# Year in Review

2025-2026

## Introduction

The 2025–2026 school year was marked by student achievement, community collaboration, artistic excellence, athletic success, innovation, and continued commitment to environmental stewardship. Across every school and program, students demonstrated resilience, creativity, leadership, and academic excellence while staff and community partners provided opportunities that enriched learning experiences throughout the district.

## Academic Excellence

Students across Cascade School District continued to excel academically while engaging in rigorous coursework, Career and Technical Education pathways, advanced learning opportunities, and college- and career-preparation experiences.

Both Alpine Lakes (ALPS) and Icicle River Middle School (IRMS) were recognized as, respectively, BEST elementary and middle schools by the U.S. News and World Report for the second year in a row. It's important to note that Peshastin-Dryden Elementary School is not eligible as students are too young to participate in state testing; however, they set the foundation for this recognition.




The district maintained its strong commitment to Career and Technical Education (CTE), offering multiple pathways that allow students to explore careers while earning valuable technical and workplace skills. Throughout the year, students participated in hands-on learning experiences connected to business, technology, skilled trades, health sciences, engineering, and public service.

## Washington 45

For the first time, Cascade High School offered what is called the Washington 45, which is a set of courses that satisfy up to one year's worth of general education requirements at public four-year universities.

COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES
*Washington State Board*

## Cross Country Successes

Cross Country had an outstanding season, with both the boys and girls teams winning Caribou Trail League (CTL) Championships. Individually, Landon Smith was named the CTL Boys Runner of the Year, while Greta Broom earned CTL Girls Runner of the Year honors. The girls also captured the District Championship, while the boys finished second at the District meet to earn a trip to the State Championships. Greta Broom led the way by winning the District individual title and finishing as the State Runner-Up. At the State Championships, the girls team placed sixth overall, and the boys team finished 13th, capping off an exceptional season for the Kodiaks.




*At the Cross-Country District Meet, the girls placed 1st and the boys placed 2nd.*

## Communities in Schools

During the 2025–26 school year, Cascade School District launched a significant partnership with Communities In Schools of North Central Washington to expand support services for students and families. The partnership was created to help remove barriers to learning by providing on-site student support, connecting families with community resources, and addressing challenges such as food insecurity, homelessness, social-emotional needs, language barriers, and student engagement. Supported by a three-year grant, the initiative began with a site coordinator serving Alpine Lakes Elementary School and Icicle River Middle School, while also offering broader district support. Through programs such as resource coordination, student mentoring, wellness support, and school-based community outreach, the partnership strengthened Cascade's commitment to ensuring that every student feels connected, supported, and empowered to succeed both academically and personally.



*Alpine Lakes students cut the ribbon celebrating the start of the partnership between Cascade School District and Communities in Schools.*

## Beaver Valley Outdoor Classroom Treehouse

The Beaver Valley Parent Group and teachers worked together to create an outdoor classroom treehouse that gives students a unique space to learn, explore, and connect with nature. Through teamwork, fundraising efforts, volunteer labor, and careful planning, the parent group and school staff transformed their vision into a welcoming learning environment. Teachers helped design the space to support hands-on educational activities, while parents donated time, materials, and expertise to bring the project to life. The finished treehouse serves as an inspiring outdoor classroom where students can read, study science, participate in group discussions, and develop a

deeper appreciation for the natural world. It also was an addition to the Eco play yard that has been slowly growing over the past decade. This collaborative project demonstrates the strong partnership between families and educators in creating meaningful learning opportunities for children.



*Students race up the hill to the treehouse at the ribbon cutting with teacher Mr. Tiegel up top.*

## Performing Arts

In fall 2025, Cascade School District's theater program presented *Clue: On Stage* at the Cascade High School Auditorium, with performances held November 13–15. Based on the classic mystery, the production followed six dinner guests who become suspects when their host is murdered, leading to a fast-paced and comedic whodunit filled with twists, suspense, and humor. The student cast brought the colorful characters to life for local audiences, while the production highlighted the creativity, dedication, and collaboration of Cascade High School's performing arts students and staff. Admission was offered by donation, helping make the event accessible to the wider Leavenworth community and reinforcing the district's tradition of community-supported student theater.



