October 2025

COMMUNITY *Connections*

News of Cheney Public Schools



For our children, our world, our future



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

IMPORTANT DATES

November 5
School Improvement Plan - 5 p.m.
Snowdon Elementary

November 5
School Board Meeting - 6 p.m.
Snowdon Elementary School

November 10
Non-School Day - No Students

November 11
Veterans' Day Holiday - No School

November 19
School Improvement Plan - 5 p.m.
Cheney Middle School Library

November 19
School Board Meeting - 6 p.m.
Cheney Middle School Library



On the Cover: Snowdon Elementary PT Erika Ellis pushes a student during the Pride Stride on Oct. 3.

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, and Community Members,

Every fall reminds me just how special K–12 education is, and this year is no different. Across Cheney Public Schools, teachers, support staff, and administrators are doing incredible work for our students. At Cheney Middle School, the team has partnered with The Learner First organization since August to build high-impact routines that strengthen both math skills and student confidence. At Sunset Elementary, staff are working together to boost attendance—up nearly seven percent from the same time last year. There is amazing work happening at every level, and it is making a real difference!

Our students and staff are also doing incredible things beyond the classroom. Cross country is a great example. Cheney High School Head Coach Derek Slaughter and Head Coach Camille Moseley organized the Battle for the 509, the largest secondary cross country meet in the region. With nearly 2,500 athletes and 110 teams, it was quite the event! On a smaller but equally impressive scale, Sunset Elementary hosted its first-ever cross country meet. Third, fourth, and fifth graders practiced every Tuesday and Thursday, finishing strong with a final mile race on October 9. The smiles on those students said it all.

Our Strategic Plan guides all the work we do in Cheney Public Schools. With six goals, plus our Profile of a Learner and Portrait of a Graduate, it serves as our roadmap for student success. This plan is a living document that we review multiple times each year, and each school's improvement plan connects directly to it. You may have noticed new icons on photos across our social media pages. Each icon highlights one of the six goals in action so our community can see our Strategic Plan at work in real life.

The November 2024 bond package continues to make big impacts across our district. This summer saw major projects with new bus loops at Salnave and Windsor elementary schools, a renovated track and stadium at Cheney High School, interior updates at Sunset and Windsor, in addition to new chillers at three of our elementary schools. None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of our community! To follow our progress and to see updates on the bond projects, click here.

As the first quarter of the 2025-26 school year comes to a close, I am excited for the future of our school district!

We are Cheney Public Schools!

Onward,

Ben Ferney, Ed.D | Superintendent



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

Three District Teachers Awarded Alpha Nu Educational Grant



Sunset Elementary third grade teacher Courtney Read (center), with Vickie Kennedy (left) and Bonnie Sullivan (right).



Salnave Elementary second grade teacher Colsen Mayfield (center), with Bonnie Sullivan (left), and Susan Mattoon (right).



Sunset Elementary first grade teacher Bree Dawson (center), with Vickie Kennedy (left) and Bonnie Sullivan (right).

Members of the local Alpha Nu chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa made a big difference for three Cheney Public Schools teachers this fall, awarding each a $300 grant to support classroom-related expenses.

The Alpha Nu Educational Grant supports certificated educators in their second through fifth years of full-time teaching. Designed to encourage teacher retention, the grant helps early-career teachers cover a variety of classroom needs—from instructional materials and supplies to professional development opportunities.

Alpha Nu representatives and retired Cheney Public Schools and Medical Lake School District teachers Vickie Kennedy, Bonnie Sullivan, and Susan Mattoon attended staff meetings at both Salnave and Sunset elementary schools in October to personally present the awards.

This year's recipients include Colsen Mayfield, second grade teacher at Salnave, and Bree Dawson (first grade) and Courtney Read (third grade), both from Sunset Elementary.

Alpha Delta Kappa, the parent organization of the local Alpha Nu chapter, is an international network that honors outstanding women educators, strengthens the education profession, and supports altruistic projects, grants, and scholarships.

October 10 Professional Learning Day

On Friday, October 10, staff district-wide participated in a professional learning day (PLD). Organized by our Teaching and Learning department, with specialized support from our teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), the PLD provided meaningful time together to positively impact student learning.

The PLD was organized into learning groups by specialty–including elementary, secondary, paraeducators, preschool, occupational and physical therapy, functional academics, speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, and elementary specialists. The TOSA team supported the day by leading sessions and floating between groups to address immediate needs and questions. Several groups participated in interactive lectures and workshops from guest speakers, like The Learner First social-emotional learning for secondary educators, or Paula Maeker for elementary staff. Our entire staff of paraeducators participated in multiple sessions throughout the day, covering topics such as role clarity and collaboration, instructional strategies, trauma-informed practices, and de-escalation and positive behavior



District paraprofessionals participate in a discussion about the role of the paraeducator in an educational ecosystem during the District PLD on Oct. 10.

reinforcement. These sessions were led by staff from Eastern Washington University, continuing the strong partnership we have built with their team.

We are grateful to our students and families for their flexibility and support to provide a day for our staff to collaborate together for learning, strengthening their skills to best support every student, every day.



Superintendent Ben Ferney addresses district staff at the Oct. 10 PLD.



Westwood assistant principal Tim Harse interacts with group members.

