OCTOBER 2026

ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT

GOOD NEWS

EDITION NEWSLETTER



Superintendent’s Corner

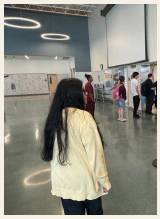


Photo Credit: St. Helens Kiwanis Club













It is a true honor to begin my second year as your superintendent and to continue partnering alongside our dedicated staff to serve your children. As we move into this new school year, we continue to focus on aligning our behavior systems district-wide, advancing our Blueprint for Student Success, and implementing our Special Education Redesign to ensure every single learner feels safe, supported, and valued.

Our district-wide theme for this school year is "Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow." We firmly believe that when students feel safe, known, and connected, they are empowered to grow, belong, and achieve. To drive this initiative forward and build deep connections within our schools, we recently launched our "Who Connected You?" campaign. This effort is all about ensuring that both our students and staff truly feel like they belong and matter every single day.

Building these strong relationships is one of my highest priorities, which is why I am spending twice a week directly inside our schools—every Tuesday at St. Helens High School and every Thursday at St. Helens Middle School, along with rotating through all our schools monthly.

Being in the schools twice a week has been deeply encouraging for me. I absolutely love being out in the halls with our kids, making those face-to-face connections, and seeing firsthand the incredible work happening across our district. We are blessed with amazing, dedicated staff members and truly wonderful kiddos.

To ensure our students' perspectives directly shape our future, I am also excited to share that I am starting a Superintendent Student Advisory Council to listen closely to student voices. Additionally, I recently had the privilege of speaking at the local Kiwanis Club to share all the fantastic things taking place within the St. Helens School District and celebrate our strong community partnerships. It was such a proud moment for me as superintendent to share the stories of our incredible students and staff and highlight the amazing things they are accomplishing together every day.

Thank you for your continued partnership, support, and dedication to our students. Together, we are building a bright, connected future!

Dr. Koreen Barreras-Brown
SHSD Superintendent









WORKING TOGETHER FOR STUDENT SAFETY

At St. Helens School District, ensuring the safety and well-being of your children is our highest priority. Effective emergency preparedness requires continuous practice and close collaboration long before a crisis ever occurs.

To make sure we are prepared, SHSD holds regular quarterly planning sessions with our local first responder partners from across Columbia County. At our most recent meeting, team members and leaders from emergency response agencies joined district staff to review protocols, share insights, and walk through real-world safety scenarios together.

During this session, SHSD Director of Facilities Jared Plahn presented our off-site student reunification plan. This plan establishes how we would safely manage and coordinate reuniting students with their families if an emergency ever prevented students from returning to campus buildings.

Having so many dedicated local agencies in one room, all focused on a unified goal of protecting our students, is a powerful reminder of how supportive our community is. We are deeply grateful to our local first responders for their ongoing partnership, expert feedback, and commitment to our schools.

Hands-On Learning

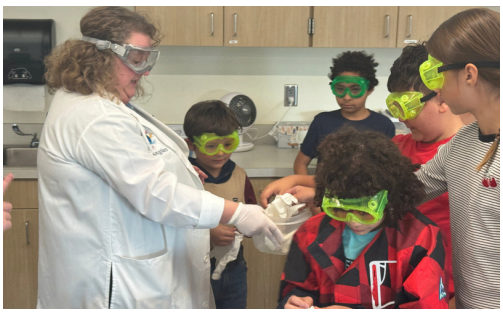
St. Helens Virtual Academy











Once a week, our St. Helens Virtual Academy Elementary students trade their screens for hands-on exploration during our weekly STEAM events. Our schedule rotates between K–2, 3–5, and all-school K–5 gatherings—and this week, our entire K–5 community came together for an exciting seasonal investigation!

Students put on their scientist and mathematician hats to explore the properties of pumpkins. Using science investigation strategies and real-world math skills, they analyzed, measured, and predicted before taking part in a pumpkin drop test. While the drop itself was a bit less dramatic than we hoped, the experience was a resounding success! It gave our students a fantastic opportunity to collaborate, share laughs, and work toward a common goal.

After the drop, we head back to the classroom to debrief, analyze our data, discuss what happened, and enjoy some valuable social time with peers. We love seeing our virtual learning community build such strong, real-world connections!



