

# Our Schools

ARLINGTON  
Public Schools

A publication for the Arlington community.

SUMMER 2017

## Summer hours for Arlington schools

School offices are closed for the summer and will reopen on Wednesday, Aug. 16. Eligible students are participating in a K-3 Literacy Camp and K-5 Math Camp. There is also a K-12 English Language Learners (ELL) Summer Program, 9-12 Summer School and Robotics Summer Camp.

The district office will be operating on summer hours from July 1-31. The district office will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The office will be closed on Fridays in July and on July 4.

## Celebration recognizes community support for Byrnes Performing Arts Center

Nearly 300 community members attended a celebration on June 3 to commemorate 10 years since the doors opened at the Byrnes Performing Arts Center. Attendees enjoyed desserts provided by Arlington High School Culinary Arts students and cookies donated by local churches. The Arlington High School jazz bands and performing arts students provided entertainment and local Edward Jones agents sponsored "The Coats" acapella band as the headliner for the evening.

## Pioneer and Presidents students and staff work hard to earn achievement awards

Pioneer and Presidents Elementary Schools were selected as 2016 Washington Achievement Award winners. Schools are recognized as top performers in one or more of seven categories: Overall Excellence; High Progress; English Language Arts Growth; Math Growth; Extended Graduation Rate; English Language Acquisition; and Closing the Achievement Gap.

Pioneer earned a special recognition for English Language Arts growth. Presidents was recognized for closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities.

"I would like to thank the teachers, staff and administrators at these schools for working hard to achieve student success," said Arlington Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Chrys Sweeting. "Your dedication to students is evident with this recognition."

Schools are selected for recognition using the Washington State Achievement Index. The index is a snapshot of a school's performance based on statewide assessments. A total of 280 schools statewide earned Washington Achievement Awards for 2016. The award-winning schools were honored at

a ceremony in May.



Pioneer Elementary School Staff



Presidents Elementary School Staff

Educating all students, preparing & inspiring them to achieve their full potential.

## District provides alternative learning option for disengaged youth

Arlington Public Schools (APS) will be providing the Open Doors Youth Reengagement Program next school year to reach older youth who have dropped out of school and to serve students who are significantly credit deficient. Open Doors is a statewide dropout reengagement system approved by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction that provides education and services to older youth, ages 16-21, who have dropped out of school or are not expected to graduate from high school by the age of 21.

“Students who may not have succeeded in a traditional school setting can truly benefit from this program,” said APS Assistant Superintendent Kathy Ehman. “It allows students to get a high school diploma, General Education Diploma (GED) and/or job-ready skills. We’ve also partnered with Workforce Snohomish to help students with resumé writing and job preparedness while also connecting them with internships and employment.”

Open Doors will be housed at Weston High School and



provides a flexible learning environment for students that works around their schedules. Initially, students would need to come into the building weekly but after that, there are weekly status checks and a monthly face-to-face check-in with a teacher and counselor.

“This program is not based on seat time; it’s based on progress,” said Ehman. “Students can come to Weston to do their work, complete it at home or finish it online. It all depends on their schedule and what works for them.”

The district is currently reaching out to former students who dropped out over the past three years to see if they would be interested in attending the program. If you know of someone who would benefit from the Open Doors program, please contact Will Nelson at 360-618-6342.

## Community truancy board works to reduce barriers to student attendance

This school year, a team of educators, administrators, mental health professionals and community members worked to create a community truancy board to help students remain in school. Last year, the state Legislature passed a law that stated by the 2017-18 school year, all school districts would have a community truancy board in place. Arlington wanted to get a start before the deadline to ensure the process worked for the student and their family. Arlington has held two community truancy boards and both have gone well.

The truancy board is designed for students who have missed a significant amount of school and provides an alternative to juvenile court. Before attending the truancy board, secondary students complete a



Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students which looks at barriers to student attendance.

“The community truancy board is not designed to be punitive but rather it helps reduce the barriers to student attendance to increase academic performance,”

said Arlington Public Schools Assistant Superintendent, Kathy Ehman. “At first, the families said they were nervous attending the truancy board but became more comfortable when they saw that someone they knew from the school was there. They were also involved in crafting solutions so their child could attend school every day.”