*Cascade High School students perform Clue in November 2025.*

In spring 2026, Cascade School District in Leavenworth brought Disney's The Little Mermaid to the stage as a community-centered student production, with performances held April 30–May 2, 2026. Directed by Shelly Vandel and Amy Edwards, the musical showcased the talents of Cascade students through colorful costumes, energetic choreography, and memorable songs from the Disney classic, giving audiences a lively journey "under the sea." The production highlighted the district's strong performing arts program and the dedication of its students, staff, and volunteers, earning enthusiastic support from families and community members throughout the run.



*Mermaids meet with King Triton in the Little Mermaid.*

# Strategic Planning

The strategic framework that oriented the work of the school district was expiring in 2025, so the school district partnered with FranklinCovey to reengage in a strategic planning process for the future. Specifically, this process started with the school board and continued with administrators, staff, families, and students. Sessions focused on reconsideration of the district mission, vision, values, priorities, and strategies leading to student success.

# Wrestling Accident and Perseverance

In December, the boys wrestling team was involved in an accident on a school bus on their way to a meet. You can read more about it on our school newsletter at: https://www.cascadesd.org/o/csd/page/connections-newsletters. Despite this challenge early in the season, the Cascade Kodiaks boys wrestling team had an outstanding season, highlighted by a strong performance at the WIAA 1A State Wrestling Championships. Despite having a relatively small roster, the team competed at a high level throughout the year and finished the season with two state medalists. Junior Tristan Sharpe capped off an impressive season by placing 4th at the state tournament after defeating the tournament's top-seeded wrestler, while Aengus Gillikin earned a 6th-place finish in his weight class. Their accomplishments reflected the hard work and dedication of the entire team and coaching staff, making it a successful season for the Kodiaks on the state's biggest stage.




*Celebrating our senior wrestlers Jonah Peake and Kathleen Kocher on senior night.*

The Cascade Kodiak girls wrestling program made positive strides this season, building on the growth and momentum established in recent years. The team was led by standout performances from Lizbeth Lopez, who earned 3rd place at the Caribou Trail League Championships, and Kathleen Kocher, who finished 5th in the league tournament. Piper Copson also made valuable contributions as the team continued to develop depth and experience. Through hard work, dedication, and a commitment to improvement, the Kodiaks strengthened the foundation of the program and positioned themselves for continued success in the years ahead.

# Storm of 2025

In December 2025, the Leavenworth area was struck by a devastating atmospheric-river storm that brought intense rainfall, powerful winds, widespread power outages, road closures, and historic flooding throughout the Upper Wenatchee Valley. The Wenatchee River rose to major flood levels, inundating neighborhoods, forcing evacuations, damaging homes and infrastructure, and

disrupting businesses during what is normally one of the community's busiest tourism seasons. Cascade School District was forced to cancel activities and close schools as the storm's impacts spread across the region. In addition to the extensive public and private property damage, floodwaters also damaged school district track equipment, creating further recovery costs for local schools already coping with the storm's aftermath. The event left a lasting mark on the community and highlighted both the severity of the flooding and the resilience of Leavenworth residents as they worked to rebuild. For more information, see: https://www.leavenworthecho.com/stories/flooding-wind-damage-batter-western-chelan-county-state-of-emergency-declared,155009. Because there was a statewide emergency declared and because Cascade School District met instructional minutes without those days, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) did not require CSD to make up the two days of school closure.



*Cascade High School students participate in a geology field trip.*





## Environmental Leadership

Building on previous sustainability accomplishments, Cascade School District continued to serve as a model for environmental education and stewardship. District programs emphasized outdoor learning, environmental literacy, sustainability, and connections to local ecosystems. These efforts built upon the district's previous Green Ribbon School District recognition and continued to integrate stewardship practices into student learning experiences. One example included the Cascade High School plant science's class, which helped Cascadia Conservation District with a riparian restoration project on Chumstick Creek. See: https://www.facebook.com/reel/1349590030425499.



