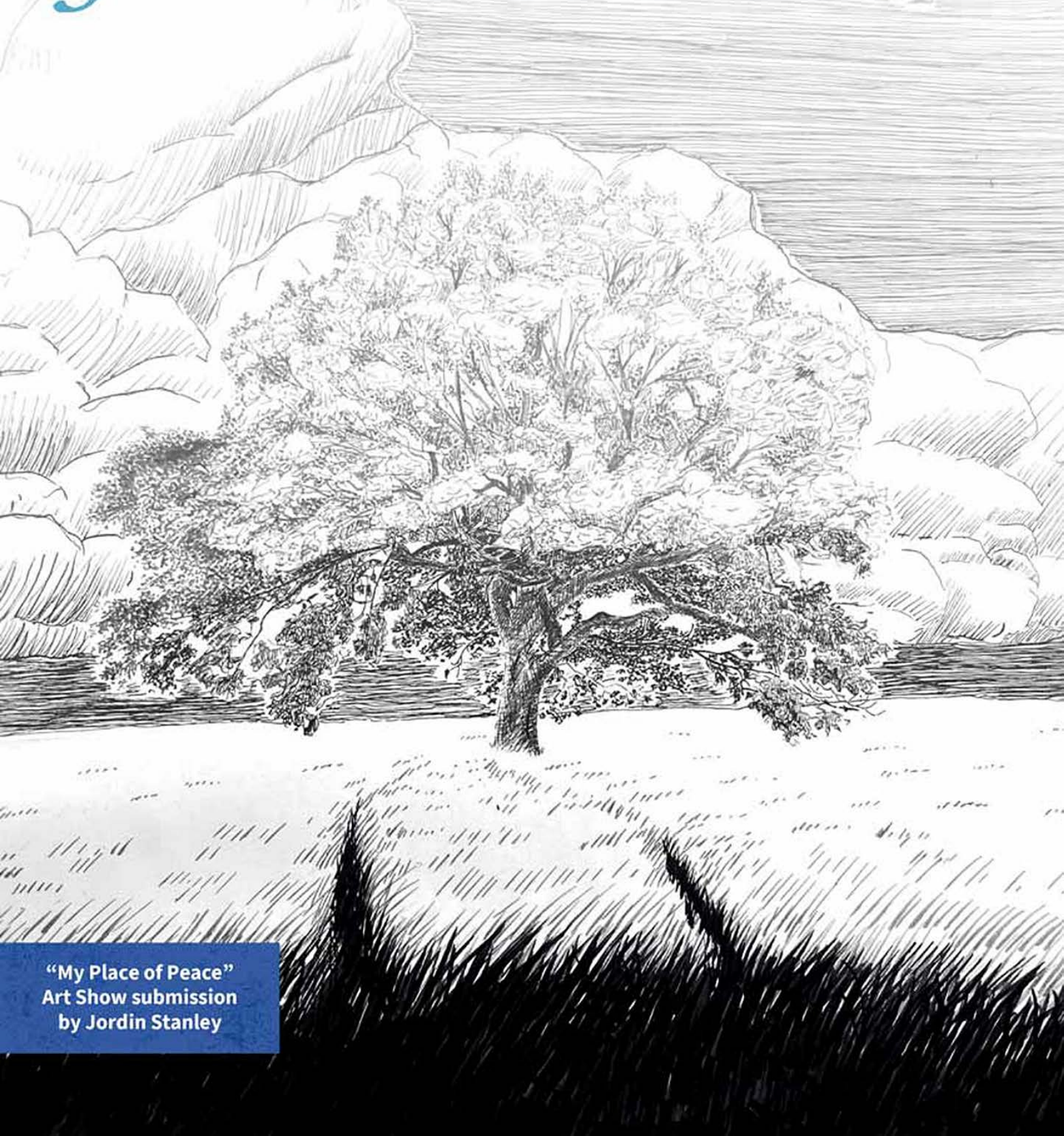


Your **BATTLE GROUND** **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**"My Place of Peace"
Art Show submission
by Jordin Stanley**

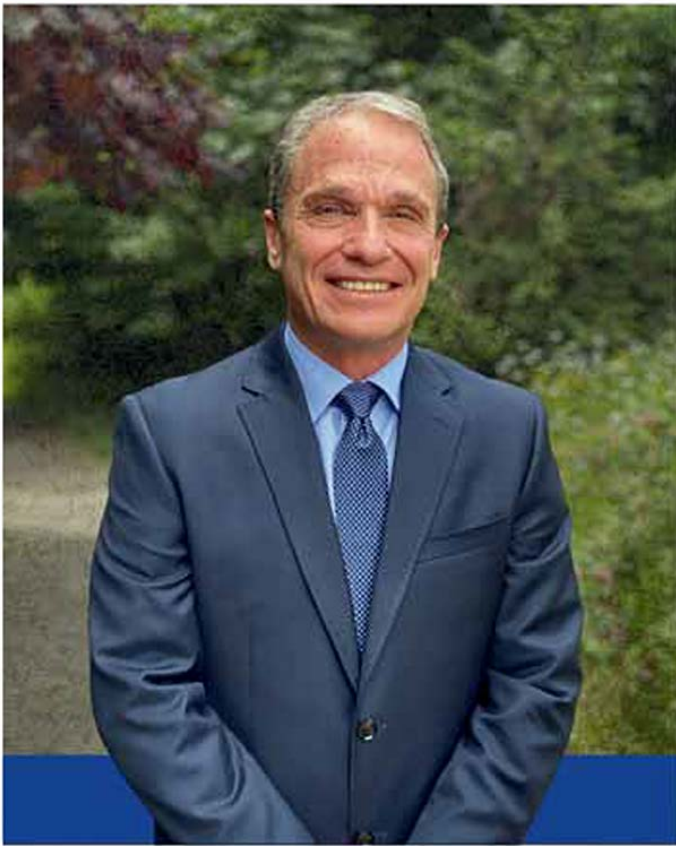


PREVENTION CONVENTION

► THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025

Students pack DREAM Team-hosted wellness event
at Washington State University Vancouver.

