



Community Connections

NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Superintendent's message: Strong schools, strong communities!

community
PARTNERSHIPS



Community partnerships support NTPS student success! We are grateful to strong partners who help us offer engaging and enriching opportunities year-round.

For example:

- During Lacey Loves to Read, students get excited about reading through contests and meeting a children's author. This partnership with the Timberland Regional Library, Friends of Lacey Library, and Lacey Parks, Culture & Recreation encourages students to become lifelong readers!
- NTPS middle and high school students visited the Black History Museum at New Life Baptist Church in Lacey during Black History Month. Community members loaned magazines, books, posters, vinyl records, and artwork to bring history to life for our students.
- In partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, our annual Billy Frank Jr. celebration brings hundreds of community members together to enjoy student displays, presentations, food, and activities.

- NTPS career and technical education (CTE) students visited Joint Base Lewis-McChord to learn about military career opportunities, thanks to a partnership with JBLM and the Lacey Army Recruiting Center. Students toured the medical center and even got to tour a helicopter.

NTPS students have high-quality learning opportunities in our classrooms every day, and our district is made even stronger by these additional experiences! We are grateful for our engaged community.

Troy M. Oliver
NTPS Superintendent

Above photo taken at the Billy Frank Jr. Annual Celebration at Timberline High School (March 19, 2025).

Now enrolling for NTPS kindergarten and preschool

NTPS offers a variety of programs to support our youngest learners in starting strong!

- **Kindergarten:** If your child turns 5 on or before August 31, 2025, they can start full-day kindergarten this fall. Families can find helpful information about registration and preparing for this exciting step at ntpnews.com/news/kindergarten
- **Future-Ready Kindergarten:** If your child turns 5 between September 1, 2025, and August 31, 2026, and needs support for kindergarten readiness, they may be eligible for our full-day transitional kindergarten program at select elementary schools. Learn more and apply! [ntpnews.com/frk](https://ntpnews.com/news/frk)
- **Preschool:** Our part-day preschool program is designed for preschool students with special needs to learn alongside typically developing peers. Families of the typically developing students pay tuition on a sliding scale. Learn more at [ntpnews.com/preschool](https://ntpnews.com/news/preschool)



Future-Ready Kindergarten students learn school day routines and expectations, like waiting patiently in the school lunch line.

Unified basketball games bring community together

Unified sports clubs allow students with and without disabilities to participate in school activities together! The Unified program promotes a districtwide culture of inclusion and acceptance. Our high schools host “Pack the Gym” events celebrating Unified sports by inviting the whole student body and community to attend and cheer on the teams.

We are working to expand the Unified experience around the district. Recently, Chinook, Nisqually, and Salish Middle School Unified basketball teams took the court at Salish for the first middle school Unified jamboree. It was an afternoon of teamwork and fun.

Check out our school website calendars to find information on Unified events!



At the Unified “Pack the Gym” events, high schools invite the student body and community to come together to cheer on their student-athletes!

Students explore science during spring field studies

We offer field studies so students can have hands-on learning experiences related to scientific concepts they learn in class. Depending on their grade level, students may visit WET Science Center, Mount Saint Helens, salmon spawning areas, Inspiring Kids Preserve, and many more.

NTPS 2nd-grade students recently visited Wolf Haven Prairie, Mima Mounds, or Glacial Heritage Preserve and participated in interactive stations to observe and identify prairie plants and animals, practice scientific drawing, and make seed balls to help restore prairie habitats.

Learn more about our science program and field studies at [ntpnews.com/science](https://ntpnews.com/news/science)



2nd-grade students from around the district recently visited Mima Mounds to explore prairie pollinators.



Cultivating Creative Expression



From student-structured studio time in elementary school to high school musical productions, we ensure students of all ages have opportunities for creative expression. Visual and performing arts are a key part of the NTPS experience.

Starting in kindergarten, NTPS students participate in hands-on visual art experiences. Anndi Cook is **Woodland Elementary School's** dedicated art teacher. She and art teachers around the district teach students that art class is a place where they can choose the direction of their creativity and access the space and materials they need to imagine, initiate, experiment, and collaborate.

In Cook's classroom recently, 3rd-grade students chose "studios": collage, painting, drawing, fiber arts, and building. Along with the freedom to choose their studio comes the responsibility of sharing materials with other students, caring for the community tools, and carefully putting everything away when it's time to wrap up. Students learn to find inspiration, envision an idea, design a plan of action, problem-solve when something doesn't go according to plan, and see projects through to completion. They also develop fine motor skills and organizational skills.

Alongside art class, NTPS elementary students participate in music class, where they gain foundational music skills, like identifying notes, rhythms, and musical forms. Starting in 5th grade, students can choose an instrument and join band or orchestra. Once students enter middle school, they may also choose choir as an elective. Young musicians perform at school and community events, and if they stick with it, they might find themselves in a jazz band, concert orchestra, or chamber choir in high school.

High schoolers at NTPS have even more opportunities to explore visual arts. Classes like ceramics, photography, and metalwork can spark a lifelong hobby or a career.

"This goes beyond fulfilling a graduation requirement for so many students," said Angela Brooks, NTPS director of activities, arts and, athletics. "Besides cultivating creativity and collaboration in our learners, arts education helps create a sense of belonging."

upcoming
IMPORTANT DATES

May 19

Community Café, 5:30 pm
Timberline High School (6120 Mullen Road SE)

May 28

Day of Champions, 10:00 am
South Sound Stadium (4201 6th Avenue NE)

See details about these and other events at ntpnews.com/calendar

upcoming
THEATER EVENTS

May 13-15

Timberline Theatre Spring Spectacular, 7:00 pm
Timberline High School Theater

May 14-17

Alice By Heart, 7:00 pm (May 17: 12:00 pm)
Koval Center for the Performing Arts

May 29-31

Chicago, 6:00 pm
River Ridge High School Theater

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Construction & Design Update

Thanks to voter support, we have completed the new lighted turf field and rubberized track at **Nisqually Middle School**! Nisqually students are enjoying this addition during PE classes. The track and field will be an excellent resource for middle school athletics and the community.

The new 70-classroom wing at **River Ridge High School** is on schedule to open in fall 2025! This new space will provide modern general and science classrooms for our students. We are beginning work on the River Ridge track and field this spring. Some River Ridge athletes will use the Nisqually space for practices over the next year while we complete the major modernization of the River Ridge campus.

The NTPS School Board has approved the schematic design for the **Young Child and Family Center**, which is slated to open in 2027 near the corner of Marvin and Steilacoom roads. It will provide high-quality indoor and outdoor preschool spaces for our youngest learners, as well as community gathering spaces.

Read more about current construction and modernization projects at ntpnews.com/buildingourfuture



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