*The 5th grade takes a hike to Hidden Lake.*

# Toy Drive

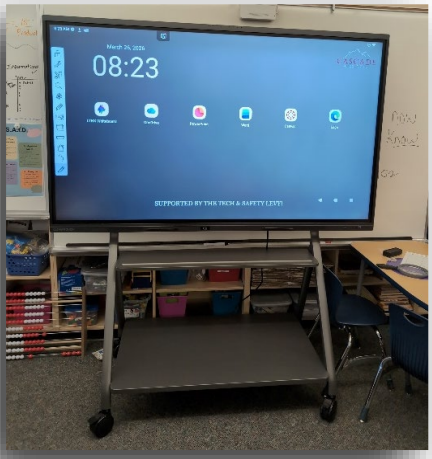
The Cascade School District Winter Toy Drive was a community effort that helps ensure local children and families have a great holiday season. Organized by Dora Campos from Communities in Schools with great assistance from school counselors, and in partnership with the North Central Washington Toy Drive, Cascade School District collected new, unwrapped toys and gift cards through donation sites throughout the Upper Valley. Families within the district could register to receive assistance, and during the annual distribution event, students and families were able to select age-appropriate gifts. The program was supported by local businesses, volunteers, Upper Valley MEND, and regional sponsors such as Les Schwab Tire Centers, demonstrating the community's commitment to making the holidays brighter for families in need.



*Paraeducator Michal Mock was an elf for the toy drive.*

# Technology Improvements

In 2025-2026, we hired a Technology Director! David Belmont joined Cascade School District from Confluence Health in January 2026. Under his leadership, the Technology Team focused on strengthening and understanding the systems, processes, and partnerships that support teaching and learning within our district. Their work went far beyond the devices students and staff use every day. While laptops, iPads, and classroom technology were the most visible aspects of technology, they represented only a small part of the infrastructure required to support a modern educational environment.




*This interactive display was tried out in classrooms as a future technology improvement consideration.*

Much of the effort in the 2025-2026 school year occurred behind the scenes. The team began refining the way we provide support, documenting and organizing the district's systems and software, while also beginning upgrades to key network infrastructure to improve reliability, security, and long-term sustainability. Most importantly, this year established a clearer understanding of where technology exists across the district, how it supports students and staff, and how it can be better managed moving forward. The Technology Team looks forward to building on that foundation and continuing to enhance the technology experience for our district.

# Teaching and Learning Council




*The Teaching and Learning Council (TLC) worked under the guidance of Educational Service District Assistant Superintendent Dr. Linda McKay on collective teacher efficacy.*

Back after a few years of hiatus, during the 2025–26 school year, Cascade School District's Teaching and Learning Council served as a collaborative leadership team focused on improving student learning through high-impact instructional practices, collective teacher efficacy, and continuous improvement. The council brought together educators from across the district to develop a shared understanding of student engagement, drawing on the research of John Hattie and Marcia Tate to emphasize that engagement is not simply participation but rigorous cognitive work. Through professional dialogue and action plans, members worked to establish common instructional expectations, identify evidence of effective teaching and learning, and align practices across schools. The council's work centered on creating clarity around learning goals, increasing purposeful student engagement, strengthening collective responsibility for student success, and using evidence-based reflection to improve outcomes for all learners.

# School Board Leadership

January was recognized as School Board Appreciation Month. The Board of Directors continued its commitment to student success, fiscal responsibility, facility planning, and long-term strategic goals. Not only did the Board receive the designation as Board of Distinction for the fourth year in a row, the School Board was also recognized by the North Central Educational Service District as a Board of the Year, honoring them for their leadership and mentorship of other boards in the region. For more information, see the article in the Leavenworth Echo.



*Trey Ising accepts an award for board excellence and leadership at Discovery School on May 26, 2026.*

## Girls Basketball

*Olympia Haberberger shoots free throws.*



The Cascade Kodiaks girls basketball team put together an exceptional season, finishing with a 13–7 overall record and earning the Caribou Trail League Championship. Sophomore Sydney Melody was recognized as the CTL Player of the Year after an outstanding season. The Kodiaks continued their success into the postseason, defeating Kiona-Benton in the district tournament before coming up just one win shy of a state tournament berth with a hard-fought loss to Wapato. Throughout the season, the team demonstrated consistency, resilience, and outstanding teamwork.

