

Your BATTLE GROUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ISSUE 003



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For nearly 120 years, BGPS has worked to connect every student to a successful future.

Founded in 1909 following the consolidation of the Maple Grove and Dublin school districts, Battle Ground Public Schools has grown into one of the largest and most geographically diverse school districts in Washington state. Spanning 273 square miles across northern Clark County, the district serves more than 13,000 students in 19 schools and programs, connecting communities from rural Yacolt and Amboy to the growing neighborhoods of Battle Ground, Brush Prairie, and Vancouver.

Today, BGPS offers students a wide range of learning opportunities, including neighborhood schools, alternative and virtual programs, career and technical education, and specialized pathways designed to prepare students for college, careers, and life beyond graduation.

Set between scenic views of Mount St. Helens to the north and the greater Portland metro area to the south, Battle Ground Public Schools reflects both the small-town character and continued growth of southwest Washington. Alongside strong academics, the district is home to award-winning music, theater, leadership, and athletic programs that help students stay connected and engaged both inside and outside the classroom. For nearly 120 years, BGPS has remained focused on creating welcoming schools, meaningful opportunities, and successful futures for every student.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Shelly Whitten
Superintendent

As I reflect on the 2025-26 school year, my first as superintendent of Battle Ground Public Schools, I am filled with gratitude, pride and a deep sense of responsibility for the work ahead. This year has been one of listening, learning and building connections across our district and community. It has also been a year that revealed both the incredible strengths within our schools and the very real challenges we must continue to face together.

One of the most meaningful accomplishments this year has been the opportunity to connect with so many members of our community, including students, families, staff and local leaders. Through listening sessions, school visits and community events, I have had the privilege of hearing directly from those who make Battle Ground Public Schools what it is. The high level of participation in these conversations, particularly during the budget reduction process, demonstrated a shared commitment to our students

and provided valuable insight that will guide our future decisions.

I have also had the opportunity to learn alongside our school board, including new members who bring fresh perspectives and dedication to the role. At the state level, engaging in the legislative process and connecting with policymakers has deepened my understanding of how decisions beyond our district shape the opportunities we can provide students. These experiences have reinforced the importance of advocacy for our schools, our staff and, most importantly, our students.

Of course, the most inspiring moments this year have come from our students. Whether in classrooms, on stages, in competitions or through everyday acts of perseverance and growth, I have witnessed students achieving amazing things. Just as importantly, I have learned from students by listening to their experiences, what supports them, what challenges them and what they hope their schools can become. Their voices continue to shape our direction.

We also began new traditions that celebrate the people who make our district special. Events like Legacy Night, which recognize outstanding staff and community alumni, remind us that education is not just about today. It is about the lasting impact we have on generations. At the same time, this year has not been without challenges. Like many districts across our state, we continue to face a lack of adequate resources to fully meet student needs. Increasing

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River HomeLink

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unfunded mandates place additional strain on our system, often pulling focus away from our core mission of student learning. At times, we have also experienced divisiveness, which can shift attention away from what matters most: supporting students and helping them succeed.

These challenges are real, but they also clarify our purpose. Looking ahead to the next school year, our focus is clear. We are committed to increasing

student achievement in two critical, research-based areas: ensuring that every student is reading at grade level by the end of third grade and that more of our high school students successfully pass algebra. These milestones are foundational to long-term academic success and future opportunity.

We will also place a renewed emphasis on student attendance. Being present in school each day is one of the strongest

predictors of success, and we will work in partnership with families and our community to improve attendance rates across the district. In addition, we are committed to strengthening our connections with the community by creating more opportunities for meaningful engagement and increasing volunteer involvement within our schools. These partnerships enrich the student experience and help build a stronger, more connected school community.

First Graders Celebrate Literacy at 'Bites & Books' Event

More than 1,200 first grade students and their families gathered across Battle Ground Public Schools primary schools in March to celebrate literacy during the annual Bites & Books event, a community partnership focused on encouraging a lifelong love of reading.