► SEE ON PAGE 3



INTRODUCTION

Superintendent Denny Waters

Denny Waters has served as superintendent of Battle Ground Public Schools since 2021, prior to leading the district, he spent years working in special services before serving as deputy superintendent under Mark Ross. Waters is retiring at the end of the school year and is to be replaced by current Deputy Superintendent Shelly Whitten.

It's with great pride and excitement that I welcome you to the revival of *Your Battle Ground Public Schools* - a publication that celebrates the heart of our district: our students. This magazine, the brainchild of talented students with support from district staff, honors the tradition of sharing the voices, stories, successes, and achievements that make Battle Ground Public Schools a place of growth, innovation, and community.

As we look ahead, this project reflects our continued commitment to transparency, connection, and pride in public education. It is also a testament to our belief in the power and importance of student voice. Thank you for being an essential part of our district's journey. Your support makes a difference, and we're proud to share these stories with you.

Please enjoy learning more about our students and the amazing things they do and accomplish. I have no doubt it will bring a smile to your face.



MAKING OLD *New* AGAIN



Your Battle Ground Public Schools started as an insert included with copies of *The Reflector* newspaper in 2009 and ran until 2013. Over a decade later, 13 students from across the district have come together to revive the old publication as an independent magazine, designed to put a spotlight on stories from across the district.

DREAM Teams host inaugural Prevention Convention wellness fair

On March 13, 2025, 150 middle school students from across Battle Ground Public Schools came together at Washington State University Vancouver for a conference hosted by the DREAM Team, based at Chief Umtuch, Tukes Valley, and Pleasant Valley middle schools.

The inaugural event, dubbed 'Prevention Convention: The Way to Wellness' brought students together for a fun day of engaging learning about

wellness and connection. The convention was opened by Xander Cook, a nationally recognized youth trainer and public speaker specializing in youth leadership and prevention.

Students also participated in interactive workshops covering topics like building healthy relationships, emotional and physical self-care strategies,

emotional wellness, and balancing social life while respecting personal boundaries.

Leading up to the event, DREAM Team students at three BGPS middle schools spent months working on every aspect of the event, from speaking scripts and decoration to marketing and organizing volunteers.



Who are the DREAM Team?

The DREAM Team is a group of middle school students with a mission of youth substance abuse prevention and mental health awareness.

Funded by Prevent Together: Battle Ground Prevention Alliance and centered at three schools in Battle Ground; Chief

Umtuch, Tukes Valley, and Pleasant Valley middle schools, the DREAM Team plans events such as the Prevention Convention to bring together students and share their vision.

Any student at the three middle schools is welcome to join the group and help make a difference in their community.



preventtogether
Battle Ground Prevention Alliance



Marching Madness: Bands in Hazel Dell Parade

Bands across Battle Ground Public Schools set down their sheet music and picked up their instruments to march in the 59th annual Hazel Dell Parade of Bands on Saturday, May 17.

Taking buses to Vancouver on the morning of that Saturday, hundreds of band students from BGPS' six middle schools and two high schools started near the Target on Hazel Dell Avenue and swung around Hazel Dell Elementary School, before ending the route at the intersection north of the Fred Meyer on Highway 99.

The parade featured highlights including the song "Thriller," performed by Pleasant Valley Middle School, and "Born to Be Wild," by Tukes Valley Middle School. All eight bands marched together with those from surrounding school districts to put on a show for

those watching in-person and at home.

With not only strict uniform and etiquette, but the talent of the student musicians featured—the Hazel Dell Parade served its purpose to "band" together the community around the love of music.



Student Accomplishments



Prairie High School has faith in wrestling champion, Faith Tarrant

By HARPER LETHGO

Faith Tarrant recently won her fourth state title in the girls 235-pound, 3A division. She took less than 90 seconds to pin her final opponent. Stepping out of the match, Tarrant did a move just as iconic as the three finger symbol from the Hunger Games—she smiled, held her left hand near her chest, four fingers extended, her right fist raised, to represent her state titles.

Tarrant is an exceptional student and is taking a break from wrestling to focus on her senior year. She has received multiple

scholarships to wrestle at a college level, but hasn't picked one yet. She is co-leader of Prairie's Black Student Union and Student Body President. She is also glad that in the current world today she gets to show people that she is more than just her skin color.

She has ideas of pursuing a legal career as a child advocate, wanting to give kids opportunities, like the ones she has. She says that Prairie High School has helped her so much with her success. Tarrant said of the school, "I feel like my opportunities here at Prairie are endless." She came from an impoverished neighborhood in Denver and then moved, finding a community at PHS. No matter what Tarrant does, Battle Ground will have faith in Faith.



BGHS hosts state cheer competition

By RYE DILLEY

For years, Battle Ground High

School has served as the home of the Washington state cheerleading competition. This year was no different, seeing approximately 90 high school teams make their way to the high school to battle for qualification for the national competition. The event brought an estimated \$750,000 in tourism revenue for local businesses.

Though they did not make it to nationals, the BGHS cheer team worked hard to make it to state and show off their skills to the thousands of spectators. Along with the dozens of other competing teams, these hardworking and under-appreciated athletes gave quite the show to visitors from all over the state.



Clark College Jazz Festival

By RYE DILLEY

Over 60 middle and high school bands competed in the 61st annual Clark College Jazz Festival in Vancouver at the end

of January. Among those bands were a collection of BGPS schools, three of which had students win Outstanding Musician awards.

According to the press release by Clark College, the following BGPS students received such awards.

Tukes Valley Middle School

Addie Sahler.

Prairie High School

Gavin DeMoss, William Johnstone, Aubrey Grier, Ruth Sprenger.

Battle Ground High School

Driggs Hemming, Ekaterina Kalinin, Maddox Cheen-Connlely.



