Orting School District
121 Whitesell St. NE
Orting, WA 98360

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ORTING SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2025

SUMMIT



Have you registered your kindergarten student yet?

Kindergarten through 12th grade new student registration is open! Scan the QR code to register your student today.

Graduate showcase, facilities update, 2025-26 student board representatives, elementary schedule changes, peer model preschool, and more

(Photo above) Mr. Collin Griebling, the Orting Middle School band teacher, was nominated to be highlighted during Certificated Staff Appreciation Week in May

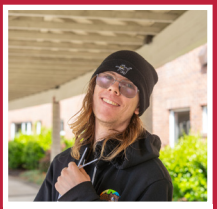
Your Support, Their Success

This year (2025) marks the third year of a four-year Educational Program and Operations Levy (EP&O) that voters approved in 2022. This levy supports local enrichment programs across the district that are *not state-funded*. Performing arts, clubs, athletic programs, enhanced security, one-to-one technology and many other amazing opportunities for kids would not exist or would be greatly limited if not for the support of local taxpayers.

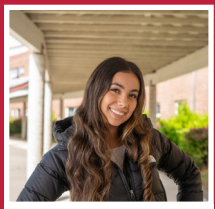
Orting is proud to be one of the few local districts that does not charge an added fee for athletic participation. ***Thanks to you***, we have an athletic and activity bus that is able to get students home safely after school activities wrap up. There are so many lessons students learn outside the classroom under the supervision and support of caring adults. Look for highlights and celebrations in this newsletter and in our annual report coming this summer.

Your vote made it happen, thank you!

Here is your **GRADUATE** *showcase*


Shane Harobin


James Hadley


Gabriela Velasco


Connor Waggoner


Emyllie Nelson


Allena White


Dorothy Goff


Xelaria Barker


Jashauna Peña


Justin McKinney

As we honor the class of 2025, we celebrate the diverse achievements and future paths of our graduates. Among them are our top academic scholars, who have excelled in their studies and are poised to make significant contributions in colleges and universities. Equally, we commend our graduates entering the workforce, the trades, and the military. Their skills, dedication, and readiness will drive innovation, strengthen our industries, and serve our nation. Each of these students represents the spirit and strength of the Orting School District, and we are proud of their unique journeys and the positive impact they will have on our community. *Congratulations, class of 2025!*

Shane Harobin is one of our Valedictorians for the class of 2025. Shane will begin his college journey at Pierce College before transferring to the University of Washington. While still exploring specific career paths, he plans to pursue a degree in the IT field.

James Hadley will attend Centralia College to study diesel mechanics. He aims to begin as an apprentice and eventually open his own diesel repair business.

Gabriela Velasco will be a first-generation college student, attending the University of Washington's Tacoma campus to study nursing. With a passion for healthcare and helping others, she dreams of one day owning a medical spa right here in the Pacific Northwest.

Connor Waggoner will dedicate two years to serving his church after graduation. Upon returning, he plans to pursue a career in law enforcement with the goal of joining the Alaska State Trooper SWAT team.

Emyllie Nelson is heading to Washington State University this fall to major in music education. She hopes to make a home in eastern Washington and eventually pursue her master's and doctorate degrees, with the goal of teaching at the college level.

Allena White is enlisting in the United States Air Force. While serving, she will work toward earning her bachelor's degree in cybersecurity from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Dorothy Goff plans to stay local and save money before enrolling in Petco's animal grooming program. Her long-term dream is to live on a spacious property surrounded by farm animals she can call her own.

Xelaria Barker is pursuing a degree in musical composition at Cornish College of the Arts. With a creative spirit and passion for storytelling, they hope to become a freelance composer for film, video games, or television—and maybe even direct one day.

Jashaun Peña will be heading to Arizona to play football for the Salt River Scorpions at Phoenix College while studying sports medicine. In the future, he hopes to work with athletic teams in Oregon.

Justin McKinney is preparing to become a volunteer firefighter while working in construction and earning his emergency services certification. His ultimate goal is to serve as a firefighter in Montana, near Yellowstone National Park.