Organized by Read Northwest and the Battle Ground Education Foundation, the March 12 event invited parents and guardians to join students for breakfast and reading activities at each of the district's primary schools. The celebration was part of Read Northwest's Clark County Community Literacy Project, which promotes family-centered literacy experiences throughout the region.

During the event, students participated in reading activities and received literacy-themed items including bookmarks, leis and sunglasses. Thanks to support from the Battle Ground Education Foundation, every student also took home a free book to add to their personal library and continue reading at home.

Battle Ground Police Department also joined the celebration. Dennis Flynn, chief of police for the City of Battle Ground, traveled from school to school escorting the event's shark mascot and helping build excitement around reading and literacy.

District and community leaders said the event highlighted the importance of strong



partnerships between schools, families and local organizations in supporting student learning. Organizers added that events such as Bites & Books help create positive reading experiences for children while strengthening connections throughout the community.

Student-Led Assembly Honors Black History at *Prairie High School*

Students at Prairie High School came together Feb. 13 for a schoolwide Black History Month assembly organized by the school's Black Student Union (BSU). The event celebrated the strength, resilience and creativity that have shaped Black history while also highlighting the continued impact of Black leaders, artists and communities today.

Throughout the assembly, student speakers reflected on the lives and legacies of influential historical figures including Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Madam C. J. Walker and Martin Luther King Jr. Presentations emphasized the courage, perseverance and leadership demonstrated by each figure and connected those lessons to the experiences of students and communities today.

One of the highlights of the assembly was a student dance performance led by BSU members, using movement and performance



to emphasize themes of culture, identity and community impact through the arts. The assembly also featured guest speaker Paul Porter, a planner for the City of Vancouver, who spoke with students about belonging, community engagement and the importance of creating spaces where everyone feels valued and included.

Through student-led presentations, performances, and

reflections, organizers said the event demonstrated that Black History Month is not only about honoring the past, but also about recognizing the present and helping shape the future.

The Prairie High School Black Student Union includes students: Makhi Harris, Boonme Keough, Elijah Aponte, Shadae Jacques, Nala Roberts, Chasetin Hyde, Mya Brown and Justyne Glover. The group is advised by CJ Schiller.

"Black history is not just something we study, it's something we see, hear, feel and experience every day," members of the BSU shared during the assembly. "It lives in culture. It lives in music. It lives in movement. It lives in community."

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Hazel Dell Parade of Bands



BGHS Students Dominate Annual Vancouver Weld-Off Competition

Five students from Battle Ground High School earned top honors at the annual Charter College Weld-Off held March 23 in Vancouver, sweeping the competition's top three placements against student welders from across the region.

During the competition, students were required to complete a series of welds based on detailed plan drawings, demonstrating technical accuracy

precision and industry-level welding skills.

Steven Howe earned first place, receiving an \$8,000 scholarship along with a new Fronius welder. Trent Nixon placed second and was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship and new welding equipment, while Parker Irvine finished third, earning a \$3,000 scholarship and additional welding equipment. School officials

said the results highlight the strength of Battle Ground High School's welding and skilled trades programs, which provide students with hands-on experience and opportunities to develop career-ready technical skills.



Tukes Valley Students Raise Over \$22,000 to Restore Outdoor Classroom

Nature trail to come back to life after a successful fundraiser.

The annual Fund Run at Tukes Valley Primary and Tukes Valley Middle School surpassed expectations this spring, raising more than \$22,000 to help restore and improve the schools' long-dormant nature trail and outdoor learning spaces.

Organized by the Tukes Valley PTO, the March 20 event raised \$22,759, significantly exceeding its original \$15,000 goal. The fundraiser focused on supporting outdoor education opportunities and reopening the schools' nature trail, a once-active environmental learning space located adjacent to the shared Tukes Valley campus.

Students participated in the Fund Run by running laps while classmates, families and community members cheered them on. Donations from families, local businesses and community supporters helped push fundraising totals well beyond expectations. According to PTO Secretary Jane Lindberg, the event reflected months of planning and strong community support.