River HomeLink students help school access clean drinking water

By HARPER LETHGO

Charis Ahrendt and Chloe Schultz noticed something strange going to school at River HomeLink (RHL) one day. The only water fountain in the entire

school building was near the front office. Schultz always had problems with her water running out quite quickly and noted many did not want to drink out of the school's sinks. The two friends pondered for a bit before coming up with a simple yet effective solution.

A petition—a simple letter that the pair passed around for access to more clean drinking water. Many agreed with Ahrendt and Schultz as they received 80 signatures. Then they presented it to RHL principal, Matt Kesler. Kesler teared up, he didn't know how they could do this since they didn't have the funds.

After communicating with the Parent-Teacher Organization about funding, they pondered if they could fulfill the wish of 82 students for better access to clean drinking water. Unfortunately, they were unable to. Former PTO president, Melissa Wellborn, the organization, and Kesler decided to seek the assistance of BGPS' School Maintenance Supervisor John Parker. Soon two water fountains were installed in the school.

Kesler brought together the

group who worked to make it happen for a small ceremony, where Ahrendt and Schultz placed a small plaque in front of the filling stations that said, "Donated by RHL PTO, 2023-24." Schultz says that she uses the fountains all the time and that she feels incredibly happy when someone uses or mentions them. Thanks to two seventh graders, more people drink clean water each day.



Chief Umtuch students make it to History Day competition

By RYE DILLEY

Chief Umtuch Middle School (CMS) sent 16 students to the state National History Day competition, continuing a multi-year tradition. Over half of the CMS students who competed in the regional event at iTech Preparatory School in March qualified and continued to the state competition in Kirkland.

ASPIRE Highly-Capable Program teacher, Beth Doughty, said of the accomplishment, “I am so very proud of the caliber of work that our students created this year.”

Inaugurating the 50th anniversary of the History Day competition, this year’s theme of “Rights and responsibilities” focused on questions such as

“Who decides who has rights?” and “How have people, governments or institutions decided what parameters should be set to enforce responsibilities?” Eighth grader Zelia Anderson earned first place at the regional competition with her exhibit on a group of women who developed serious health issues after using paint containing

radioactive substances in the late 20th century called ‘the Radium Girls’. Their lawsuit assisted scientists in understanding the risks associated with radium and guided government regulations to establish higher standards for safety and the use of protective equipment.

PHOTOS

Hazel Dell Parade of Bands



Q&A with Shelly Whitten:

The next superintendent of BGPS



Shelly Whitten currently serves as deputy superintendent of Battle Ground Public Schools and will take over as superintendent in July 2025. Whitten comes from generations of Battle Ground residents before her, with her grandmother, parents, and brother attending Battle Ground High School. She has led multiple buildings in the district, starting with the now-defunct Chief Umtuch Primary School over 20 years ago and eventually became the Deputy in 2021, when Waters took the position of superintendent following the retirement of Mark Ross. As a life-long resident and veteran of BGPS, it did not take long after Waters announced his retirement for the board of directors to decide

Whitten as his replacement.

Given that Whitten has played such an important role in the district for decades, and will only continue to play an even more important one—the Your Battle Ground Public Schools staff thought it obvious to reach out to the incoming superintendent with a list of questions to include in the publication. She agreed and the following Q&A is featured below.

Q: What are your thoughts going forward as the next superintendent of BGPS?

A: As I assume the role of superintendent, I carry with me not just professional experience, but also deep personal roots in this community. Battle Ground has shaped who I am, and I view

this position not merely as a job, but as a responsibility to uplift and inspire each and every student, just as others did for me. While this is a difficult time in education, as we are under fire for many things outside the local district control, I continue to believe with community partnerships we can find a positive path forward. Being selected for this role is the biggest honor of my career and I hope my leadership results in positively giving back to this community. Going forward, I am committed to building on our strategic vision: *Connecting Every Student to a Successful Future*. Our path is clear—focus on safe and caring environments, high-quality instruction, and collaborative trust.

Q: What are you planning to do the same as Mr. Waters and what are you planning to do differently?

A: What I plan to do the same:

- Continue utilizing feedback loops such as surveys and advisory committees to guide decision-making.
- Uphold the strategic plan that Mr. Waters facilitated with a great deal of input from stakeholders.
- Maintain high visibility and accessibility with community stakeholders, staff, and students.

What I plan to do differently:

- Increase direct engagement opportunities, including community partnership meetings and one-on-one invitations for dialogue to build and strengthen trust. This will include seeking meetings with service organizations, church groups, and local businesses.
- Further emphasize transparency and accountability not only through communication but in how we evaluate and adapt strategic goals in real time.
- Further advocacy for every child, regardless of their background or circumstance

like it occurred for me, so that they receive targeted support aligned with our mission.

Q: Going into a state of double-levy failure, how will the district maneuver obstacles to uphold its strategic plan?

A: The double-levy failure presents real challenges, but it does not deter our commitment to students. Here is how we will maneuver:

- **Prioritize Core Strategies:** We will continue focusing on key strategies that directly impact student safety, learning, and trust. This will require that we streamlining our resources to support the most vital areas first.
- **Community Transparency:** We will foster trust through honest dialogue about budget constraints, exploring community-led solutions, and openly sharing how financial decisions are made.
- **Innovative Resource Management:** We will seek efficiencies in operations and explore alternate funding sources, including grants and partnerships, to keep educational standards high.
- **Preserving Student Support:**

We are committed to ensuring that the most critical support for students is preserved, even amid difficult trade-offs, looking first at student safety and wellbeing.

Q: How does it feel knowing that it's been 20 years since the closure of Chief Umtuch Primary School?

A: The memory of Chief Umtuch Primary School resonates deeply with me as it was the first building in the district I was honored to lead. Its closure 20 years ago marked a significant shift in our district's history. I was thrilled that the decision was to maintain the name in the new middle school and that the history of Battle Ground was honored through that decision. As someone who has been part of this district through times of change, the legacy of schools like Chief Umtuch is not forgotten. It is a reminder of how our community evolves and how we must preserve our sense of identity even as we adapt. It motivates me to ensure that all of our schools, current and future, honor the stories and strengths of our past.