## Certified Nursing Assistant Program



*CNA program participants Amara Flansburg, Sophie Summers, Melania Rodriguez-Serna, Aundrea Mann, and Sonia Martinez.*

On January 20, 2026, Cascade High School (CHS) welcomed its first cohort of students for its new Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification program. Created in partnership with Mountain Meadows Senior Living Campus and Cascade Medical Center in Leavenworth, the semester-long program is part of the regular school day at the high school and is free for the students. Once the students obtain their certificate, they can immediately start working in the medical field. Student CNAs can work at Mountain Meadows even before graduating high school, filling in on weekends and over school holidays. Not only are students learning the basics of physical nursing—how to move patients, help with toileting or bathing, etc.—they're also learning the importance of caring for themselves in the process. Amanda Ledezma, Mountain Meadows Executive Director, reminds the students that it's ok to have a range of feelings in the process of caring for their patient, especially in end-of-life care. She teaches them about all the ways that grief can show itself, how to remember that their patients are humans with their own feelings, thoughts and experiences, and how important their own self care is to ensuring they can maintain the emotional capacity to be there for their patients and do their jobs.

## Music Education

Music continued to thrive throughout the district. Choir, band, and jazz students participated in concerts, performances, and community events throughout the year. The annual Leavenworth Jazz Festival once again brought student musicians together from throughout the region. Hosted by Cascade High School, the festival provided performance opportunities, professional feedback, and collaboration with accomplished musicians while supporting arts education programs across the district.




*Kyrianna Ross sings as part of a jazz band performance at Cascade High School in March 2026.*

# Elementary Career Days

School counselor Angela Waggoner organized career days at Alpine Lakes and Peshastin-Dryden Elementary Schools in April 2026. Volunteers from our community shared about their jobs and industries with students. It was a fun event that gave students exposure to various career and job opportunities and helped them think about their future.




*4th grade students learn about fire and emergency medical services during Career Day.*

# Certificated and Classified Employees of the Year: Jill Weil and Eddie Barragan



*Jill and Eddie receive their awards at a school board dinner honoring them.*

Jill has worked in the Cascade School district for seven years in various capacities, including Multilingual Specialist, Migrant Graduation Specialist, and English Language Arts teacher. Originally from North Carolina, where she taught in a Dual Language program, Jill has a passion for using her skills as a multilingual specialist in the general education classroom. She works to make content comprehensible, accessible, and engaging for all students. Jill holds a master's degree in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from Western Carolina University and is a National Board-Certified teacher.

Eduardo "Eddie" Barragan has been cooking for more than 32 years. He began his culinary journey in California on a work visa, working at resorts and ranches where he discovered his passion for cooking. Loving the work and the opportunities it provided, Eddie eventually applied for U.S. citizenship and later made his way to Washington. After moving to the valley, Eddie joined the local family restaurant, Kristall's, where he worked his way up to kitchen manager and remained for 25 years. Four years ago, he joined the Cascade School District as a food service delivery driver. A couple of years later, he was offered the opportunity to run the kitchen at Peshastin-Dryden Elementary, a role he was excited to accept. Eddie says his favorite part of the job is the students. He loves seeing the excitement on their faces when they come through the line saying, "Hi Mr. Eddie!" and "Thank you, Mr. Eddie!" He says their positivity and smiles make every day a great day to be at work. It's even more special now that his granddaughter attends the school, giving him the chance to see her every day while doing what he loves; cooking for the community he calls home.

**Don't forget to read and subscribe to Cascade Connections newsletters found at:**
https://www.cascadesd.org/o/csd/page/connections-newsletters**!**

# Kindergarten Academy




In partnership with the Kodiak Cubs, Peshastin-Dryden Elementary School, and the Special Education Department, some incoming kindergarteners with special needs were able to attend the LifeSkills classroom at PD in the spring while also receiving support from the Kodiak Cubs. It was called Kindergarten Academy and the goal was to help students better transition to kindergarten in the fall. Students received plenty of support, and it was a rousing success.