"We started by asking local businesses to sponsor our spirit shirts by purchasing logo space on the back," Lindberg said. "Through those sponsorships, we raised \$7,500, which is included in the overall fundraising total."

Students at Tukes Valley Middle School also contributed directly to the event. Lindberg said students in specialist teacher Carol Voitik's computer science class designed the official Fund Run logo and helped place sponsor logos onto the spirit shirts, which were distributed to all Tukes Valley Primary students. Additional incentives included lanyards for middle school students, snow cones for all students after reaching the schoolwide fundraising goal and a pizza party for the class completing the most laps during the event. Fifth grade students ultimately earned the top spot.

"We are now in the early planning stages of reopening and improving the nature trail so it can be enjoyed by students at both TVP and TVM," Lindberg said.

The effort also represents a revival of a significant part of Tukes Valley's environmental education history. In 2015, Tukes Valley Middle School earned Level 1 certification through the Washington Green Schools program after students transformed the campus green space into an interpretive nature trail and outdoor classroom.

At the time, more than 50 students participated weekly in the school's Green Team program, helping restore land that had previously been used for agriculture before the





middle school opened in 2008. Students researched local ecosystems, removed debris and invasive species, planted native vegetation and helped design trail features intended for long-term educational use.

Teachers Amanda Jones and Natalie Keller coordinated with the Clark County Conservation District, which provided grant funding for trees and restoration efforts. Students also partnered with the district’s Center for Agriculture, Science and Environmental Education (CASEE) to plant

trees and build portions of the bark trail. Community volunteers contributed bird feeders and signage for the trail.

The trail was originally envisioned as a hands-on outdoor classroom where students could study biodiversity, ecology and stream ecosystems directly on campus. Science teacher Natalie Keller said at the time that the project would allow students to conduct meaningful field studies connected to their classroom learning.

Over time, however, the Green

Team program dissolved and the trail gradually fell out of regular use and maintenance. Organizers of this year’s Fund Run say the new fundraising effort is intended to help revitalize the space and once again make it accessible for educational activities and outdoor exploration.

School and PTO leaders said the overwhelming response to the fundraiser demonstrates strong community support for outdoor learning opportunities and student-centered environmental education at both schools.

The Tukes Valley Student Store, advised by Carol Voitik, is a student-led middle school CTE and STEM program that creates school-branded apparel and 3D-printed merchandise for Tukes Valley Primary and Middle schools and community partners. Founded in early 2025, the program is funded through its sales and provides students with hands-on experience in design, production and entrepreneurship.



CAM Academy Earns Platinum-Level AP Honor Roll Recognition



CAM Academy has been named a platinum-level AP School Honor Roll recipient, earning the highest level of recognition awarded through the College Board AP School Honor Roll program.

Among the 5,723 schools recognized nationwide this year, only 8% achieved platinum status, the program's top distinction. In Washington, just 7% of qualifying schools reached the platinum tier. While CAM Academy has previously been recognized through the AP School Honor Roll program, the school advanced to the highest level of distinction this year.

The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools across four levels based on research-backed criteria connected to college readiness and student

achievement. To qualify, schools must demonstrate that at least 40% of graduating students take an Advanced Placement exam, at least 25% earn a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam and students are supported in taking multiple AP courses throughout high school, including opportunities for early access during ninth or 10th grade.

The recognition highlights CAM Academy's continued commitment to preparing students for success beyond high school through access to rigorous coursework, college-level academic experiences and opportunities to earn potential college credit while still in high school. School leaders say the achievement reflects the hard work of students, staff and families in fostering a strong

culture of academic excellence and college readiness.

The Advanced Placement program, administered by the College Board, allows students to participate in college-level coursework and exams while in high school. In addition to providing opportunities for potential college credit, AP courses are designed to help students build critical thinking, writing, problem-solving and time management skills that support future academic and career success.