Q: How would you describe the BGPS community in your own words?

A: The BGPS community is resilient, passionate, and rooted in a fierce dedication to its children. It's a network of families, educators, staff, and volunteers who show up and roll up their sleeves to make a difference for kids. In recent years, both locally and nationally, there has been a shift with some individuals to step away from the public school system.

I believe this is a mistake. It is critical that our entire society is represented in our schools so that the educational system remains balanced. We need to champion the varied opinions and use this engagement to strengthen our schools. We may not always agree, but we all care deeply about our students. Our community's diversity of perspectives is exactly what

keeps our schools vibrant and evolving.

Q: What is your message to the students of Battle Ground going into next year?

A: You are the heart of everything we do! Every decision we make, every plan we write, is for you. Whether you're navigating challenges, exploring new interests, or preparing for life beyond graduation; know that you are not alone and we will walk beside you on your journey. Your voice matters, your dreams matter, and your future is bright. I promise to fight for your opportunities, to listen to your needs, and to always put you first. By working together we can make next year one of growth, courage, and connection!



BGPS logos: over the years



Exemplary Programs



Local levy-funded, the ASPIRE Highly Capable program serves students K–12 in Battle Ground Public Schools who perform at significantly advanced academic levels. Designed to meet the needs of fast-paced learners, ASPIRE provides challenging work to keep students engaged and meet them at their level.

Students can be referred to the program by community members, parents, teachers, or i-Ready test results scoring in the 90th percentile. Following a referral to ASPIRE, students take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), which is paired with i-Ready testing results to determine if ASPIRE is the right fit for the applicant.

Once tested in, ASPIRE is divided into two subprograms, the ‘Cluster’ and ‘Magnet’ programs, that families decide between. Cluster serves students at their home school,

as the name suggests, *clustering* ASPIRE students together into the same classroom and providing accelerated education without transfer. Magnet takes students from their home school and serves them at two schools—Captain Strong for primary students and Chief Umtuch for middle—and provides an even more rigorous curriculum for students at a specialized location.

The ASPIRE Program challenges students with advanced academic skills beyond what the traditional curriculum allows. ASPIRE is beloved by its students and is a core program of Battle Ground Public Schools.



FUTURES is a program for students 18 to 21-year-olds who are disabled. FUTURES does amazing work by teaching its students critical life and work skills. They partner with a collection of establishments where they send students to work and learn on the job. Such partners include the Battle Ground Community Library, Battle Ground Cinema, MOD Pizza, and the North County Community Food Bank, just to name a few. They recognize that students' needs may vary, so schedules are flexible based on their needs.

FUTURES' work is critical as currently in 2025, the unemployment rate for disabled adults is 7.5 percent, which is double the unemployment rate for adults without disabilities. As an adult, life is hard no matter what and the program strives to make it better for many. FUTURES is doing amazing work, yet most don't even know what it is.



Battle Ground Public Schools, like many districts in the area, runs a Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) that provides support for families struggling during difficult times like housing instability or financial hardships. Located at the district's Lewisville campus, the FCRC connects families and community members with essential items such as clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies. The center operates in partnership with the Battle Ground Education Foundation (BGeF) and thrives on community donations—often seen in food and toiletry drives at schools—and volunteer efforts to ensure students have the stability they need at home to succeed in school.