# Soccer Success!

The Cascade Kodiaks girls soccer team put together an outstanding season, led by junior Ada Missal, who was named the Caribou Trail League Player of the Year. The Kodiaks captured the Caribou Trail League Championship, earned the league Sportsmanship Award, and advanced to the WIAA Class 1A State Tournament for the first time since 2019. Along the way, Cascade defeated several quality opponents during the postseason to earn a spot among the state's top Class 1A teams before its season came to an end in the opening round of the state tournament.



*Arlo Gibbs is looking to set up a shot on goal.*

The Cascade boys soccer team put together one of the finest seasons in school history, finishing as Caribou Trail League Champions and District Champions while earning the No. 1 seed into the WIAA Class 1A State Tournament. The Kodiaks consistently demonstrated outstanding teamwork, determination, and resilience throughout the season, establishing themselves as one of the top-ranked Class 1A teams in Washington. Their remarkable run came to an end with a hard-fought loss to Wahluke in the state tournament.



*Home Link students study water in an outdoor, multi-age format.*

# Home Link Harnessed Outdoor Learning

Home Link students spent over 7000 student hours outdoors, partnering with over 20 organizations. Home Link is a partnership between public schools and homeschool families. One example of how they used outdoor learning was when students of various ages studied water. In this picture, older students were studying chemistry focused on the molecule of water, and younger students were learning the basics of the water cycle. They were tasked to build a model of the water cycle in a watershed with specific requirements. Older students built a gravity driven ram pump to pump water up to the "atmosphere/cloud system" at the top of the watershed. Students also dug down to the water table to provide the wells for their town.



*Alpine Lakes students perform under the lights at a standing room only concert held at Cascade High School.*

# Glow Concert

The Alpine Lakes Glow Concert has become a signature celebration of arts education in Cascade School District, bringing together music, visual art, and student creativity in a vibrant performance experience. Led by elementary music teacher Angie Bates and art instructor Amber Zimmerman, the event featured students performing songs they helped select while surrounded by glowing artwork created by their classmates under black lights. The concerts showcase the talents of Alpine Lakes Elementary students and provide an engaging, memorable way for children to build confidence, collaborate, and express themselves creatively. Supported by community organizations and educational foundations, the Glow Concert demonstrated the district's commitment to enriching student learning through the arts while creating meaningful connections among students, teachers, families, and the broader community. As highlighted in local coverage, the event inspires both students and educators, transforming a traditional school concert into a dynamic experience that encourages participation, excitement, and pride in learning. See: Glow Concerts light up Cascade schools by inspiring kids, teachers | Conversations | wenatcheeworld.com

# Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship

One of the year's notable accomplishments came from CHS junior Elliot Tiegel, who presented his product, OhmLife Insoles, at the NCW Tech Alliance Flywheel competition. His presentation earned both a $500 award and the Audience Choice Award. This accomplishment showcased the innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial thinking being cultivated among Cascade students.




*Elliot Tiegel pitched his product, OhmLife Insoles, at the NCW Tech Alliance Fly Wheel competition and was awarded a $500 check and the Audience Choice Award!*

Another success came from the Cascade High School's Anatomage team, which attained an outstanding accomplishment during the 2025–26 school year by earning 11th place at the National Anatomage Tournament, placing among the top anatomy and physiology teams in the country. The competition brought together elite student teams from across the United States, challenging participants to apply advanced knowledge of human anatomy, critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving using Anatomage's virtual dissection technology. Cascade's strong national finish reflects the dedication of its students and teachers, the rigor of the school's science and health sciences programs, and the team's commitment to academic excellence. Their success showcased Cascade High School on a national stage and demonstrated the high level of achievement students can reach through collaborative learning and scientific inquiry.