CTE PROGRAMS

ST. HELENS HIGH SCHOOL

FROM RAW LUMBER TO FINISHED DELIVERIES: A PEAK INSIDE THE SHOP

There is never a dull moment in our woodworking program! Recently, our students hit some exciting milestones across every skill level:

We finally delivered the shed constructed by last year's class—a massive project that took a blend of heavy equipment, careful rigging, and great teamwork to place in its new home.

Meanwhile, innovation is thriving in the shop. One of our independent study students experimented with wood-torching techniques to bring out unique grain patterns and rich character on her build.

And for our newest makers, 30 Woodworking students took over the shopfloor together, stepping up to the bandsaws to build foundational techniques and confidence.

Thank you to everyone who supports our students as they learn, create, and build skills for the future!

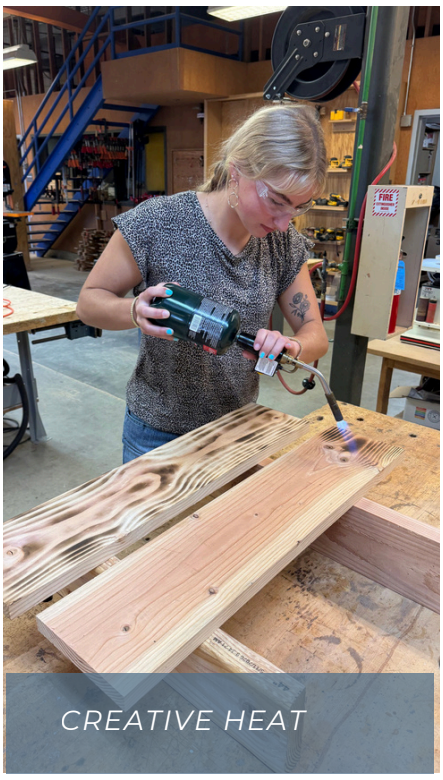


BIG MOVES



FULL HOUSE IN THE SHOP





CREATIVE HEAT

HANDS-ON ENGINEERING COMES ALIVE FOR ST. HELENS VIRTUAL ACADEMY STUDENTS



Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) came to life as our 3rd–5th grade St. Helens Virtual Academy students gathered on campus for an interactive hands-on challenge! Tasked with building the tallest freestanding tower using only spaghetti, string, tape, and a marshmallow, students applied key engineering concepts together in person.

Students experimented with structural stability, learned from trial and error, and figured out how to build the tallest, strongest towers possible. Our students had a blast and made some impressive structures they were able to take home!





ST. HELENS VIRTUAL ACADEMY



Photo Credit: St. Helens Kiwanis Club

SHHS AUTOMOTIVE & CTE PROGRAMS

At a recent meeting of the St. Helens Kiwanis Club, SHHS Automotive Teacher Tyler Ross delivered a feature presentation highlighting the hands-on learning experiences shaping local students into career-ready technicians.

The SHHS Automotive Program provides students with practical, real-world skills through direct experience servicing and repairing customer vehicles. Throughout their coursework, students gain expertise across a wide range of automotive services:

- **Diagnostic Technology:** Training with modern scan tools and diagnostic procedures to pinpoint complex mechanical and electrical issues.
- **Routine Maintenance & Major Repairs:** Hands-on experience ranging from basic oil changes to advanced brake work, suspension repairs, and wheel alignments.
- **College Credit:** Students in the Auto 4 course earn dual credit, giving them a jumpstart on their post-secondary education and career credentials.
- **Career Preparation:** Every student builds a professional portfolio featuring a resume alongside a detailed log of all shop work performed, preparing them directly for the workforce.

In addition to the deep dive into automotive technology, Tyler Ross shared an overview of the full scope of Career & Technical Education (CTE) pathways offered at SHHS. These programs emphasize real-world responsibility, practical skill application, and career readiness, ensuring students graduate equipped with the tools and experience needed to succeed in modern industries.







HIGH SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES

October 2026



ST. HELENS SCHOOL BOARD SWEARS IN 2026–2027 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

During the regular school board meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2026, the St. Helens School Board officially welcomed Leah Yarbor as the Student Representative for the 2026–2027 school year. Board Chair, Reed Hjort, conducted the swearing-in ceremony to officially open Leah's term.

Each school year, the Board designates a Student Representative to serve as a vital connection between the district's student body and its leadership, bringing student perspective directly to board discussions and decisions.

Congratulations to Leah Yarbor! We look forward to hearing her valuable contributions to our school community throughout the year.