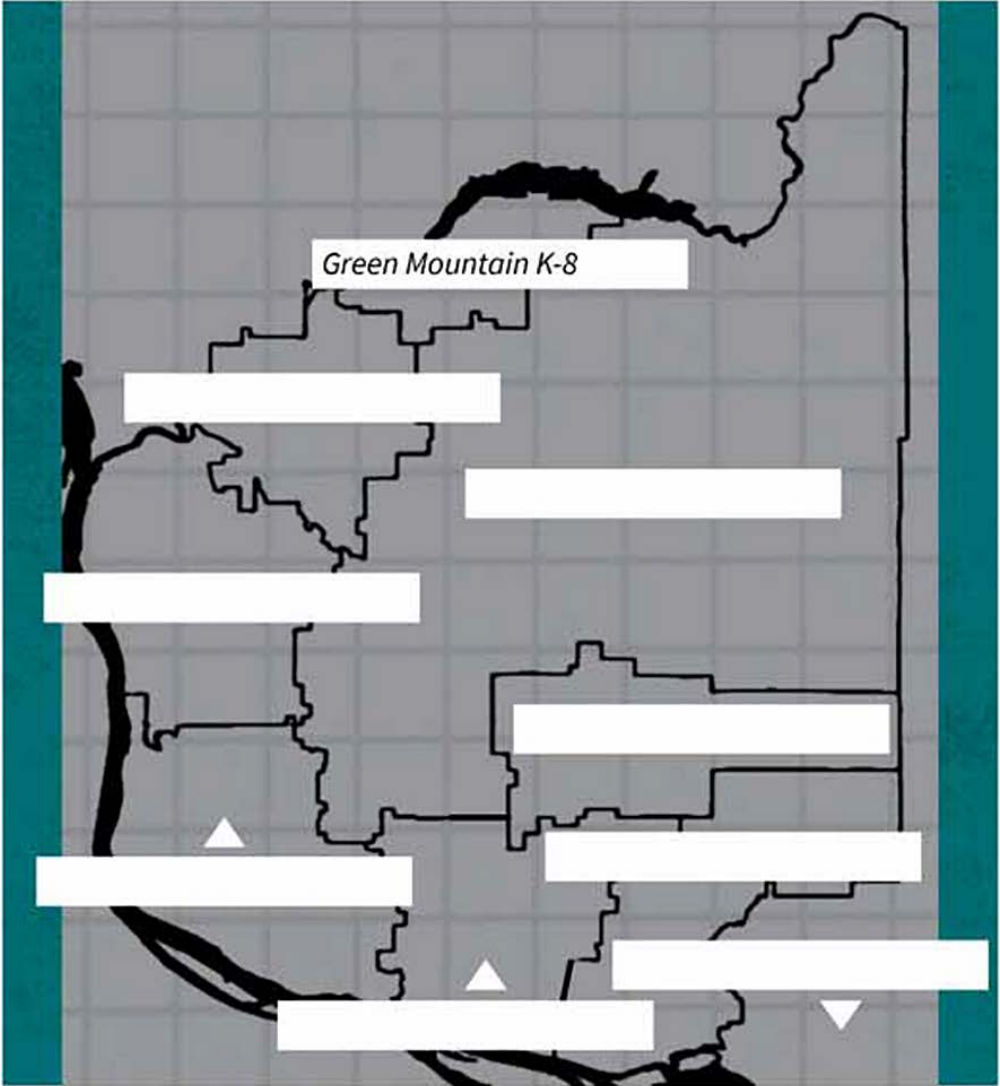


How well do you know our county? GAME



Try to label the eight K-12 school districts in Clark County on the map below.

- Battle Ground Public Schools
- Camas School District
- Evergreen Public Schools
- Hockinson School District
- La Center School District
- Ridgefield School District
- Vancouver Public Schools
- Washougal School District



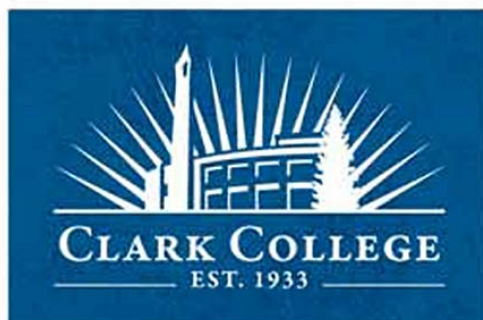
Partner Programs



Cascadia Technical Academy is a career and technical education (CTE) center in Vancouver. The program serves junior and senior high school students from across Clark County, including BGPS. Cascadia Tech features several pathways students can take from Aviation Technology and Criminal Justice to Cosmetology and Information Technology. The program offers interactive and hands-on learning opportunities that are designed to prepare students for their future careers. Each subprogram has been created in partnership with industry professions to ensure students develop real-world skills, earn certifications, and have the chance to earn college credit while still attending high school.

Students attend the technical academy for half of their school day, and return to their home high school for the rest of the

day. High schoolers from Battle Ground, Camas, Evergreen, Hockinson, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal, and Woodland school districts are welcome to apply for the program. More information can be found on the Cascadia Tech Academy website or through Evergreen Public Schools.



Clark College hosts an on-campus program called Running Start that offers eleventh and twelfth grade students an opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. By enrolling in college-level courses at Clark, students can complete their graduation requirements and accumulate credits that may be transferable to four-year universities. The dual-credit system lets students experience the rigor of college coursework, fostering growth and independence. The program is also financially appealing, as tuition is covered

by the state for students who are eligible. The program is open to students of local school districts, including Battle Ground Public Schools, who are free to apply.



Officially a program of Vancouver Public Schools, iTech Preparatory School serves students 6-12 as an “early college” STEM program located within the BGPS district boundary at the Washington State University Vancouver (WSU Vancouver) campus.

A randomized process with a designated number of slots for each zip code is designed to ensure that the program’s enrollment reflects the demographics of the area. Despite being operated by VPS,

10 percent of the iTech’s enrollment is reserved for Battle Ground students.

The rigorous learning environment is incomparable even to the likes of the ASPIRE Program and AP courses in-district, seeing students able to

begin college classes as early as the ninth grade. iTech blends college-prep academics with hands-on and project-based learning. High schoolers can earn college credit through partnerships with local colleges, helped by the program's placement at WSU Vancouver.

For more information on the award-winning program, visit Vancouver Public Schools district website.

meet *your* ASBs



► PAGE 27

Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) is a federally funded initiative with a mission to enhance mental health support within BGPS. In 2023, BGPS was awarded a five-year, \$5 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), being the only school district in Washington

State to do so in the funding cycle.

The primary goals of the program are to increase awareness and prevention of behavior health issues among youth through training for students and staff, as well as enhancing student support via multi-tiered efforts to connect youth to necessary school-based resources and health-services.



Project AWARE

care/solace

**BATTLE
GROUND**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Connecting every student
to a successful future

Following the theme of focusing on student wellness, Battle Ground Public Schools has partnered with mental health service Care Solace to provide access to a network of providers and support. Care Solace connects participants with providers that accept all forms of insurance and a 'sliding scale' option for those without.

► PAGE 22



**INTERVIEW W/
MARK HOTTOWE**

Staff Appreciation Week



Staff Appreciation Week is an annual event to celebrate those who dedicate their lives to educating the future generations. Battle Ground Public Schools takes this opportunity especially seriously, taking submissions from students and families to honor staff across the district. Featured below is a collection of testimonials from community members on their favorite teachers.

Battle Ground High School

Lt. Col. (ret.) Andrew Woodrow & Master Sergeant Nicholas Gega, AFJROTC: “The values and practical life lessons they provide through this program are second to none. These leaders get the kids in this program outside, moving and doing activities they would otherwise not have the

opportunity to do.” - Cadet mother

Battle Ground Virtual Academy

Bradley Cain: “Mr. Cain is very supportive of her efforts and always makes her want to do more. He is a friendly voice of reason and a fountain of knowledge.” - Anthony Callaway”

Captain Strong Primary

Toni Brammer, kindergarten: “My kindergartener is so excited every morning to go to school, she is constantly saying, ‘Mrs. B is the best teacher on earth!’ She loves Mrs. Brammer’s soft approach and inclusiveness to each child in her classroom. Starting your childhood education with such a positive role model for a teacher truly makes all of the difference!” - Mackenzie Wurzer

