

# Friends & Neighbors Newsletter

## Congratulations, Class of 2026!



As Valedictorian Brooke Yargus reflected on her time at Lakewood High School, she thought back on the small moments, like ice cream runs and late nights with friends. She encouraged her classmates to be vulnerable. "It's OK not to have everything figured out right now," she said. Faculty Speaker Jeff Sowards encouraged grads to persevere. "Struggle is where growth truly happens." Bottom-right: Elementary students were eager to give high-fives as graduates returned to where their journeys began before they walked under the Hole in the Wall one last time.



## Superintendent's message to graduates: Remember kindergarten lessons

Greetings,

As I looked out at this year's 188 Lakewood High School graduates, I thought about each student's journey to receive their diploma. A journey that began in kindergarten. I asked our graduating class to remember



**Dr. Erin Murphy,**  
Superintendent

those early lessons. Lessons like "Be Kind" and "Stay Curious." "Ask Questions" and "Nurture your relationships."

As we prepare to welcome next year's kindergartners (the class of 2039!), I am confident that our graduates will continue to lead with compassion and purpose. Whether entering the workforce, serving in the military, attending trade school, college, or university,

our world is a better place because of them, and our school is stronger because they were here.

While summer has arrived, the learning doesn't stop. We invite you to read "The Anxious Generation" with us in partnership with the Lakewood/Smokey Point Library. Stop by the library to check out a copy of the book or call the library and pick up your copy at the Lakewood

Library Lockers near our schools. Book discussions are July 30 at 5:30 p.m. at the library and online at noon on Aug. 10. There will also be a panel discussion at LHS on Aug. 10. More information will be available on our website calendar.

Thank you for your support of each of our students this year.

In partnership,

*Erin*



**LAKEWOOD**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Inspiring Growth.  
Empowering Futures.*

FIND US ON





Washington State Auditor Pat McCarthy presented the SASA award during a meeting of the Lakewood Board of Directors on May 4 at LHS.

## Auditor presents state award for stewardship

State Auditor Pat McCarthy presented the Lakewood School District Business Office with the State Auditor's Stewardship Award (SASA) during a special meeting of the Lakewood Board of Directors on May 4.

In presenting the award, McCarthy praised the district's strong internal control environment, noting that it reflects Lakewood's commitment to accurate financial reporting, continuous improvement, and a spirit of collaboration.



The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is one of the nation's highest honors for graduating seniors.

## LHS student 1 of 11 state Presidential Scholar semifinalists

Lakewood School District is proud to announce that recent graduate Rylee Thompson is a semifinalist for the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Rylee was recognized for excellence in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Finalists will be announced later this year.

## Ag Teacher of the Year



Students in agricultural science learn by doing. In Advanced Animal Biology (top), students explore anatomy by dissecting and labeling parts of a sheep's heart. Bottom-left: Lakewood FFA earned \$3,048 at the Puget Sound Junior Livestock Show. Ten students showed rabbits, chickens and goats, and five students earned awards. Bottom-right: Using Karo syrup, marshmallows and sprinkles, students explore how plasma carries nutrients throughout the body.

Today's Lakewood students could be tomorrow's veterinarians caring for livestock, scientists developing sustainable crops, or farmers feeding communities across the country.

Helping inspire those futures is Danika Welty of Lakewood High School, who has been named Washington State Early Career Teacher by the Washington Association of Agricultural Educators.

In addition to her efforts in the classroom, Welty was recently awarded a \$40,000 FFA Chapter Grant to upgrade LHS lab equipment, including microscopes that connect to lab computers, biotechnology equipment, and veterinary science animal simulators that allow students to gain hands-on clinical practice.

## THANK YOU, VOTERS!



Superintendent Dr. Erin Murphy points out some of the changes that Lakewood Middle School students will see in the fall as part of their remodeled cafeteria. This project was made possible by the Capital Improvements and Safety Levy, approved by voters in 2024.

## LMS cafeteria remodel

"Tell me more about that." Superintendent Dr. Erin Murphy sparked a thoughtful conversation with Lakewood Middle School students about their upcoming cafeteria remodel. Students' top priority? Eating at times that help them stay focused and energized. The redesign will shift the schedule from three lunches to two with increased seating.

As part of the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee's short-term plan approved by the Board in 2023, the LMS cafeteria is being remodeled this summer to increase efficiencies.

LMS students also suggested incorporating school colors and additional artwork throughout the space.

## WATCH THE VIDEO



### ALL-STATE MUSICIANS



Two LHS musicians performed in all-state ensembles: Lukas Gibb played 2nd chair tuba and Gisselle Solis sang alto.

### SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS



Graduates were offered more than \$3 million in scholarships this year. Some of those were awarded at Senior Awards Night.

### 40TH YEAR AT STATE TRACK



Cougar Track and Field competed at their 40th consecutive trip to the State Championships, the longest streak in 2A state history!

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE:

Lakewood School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, disability, neurodivergence, the use of a trained dog guide or service animal, age, and honorably discharged veteran or military status 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: Lakewood School District, 17110 16th Drive NE, Marysville, WA 98271, Attention: Title IX and Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, Timothy Haines, 360-652-4500, thaines@lwsd.wednet.edu or Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Lissan Wipfli, 360-652-4500, lwipfli@lwsd.wednet.edu. Title IX inquiries may also be directed toward the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Information about the nondiscrimination and sex-based discrimination policies and grievance procedures, and how to report a concern or complaint are at [www.lwsd.wednet.edu](http://www.lwsd.wednet.edu).