*The CHS anatomy team of Tristan Mcleod, Soren Ising, Todd Lindsay and Owen Schoenwald competed in the National Anatomage tournament. They put together an impressive performance to place 11th on the national stage. This tournament had the best teams from all over the united states out of over 2000 teams that competed at various state competitions.*

# Solos and Signs

In spring 2026, Cascade High School's ASL Club joined forces with CHS band students and Icicle River Middle School choir students to present "Solos and Signs," a unique concert that blended live music with American Sign Language. Held on May 5, the performance showcased student musicians and signers working together to make music more accessible while highlighting the expressive power of ASL. The evening featured a variety of solo and group performances, ranging from contemporary songs and Broadway selections to original music, with ASL interpretations woven throughout the program. The concert provided students an opportunity to share their talents, build confidence, and celebrate inclusivity through the arts, earning praise from audience members for its creativity, collaboration, and heartfelt performances.



*Two students perform a duet in American Sign Language at the Cascade High School Auditorium.*

# Track and Field

The Cascade Kodiaks track and field teams capped off an outstanding season with an impressive performance at the 1A State Track & Field Championships, earning a state championship along with numerous medals, top eight finishes, and personal bests. Senior Ezra Week led the boys by winning the 1A State Championship in the Long Jump, while Evan Ragsdale placed 5th in the event and set personal bests in the 100- and 200-meter dashes. On the girls' side, freshman Greta Broom earned medals with a 5th-place finish in the 1600 meters and 6th in the 800 meters, and the 4x200-meter relay team of Zoie Burpee, Greta Broom, Ella Henscheid, and Samantha Crossley placed 6th in the state. Bennett Werdell finished 4th in the Pole Vault, Cyan Worden placed 6th in the High Jump, Skye Blue earned an 8th-place finish in the High Jump, and Eli Webb recorded a personal-best clearance in the Pole Vault, highlighting the depth, talent, and determination of the Cascade track and field program.



***Ezra Week was the 1A state champion in the long jump.***

# Día del Niño




*Students enjoy face painting at the festival.*

In the spring of 2026, Cascade School District's Día del Niño celebration brought students, families, and staff together for a joyful event that honored children, culture, and community. This event was organized by Flor Murguia-West and the Migrant Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at Alpine Lakes Elementary School. The celebration featured engaging activities, opportunities for families to connect, and experiences that highlighted the district's commitment to creating welcoming and inclusive learning environments for all students. Throughout the event, children enjoyed a variety of fun, educational, and cultural activities that celebrated their unique talents and backgrounds while strengthening relationships between schools and families. Día del Niño served as a vibrant reminder of the importance of supporting every child's growth, success, and sense of belonging within the Cascade School District community.

# Reading Around the World




Peshastin-Dryden Elementary's "Reading Around the World" event transformed literacy into a global learning experience for students and families. The program featured country-themed rooms representing different cultures, including African, Russian, and American experiences, where students explored books, listened to stories read by local librarians, and participated in hands-on cultural activities. Students received passports that were stamped as they visited each learning station, encouraging them to engage with every activity while building excitement around reading. The event also included creative projects such as origami and African mask-making, along with a community dinner that brought families, staff, and volunteers together. Thank you to the Masons, who donated funds to provide fruit for their culminating "arrival day", and parents and community members who were very involved in daily interviews. By connecting literacy with cultural exploration, Peshastin-Dryden Elementary fostered curiosity, global awareness, and a love of reading while strengthening relationships across the school community.

# Home Link Service-Learning Project

Cascade Home Link students partnered with Mountain Meadows Senior Living Campus through their "Getting to Impact" service-learning class to develop projects that enhance the quality of life for residents, particularly those living with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. After touring the facility and meeting with residents and staff, students designed several community-focused improvements, including painted walking paths to help residents navigate safely, sensory room enhancements, nature-themed murals, additional seating areas, and an outdoor waterfall feature. Working alongside local businesses and community organizations, the students launched a fundraising campaign with the goal of creating spaces that promote dignity, connection, independence, and joy for Mountain Meadows residents.