Chief Umtuch Middle

Bobbi Coine, sixth grade: “She’s awesome and caring and

understanding and fun.” - Connor Cochran

Ariella Schaaf, sixth grade: “A great teacher! Fun, kind and awesome. We love her.” - Connor Cochran

Kimberly Vissotzky, fifth grade, ASPIRE: “My son has had the amazing opportunity to be in Mrs. V’s history and English class this year, and he has learned so much from her. She works so hard to help them learn at a deep level and has taught them very valuable teamwork and organization skills this year. My son has learned so much in her class this year and has gotten to do some really fun projects. Thank you Mrs. V for everything you do!” - Allison Kimber

Donni Woolman, fifth grade, ASPIRE: “She has challenged her students in deep ways and has given them opportunities to participate in math and science

challenges, such as the Science Olympiad and the SW Washington Math Challenge. My son loved both of these challenges. He has especially grown in his math skills this year, a subject he loves, and I know this is thanks to the opportunities Mrs. Woolman has given them to learn far beyond their grade level. Thank you for your care and dedication to your students, Mrs. Woolman. We are so grateful for you!" - Allison Kimber

Daybreak Middle

Jeanie Vashaw, Center Based Classroom teacher: "Thank you for always providing support and caring for Kingsley!" - Whitney Walker

Kayla Alexander, fifth grade: "She is very nice/kind and helpful and never is disrespectful." - Joyce S.

Jordan Osborne, sixth grade & Miki Meadows, eighth grade: "Mr. Osborne seems to have a positive way of connecting with kids that makes them feel good being at school. Mrs. Meadows (Ray) has managed to create a supportive connection with my daughter who has ADHD." - Rebecca Olson

Katelyn Downing, eighth grade: "Ms. Downing is so nice and sweet. I've honestly never seen

her get angry with us, even when she's having trouble getting everyone to listen. She does everything she can to make sure we all understand whatever we're learning." - Student

Tony Brence, band teacher: "He is kind and really enjoys his students. My son has loved being in band and learning his instrument. Even when he has a rough day, Mr. Brence is understanding and helpful." - Clarissa Meyers

Daybreak Primary

Nikole Graves, kindergarten: "Ms. Graves is such a wonderful teacher! My son always talks about how great of a listener she is. It's been incredible to see his growth in reading and writing and I know it's thanks to her." - Shylo Shrewsberry

"She has given our daughter the confidence to find her voice, a love for learning, and a sense of belonging in the kindergarten classroom. We love Ms. Graves!" - Merryman Family

Nataliya Alekseyeva, kindergarten: "Incredible teacher. Knows how to teach, very easily explains and has an approach to every child. My son goes to school with pleasure!!!!" - Alona

Sandi Brown, third grade: "My daughter says Ms. Brown is calm and kind. This is why she

is a good example for our children and my daughter really enjoys being in her class." - Kelsie Chandler

Lisel Johnson, third grade: "Even though my son has moved on to the next grade level, he still frequently talks about his third grade teacher and gets excited when she says hi to him after school. The legacy of a teacher continues on well after the kids leave the classroom, and that is Ms. Johnson." - Merryman family

"Mrs. Johnson warmly welcomed our daughter two months into the school year. She has gone above and beyond to build a personal connection, and boy did they hit it off! My daughter genuinely cares for and trusts Mrs. Johnson. As parents we can see that it is mutual between them. It puts my Mom heart at ease sending her off to school knowing she's in such AMAZING hands during the day! Our family is truly thankful." - Kim Fahey

Jennifer Bartel, fourth grade: "Ms. Bartel is an amazing teacher. She provides our son with structure and guidance in the classroom and leads with heart." - Merryman Family

Glenwood Heights Primary Lynne Berry, fourth grade:

“Que es una excelente maestra y la verdad que han ayudado mucho a mi hijo le agradezco mucho a ms berry.” (“She is an excellent teacher and the truth is that she has helped my son a lot. I am very grateful to Ms. Berry.”) - Miriam G.

Brynne Wooten (Cunningham), second grade: “Mrs Wooten is THE BEST! She is so organized and our son is very motivated by her as a teacher. It is wonderful to see him thrive with her as a teacher!” - Kristin Healey

Suzanne MacLachlan, second grade: “Our family has had the privilege of having Mrs. Mac for two of our kids so far, and she is amazing! She has challenged each of them in their learning and helped us see their potential in the classroom, but even more than that, she has shown them love, care, and kindness. She cares so deeply for each of her students, working hard to help them succeed far beyond just academics. She pours her heart and soul into her job and it is evident that she genuinely cares about her students. Our family has been blessed by her. Thank you Mrs. Mac!” - Allison Kimber

Linda Maddex, kindergarten: “Two of my children have had

the privilege of having Mrs. Maddex as their kindergarten teacher. She is amazing! She interacts so well with this age of kids, showing love and care to each individual student. She teaches them so much about how to get along with each other, how to be respectful, and how to be kind. She works so hard to not only teach them how to read and write, but also very foundational interpersonal skills that they will take with them as they move through elementary school. Thank you Mrs. Maddex for your hard work, care, and dedication to your students! We are so blessed to have had you for two years!” - Allison Kimber

Laurin Middle

Cathleen Butler, resource room: “Mrs Butler is a huge advocate for her students. She wants students to succeed and sets students up for success accommodating individual needs. She is prompt, friendly and a hard worker.” - Jodi Schuck

Shawn Maffeo, seventh grade: “Ms. Maffeo welcomed me warmly on the first day that helped me to relieve the nervous feeling of the first day at school. During the semester, she helps me with work and encourages me to finish my assignments.” -

Han

Maple Grove Primary

Benjamin Scott, Transitional Kindergarten: “Mr. Scott really helped my daughter love school and get her interested in learning. He does a great job with TK and is so thoughtful with his weekly newsletters.” - Katie Burris