SHHS ASB PRESENTATION TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

During the regular school board meeting, St. Helens High School ASB Public Relations Officer Lucy Durant delivered an insightful presentation to the Board and attendees.

As part of her leadership role within the SHHS Associated Student Body (ASB), Lucy provided a comprehensive overview of recent high school events, celebrated student achievements, and shared a preview of upcoming activities scheduled across campus.

Thank you, Lucy, for serving as a voice for your fellow students and keeping our community informed on the wonderful momentum at St. Helens High School!



CTE PROGRAMS

ST. HELENS HIGH SCHOOL

FROM FOUNDATION TO FUNCTION: STUDENTS UPGRADE THE SHOP









True craftsmanship comes down to building things that last. Last year, our students poured a fresh concrete pad outside the shop. This week, the next phase of the project came to life as students set heavy-duty storage racks onto that very same pad.

Using roto-hammers, students precision-drilled anchor points directly into the hardened concrete to secure specialty heavy-duty bolts. It's an incredible hands-on lesson in structural anchoring, safety standards, and seeing a multi-stage construction project come full circle.

Great focus and professional execution by everyone involved!

CONGRATULATIONS!

SHSD STUDENTS SELECTED TO OMEA ALL-STATE HONOR BANDS

Congratulations to Quinton, Tabitha, and Eli for their outstanding hard work and success! They have been selected to participate in the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA) All-State Ensembles.

This January, they will head to Eugene to rehearse alongside the state's top student musicians and perform live at the OMEA State Conference.

We are so proud of their dedication and talent!

Congratulations!







Celebrating National Farm to School Month at Lewis & Clark Elementary



Recently students and staff at Lewis & Clark joined schools across the state for Crunch at Once—a statewide synchronized event celebrating National Farm to School Month!

At precisely the same moment, our kids took a synchronized, loud, crunchy bite into fresh, locally grown Oregon produce. This year's spotlight was on two incredible Oregon apple varieties: Mt. Rose and Rubinette.





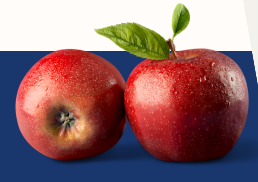




The Mt. Rose apples—with their surprising, vibrant pink-and-red flesh—were an absolute hit! As you can see in the photos, the kids were thrilled to discover the colorful surprise inside and enjoyed celebrating our local farm partners together.

A big thank you to everyone who made this event such a delicious success!







STAFF COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

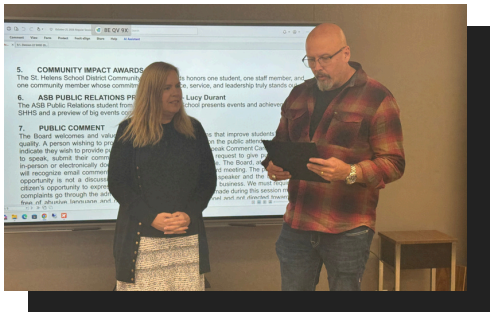
TERESA GORE

Teresa is an incredible kindergarten teacher at Lewis & Clark Elementary who consistently goes above and beyond to support not only her students, but the teachers, staff, and families around her. The foundation of a welcoming, connected school community begins in the classroom, and Teresa manages her role with extraordinary dedication, warmth, and heart. Whether she is opening her classroom doors to new learners, supporting her colleagues, or organizing events that bring our entire staff together, she ensures that everyone who steps through our doors feels valued and supported.

Each day, Teresa actively looks for ways to lift up those around her—whether that means offering a helping hand, sharing thoughtful ideas, or simply being a steady presence others can count on. Recognizing the importance of early transitions, she works tirelessly to build a strong bridge between our preschool community and kindergarten. Her efforts create a seamless sense of continuity and belonging for young students and their families as they step into elementary school for the very first time.

Beyond her classroom, Teresa plays a vital role in nurturing our school's culture as a key member of our social committee. She is constantly generating fresh ideas and putting in the time, energy, and care required to create an environment where staff members genuinely look forward to coming to work. From staff parties and celebrations to thoughtful small surprises, Teresa works behind the scenes to make every moment meaningful and fun. She deeply understands that building a thriving school community means taking care of and celebrating the adults who make our school what it is.
Teresa's generosity knows no bounds—she never misses an opportunity to volunteer her time. Whether she is stepping in to help run an event, supporting a school activity, connecting different parts of our community, or jumping in wherever help is needed most, she gives unconditionally of herself.