Once the family and board come up with a solution, they sign the plan. Following the truancy board, there’s a follow-up with the families to see how they’re doing. Improving attendance has been a major focus for the district this year and this will continue for the 2017-18 school year.

“A lot of this comes down to understanding what the barriers are to attendance and trying to remove those barriers,” said Ehman. “We have a phenomenal team on the truancy board that works hard to find solutions for these students and families.”

# Congratulations Class of 2017!



*Arlington High School graduates*



*Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center graduates*



*Weston High School graduates*

We are proud to recognize the Class of 2017! This year, 350 students graduated from Arlington High School, 15 students graduated from Weston High School and 15 from the Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center. We know you have a bright future ahead of you!

## Skilled Trades Day provides hands-on career options for Arlington students

More than a dozen local businesses and organizations showed middle and high school students some different career options during the first-annual Skilled Trades Day at Arlington High School in April. The businesses showed off equipment and products they use on a daily basis like a crane, hay harvester, front loader and semi-truck.

"When we reached out to local businesses to pitch the idea of the Skilled Trades Day, they were very supportive of the idea," said Amie Verellen-Grubbs, Arlington Public Schools' Director of Career Readiness and Innovative Programs. "It's great to have a community that's so supportive of our students and career and technical education."

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- Amie Verellen-Grubbs,  
APS Director of Career Readiness  
and Innovative Programs.

There is a lot of demand for skilled trade jobs which is why many of the businesses gave up a day's work to attend the event.

"If they want a job where they can drive a big rig, they just need a commercial driver's license which takes six to eight weeks to obtain," said Jason Byle with Three Rivers Cutting. "I don't think a



lot of students know these jobs are available and that they're jobs they can make a living at. There's a huge demand for these jobs as the workforce ages."

"We've found that industry jobs in agriculture really teach students a good work ethic," said Andrew Albert with Andrews Hay. "Even if they decide not to stay in the industry, it looks great on their resumé."

"We know that not all students will attend a university and this event shows them that there are other career paths open to them that don't require a university degree and still provide a very good salary," said Verellen-Grubbs.

Postal Customer ECRWSS

# Updated strategic plan sharpens focus to prepare students to be lifelong learners

A top priority this year was to review the current strategic plan and provide recommendations for revisions that will support our work into the five to seven years. The Advisory Council for Education (ACE) – which is a board-commissioned committee comprised of parents, staff and community members – and representatives from higher education and the business community spent the year reviewing and revising the strategic plan. The plan was last updated in 2010.

The ACE Plus members have engaged in a year-long process to revisit the APS Strategic Plan. An outside consultant, Shari Campbell, facilitated this process. ACE Plus Committee members reviewed components of the current Strategic Plan including the mission, vision, and goals. The committee analyzed data from multiple sources in order to identify strengths, areas for improvement/enhancement, and confirm priorities for the next five to seven years.

A survey was sent to parents, staff and community members this spring to determine what priorities the district should be focusing on. This feedback helped guide the discussion of the committee as it worked through the process of updating the plan.

The updated, proposed mission for the district is:

*Arlington Public Schools educates all students, preparing and inspiring them to graduate and seek their full potential as lifelong learners*

This is similar to the previous mission. However, it includes “to graduate” as a gateway to future opportunities. The inclusion of “lifelong learners” was also important since reaching your full potential is different for each person and learning is continuous.

The Goals have also been updated.

## Goal 1: Student Learning & Achievement

- Students will engage in learning that is rigorous, research-based and focused on successful grade transitions leading to graduation and further pursuits.



**Dr. Chrys Sweeting,**  
Superintendent

## Goal 2: Safe and Caring Environment

- We will cultivate and maintain a safe and caring environment that supports a positive culture to increase student achievement.

## Goal 3: Resource Stewardship

- We will align all resources (people, time, money and property) to support the District’s mission.

## Goal 4: Parent and Community Partnerships

- We will engage and encourage parents and our community to partner in the education of students.

The board will consider approval of the updated strategic plan at its board meeting on July 10. I would like to thank the ACE Committee for their work this year. I would also like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback was incredibly helpful as we reviewed and updated the plan. This plan will direct our actions, align our efforts, and bring accountability to our efforts to educate, prepare and inspire each student.

Dr. Chrys Sweeting, Superintendent

Arlington Public Schools provides equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, 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. The District will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities.

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