Jass Garnett, fourth grade: “Mr. Garnett is the best teacher at teaching things in various ways that allows every student to learn in his classroom! My son has really made leaps and bounds in his learning this year across the board, reading, math, science, and history! Thank you Mr. G for all of your hard work!” - Bern Young

Amy Carlson, first grade: “She has helped my daughter work through tough emotions from the loss of our dog to being too hard on herself in class. I have seen so much growth in confidence in her and I often hear Miss.Carlson's words being repeated from her in our home. She has made a huge impact on my daughter and I believe she will continue to remember the lessons and love she was shown throughout her school years to come.” - Dayjah Johnson

Katherine Simko, second grade: “Katherine is so understanding and patient when it comes to my

daughter and her big emotions. She always communicates with me and responds to my messages and concerns. As a mother, it is so comforting to feel that your child's mental well being is taken seriously as well as their learning progress. Katherine shows how much she cares about each individual student and it takes a special heart to do what she does!" - Jessica Kesler

Cassie Unruh, first grade: "She has helped my very nervous, anxious child through me leaving her at school in the morning. Ms Unruh really cares about her students, she wants them all to succeed and that is very apparent when watching her interact with the kids." - Chelsea Nelson

Jamie Griffith, kindergarten: "Mrs. Griffith is a true gem—she is a wealth of knowledge and experience, and once you get to know her, you realize how deeply she connects with both students and parents. She genuinely cares about each child's growth and future, always offering thoughtful advice and guidance to help them succeed. Her dedication and heart make a lasting impact." - Meghan Hill

Alex Bennet, health/fitness: "My son comes home so excited to

tell us all about the body & what Mr. B has taught him. Thank you for being a positive impact in our son's teaching environment." - Pamela Dineen
Kelly Asplund, resource room: "Mrs. A is so patient and so kind. She's there whenever they have tough times and is there for when they just need jokes. She left notes to make them feel good about themselves. Mrs. A really cares for our children." - Jessica Twilleager

Pleasant Valley Primary

Amy Allinger, physical education: "My daughter loves all the fun games they play!" - Unsigned

Bre Woodhouse, Transitional Kindergarten: "Ms. Woodhouse is incredibly communicative and non-judgmental. My son is always asking me to take pictures showing how well he did at something ... so that we can show Ms. Woodhouse." - Katie Montenegro

Prairie High School

John Faron, resource room: "Mr. Faron genuinely cares about the kids. He has been with my son for 3 years now, and has been such a positive support for him. Mr. Faron encourages kids to be their best, and helps them be successful. Not only is he an amazing educator, but he is also an outstanding human being.

Prairie is lucky to have him." - Jennifer White

River HomeLink

Alesa Corrin, third/fourth grade: "Mrs. Corrin has gone above and beyond to help my daughter grow her imagination, confidence and reading skills." - Unsigned

Miranda Roderick, kindergarten: "Mrs. Roderick always goes above and beyond for her kindergarten class. My daughter loves to go to school and has really blossomed into an inquisitive learner with her help." - Unsigned

Traci Donahue, EAC 4-8: "Mrs. Donahue is an amazing human. She is hilarious, mindful, and compassionate beyond understanding. A life-saver. From raising two Mr. Fishyfaces to replacing the llama stuffed animal after its untimely demise, Mrs. Donahue maintains silly connections, stories, and jokes with her class that last years. Stepping into her classroom is like stepping into another world and she deserves recognition." - Rye Dilley

Summit View High School

Mary Kahler, resource room: "Mrs. Kahler's dedication goes far beyond the classroom. She recently checked in and supported my son even while on

vacation. That speaks volumes about the kind of educator (and person) she is. She doesn't just teach—she cares. She lifts up both her students and their families, and that kind of support is something we'll never forget. It takes a special kind of heart to do what she does every day. Her efforts do not go unnoticed, and her hard work is deeply appreciated—not just on teacher appreciation day, but all year long by our family.” - Sarah Brackeen

Andrea Swan, math teacher: “Ms. Swan is such an amazing and giving teacher. She goes above and beyond for each of her students and I am forever grateful for her!” - Jennifer I.

Tukes Valley Middle

Alison Pierce, band director: “She has done a fantastic job with these kids. She puts in a lot of time outside of class with her students and I truly appreciate her.” - Desiree Mitchell

Tukes Valley Primary

Marissa Smith, Transitional Kindergarten: “Mrs. Smith has fostered a warm and welcoming kindergarten class. She puts her students' needs first and is always available to help students exceed and learn to love school.” - Unsigned

Yacolt Primary

Tasia Markus, third grade: “She is the most caring and attentive teacher I have met. She makes every child feel important and

included. She's so patient and goes above and beyond what's expected of her.” - M. Linge

Sally Washington, kindergarten: “Mrs. WA is the best of the best! She takes care of the kindergarteners like they are her own. She's caring and kind, and is a fantastic teacher 🍎” - S. Rotschy

Kristi Adams, first grade: “Mrs. Adams has the ability and personality to light up her classroom with such excitement that my children look forward to school every single day. From the little rewards, happy spirit, and her way of teaching my kids have excelled so much in her class. She is amazing!” - Maryjane Johnston



ALE Programs

The term ‘alternative school’ often carries negative connotations, however, Battle Ground Public Schools breaks the commonly-held stigma toward alternative education—operating five exemplary alternative learning experience (ALE) programs for students to choose from if they decide traditional neighborhood schools aren’t for them.



Battle Ground Virtual Academy

Battle Ground Virtual Academy is a full-time online K–12 learning option for students of BGPS—and the entire state of Washington, starting next school year. The school has 21 teachers and over 700 students who work together with families to achieve a full education, primarily at home.

Opening in 2023 as the district’s newest school, BGVA has continued the legacy of River HomeLink’s former OnlineLink program, while also introducing the BGPS version

of online learning to hundreds of new students.

Battle Ground Virtual Academy will be moving to a new location on the Prairie High School campus in the near future to accommodate for population growth, ceding the 10-plex modular building it currently inhabits back to River HomeLink.