Superintendent Ed Hatzenbeler asks students about their pizza opinions at the OSPI taste-testing event in December.

Dear community,

As we close the 2024-25 school year, we're proud to reflect on a year of meaningful progress grounded in our shared commitment to empowering students. Across Orting School District, we focused on creating environments where every student feels heard, valued, and supported.

Elevating student voice was a top priority. From expanded leadership opportunities to student-led conferences and board presentations, our students helped shape their learning experiences with insight and passion.

We also strengthened our culture of belonging through inclusive practices, restorative approaches, and social-emotional supports, fostering safe, connected spaces for students and families.

Academic growth remained central. We expanded interventions, invested in engaging curriculum, and used data to drive instruction—yielding promising results, especially in literacy and math.

We are deeply grateful to our families, staff, and community partners for their continued support. Together, we are preparing students for success—and empowering them to pursue bright futures.

We look forward to 2025-26!

Ed Hatzenbeler
Superintendent

Facilities Update

Proactive Steps Toward a Stronger, Safer, and Smarter School Future

This school year, we added two portables (four classrooms) at Ptarmigan Ridge Elementary to support enrollment growth. Although they were delivered early in the summer 2024, we did not get final occupancy until after winter break. Learning from this lesson, and as we have no more classroom space at Orting High School (OHS) and Orting Elementary School (OES), we added four portables (eight classrooms) on that shared facility this April during spring break. This added time will ensure the facilities are ready for school just after Labor Day.

The portable addition means fewer parking spaces and added congestion to an already tight campus. Combined, these two schools were designed for 890 students. This year, we averaged an enrollment count of nearly 1,500 students and more students are on the way. You can read more about the District's long-term solution under our update on the Bond Task Force.

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Until a permanent solution is found, we will reconfigure the OHS/OES to better support students. OES will move into the "West Wing" building beginning in 25-26. Their main office will relocate to the northern portion of the building closest to the OES cafeteria. This will add six classrooms with water, adjacent restrooms, and intervention/support spaces for our youngest, most vulnerable students. OHS will relocate from the West Wing to the new portables which were added to the main parking lot. As we monitor growth, OES could fully take over the West Wing in future years and/or we may add additional portables behind OES. The long-term vision is to rebuild OES on a separate campus which would allow eventual rebuilding of a safe and secure new high school on its existing campus.



Make Your Vote Count!

Register to Vote.

You can register online, 24 hours a day, at **VoteWA.gov**. Scan the QR code to register today!

Upcoming Election Dates:

- Aug. 5
- Nov. 4

Who Can Register?

Scan the QR code to see who can register to vote in Washington state.



Board of Directors
Carrie Thibodeaux ● Melissa Kinzler
Michael Melot ● JoAnn Tracy
Kathy Madigan

For Our Students' Future:

Task Force Recommends Urgent School Investments

Scan the QR code to learn more about the task force.

Thirteen citizens spent months reviewing data, touring schools, and prioritizing needs — culminating in a focused recommendation for Orting's future bond.

After failing to reach a supermajority vote (60 percent) on the November 2024 bond attempt, the Orting School District Board of Directors put out a public call to the community for citizens to join a Bond Task Force to help shape a future recommendation to the local community. 13 citizens answered the call in January and spent the next several months analyzing facility capacity, facility condition, enrollment growth, assessed valuation, project costs, prior communication and other data to help reshape and prioritize a future bond.

The task force met with board members in May to make a recommendation moving forward. The task force concurred with the Citizens Facility Advisory Committee (2021-2022) that there are several needs across the district. However, when faced with the task of prioritizing those needs, the task force recommended the next bond be "laser-focused" on the most urgent priorities. As their top two recommended priorities, the task force advised replacing Orting Elementary School and adding a wing focused on Career and Technical Education at Orting High School.

The most eye-opening data came from the facility tour where task force members met with staff and students. Afterwards, committee members remarked:

- "The facilities were **worse than I expected**."
- "Our labs are in **poor condition** and our **STEM graduates are not prepared**. Our kids need access to equipment and tools to support their career pathways."
- "Many things are not to current code. It was difficult to hear in the lunchroom and in our classrooms. **Our facilities are extended past their designed use**."