*Home Link students present their ideas to Mountain Meadow residents.*

# Middle School Space Project

The Space Project challenged 7th grade students to research and apply for a job in a student-led "space exploration company" that would design a research base for 25-50 settlers on Mars. Students created resumes and cover letters and applied to a job of their choice in the company. They then interviewed with community members, received a job offer, and became a founding member of a "company". They worked for two weeks to learn job-related skills as a banker, medic, project manager, civil design engineer, sci-fi innovator, spacesuit designer, nutritionist, marketing designer, scientist, mechanical engineer, or architect. For many jobs, this included walking field trips and/or opportunities to meet with local experts in their field. This helped connect our students to the community and allowed them vital career exploration opportunities. For example, architects visited Todd Smith of Syndicate Smith to learn more about the architectural design and rendering process and share their blueprints. Our scientist and engineering team met with Alex Mathers from Aerojet Rocketdyne to explore innovations in rocket engineering and receive feedback on their prototypes. Spacesuit designers attended a workshop with local fashion designer Desi Carleton to learn how to create sewing patterns.

Some 21st century skills students learned included taking medical vitals, building and programming robots, website design, textile design, and earning food handlers permits. Medics completed a full CPR course with high school instructor Jon Betz and received their official CPR cards. This also allowed students the opportunity to explore classes and CTE learning spaces at the high school.

After job training, students worked with their company of twenty others to develop a mission, vision, slogan, and brand identity. Each job developed innovative projects to push the boundaries of space exploration. They then pitched their ideas to experts from Blue Origin over Zoom and presented their plans to the public in our IRMS Space Expo. The Expo was attended by approximately 150 community members, including friends, family, and our Leavenworth city planners.




*Middle school students celebrate their achievements at the Space Expo.*

# Tim Barnes Named Caribou Trail League Athletic Director of the Year!



Tim Barnes has been recognized as the Caribou Trail League Athletic Director of the Year, an honor that reflects his outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to student athletes. Throughout his tenure, Barnes has worked tirelessly to support athletic programs, promote sportsmanship, and create positive opportunities for students to succeed both on and off the field. His collaborative approach with coaches, staff, students, and families has helped strengthen athletic participation and foster a culture of excellence across the district. This well-deserved recognition highlights the positive impact he has made on athletics and the lasting influence he continues to have within the Caribou Trail League community.

# 6th Grade Camp



*6th graders engage in outdoor activities after dinner during 6th grade camp.*

Cascade School District's 6th Grade Camp is an exciting outdoor education experience that gives students the opportunity to learn, grow, and build friendships outside the classroom. During camp, sixth graders participate in hands-on activities that encourage teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving while exploring the natural environment. Students take part in educational lessons, recreational activities, and group challenges that help them develop confidence, independence, and respect for others. The camp creates lasting memories and strengthens connections among classmates, making it a valuable tradition that supports both personal growth and academic learning. In 2026, camp was held at Tall Timber in the Plain area. One unique aspect of the 2026 camp was that camp counselors were high school students who had not experienced 6th grade camp in their year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp counselors expressed happiness that they were able to participate in this tradition too.

# Students Pass First CompTIA Security Exams in Cascade History

Cascade High School is proud to celebrate a historic achievement in its cybersecurity program. Elliot Simmons and Ben Clifton-Kwan have become the first students in Cascade High School

history to successfully pass the CompTIA Security+ certification exam, a nationally recognized credential that validates foundational cybersecurity knowledge and skills. Their accomplishment reflects countless hours of dedication, hard work, and commitment to mastering complex cybersecurity concepts learned through Cascade's cybersecurity courses. By earning this respected industry certification while still in high school, Elliot and Ben have set a new standard of excellence for future students and demonstrated the growing strength of Cascade's career and technical education programs.

## Discovery School

A significant success for Discovery School during the 2025-2026 school year was its continued ability to provide personalized, hands-on learning opportunities that helped students stay engaged and progress toward graduation. Located on the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery grounds, the program partnered with U.S. Fish and Wildlife to offer unique mentorships and real-world learning experiences. Students participated in projects such as building Adirondack chairs and musical instruments in the hatchery woodshop, producing maple syrup, creating leather from salmon skins, and helping construct beaver dam analogs for habitat restoration. With small class sizes and a strong focus on relationships, Discovery School created an environment where students could explore their interests, develop practical skills, and successfully work toward their academic and career goals.