With its platinum-level recognition, CAM Academy joins a select group of schools across the nation recognized for expanding access to advanced coursework and supporting strong student outcomes in Advanced Placement programs.

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RHL Students Surpass One Million Words in Literacy Challenge

Students at River HomeLink reached a major literacy milestone this spring, reading more than one million words since the start of the school year as part of a daily reading challenge led by English teacher Ryan Anderson.

The challenge encouraged students to read for at least 20 minutes each day beginning on the first day of school. At the average teenage reading pace of approximately 250 words per minute, the daily habit steadily accumulated over time. By March 16, students who consistently participated officially surpassed the one million-word mark, an achievement celebrated during a themed event dubbed “Million Word Monday.”

The celebration featured a red carpet, confetti and themed snacks including “bookworms” and “chapter chips.” Students also created drawings of the spines of their favorite books and spent part of the event continuing to read together. As a humorous keepsake, each student received a mock “million-dollar bill” featuring

Anderson’s likeness.

Beyond recognizing the reading milestone itself, the event also focused on the long-term value of literacy and consistent reading habits. Students discussed research connecting strong literacy skills with future academic and career success, including higher lifetime earning potential. According to Anderson’s research, proficient readers may earn significantly more over the course of their careers than individuals with lower literacy levels.

As part of the lesson, students wrote letters to their future selves reflecting on the long-term impact of reading and education. The letters framed

daily reading as an investment in future opportunities, emphasizing vocabulary development, focus and critical thinking skills.

Anderson said he hopes families will continue encouraging reading habits at home. “If there’s one thing that you can help with, it’s developing a lifelong reader,” he said. “The research shows that’s the best thing that we can do for them and for their academic performance.”

He added that one of the most effective ways parents can support literacy is by modeling reading themselves. “If we can do that,” Anderson said, “then we make readers out of students.”



BGHS Tiger Spirit Caps Landmark Season With National Finish



The Battle Ground High School Tiger Spirit Cheer Team is closing out one of its most successful competitive stretches in program history, highlighted by a first-ever qualification to the national stage, strong regional finishes, and continued momentum under head coaches Megan Torneby and Brittnie Johnson.

The Tigers opened their competitive season with a breakthrough performance at the NCA-UCA-USA Northwest Regional, placing second in the traditional category and fourth in the game day division. The results marked a turning point for the program, securing the team's first qualification for the U.S. Spirit Nationals in Anaheim, California.

Coaches said the regional success reflected months of preparation built on consistency, difficulty and execution.

The team emphasized steady improvement throughout the season, with athletes balancing school commitments alongside an increasingly demanding competitive schedule.

That momentum carried into the state level, where Battle Ground once again hosted the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association State Cheer Championships on Feb. 6-7. Competing on their home floor, the Tigers finished seventh in both 4A Tumbling

Small and 4A Game Day Medium divisions, continuing a run of strong state-level appearances and adding to the program's growing competitive résumé. "I thought they were outstanding," head coach Megan Torneby said after the state performance. "They've been working so hard all year for this, and I think they showed everything that they wanted to add on that mat."

The home setting added an additional layer of significance for the team, which typically travels across the region for major events. The atmosphere also underscored the broader impact of the state championships, which draw more than 100 teams from across Washington and bring thousands of athletes, families and spectators into the Battle Ground area each year.

Following state competition, the Tigers shifted their focus to nationals, where the program made its debut appearance on the national stage in Anaheim.





Competing against top programs from across the country, Battle Ground earned ninth place in Varsity Show Cheer Intermediate Non-Tumbling Small and 10th place in Crowdleader Team Medium.

The national appearance marked a milestone for the program, which had never previously qualified for the U.S. Spirit Nationals. Coaches described the experience as both a competitive achievement and a foundational step for future seasons.

The season also highlighted the leadership structure behind the program. Torneby, in her third year leading the team, has worked alongside assistant coach Brittnie Johnson, who has played a key role in developing routines, supporting athlete growth and guiding the team through its first national qualification process. The staff also credited additional support within the program for helping athletes adapt to the increasing demands of high-level competition.