The Board of Directors has directed NAC Architects to work on cost estimation for the recommended projects. It is anticipated they will consider action on a future bond at their July 17 regular board meeting.



Bond Task Force members tour Orting schools in March

Solving for Success: How Our Math Program Is Adding Up

Hands-on learning and personalized support are sparking confidence and achievement in every classroom.

Our district is excited to share the momentum we're seeing in math learning across all grade levels. With the adoption of a new, high-quality math curriculum in every school and comprehensive training for our teachers, students are experiencing math in more engaging, hands-on, and collaborative ways. Classrooms are buzzing with real-world problem-solving, deeper thinking, and a renewed sense of curiosity and confidence in math.

We're already seeing encouraging results. Many students are performing at or near grade level, particularly in elementary grades, and students at all levels are showing steady growth. These early signs reflect the power of strong instruction, meaningful curriculum, and the hard work of our educators and students alike. To support this progress, we also use tools like i-Ready, which helps teachers identify student strengths and tailor instruction to meet their individual needs. With all these elements working together, we're confident our students are on a path to long-term success in math and beyond.



Teachers participated in professional development in April

District Approved to Expand Free Meal Program

Beginning in the 2025–26 school year, Ptarmigan Ridge Elementary will join Orting Elementary School in offering free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of their Child Nutrition Eligibility and Education Benefit (CNEEB) status.

Funding for universal free meals is based on the number of qualifying applications submitted by October 1. Even if you don't think you qualify, every application counts and helps support our school community.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the initiative and CNEEB application.

2025-26 School Board Student Representatives

Our School Board believes that students' voices are a critical component of effective governance in order to advocate for the district and the students we serve. In line with this commitment, we are fortunate to have two student representatives from Orting High School who actively participate in our Board meetings. These students dedicate their time and energy, attending meetings after school hours, which is no small commitment. Their participation not only strengthens our Board but also serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of student engagement in shaping the future of our schools.



Carly Castro

Senior Board Representative

Carly is returning for her second year as a student board representative. A senior at Orting High School, she's involved in volleyball, ASB, and jazz band, and has been playing piano for 11 years. Carly is passionate about student voice and chose to serve in this role to advocate for her peers and help make a positive impact across the district.



Dallas Guy

Junior Board Representative

Dallas is a junior at Orting High School where he participates in track, and wrestling, and serves on the executive ASB team. He has been sharing his voice since middle school and is eager to continue that work as a student board representative. Dallas values community involvement and is committed to representing students—especially those who may not always feel heard.

Congratulations to Our 2025 Retirees!

Overall, these employees have collectively served more than ***77 years*** in support of our students, schools, district, and community. **Thank you, and congratulations!**

Orting Middle School
Stephanie Oberdin-Bailes, *Paraeducator*
Marilyn Cordes, *Paraeducator*

Orting High School
Kim Wagner, *Special Ed Resource Teacher*

Nutrition Services
Tina Hemstreet, *Food Service Worker*

Transportation
Gerald Brown, *Bus Driver*

Central Office
Debi Christensen, *Exec. Dir. for Human Resources*
Steve Rabb, *Exec. Dir. for Teaching, Learning, & Assessment*

Scan the QR code to view our district calendar.

A LOOK Ahead

Wednesday, September 3:
First Day of School for Grades 1 -12
Monday, September 8:
First Day of Kindergarten and Preschool

Student supply lists will be provided on our school websites in August. Check for updates at ***OrtingSchools.org***

Elementary School Schedule Changes

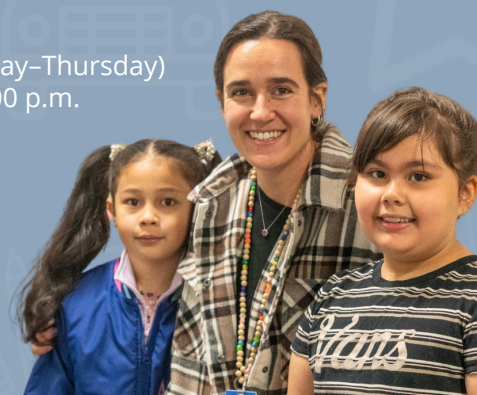
Starting this fall, both Orting Elementary School (OES) and Ptarmigan Ridge Elementary (PTR) will slightly shift start and end times. These changes are necessary to improve bus route reliability, as transportation delays have made it difficult for buses to serve both elementary and secondary students on time.