Teresa's impact on our school is profound and lasting. Her willingness to support others, strengthen community connections, spark joy, and serve with an open heart shapes the very culture of our campus. She brings excellence to her teaching, compassion to her relationships, and an unwavering commitment to the growth and happiness of our entire school family. She truly embodies what it means to be a community-minded educator.



Please join us in congratulating Teresa as our Staff Community Impact Award recipient for October!



COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

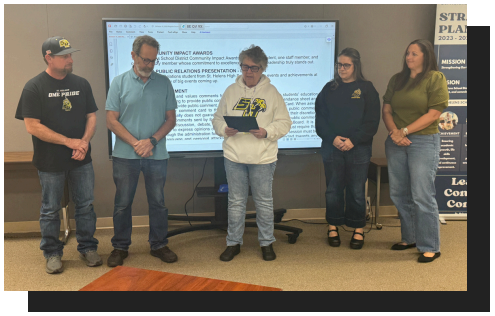
ST. HELENS SPORTS BOOSTERS

The St. Helens Sports Boosters is a dedicated group of community members whose continued service, generosity, and commitment have made a profound impact on the student-athletes, staff, and families within the St. Helens School District. Driven by their mission to support and create wholesome athletic opportunities, the Boosters facilitate and elevate interscholastic athletic programs at both St. Helens High School and St. Helens Middle School.

For nearly four decades, the Sports Boosters have been a steadfast pillar of support for our local youth. Their dedication extends far beyond financial contributions; just last year alone, members volunteered nearly 5,000 hours to ensure our programs thrive. They manage and run athletic events, operate concession stands, and handle countless behind-the-scenes efforts that keep middle and high school athletics running smoothly.

In addition to their hands-on support, the Boosters provide vital funding to every sports team at the high school and contribute $5,000 annually to middle school athletics, alongside offering scholarships to graduating students. Over the years, their commitment has transformed district facilities through major capital projects—including building the varsity stadium, constructing the weightlifting room, repaving and resurfacing the tennis courts, and installing bleachers in the gym balcony. Most recently, they completed the repainting of the high school track in addition to repainting the lion paw prints that lead up to the track and field this summer.

Beyond facility upgrades and funding, the Boosters foster a strong culture of encouragement and pride. Through programs like the Student-Athlete of the Month breakfast, they take time to highlight and celebrate the hard work and achievements of our youth.



The St. Helens Sports Boosters' selflessness, hard work, and unwavering commitment to supporting our students make them truly valued leaders in our community. Their impact is felt in every game, on every field, and in every student life they touch.

Please join us in congratulating the St. Helens Sports Boosters as the Community Impact Award recipient.

WHO CONNECTED YOU?

GRAYCLYNN



"She invited me to a project where people could share their favorite characters, which helped me find a lot of like-minded people. Beyond that, she's just been a genuinely nice person to me."

Anonymous SHMS Student

Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow.
— Learn, Connect, Commit —



WHO CONNECTED YOU?

CARLA & NINA

"They care about what's going on in my life and remind me of how much I matter."

Anonymous SHHS Student

Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow.
— Learn, Connect, Commit —

WHO CONNECTED YOU?

This year, we are coming together around a theme that reflects what we believe about our students and our schools: ***Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow.***

Our work remains grounded in our district tagline: Learn. Connect. Commit. This year, we are placing a special emphasis on Connect because we know that when students feel safe, known, valued, and connected, they are empowered to grow and achieve.

Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow. is more than a slogan. It is a shared commitment to ensuring every student in our district knows they have a place here and a network of caring adults and peers supporting them along the way.

We are excited to launch WHO CONNECTED YOU?—a simple way to recognize the people who make a difference in the lives of our students and one another.

Maybe it was a teacher who listened, a staff member who made you feel seen, a counselor who helped you feel safe, a coach who believed in you, or a peer who noticed, included, or encouraged you when you needed it most.

We invite you to take a moment to recognize any St. Helens School District student or any St. Helens School District staff member who helped you—or someone you know—feel safe, seen, and connected.

Thank you for helping us build a district where every student knows they belong, every person feels valued, and every connection has the opportunity to make a difference.

WHO CONNECTED YOU? SHARE YOUR STORY HERE

CLICK HERE!

