

To attend a school different from your neighborhood assignment, you must apply through Choice Enrollment. See dates and details on page 2.

Learn more: www.fwps.org/choice

National Reading Month

Join FWPS as we celebrate the privilege of literacy and encourage readers, young and old, to engage in reading. **March 1–31, 2025**

Learn more: www.fwps.org/nationalreadingmonth

Family Academy—Bridging the Gap: Supporting Students Through Change

Learn how to confidently support smooth school year transitions.

April 25, 2025 | 6–7:30 p.m.

Evergreen Middle School

Learn more:

www.fwps.org/familyacademy

CTE Scholar Showcase

See what middle and high school students are learning in FWPS CTE courses.

May 14, 2025 | 6–7:30 p.m.

Thomas Jefferson High School

Learn more:

www.fwps.org/CTEshowcase

Illahee Middle School Ribbon Cutting

May 19, 2025 | See details on page 3.

STEAM Exploration Night

Attend the annual district-wide event to explore the many possibilities through STEAM.

March 13, 2025 | 6–8 p.m.
Federal Way High School

Event Highlights:

- Over 120 booths with hands-on activities for all ages
- Coding and STEAM career workshops
- Family-friendly perks: interpreters, shuttles, and dinner
- Robotics demonstrations and coding challenges
- STEAM Film Festival and panel discussions
- Free SWAG bags and school attendance prizes!

Learn more: www.fwps.org/steamnight



Mark your calendars
and get ready
to celebrate with

THE CLASS OF 2025



As of January 2025,
graduation dates, times, and
locations are as follows:

Friday, June 13, 2025

at the Federal Way Performing Arts and Event Center, 31510 Pete von Reichbauer Way South, Federal Way, WA 98003:

- » Employment and Transition Program | 10:30 a.m.
- » Internet Academy and Career Academy | 2 p.m.
- » Open Doors at Truman | 4 p.m.
- » TAF@Saghalie | 6 p.m.

Sunday, June 15, 2025

at the ShoWare Center, 625 West James Street, Kent, WA 98032:

- » Todd Beamer High School | 8:30 a.m.
- » Thomas Jefferson High School | noon
- » Federal Way High School | 3:30 p.m.
- » Decatur High School | 7:00 p.m.