We understand that even small shifts in time can affect family routines. These changes will ensure more consistent transportation service and safer, more reliable arrival and departure times for our students.

New Elementary School Schedules (Beginning Fall 2025):

Orting Elementary School
Start Time: 9:00 a.m.
End Time: 3:30 p.m. (Monday–Thursday)
Friday Early Dismissal: 2:00 p.m.

Ptarmigan Ridge Elementary
Start Time: 9:10 a.m.
End Time: 3:40 p.m. (Monday–Thursday)
Friday Early Dismissal: 2:10 p.m.



THE TRAIL MIX

Blending moments, milestones, and memories from our schools

Early Learning, Big Impact

New peer model preschool program builds strong foundations for all Orting kids.

Research supports the concept of having children with identified disabilities participate in learning opportunities with their non-disabled peers. The Orting School District has developed a program for preschool-age children to participate in all of our developmental preschool classes. We are excited to offer opportunities for children to participate in an enriched learning environment focused on developing communication and language, social, self-help, motor, and cognitive skills. Early literacy and math skills are emphasized. Students also learn leadership and helping skills by modeling appropriate play and communication for their classmates with developmental delays. Scan the QR code to learn more about the program and important upcoming dates!



GET OUTSIDE OSD!

Earlier this year, we launched ***#GetOutsideOSD***, a new initiative that encourages students and families across the Orting School District to embrace a healthier, more active lifestyle. Summer is a great time to get outside! Scan the QR code for get outside ideas, printable scavenger hunts, and more resources!



We're celebrating a season of excellence in Orting athletics! OHS softball standout Norah Fenton was named Tacoma News Tribune Athlete of the Week, and Coach Cody Baskett received the WIAA Salute to Coaches award for his leadership and impact. Wrestling Head Coach Jody Coleman was honored as the NWCA Head Coach of the Year for Washington, and the OHS wrestling team made history by winning their fourth consecutive WIAA 2A State Championship, scoring an impressive 434 points at the Mat Classic. These achievements reflect the incredible talent, dedication, and spirit of our student-athletes, coaches, and community.



Our big facilities celebration this spring is that the Orting School District received grants totaling $4,592,000 for a new, eight classroom early learning facility. This will allow the district to nearly double the amount of early childhood learning opportunities from what is currently available. This will ensure we can grow our developmental preschool program as well as our peer inclusion model, begin a Transitional Kindergarten program, and expand ECEAP programming. We began efforts in this regard in 2023. We are thankful to Senator Gildon in the 25th, Senator Fortunato in the 31st and Representative Stokesbury and Representative Penner in the 31st for their incredible support. We anticipate opening the facility in late 2026.

Orting School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, marital status, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination and their offices are located at 121 Whitesell St NE, Orting, WA 98360: Civil Rights Compliance/ Title IX/ADA Coordinator Debi Christensen, Executive Director for Human Resources, 360-893-6500, ext. 4028, christensend@orting.wednet.edu. Section 504 Coordinator Dr. Jennifer Westover, Executive Director for Student Support Services, 360-893-6500, ext. 4027, westoverj@orting.wednet.edu. Information about the nondiscrimination and sex-based discrimination policies and grievance procedures, and how to report a concern or complaint can be accessed here. Title IX inquiries may also be directed toward the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Questioning why you are receiving this publication?

An estimated 75 percent of the residents and voters within the school district boundaries do not have school-aged children in the Orting School District. The purpose of this publication, therefore, is to let those members know about the programs and activities taking place in their school district. To greatly reduce the cost of postage, we use a bulk mailing process that has it delivered to every residential customer on each carrier's route.

Be the first to know!

Follow us on social media and be sure to be checking our website for updates!

@OrtingSchoolDistrict

OrtingSchools.org