

COMMUNITY *Connections*

News of Cheney Public Schools



For our children, our world, our future



Ben Ferney, Ed.D.
Superintendent
bferney@cheneysd.org

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, and Community Members,

We are already four weeks into the 2025-2026 school year; can you believe it?! Students—and staff—are settling into their morning routines and getting more comfortable every day. In my initial site visits to buildings these first four weeks, I have witnessed learning at every level. Sunset Elementary's first graders in Ms. Dawson's class practiced 'warming up' their new skills, answering questions about counting, phonics, word problems, and sentence writing; Westwood sixth graders in Ms. Turner's multilingual classroom practiced the appropriate use of coordinating conjunctions; fourth graders in Mrs. White's class at Windsor Elementary learned how to describe vocabulary words through words and photos. These are just a few examples of the amazing leadership of our staff, providing great opportunities for learning at every level.

Communication around student learning is central to our District's Strategic Plan. Crafted during the 2023-2024 school year with input from staff, students, parents, guardians, School Board of Directors, and community members, the plan is a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect our shared values and goals. Now in its second year, the plan continues to guide our work, keeping students at the center of every decision. As part of this effort, the Portrait of a Graduate and Profile of a Learner outline the experiences and evidence that will shape K-12 portfolios, demonstrating both readiness for graduation and preparation for life beyond high school. I am especially grateful to Dr. Kelly Niccolls and the Measurement Team for their leadership in defining these guiding ideas.

This past summer was filled with construction projects across the district, funded by the voter-approved November 2024 bond package. Salnave and Windsor elementary schools each have a brand new bus loop, new chillers were installed at three of our district schools, interior updates were completed at both Sunset and Windsor, and a newly renovated stadium at Cheney High School are a few of the initial projects that were completed. Our community enjoyed the first football game inside the new stadium on September 19 which was kicked off with a short dedication with board members Director Elizabeth Winer and Director Mitch Swenson, Principal Brett Hale, and myself. Initial groundwork is set to begin in the fourth week in September at the site of the new elementary school in Airway Heights, with preliminary designs completed. It is so exciting to see everything come to life! For updates and additional information, check out our social media pages or [click here](#) to visit our website.

We are Cheney Public Schools!

Onward,

Ben Ferney, Ed.D | Superintendent

IMPORTANT DATES

September 24

School Board Meeting - 6 p.m.
Cheney High School Library

October 8

School Improvement Plan - 5 p.m.
Windsor Elementary

October 8

School Board Meeting - 6 p.m.
Windsor Elementary

October 10

No School - Professional Learning Day

October 22

School Improvement Plan - 11:15 a.m.
School Board Meeting - 12:15 p.m.
Sunset Elementary School



On the Cover:
Two Betz students assist with the flag raising on Aug. 29.



Mark Scott
School Board President
District 1



Elizabeth Winer
School Board Member
District 2



Henry Browne
School Board Vice President
District 3



Bill Hanson
School Board Member
District 4



Mitch Swenson
School Board Member
District 5

DISTRICT NEWS

Spreading Kindness and Joy Through Shoes



A Sunset Elementary first grader reacts to their new pair of shoes on Sept. 16.

Basketball and community service are not synonymous terms, but for the Shoes 2 Play club basketball team, you cannot have one without the other. A relatively new program, Shoes 2 Play, or S2P, combines building basketball skills with building character.

Joshua Loera, head coach of S2P and a local insurance broker, has always had the desire to give back to his community. A self-described servant leader, he is one of the founders of the Love Your Neighbor Foundation, a local non-profit organization focused on making a positive impact in Spokane and neighboring communities. The idea of S2P was born about five years ago when Loera learned of a local student that lived in their car and did not have shoes.

“I went to the Nike store and bought a bunch of shoes and gave it to them,” Loera said. “From there, it just kind of turned into what it is now.”

Today, S2P is a club basketball program teaching area girls both basketball and servant leadership skills; a crossover coupled with community service. For Windsor Elementary parent and second grade teacher Kristen Myers, it was an incredible opportunity to support the growth of her daughter in more than just sports.

“I quickly realized it was more than just a basketball team,” Myers said. “[Joshua] was really supporting the character of the whole athlete, not just, ‘You’re playing basketball, and we’re here to win.’ You know, let’s build character too.”

Shoes 2 Play players have learned the importance of giving back to the community—fittingly with shoes. During the 2024-25 playing season, Myers’ daughter and the rest of the S2P then-fourth-grade girls basketball team volunteered to raise funds that went toward

purchasing shoes and socks for 42 students at Windsor Elementary.

“I worked with our counselor and she emailed out to [the parents/guardians] for 42 kids,” Myers said. “We got their sizes, and then on the day of the event, we went down to Nike. I just had the kiddos’ first names, shoe size, and if they were a boy or a girl. We assigned a kiddo to each of the team members.”

The S2P players not only picked out the shoes and socks for each recipient, but they also took the time to write a personalized note to every recipient as well.

“That’s something that we really focus on with the girls’ writing is, you know, put your thought into it and really care about what you’re writing because some of these kids may keep these cards forever, and it might change their life,” Loera said. “You just never know.”