Cheney FFA Welcomes District Students for Ag Day

Cheney FFA hosted Ag Day on October 14, the first since COVID sidelined the annual event in 2020. Over 600 elementary and middle school students attended, learning about agriculture in an up-close and personal way. Cheney FFA members showed attendees livestock, including cows, goats, chickens, and horses, along with two tortoises, as well as lessons on plants, animals, and how to make apple cider.

Cheney High School senior and four-year Cheney FFA member Taylor Pettit helped to organize the event. "I think it's really important because FFA–it used to be called Future Farmers of America–ties into agriculture," Pettit said. "You go to school every day, you pass the fields, and that's part of agriculture. I think they would want know what they are seeing every day, or a part of it at least."

Pettit, along with two other team members and Cheney FFA advisor Heather Nelson, organized the event, planning schedules and mapping out livestock and booth locations.

"I love it, honestly," Pettit said. "I thought it was so great. Seeing all the smiles they had. I did not see a single frownie face from any kid. They all had smiles. They were so excited to be there and see the tractors and the animals, make cuttings in the greenhouse and watch the apple cider get made. I thought it was really, really cool this year."







Battle for the 509

Saturday, October 4 saw the region's largest cross country meet as over 110 teams with nearly 2,500 athletes came together in Airway Heights for the eighth annual Battle for the 509. The meet, which spans the vast open space of the Spokane Polo Grounds off of Sunset Highway, featured nine races for middle school and high school cross country runners.

Cheney High School cross country Head Coach Derek Slaughter, with assistance from Head Coach Camille Moseley, organizes the event, which Slaughter created in 2017.







District Snapshots



This Salnave Sparrowhawk enjoys a brain break on October 3 as part of the bi-weekly event, Healthy Hawks.



During PLCs on Friday, October 3, educators at Three Springs High School review weekly student feedback to help create personalized education plans for their students.



This paraeducator takes notes during a presentation about role clarity and collaboration during the district-wide PLD on Oct. 10.



District students get to pet a chicken with the help of this Cheney FFA member during the 2025 Ag Day on Oct. 14.



These Windsor Elementary students are having a ton of fun during the Wildcat Walk on Oct. 9.



This Sunset Elementary student races toward the finish line with support from her family during the cross country meet on Oct. 9.



The Cheney High School choir students perform in the second fall concert of the year on Oct. 14.



Betz Elementary fifth grade teacher Ms. Johnson helps this student during a narrative writing segment on Oct. 13.



Members of the Bond Advisory Team take a look at the initial grading at the new Craig Road Elementary School in Airway Heights on Oct. 13.

NOTICES

Boundary Review Community Partners Team

Our district will be opening a new elementary school in Airway Heights for the 2027-28 school year. This exciting change means that attendance boundaries will need to be adjusted for several of our district's elementary schools to support balanced enrollment and equitable access for all families.



To help guide this exciting transition, Cheney Public Schools is seeking community participants to serve on the Boundary Review Community Partners Team (BRCPT). This team will work together with district staff and consultants from Teater Crocker, Inc. -- an educational consulting firm -- to prepare a recommendation for boundary adjustments to the School Board. The team will meet four times before finalizing a recommendation; the meeting times are as follows:

December 9, 2025, January 6, 2026, February 3, 2026, and March 16, 2026. All meetings will be 6-8 p.m.

Community input is a vital part of the boundary adjustment process. If you are interested in volunteering on the BRCPT and live within the Cheney Public Schools attendance boundary, please complete and submit an application by October 31, 2025. There are several options for submitting an application for the BRCPT. Those options are listed below:

- Application (PDF)
- Application (Fillable PDF)
- Application via Google Forms

PDF applications can be mailed or dropped off to:

Boundary Review Community Partners Team
Attn: Megan Kensok
12414 S. Andrus Road
Cheney, WA 99004

or emailed to: mkensok@cheneysd.org

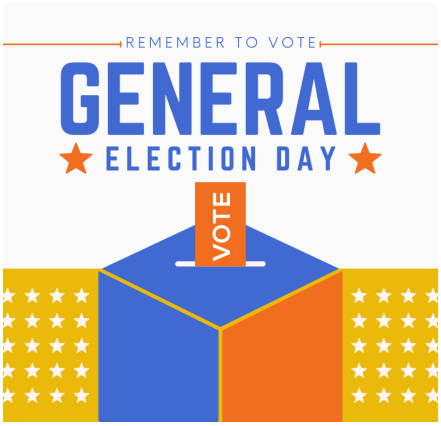
Applications MUST be received via mail, email, dropoff, or Google Form by 5 p.m. on October 31, 2025 to be considered. For more information on the BRCPT, please visit our website.

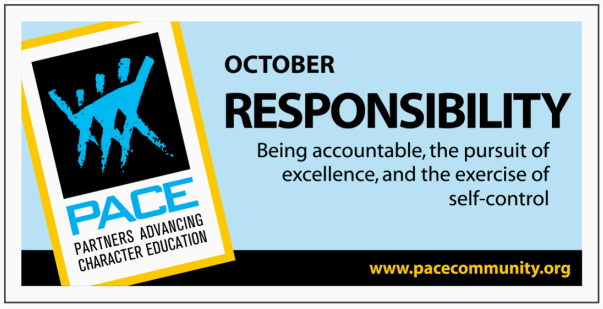
Join Our Team!

Interested in joining our team? Check out our website to learn more about open positions.

Visit cheneysd.schoolspring.com or click here!







Cheney Public Schools @cheneyschools @CheneySchools

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

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: ⟶

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

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 jlarson@cheneysd.org.