



Deer Park
SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONNECT

Deer Park School District Community Newsletter | September 2023

Great Schools = Great Communities

Message from Board Chair

Dear Deer Park Community,

I hope this message finds you well. Our thoughts are with those affected by the recent fires, especially those enduring significant devastation. We are encouraged by how our community has rallied together to support each other in this difficult time.

As Chair of the Deer Park School Board, I want to say welcome back to another school year. I'm excited to continue our educational journey together. Reflecting on our progress, I'm proud of our school's achievements post-pandemic. Thank you, to our community and families, who have provided ongoing support for your children and to our schools.

To our exceptional staff, I extend my deepest appreciation for your dedication, tireless efforts, and unwavering commitment. Your passion for fostering learning and growth is truly commendable, and it is your hard work that forms the bedrock of our students' educational journey.

With the support of the City Council and the Deer Park Facilities Advisory Committee the School District Board of Directors elected to run a bond and a levy in February 2024. The collaborative effort of this committee, along with the input and feedback received from our community members, has been instrumental in shaping our future direction for how to meet the needs of our students and our community.

Eric Keller

Deer Park School District,
Board Chair

Eric.keller@dpsdmail.org



Superintendent Message

Dear Deer Park Community,

On behalf of our entire district, our hearts and thoughts are with those affected by the recent regional fires. We share our sincere gratitude to the diverse range of community members and public service organizations for their support during this challenging time.

As we begin another exciting school year, I want to warmly welcome new and returning families. Serving the Deer Park community remains an honor and a privilege. This year, our District is focused on the following priorities: student academic growth and achievement, ensuring all students feel a sense of belonging and welcome, community engagement, and growth and planning.

Through your sustained backing, our growth and planning efforts are thriving. Feedback from spring's town halls and community forums has guided the Board of Directors, District Leadership, and Facilities Advisory Committee in shaping forthcoming District plans. Together, we are building a strong foundation for the growth and development of our community.

At Deer Park School District, we firmly believe that great schools lead to great communities. I look forward to another year of growth, learning, and memorable moments with all of you. Thank you for being an integral part of our Deer Park community.

Warm regards,

Alexa Allman, Ed.D
Superintendent

alexa.allman@dpsd.org



>> Growing Schools. Growing Communities.

Strategic Planning Process

Deer Park has been actively engaged in an extensive growth and planning process that will address the pressing needs of our schools, most notably a critical space shortage. As we prepare for a bond and levy, our primary goal is to ensure that our community's children and grandchildren have safe, nurturing, and welcoming spaces where they can flourish, learn, and thrive. We believe your engagement, input and involvement in this process are critical to our success. We encourage you to visit our website regularly for continued updates and additional opportunities to help shape the future of Deer Park.

The strategic planning process has enabled us to identify what we have and what we still need to do. Our goal is to create the best possible learning environment for our students to become confident, capable adults who will contribute to the prosperity of our community. Our commitment to building and providing an enriching learning environment extends beyond the classroom. We are dedicated to working with our community to build a legacy of educational excellence to support generations to come.

Key themes as we plan for the future:

- Our District recognizes and respects the values of our community
- Our community cares for our children and grandchildren
- All students deserve safe and optimal learning spaces
- Ensuring the success of our schools ensures the success of our community
- Our schools are our community

To stay informed about the latest updates on our growth and planning initiatives, please visit our website (www.dpsd.org), where you can find information on our progress. On our website, you will find Frequently Asked Questions and the prioritized project list from the Facilities Advisory Committee.



Historical Information

Our Facilities Advisory Committee and School Board are currently evaluating the next steps in our growth plan. As a reference, here are details on previous ballot measures and details.

2008 Bond - Passed

In 2008, the Deer Park Schools Bond passed and enabled critically necessary expansions and updates to Deer Park High School, originally built in 1979. This bond-funded update to the high school meant the school could not only be used for educating our students but also to provide needed space for community events and endeavors.

Details

The 2008 bond will be paid off in December 2024, and 2025. This expiration of existing bonds, paired with a decreased bond rate (projected/current rates are \$1.70

per \$1,000 of assessed home value vs. the previous \$2.74 per \$1,000 assessed value in 2008) has led the Deer Park School district to propose February 2024 as the optimal time to place a bond measure on the ballot.

2024 Bond

The lower projected tax rate and expiring previous bonds mean critical expansions and improvements to district facilities can be completed in a way that is most cost-effective for Deer Park residents. Residents can expect to see this bond measure on the ballot in February.