It set the expectation for the players heading into the 2025-26 playing season. Using funds raised during the previous season, the S2P program donated 50 pairs of socks and shoes to students at Sunset Elementary on September 16. Loera delivered the shoes along with a few players from the team, and the elated chorus of happy recipients echoed through the front office.

“It’s just overwhelming, to be honest,” said Sunset Principal Sara McKennon. “It’s completely overwhelming to think about the generosity that they are providing, and for students that they have no connection to...It was so moving. Definitely fighting back some tears there.”

The majority of S2P’s funds stem from the largest fundraiser for the program, the Great Pumpkinfest. It is an annual fall event that Loera began in the fall of 2020, and it spans four weekends running late September through October. Loera’s family supplies the event with thousands of pumpkins—all homegrown on his family’s farm in Moses Lake—along with facepainting, live music, dancing, and a petting zoo. It is a family-friendly event, with all proceeds going directly to charities in the local community. Players volunteer their time in shifts, helping patrons pick out pumpkins or selling raffle tickets.

“That’s where we earned a lot of the money to be able to give back to the community,”

Myers said.

The S2P experience has generated multiple touchpoints for players to engage in servant leadership and community service, bringing awareness to the various levels of privilege and accessibility across the community. The excitement on both the players’ and recipients’ faces during the shoe distribution at Sunset was evident, a shared connection of happiness between kids.

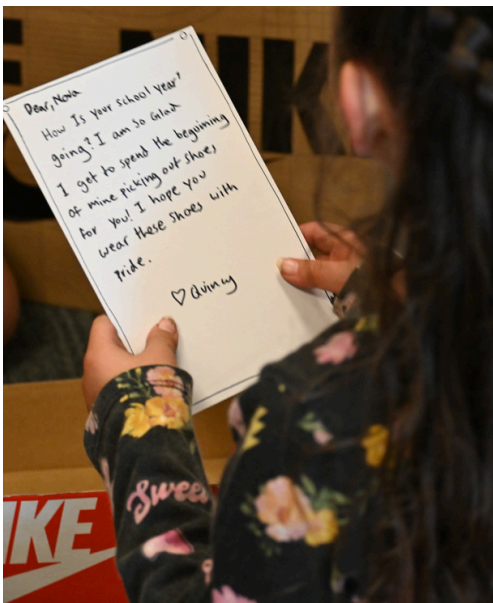
“A first grader last year who received a pair of shoes is now in my class and still wears them,” Myers said. “He told me, ‘Teacher, do you know that a kid gave me these shoes?’ Kids helping each other is what this is all about.”



This S2P player--and Windsor Elementary fifth-grader--carries shoes into Sunset Elementary.



Sunset Assistant Principal Gabrielle Smithley (right) helps this Sunset first grader open their new shoes with the help of a S2P player.



An example of the handwritten cards S2P players wrote to each recipient.



This Sunset third grader shows their new socks and shoes to Principal Sara McKennon and Superintendent Ben Ferney.



This S2P player reads this Sunset first grader their card.

DISTRICT REMINDERS

ECEAP Preschool Openings: Register Today!



There are several openings for interested families to register children for ECEAP preschool across the district. The program serves students from three (3) years of age through five (5) years of age (on or before August 31). Sessions are two (2) full days per week and align with the start and end times of the elementary day. Students may be registered for one (1) preschool session at a time.

Interested families should contact their neighborhood school or visit cheneyisd.org for more information.

Greater Spokane League Passes - Free for 65+



Fall sports are officially here! Did you know that GSL annual passes are free for individuals age 65 and over? Snag yours today at the Cheney High School business office. Simply present your ID for proof of age to collect your free pass. GSL passes grant admission for one adult and any family members younger than high-school age to all GSL home and away game for all seventeen GSL schools.

Mark Your Calendars: Non-Student Days

There are several non-student days throughout the 2025-2026 school year. Please make note of these days; the district will send out reminders between 3-5 days ahead of scheduled non-student days.

Please note, emergency make-up days are highlighted in **red**; these days will be used

in the event of a school cancellation prior to the date. If school has not been previously canceled, these days shift to a non-student day. For more information on inclement weather delays and cancellations, [click here](#).

A list of non-student dates is featured below. Visit cheneyisd.org for the annual calendar.

OCTOBER 10

Professional Learning Day - No Students

JANUARY 19

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School

MARCH 12-13

Conferences - No Students

NOVEMBER 10

Non-School Day - No Students

JANUARY 26

Semester Break Day - No Students

APRIL 6-10

Spring Break - No School

NOVEMBER 11

Veterans Day - No School

FEBRUARY 9

Professional Learning Day - No Students

APRIL 27

Emergency Make-Up Day

NOVEMBER 24-25

Conferences - No Students

FEBRUARY 13

Non-School Day - No Students

MAY 22

Non-School Day - No Students

NOVEMBER 26-28

Autumn Break - No School

FEBRUARY 16

Presidents' Day Holiday - No School

MAY 25

Memorial Day Holiday - No School

DECEMBER 22 -

JANUARY 2

Winter Break - No School

FEBRUARY 17

Emergency Make-up Day

JANUARY 16

Emergency Make-Up Day



Free Afternoon Snacks



For all children ages 1-18, the Spokane County Library District offers a free afternoon snack, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) from 3-4 p.m. at the Cheney Library. Simply show up at 610 First Street in Cheney, Wash., to claim your free snack.

