



What's Inside

Message from Superintendent Gary Storts

Welcome to the first edition of *Future-Ready: The ECS Update*. Each month, this newsletter will highlight the ongoing work across Eureka City Schools (ECS) to ensure learning is **intentional**, **engaging**, and **relevant** to every learner we are privileged to serve. Our goal is to keep you both informed and involved in the educational initiatives that reflect our shared mission and values.

At the heart of this work is the Portrait of a System, an educator-led initiative uniting some of ECS's most dedicated teacher leaders. By blending tried-and-true best practices with the latest research, this effort defines the systems-thinking, intentional design, and learner-centered practices that will guide our schools in the years ahead, culminating in the full embrace of Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) by the start of the 2029–30 school year.

Our upcoming efforts will thoughtfully align with our core beliefs. We believe that learners thrive when they actively guide their own educational journey. We believe learning should be joyful, relevant, and connected to real-life experiences. And with personalized support and high expectations, we believe that each learner in our care is capable of achieving greatness.

Gary Storts, Superintendent
Eureka City Schools

Every Learner, Every Day: Engaged, Empowered, and Future-Ready

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Pictured: Lunch33 Crew with Mr. Bird | Eureka High School

LEARNER AGENCY TEAM UPDATE

By: Garrett Montana

The Learner Agency Team has been hard at work advancing several **Result-Oriented Commitments (ROCs)** across the district.

A major milestone is the full implementation of **Legacy Statements** by staff. These personal declarations act as a north star, grounding educators in the impact they want to leave on learners and colleagues.

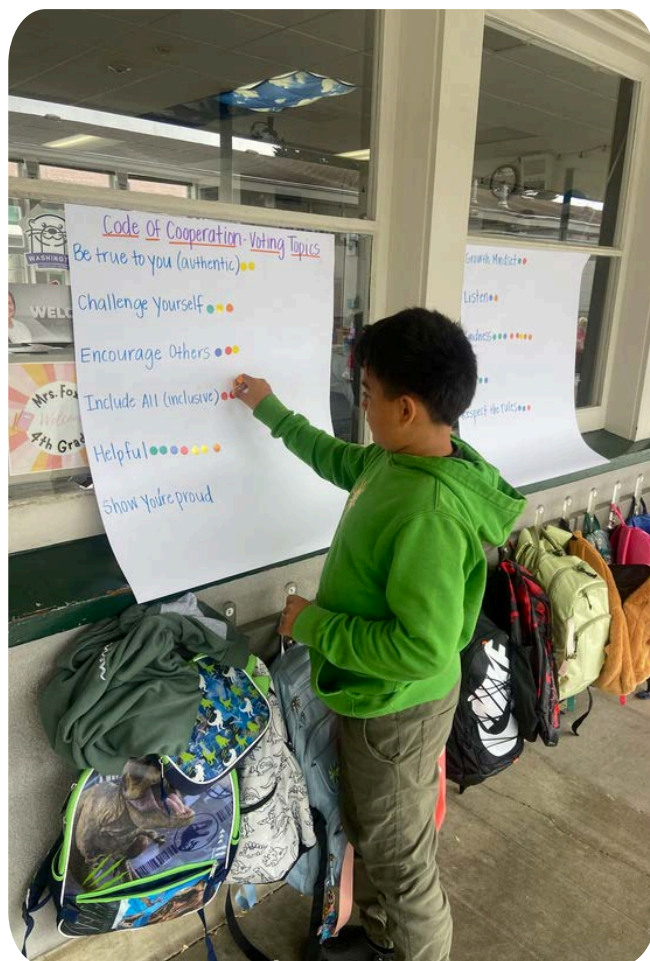
We also launched **Codes of Cooperation (CoCs)** in every school, division, and classroom. Introduced at the August professional development days, these co-created agreements give learners and staff shared ownership of classroom culture. Classroom visits are underway to capture bright spots, hear from students, and gather feedback to refine the process.

Looking ahead, the **Lunch33** program will launch at the end of the month, building belonging through inclusive, student-driven lunchtime activities. Learner Ambassador groups are also forming at EHS and Zoe Barnum. Trained to host visitors, these student leaders will be the face and voice of our transformation.

Work continues on Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) to strengthen discipline systems, alongside preparation for the October 3rd professional development session on the 4 Rs and R Factor.