Beyond Battle Ground's varsity squad, the program's broader competitive footprint also extended into youth and club-level cheer. Pacific Youth Cheerleading, a Vancouver-based program that includes athletes from the Battle Ground area and has ties to the high school program, also competed at nationals, placing third in its division. The shared participation underscored the depth of cheer development in the region and the pipeline feeding into high school programs.

Across all levels, this year's results reflect a program that has steadily built competitive credibility in both game day and traditional formats, while expanding its presence beyond the state level for the first time.

With nationals now complete, the Tigers will turn their attention to the next season, aiming to maintain a momentum that set new benchmarks for the program and established Battle Ground as an emerging presence in Washington cheerleading competition.



Battle Ground Virtual Academy Prepares for Move to Permanent Campus

Battle Ground Virtual Academy is preparing to move into a new permanent facility on the Prairie High School campus during the summer of 2026, marking a major milestone in the school's continued growth. The new building is located on the corner lot across from WinCo Foods and will provide a dedicated long-term home for the district's virtual learning program.

Construction began in August 2025 and the building is expected to be ready for use in 2026, barring unforeseen delays.

The project is funded entirely



through impact fees, which are paid by developers and buyers of newly constructed homes within Battle Ground Public Schools boundaries. Unlike property tax revenue, impact fees are legally restricted and may only be used for capital projects outlined in the district's approved capital facilities plan.

BGVA traces its roots to "River Online," a virtual learning program once operated through River HomeLink. As online

learning expanded, the program grew and officially became its own standalone school in 2023 while remaining on the River HomeLink campus.

District leaders say the move to a permanent facility reflects continued demand for flexible learning options and represents a long-term investment in virtual education within BGPS. The transition will also open up space on the RHL campus, creating more opportunities for the program and its families.





Two BGPS Students Honored with 2026 Marshall Youth Leadership Awards

From the left:

Grace Wing, Battle Ground High School; Nathan Kim, Ridgefield High School; Itzel Contreras Montiel, Prairie High School; Abeal Sihel, HeLa High School; and Sadie Walters, HeLa High School.

Two Battle Ground Public Schools students were recognized at the 2026 Marshall Youth Leadership Awards, an annual program honoring Clark County high school seniors for leadership and community service.

Grace Wing of Battle Ground High School and Itzel Contreras Montiel of Prairie High School were among six students selected as finalists for the award. Wing was named a finalist, while Montiel was chosen as this year's award recipient. Montiel is the third student from Battle Ground Public Schools to receive the honor since the award program began in 2001 and only the second student from Prairie High School to earn the recognition.

Since her junior year, Montiel has served as a student representative on the BGPS board of directors, advising members on

policies, budget decisions and district initiatives. Alongside another student representative, she regularly visits schools throughout the district to gather student feedback and share student perspectives with district leadership. In addition to her work with the board, Montiel has helped organize school events, participated in track and soccer and volunteered at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center. After graduation, she plans to attend a university and study psychology and education.

Wing has demonstrated leadership through her involvement in the Air Force Junior ROTC program, where she advanced into leadership positions including squadron commander and chief of staff. In those roles, she oversaw support staff operations and mentored younger cadets. She is also an accomplished

musician who has earned honors including Battle Ground High School's Outstanding Musician award and recognition through the Clark College Jazz Festival.

Outside of school, Wing has volunteered more than 180 hours at Legacy Salmon Creek Hospital, assisting patients and helping train new volunteers. Following graduation, she plans to attend the University of Portland to study nursing and pursue a career in the medical field.

Presented by The Historic Trust, the Marshall Youth Leadership Award recognizes graduating seniors who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, service and dedication to improving their communities.

Student Art Walk Brings Creativity to Downtown Battle Ground

Prairie alumna leads inaugural celebration of youth participation in the arts, with support of BG City Mayor and local businesses.