This program is part of the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Per the SCLD, "This program contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States. Each day, more than 4.2 million children and 138,000 adults receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP."



District Snapshots



Richard, who is in his second year driving buses for Cheney Public Schools, has over a decade of bus driving experience. Here he prepares for his school bus route on August 27.



This family poses for the camera on August 29 for the first day of kindergarten at Salnave Elementary.



These Cheney High School Link Crew leaders pose for the camera during Freshman Orientation on August 25.



This Westwood student smiles during Ms. Turner's multilingual class on Sept. 11.



Members of the Bond Advisory Team take a tour of the renovated CHS Stadium on Sept. 8, a project completed as part of the November 2024 Bond.



This Snowdon student enjoys taking a brain break in Ms. Johnson's FAC on Sept. 11.



Superintendent Ferney helps these Sunset students find their classroom on Sept. 5.



These community members enjoy the pinball machines at the Learning Options Market Night on Sept. 3.



Windsor Elementary 4th graders in Mrs. White's class learn how to describe words and their meaning through pictures and text on Sept. 11.

NOTICES

Benefits Application

Cheney Public Schools operates under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for meal services, which means that all students in the district are eligible to receive one free breakfast and one lunch at school every day, regardless of their family's income.

Although meals are free for all students, families who believe they qualify for additional reduced fees are encouraged to complete the Benefit Application. Completing this important application helps our district keep important funding for educational programs. As well, students

who qualify can receive additional benefits like Sun Bucks Summer EBT, waived extracurricular fees, community discounts, and many other benefits.

To qualify, families must complete both the Benefit Application AND a Parental Consent Survey.

The 2025-2026 Benefit Application and Parental Consent Survey are available on the district website [here](#).

Join Our Team!

Interested in joining our team? Scan the QR code below or visit cheneysd.org to view all available job openings.



We're Hiring



Annual Notifications

The 2025-2026 Annual Notifications are now available. [Click here](#) to access the full document.

Annual Notifications are distributed each school year to all students, parents, and guardians in Cheney Public Schools to inform them of their rights and responsibilities. The Annual Notifications document includes rules that define the reasonable limits of those rights, based on the rules and regulations established by the State of Washington.

2025-2026
Cheney Public Schools
Annual Notifications

Enrollment Information
Resident and Non-Resident Transfers
District Policy and Procedure No. 3131 provide information regarding resident (intra-district) transfers. Individuals who reside within the boundaries of Cheney Public Schools and wish to transfer to another school within the district must complete a "Within District Choice Request." Forms can be found at www.cheneyd.org, Services & Support, Student Access & Opportunity, CHOICE. If you do not have access to the website or have additional questions, please contact the "Choice" office at (509) 559-4588 or at 12414 S. Andrus Rd., Cheney.
Running Start
Students enrolled in a high school program may participate in Running Start, a college credit program that is an outgrowth of the Choice legislation of 1990. This program allows students to simultaneously earn credits for high school graduation and towards a college degree. Students/parents should contact a high school counselor to learn more about Running Start or to apply to the program. Eastern Washington University, Spokane Falls Community College, and Spokane Community College are the local institutions that work collaboratively with Cheney Public Schools on this program.

SEPTEMBER RESPECT
Recognizing, considering and properly honoring the worth of one's self and others
www.pacecommunity.org

Cheney Public Schools 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, economic status, pregnancy, familial status, marital status, disability, or the use of a trained guide dog 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: →



Questions or Feedback?

Do you have questions or feedback?

We're here to help! If you have any questions, concerns, or if there is something you would like to know more about, please reach out to Jenna Larson, Communications Coordinator at jl Larson@cheneysd.org.

Title IX/Chapter 28A.640 Officer/
Civil Rights Compliance
Officer/Gender Inclusive Schools
Coordinator
Tom Artl, Assistant Superintendent
Cheney Public Schools
12414 S. Andrus Rd. Cheney, WA
99004
Phone: (509) 559-4550
Email: tarl@cheneysd.org

Civil Rights Compliance
Coordinator/Section 504
Coordinator/ADA Coordinator
Franklin Day, Director, Student
Support Services
Cheney Public Schools
12414 S. Andrus Rd. Cheney, WA
99004
Phone: (509) 559-4507
Email: fdlay@cheneysd.org

Requests for Disclosure of Public
Records
Megan Kensok, Public Records
Officer
Cheney Public Schools
12414 S. Andrus Rd., Cheney, WA
99004
Phone: (509) 559-4502
Email: mkensok@cheneysd.org



Cheney Public Schools @cheneyschools @CheneySchools

Are you a member of a military family?
Please visit <https://www.cheneysd.org/community/military>
for more information.