Pictured: Code of Cooperation Co-Created and Prominently Displayed | Washington Elementary School



Pictured: Student Votes on the Class Code of Cooperation (Voice and Choice) | Washington Elementary School



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE UPDATE

By: Adriana West & Ronda Evans

The Inclusive Excellence Team has officially launched its work this year with a focus on **aligning supports and systems** to better meet learner needs. Through recent meetings with secondary focus groups, the team completed an asset map and needs assessment that revealed both strengths and areas for growth. Key themes included refining tiered supports, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring equitable access to Social Emotional Learning services. From these conversations, the team identified priority areas for the year:

- **Academics:** Expanding Tier 2 supports, with a focus on literacy by grade 3.
- **Behavior:** Building stronger Tier 1 & 2 partnerships district-wide and ensuring staff have access to training.
- **Attendance:** Strengthening Student Attendance Review Team/Student Attendance Review Board alignment and monitoring systems.
- **Special Education:** Increasing collaboration through co-teaching models and targeted interventions

The team will begin developing a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) playbook and evaluate programs, streamline supports, and promote a culture of inclusion. This work is guided by the belief that every learner deserves equitable access to the resources they need to thrive.

WELLNESS TEAM UPDATE

By: Heather Miller & Emily Lancaster

The Wellness Team is working to define what “wellness” truly means for learners, teachers, and learning communities. We are taking a thoughtful approach by engaging students through listening sessions across all learning communities. These conversations will guide our understanding of what supports are most meaningful within our diverse learning communities.

Members of the Wellness Team also had the opportunity to attend a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) conference this summer to learn about educational wellness systems and are actively seeking other learning opportunities.

Looking ahead, our goals include partnering with the community to provide opportunities for both physical and mental wellness, creating space for growth, balance, and connection. We are also developing our first-year implementation goals, which will serve as a foundation for fostering inclusive systemic change built on gratitude, accountability, and care.

By focusing on resilience, self-awareness, and collective well-being, we hope to nurture environments where every individual feels valued and empowered to thrive.



Pictured: New staff to ECS participated in a community building circle and circles lesson. Circles have been a strong part of our ECS Wellness culture for many years!

FUTURE READY INNOVATION UPDATE

By: Ron Perry & Damon Brooks

The Future Forward Innovations (FFI) team is establishing the foundation from which we will move forward. Steps completed so far include:

- Formalized the Seal of Civic Engagement, shared opportunities with civics classes, and posted elements in a Google Classroom. The final reflection process places learners at the center by requiring them to craft a press release and a rubric for self-evaluation.
- Created Career and Technical Education (CTE) informational materials to convey opportunities for learners at EHS on the webpage, bulletin boards, and for counselors to share with prospective students.
- Initiated a pilot of a student portfolio creation with Andrew Dehart's 4th-grade class.
- Welcomed ECS' educational partner, Transcend, to EHS to gather information and conduct listening sessions. This information will serve as the foundation for the team's work to center career-connected learning this year.

The FFI team met on September 16, 2025. The 2025-2026 team goals have been organized into eight areas. Each area will be addressed by a task force of individuals with vested interests in that area.



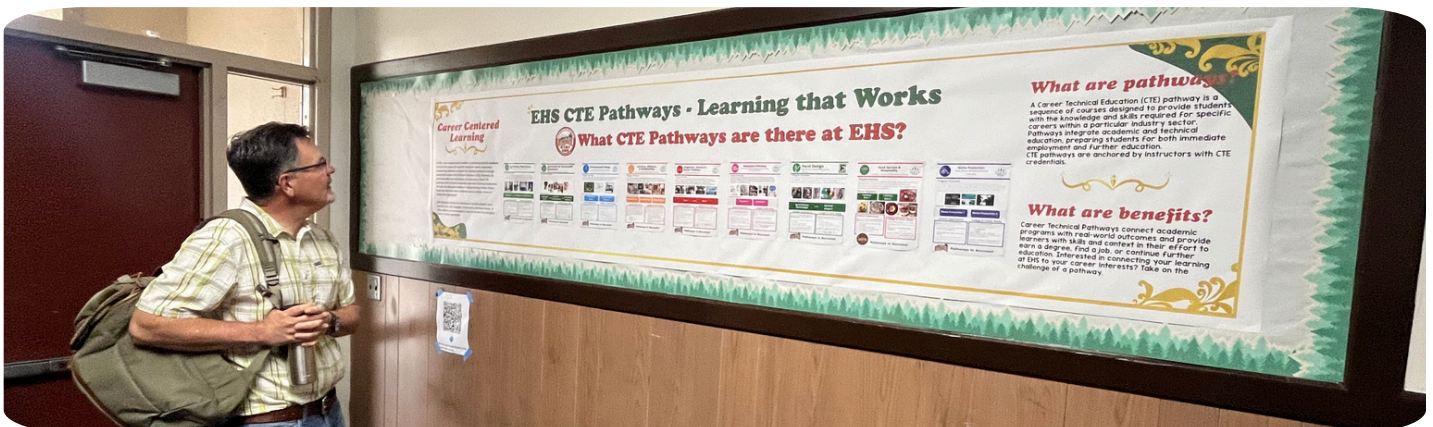
Pictured: Student in Mr. Dehart's class working on Portfolio Project | Washington Elementary School

Additional FFI Highlights

Completed and submitted the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG) application.