## Kindergarten Graduation

Peshastin-Dryden Elementary School's Kindergarten Graduation was a heartwarming celebration of learning, growth, and achievement. Surrounded by proud families, teachers, and staff, students showcased the skills and confidence they developed throughout their first year of school. Through songs, presentations, and special recognition, the young graduates celebrated important milestones in reading, writing, math, and social development. The ceremony highlighted the strong partnership between home and school while honoring the curiosity, perseverance, and enthusiasm that each child brought to the classroom. This school year featured brand new Kodiak red graduation gowns, so the kindergarten graduates matched the high school graduates.

## Class of 2026!

Cascade High School's Class of 2026 graduation was a memorable celebration of achievement, perseverance, and opportunity. On June 5, 2026, 108 seniors were recognized for completing their high school journey and preparing for the next chapter of their lives. The class demonstrated a strong commitment to future success, with 45% planning to attend four-year universities, 18% enrolling in two-year colleges, and 6% pursuing careers in the skilled trades, while others entered the workforce or military service. The ceremony brought together families, staff, and community members to honor the accomplishments of a class that excelled in academics, Career and Technical Education, dual-credit opportunities, and extracurricular activities. As graduates crossed

the stage and received their diplomas, they celebrated not only their individual achievements but also the collective support and dedication that helped make the Class of 2026 a success.



## Beaver Valley's Trail Cam Project Continued

Beaver Valley Elementary School's Trail Camera Project continued in the 2025-2026 school year and gave students authentic, hands-on opportunities to study local wildlife and ecosystems. Led by project coordinator Jeff Layton, students worked throughout the year to monitor trail cameras placed around the Lake Wenatchee and Plain area, collecting footage and analyzing animal behavior, habitat use, and seasonal environmental changes. Students reviewed camera data each month, participated in field trips to maintain equipment, and learned to identify wildlife tracks and signs in the field. The project captured remarkable footage of wildlife including bears, bobcats, cougars, wolves, mule deer, northern flying squirrels, and other native species, creating meaningful connections between classroom learning and the natural world. See: https://www.cascadesd.org/o/csd/page/beaver-valley-elementary.

# Eighth Grade Promotion




Icicle River Middle School's 8th Grade Promotion ceremony took place on June 9, 2026. It was a meaningful celebration of student achievement, growth, and readiness for the next step in their educational journey. Surrounded by family members, friends, teachers, and staff, students were recognized for their hard work, perseverance, and accomplishments throughout their middle school years. The event highlighted academic success, leadership, extracurricular involvement, and the strong relationships that helped students thrive during their time at IRMS.

# Bond Refinancing

In June 2026, Cascade School District took a significant step to reduce long-term debt costs by successfully refinancing its 2016 bonds through the sale of $23.29 million in Unlimited Tax General Obligation Refunding Bonds. The refinancing, completed on June 24, is projected to save local taxpayers approximately $3.77 million over the next 10 years by lowering the average interest rate from 4.8% to 3.13%. District leaders worked closely with financial advisors and earned a reaffirmed A1 bond rating from Moody's, helping secure favorable borrowing terms. Superintendent Dr. Tracey Edou emphasized that the savings will help offset future tax collections and reduce the overall tax burden on district residents. This achievement built upon the district's earlier refinancing effort in February 2025, when Cascade School District refinanced $16.4 million in outstanding 2015 bonds and generated an additional $1.54 million in taxpayer savings over 10 years by reducing interest costs. Together, the 2025 and 2026 refinancing transactions are projected to save district taxpayers more than $5.3 million, demonstrating the district's commitment to sound financial stewardship and maximizing the value of community resources.

# Transportation Department Successes

In the Transportation Department, our staff's committed team effort to care for students was formidable. Despite starting first semester down four drivers, they moved every single student: no routes and no programs were left behind. Our staff of 16 CDL drivers completed 4,836 regular routes. They also drove 312 extra-curricular trips. Over 500 students rode route buses up to Plain for ski team practice last winter. And finally, they safely navigated 80mph wind gusts that toppled hundreds of trees, avoided landslides and crumbling shoulders, and drove countless routes with flooding and water over the roadway, safely. The team worked together with trust, adaptability, and student-first decision making.




*The 2025-2026 Transportation team!*