Downtown Battle Ground turned into a temporary open-air gallery this spring as student artwork filled storefront windows for the inaugural Student Art Walk, a community project led by Amplify the Arts, a new local nonprofit founded by arts advocate and musician Natalie Worthy.

The weeklong event, held April 13–17 in the city’s Old Town district, showcased more than 60 pieces of student artwork created by over 50 K–12 students from across the Battle Ground area. Displays were installed in participating Main Street businesses, transforming

the corridor into a walkable exhibition designed to highlight youth creativity and increase community engagement with the arts.

Worthy, a Prairie High School graduate and lifelong Clark County resident, said the idea for the art walk grew out of her background in music education and recent work with statewide arts advocacy organizations.

“For almost a year, I’ve been volunteering with two nonprofits called Inspire Washington and ArtsEd Washington, and they both support arts education and cultural initiatives,” Worthy said in an interview. “It really opened my



eyes to the fact that as a citizen I have resources and capabilities to create change.”

That realization led her to establish Amplify the Arts, a nonprofit focused on expanding arts education and programming in Clark County. The Student Art Walk became one of its first major public initiatives.

Worthy said the goal was to create an accessible opportunity for students to be seen and celebrated, especially as schools and arts programs face ongoing funding challenges.

“I wanted to provide that opportunity for young people, specifically local to the Battle Ground area,” she said. “We’re going to be seeing constraints on recitals, on art galleries and showcases. So I wanted to do something simple where anyone could apply, and anyone could have their art highlighted.”



The event also included a community voting component, allowing visitors to scan QR codes and select their favorite pieces through a People's Choice competition. The student with the most votes received a prize package sponsored by Battle Ground Cinema, which also provided free "super student passes" to all participating artists. The theater donated more than \$600 worth of passes and coupons, according to organizers.

Participating businesses included several Old Town storefronts, such as Music World, Galleoti's, Uptown Screen Printing and 6-8 Church, all of which displayed student work throughout the week. A digital map helped guide visitors through the exhibition.

Worthy said the response from both students and business owners exceeded expectations for a first-year event. More than 50 students participated, and feedback from the community has already prompted interest from additional businesses looking to join future iterations.

While the art walk served as a celebration of creativity, Worthy also said it addressed a broader concern: access to arts exposure outside of school.

"If your kid isn't in orchestra or choir or an art show, you might never see that," she said.

"My hope is that people in Battle Ground are able to see that we have incredible talents here, and that students deserve spaces where their stories and work can be shared."

Battle Ground Mayor Eric Overholser formally recognized the initiative by proclaiming April 12-17 as "Student Artist Week," underscoring local support for youth arts programming and community-based creative events.

Worthy also noted that ongoing funding uncertainties in school arts programs highlight the importance of community-driven opportunities like the art walk, which she said can help fill gaps in access and visibility for student artists.

Looking ahead, she may work to make the Student Art Walk an annual event and continue

expanding participation across the region, while also considering other projects in her future and with the nonprofit.

"This is a week to try something different," she said. "Maybe it's someone's first time walking through an art exhibit or engaging with public art. I hope it becomes something that encourages people to keep supporting youth arts in the long term."

For Worthy, who continues balancing nonprofit leadership with her work as a musician and educator, the project reflects a broader mission.

"The mission of Amplify The Arts is to advocate for the importance of arts education by supporting young artists, strengthening arts programming, and providing meaningful creative opportunities that empower the next generation," she said.



Three **BGHS** Cadets Selected for Elite Air Force Flight Academy



Three students from Battle Ground High School have been selected for the highly competitive Air Force Chief of Staff Flight Academy, an elite summer aviation program within the Air Force Junior ROTC.

Nathan Davis, Lord King Nana-Badu-Weah and Henry Richards were chosen from a pool of more than 250 applicants worldwide for the program, which selects just 94 cadets annually from over 850 AFJROTC units. The trio is among only three cadets selected from Washington this year — all of whom are from Battle Ground High School.