Your submission may be featured in our district newsletter or on our social media as we celebrate the people and connections that bring Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow. to life throughout our district.

ST. HELENS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow.

— Learn, Connect, Commit —



Our Good News Edition Newsletter is now open to everyone in our community! Whether you are a proud grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbor, local business owner, or long-time resident, you can get the best stories, highlights, and updates delivered straight to you.

Do you have family members, friends, alumni, or neighbors who would love to stay updated on our students' successes? Please forward this message or share the sign-up link with your network so everyone who cares about our schools stays in the loop!

Important Note for Current Students, Staff, and Families: If you are a current student, staff member, or parent/guardian with an existing ParentSquare account, you do not need to sign up. You will continue to receive all official communications and news through your standard ParentSquare account. This new sign-up link is specially created for extended family, alumni, community partners, and local residents!

Thank you for your continued support of our students, staff, and schools.

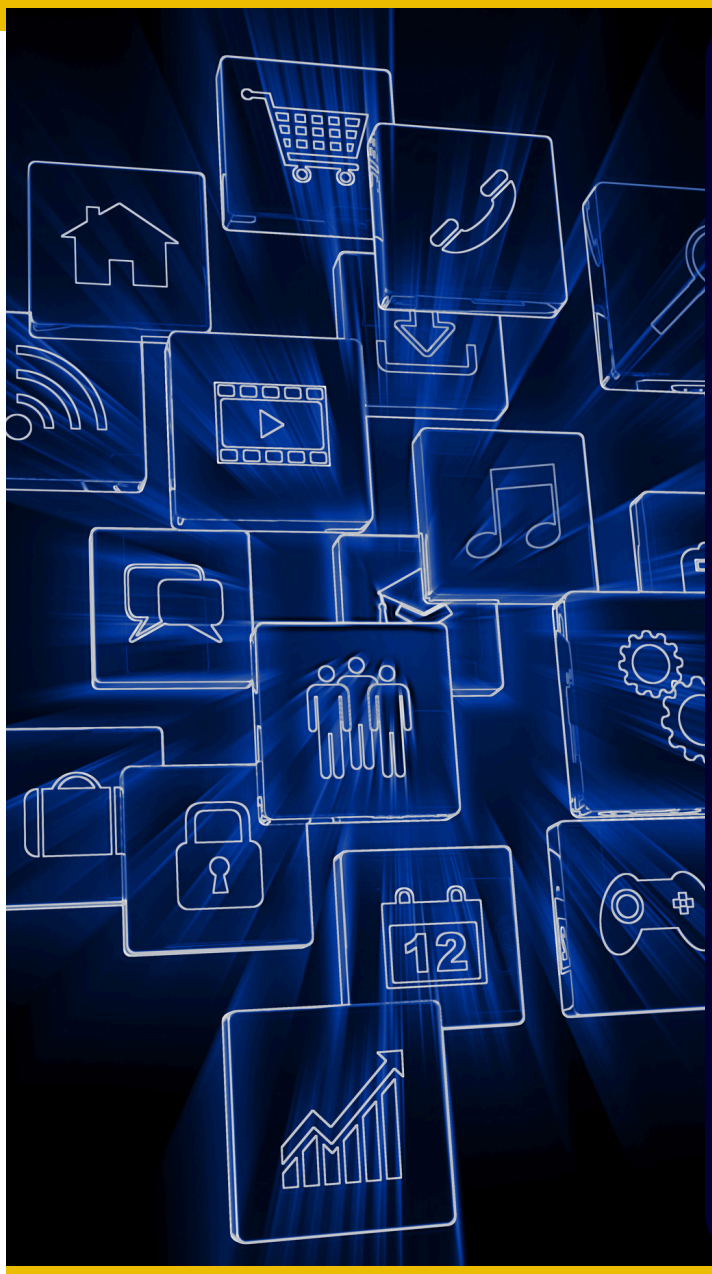
SIGN UP

DON’T FORGET!

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026!



STAY CONNECTED



We are so proud of our school community, and we want YOU to be a part of everything happening in our district! Whether you're looking for the latest news, inspiring student stories, upcoming event reminders, or helpful resources, staying in the loop is easier than ever.

Join our online community today and see all the amazing things happening across our schools!

FOLLOW US ONLINE

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Connected Today. Capable Tomorrow.

Learn, Connect, Commit