Planning for the Future

The Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) includes a diverse set of community members, business leaders, and education experts. This committee is entrusted with analyzing growth and evaluating facility needs. The overarching objective of this group is to ensure financial stewardship of taxpayer dollars, while also rising to meet the needs of our burgeoning community.

As part of their assessment, the team conducted site visits, analyzed data from geographers and demographers, and learned about tax rates over time. They identified the following priorities and presented them to the Board of Directors in January 2023: Transportation Center, Arcadia Elementary School, Deer Park Elementary School, Home Link (Deer Park location), Deer Park Middle School, and Deer Park High School Ballfields.

For more information on the Facilities Advisory Committee's comprehensive research process and their project recommendations to the Deer Park School Board, please visit our website.

>> Highlights to Proposed Facility Upgrade:



- Build a new elementary school to support students grades 2-5 and create space at Deer Park Elementary School for pre-school/ECEAP
- Building a new elementary school will support the safety of students and staff: eliminate portables
- Building a new elementary school will allow students to have a cafeteria, and eliminate “teachers on a cart”
- Build a new transportation facility (new plumbing, internet access, structure) closer to the schools
- Alleviate the traffic congestion (a road will be constructed that connects East D Street to S Aspen Road and north to Crawford)
- Renovate Arcadia to meet the needs of Home Link (5-7 more office spaces needed, conference room, additional classrooms including updated technology infrastructure and industrial arts, and space to accommodate classes such as weights, dance, stained class, survival classes)
- Renovate Deer Park Middle School
- Utilize **\$20 million** available from Washington State in match dollars for the project

>> Deer Park Schools Embrace Our Community



Deer Park School District employees were thrilled to join Settler's Day, Deer Park Market, and Clayton Brickyard Days this summer. Thank you for stopping by to say hello and share your thoughts with us.

>> Ending on a High Note



Last spring, Deer Park Elementary joyfully resumed its annual concert at the High School, featuring a heartwarming performance of “Jack and the Beanstalk” by the whole student body. Mr. Matt Kohlhauff, the dedicated music teacher, led our students to wonderful success. Kudos to Deer Park Elementary's staff for their vital contributions, reflecting school unity and commitment. Special thanks to Deer Park High School for the venue and students' technical support that elevated the experience.

Deer Park School District complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, economic status, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, pregnancy, familial status, marital status, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Title IX/ RCW 28A.640 Officer/ADA Coordinator or Section 504 Coordinator. Inquiries may be directed to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of HEW, Washington, D.C.



Deer Park School District #414
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»» Congratulations to Our Nationally Board Certified Teachers

National Board Certification is an additional teaching certification available in education and requires additional training, professional learning, and reflection by teachers. The certification process develops, retains, and recognizes accomplished teachers. Congratulations Deer Park Educators:

Amy Bachman, David Beal,
Cheryl Demke, Trish Dotts,
Monica Emtman, Shanna
Feist, Stefany Hanlin, Lesley
Hilts, AmyKay Lindh, Matthew
Messick, Deb Paulson,
Christine Ranger, Rachel
Rasmussen, Barb Swenson,
Danielle Troup, Marlee White,
and Erica Whitmore



»» Deer Park High's Roberta Simonson Interns with the Spokesman Review

Deer Park High's Roberta Simonson, a recent graduate, is proud of her 13-year journey in the Deer Park community. She praised the school's small size for fostering close teacher-student connections and emphasizing student futures. Through Deer Park's College in the High School programs, Roberta earned college credits in history, English, and political science.

Post-graduation, Roberta secured a summer internship at The Spokesman-Review after a competitive selection process. She joined seven other students in the Teen Journalism Institute, meeting prominent figures like Senator Maria Cantwell and shadowing reporters.

The group met community leaders such as Senator Maria Cantwell, Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers, and Police Chief Craig Meidl. Roberta has opted to take a gap year between high school and college and was asked to spend that year continuing her internship at the newspaper, gaining valuable skills and real-world experience.



»» Stay Connected with Deer Park Schools Online

To remain up to date with school district information, we encourage you to utilize our various communication channels. Our website, www.dpsd.org, is a fantastic resource for accessing school news, events, and important announcements. For quick and convenient updates, don't forget to download the Deer Park App (Apple or Android), which will keep you informed about school alerts and vital information. We also invite you to join and follow our Facebook page: Deer Park School District.