The eight-week Flight Academy is hosted at seven

university-based flight programs across the country, with the Battle Ground cadets scheduled to attend Purdue University beginning in mid-June. Participants complete intensive ground school instruction along with at least 50 hours of flight training in pursuit of an FAA private pilot's license.

Cadets shared their excitement about the opportunity. "I am so grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Henry Richards said, adding that he credited instructors, friends and family for encouraging him to pursue aviation. Nathan Davis said he is eager to learn not only how to fly a plane, but also how aircraft systems work,

noting he is especially excited to attend alongside classmates. Lord King Nana-Badu-Weah emphasized the persistence required during the application process, describing months of uncertainty while continuing to prepare for selection.

The Air Force invests approximately \$2.8 million annually in the program, which provides flight training at no cost to cadets and does not require military service or repayment after high school. Since the program's launch in 2018, Battle Ground High School has had 14 students selected.

Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Andy Woodrow, senior aerospace science instructor at Battle Ground High School, said the program represents a major opportunity for students interested in aviation. He noted that it helps address broader pilot shortages while exposing cadets to aviation operations, infrastructure and potential career pathways in both military and civilian flight industries.





TVP Teacher Recognized with National Board Certification

Melinda Beachell, a kindergarten teacher at Tukes Valley Primary, has earned National Board Certification, one of the highest professional distinctions available to educators in the United States. The certification recognizes accomplished teachers who demonstrate advanced content knowledge, effective instructional practices and a strong commitment to student learning and achievement.

The rigorous certification process requires educators to submit extensive evidence of their teaching practices, analyze student learning outcomes and complete assessments designed to measure content expertise and professional decision-making. Candidates often spend months preparing detailed portfolios and reflective materials demonstrating their impact in the classroom.

National Board Certification was established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to recognize and support highly accomplished educators across

the country. Often referred to as the “gold standard” of the teaching profession, the credential goes beyond standard state licensure and identifies teachers who meet nationally recognized standards for excellence in education.

Beachell has served in multiple roles throughout her career in Battle Ground Public Schools, including as a substitute teacher, special

education teacher and kindergarten teacher. Her certification is in literacy for the early and middle childhood developmental levels.

By earning National Board Certification, Beachell joins a distinguished group of educators nationwide who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to their profession, continued professional growth and student success.

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DREAM Team Earns State Recognition for Youth-Led Prevention Work

DREAM Team named first runner-up at Spring Youth Forum for planning of Prevention Convention: The Way to Wellness.

At the intersection of youth leadership, substance use prevention education and statewide recognition, the 75-member DREAM Team is gaining attention across Washington after earning first runner-up honors at the 2026 Washington State Spring Youth Forum for its youth-led project, Prevention Convention: The Way to Wellness.

The forum, held May 19 in Grand Mound and organized by the Washington State Health Care Authority, brings together youth prevention teams statewide to present projects

focused on substance use prevention, mental health promotion and community wellness. Teams are evaluated on innovation, sustainability, impact, collaboration and professionalism, with top performers earning scholarship opportunities and advancement to national youth leadership conferences.

Represented by five students from Tukes Valley Middle School, the DREAM Team earned its recognition after receiving a near-perfect application score that secured scholarship eligibility and a

place among 42 teams selected statewide. The group ultimately placed second overall and received partial scholarship funding for future prevention leadership training.

Their presentation focused on the continued growth of Prevention Convention, a youth-led conference held March 20 at Washington State University Vancouver that brought together nearly 125 middle school students from across Battle Ground Public Schools. The event is designed and led by students in partnership with Prevent Together: Battle Ground Prevention Alliance, with additional support from the Prairie High School Wellness Alliance and community partners.

Since launching in 2025, the conference has expanded significantly, reaching nearly 300 students across two annual events. Participants attend interactive workshops on social, emotional and physical wellness, guided by SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness and shaped by student feedback. Sessions focus on coping strategies, stress management, healthy relationships and decision-making skills aimed at reducing risk factors linked to substance use.