Collaborated with Media Arts 2 students to create video content that illustrates the power of CTE programs.

Collaborated with Student Leadership to formalize the roles of student leaders in fostering a positive culture and sharing successes via social media.



Pictured: Mr. Cox Checks Out the New Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway Bulletin Board | Eureka High School

PERSONALIZED COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING UPDATE

By: Nanette Voss

What an exciting start of the year for the Personalized Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) Team! Here are a few things that we have been working on:

- **Intentional Planning Teacher Academy:** Over 20 teachers have volunteered their time after school to begin learning about how to plan intentionally to the standards, a key element of PCBL! This cohort consists of educators spanning grade levels from 1st-12th and subject areas from Drama to Science to Math to English. They are focused and ready to dive deeper into this more learner-centered method of teaching and planning.
- The **ELA Learning Progressions** team has met to begin vertically aligning ELA standards from K-12. And, the Math and Portrait of a Graduate teams are meeting soon to begin the same important work.
- The **October 27th Professional Learning Day** will focus on PCBL instructional strategies.

Most importantly, our educators seem eager to begin this work and are fearlessly diving into this new instructional world because they know that it is the best choice for our learners.

Pictured Below: Educators ranging from 1st-12th grade planning together during a session of the Intentional Planning Teacher Academy | PCBL



CONTINUOUS GROWTH TEAM UPDATE

By: Hope von Werlhof

Continuous Growth (CG) encompasses persistence, adaptability, and lifelong learning, achieved by striving for improvement in every endeavor. This is enhanced by tools for data analysis, communication, and collaboration that foster reflection and innovation.

Our Guiding Principles:

- Foster a **growth mindset** that values effort, reflection, and resilience.
- Promote **continuous learning** as a fundamental skill for success.
- Use **data and reflection** to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Support a culture of **innovation** and **adaptability**.
- Embed ECS Core Values— Innovation, Communication, Accountability, Resilience, and Empathy—into all efforts.

This past month, our team has been working on finalizing both our short-term and long-term goals. These goals include improving systems for communication throughout the district, promoting a growth mindset and common vocabulary for Competency Based Education, providing Professional Learning Opportunities based on feedback, and building a sustainable system for Standard Operating Procedures for all staff.



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR JOURNEY TO PERSONALIZED, COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (PCBL)

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

2022

July | Leadership Attends Visible Learning Conference

December | Board Approved Contract to Draft Portrait of A Graduate (PoG)



2024

March & October | Learner Listening Sessions

June | Lindsay Unified Leaders Visit ECS

June | Board Approved Contract with Lindsay Foundation for Educational Leadership

September | ECS Team Visits Lindsay Unified

October & December | Strategic Educational Partners Meetings

November | KnowledgeWorks Presents Envision Futures for Eureka's Learners

November | Leaders Attend Aurora Symposium

November | ECS Awarded Transcends' Rural Schools Community Design Grant

December | Lindsay Leads Visits ECS

December | Board Adopted Mission, Values, Beliefs and Guiding Principles



2023

March | Parent Feedback on PoG

March | Staff Feedback on PoG

May | Community Feedback on PoG

May-June | EHS Learner Feedback on PoG

June | Chamber of Commerce Feedback on PoG

August | Visible Learning Professional Learning at ECS

October | Board Approved PoG



2025

February | Portrait of an Educator (PoE) Feedback

February | Portrait of a Leader (PoL) Feedback

February and May | Strategic Educational Partners Meetings

March and October | Learner Listening Sessions

March | 2nd ECS Team Visits Lindsay Unified

March | ECS Community Schools PCBL Presentation

April | Rural School Community Design Convening

April-May | Teachers on Special Assignments Hired to Lead Portrait of a System (PoS) Teams

May | EHS Learners Presented a Case for Change to EHS Staff

June | Marzano-Led Critical Concepts Professional Learning

June | Career Connected Learning Pilot Grant Awarded

June | Lindsay Leads Visit ECS

July | ECS Team Attend Marzano Mastery Approaches Institute

July | Zoe Barnum Team Attends Big Picture Learning

August | ECS Completes Legacy Statements and Codes of Cooperation

September | 3rd ECS Team Visits Lindsay Unified

October | Board Adopts ECS Strategic Framework

OUR TEAM LEADS

As we continue our journey from traditional learning to competency-based learning, we want to keep you informed and involved every step of the way. This page introduces the Team Leads for each Portrait of a System intent area. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback, please reach out directly to the appropriate Team Lead. We are excited about this important work and committed to creating open opportunities for **communication**, **input**, and **shared ownership** in the process. Your voice is an essential part of shaping the path forward.



Learner Agency

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Personalized, Competency-Based Learning

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Continuous Growth

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