Youth voice remains central to the program. Students lead keynote introductions, facilitate peer discussions and design workshop themes using survey data collected from





middle school peers. The 2026 keynote speaker, Xander Cook, helped frame the event around the theme “Find Your Path,” emphasizing personal reflection and connection.

In their presentation, team members traced the project’s origins to conversations at the Washington State Prevention Summit and noted that concerns from results of the 2023 Healthy Youth Survey — including elevated sadness, limited access to trusted adults and reports of suicidal ideation — helped shape the urgency behind the initiative.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the program operates through structured student committees focused on logistics, marketing and programming, ensuring future cohorts of students can continue the work without losing continuity. Funding

comes from the Washington State Department of Health’s Youth Cannabis & Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program, the iQ Credit Union’s “iQ for Kids” Foundation and additional community support, with transportation funded by the school district to ensure access for all middle schools. Judges highlighted the team’s ability to combine data-driven

prevention work with student leadership and measurable outcomes. Pre- and post-surveys showed gains in student knowledge and wellness skills, while participants reported improved coping strategies, stronger confidence in refusing substances and increased awareness of where to seek help. Some students even expressed interest in joining the DREAM Team after attending.

Coalition partners say the DREAM Team reflects a broader statewide movement in youth-led prevention, where students are not only participants in wellness programming but active designers of it.

With another statewide recognition secured, the DREAM Team now looks ahead to refining and expanding Prevention Convention, continuing to center youth voice in prevention, wellness, and school community building.





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Monthly district newsletter



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BUDGET CUTS

Learn more about the budget reductions and program eliminations going into effect next school year.

battlegroundps.org/budget-cuts



The Battle Ground Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Information about the district's nondiscrimination and sex-based discrimination policies and grievance procedures are located on the District's website at: <https://www.battlegroundps.org/notice-of-nondiscrimination/>. The following employees have been designated to receive and respond to questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX Coordinator/Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator: Lynnell Tsugawa-Murray, Assistant Superintendent, Battle Ground Public Schools, PO Box 200, Battle Ground, WA 98604, murray.lynnell@battlegroundps.org, 360.885.5340 Section 504/ADA Coordinator: Michelle Reinhardt, Executive Director of Human Resources, Battle Ground Public Schools, PO Box 200, Battle Ground, WA 98604, reinhardt.michelle@battlegroundps.org, 360.885.5481



THANK YOU FOR READING!

Associate Editor
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Managing Editor
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Amy Hanson
(Editorial Oversight)

This school year tested Battle Ground Public Schools in undeniable ways. Financial uncertainty, budget reductions and growing pressures affected classrooms, programs and families across the district. And yet, through every challenge, Battle Ground students continued to rise. They earned regional and national honors, organized recognized wellness initiatives, raised thousands to restore outdoor learning spaces and strengthened their schools through leadership, service and creativity.

That resilience became the story of this year.

Again and again, students proved hardship does not define a school district — its people do. In classrooms, on stages, in competitions and in everyday moments that may never make headlines, Battle Ground students demonstrated perseverance, determination and a belief that their future is still worth building. That is the story of a community I'm proud to be part of.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rye".





REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN TODAY!

MUST BE 5 YEARS OLD PRIOR TO SEPT. 1

battlegroundps.org/enrollment

Not sure which school?
battlegroundps.org/page/boundaries



Don't miss future issues!

battlegroundps.org/page/student-publications

BOARD MEETINGS

Citizens' comments are welcome at public board meetings, held the second and fourth Mondays of most months beginning at 6 p.m.
Lewisville Campus: 406 NW Fifth Ave.

Board of Directors

Lorri Sibley, Director, District 1
Debbie Johnson, Director, District 2
Chris Grewell, Vice President, District 3
Terry Tate, President, District 4
Marshall Marrott, Director, District 5

Student Representatives

Itzel Contreras-Montiel, Prairie High School
Toby Nguyen, CAM Academy

Meetings are recorded and can be viewed online. For more information, visit battlegroundps.org/board-meetings