CAM Academy

CAM Academy is a rigorous academic program with strong parent involvement that serves students in grades 3–12. The school blends in-person and at-home learning—thought not to the degree seen at BGVA or River HomeLink—and puts a strong emphasis on character development, academic excellence, and community values. CAM operates a tight-knit community with an exceptional PTO and two ASB organizations.

CAM originally served as a subprogram of Battle Ground

HomeLink and was then known as CAMLink, with CAM standing for “Character and Academics for the Marketplace.” In 1996, the program broke off to form CAM Junior-Senior High School, remaining on the same campus as BGHL.

When the two HomeLink schools consolidated at the Maple Grove campus, CAM expanded to include third and fourth grade students—changing its name to CAM Academy to represent the shift.

Today, CAM Academy resides near the Lewisville campus and serves over 500 students with a team of 22 dedicated teachers—totaling at almost 20 years of average teaching experience.



CASEE Center

The Center for Agriculture, Science, and Environmental Education (CASEE) is the only of the district’s ALE programs to not technically serve as a

stand-alone school, instead hosting students on their 80-acre campus for half of the school day, then sending them back to their home high school for the rest of it.

CASEE provides the opportunity for students to build strong foundations for careers or college majors in environmental or agricultural sciences, giving them a unique edge through applied learning in a real-world setting. Students can also earn Career and Technical Education (CTE) credits while in the program, these credits support graduation pathway requirements and help to prepare students for college programs or careers in agriculture and science.

The center has a lengthy history, viewable on the program's website—however, it can be summarized to two Battle Ground High School science teachers in the '80s working together with superintendent Leo Beck to secure an 80-acre site from the state Department of Natural Resources to base the program on—which eventually opened in 1993.

the district office and the Summit View High School ALE program.



River HomeLink

River HomeLink is a K–12 hybrid learning program where students spend two-to-three days a week learning in-person, and the other two-to-three at home. The school is built on parent involvement and includes families in every aspect of the education process—from learning at home to inside the classroom.

RHL was originally based in Camas, opening in 1996 as a sister to the Home-Link Technology Center in Battle Ground. Eventually, River HomeLink found itself relocated to Battle Ground, where it consolidated with its precursor at the Maple Grove campus.

Today, River HomeLink is the third largest school in the district by population, with nearly 1,000 students.



Summit View High School

Summit View is an alternative high school mastery program designed to meet students at their pace, with one-to-one teacher support. SVHS also offers flexible schedules and smaller class sizes. The program focuses on helping students who may be behind in credits, face issues in a traditional high school setting, or simply prefer a quieter environment.

The alternative high school opened in 1990, originally as a credit-recovery program—before it evolved into a stand-alone high school, not exclusively serving students who are behind.

Summit View momentarily operated a middle school program at the Chief Umtuch campus, though enrollment was low and the school shuttered in 2017—little is documented about Summit View Middle School.



INTERVIEW

Former Superintendent Mark Hottowe

Rye Dilley: As a resident of Longview, what compelled you to apply for an administrative position in Battle Ground?

Mark Hottowe: From 2011 through 2014, I was a superintendent of Ocean Beach in the Long Beach area. My wife worked at the Red Canoe Credit Union in Longview, so we didn't sell her house; we kept the house, she stayed there and I bought a fifth wheel to live near the coast. After three years, I didn't want to continue to do that if I didn't have to. I wanted to be at home with my wife—so when the job came available, I decided to apply for it knowing that I could commute... It was a long commute, 55 minutes from home to work, but I could then be at home during the week as opposed to being at Long Beach where I was only home on the weekend.

Dilley: Of all the school districts that you've worked at, which is your favorite?

Hottowe: I had several, the last three districts were the three districts that I really had the most fun and thought I had the most impact there... Kelso, where I spent a long time, maybe close to three decades. Then Ocean Beach was a great little district where people were just fun to be around, I really enjoyed my time there. I will say probably if I had to pick one, it would be Battle Ground, not because you're interviewing me, but more because it presented an opportunity that I thought maybe met my skill set for the period of time that the district was in at that time. I felt like I could really do some things to help bring it back to where I thought it should be and where it wasn't. It turned out

In 2015, Former Superintendent Mark Hottowe wrote an introduction to the final newspaper produced by Battle Ground Public Schools, welcoming families into the 2015-2016 school year. Nearly a decade later and eight years after the end of his time at BGPS, Mark Hottowe sat down with editor-in-chief Rye Dilley for an interview on Monday, May 5, 2025 to be featured in the revival of that same publication.

Hottowe took over the position of superintendent in 2014, following the early retirement of Dr. Shonny Bria and worked to rebuild trust with the community after her departure. He also played a crucial role in securing the \$2.5 million Project AWARE grant for mental health services. In the interview featured below, the former superintendent answers questions about how he landed in BGPS, the failed 2016 bond measure, and other topics selected by the *Your Battle Ground Public School* team.

that a lot of the things that I and the folks I worked with did made a big difference in helping the district to recover from some tough times.

Dilley: What was the population of Ocean Beach when you were the superintendent and did going from that number of students to 13,000 at Battle Ground cause any challenges?

Hottowe: The school district had a thousand students. It was a change, for sure. I was even asked in the interview if I thought that would be an issue. I didn't think that was a tough adjustment in the standpoint that I got to do a lot of things that I thought would help the district to recover. I think those things took root and they grew. For me, the stress wasn't the size of the district, it was the anxiety surrounding if I could make my vision of what this district could become true.

Dilley: In a 2015 newspaper introduction, you described Battle Ground Public Schools as a "premier district," do you still agree with that statement?

Hottowe: I sit on the ESD 112 board, so I talked with the ESD superintendent often. He's in

touch with the districts in this area on a daily basis, and he lives in Battle Ground Public Schools. He has told me on numerous occasions over the last several years that in some ways, Battle Ground is surpassing Evergreen and Vancouver in terms of its ability to provide quality programs and community support. Other districts around here have had some issues and Battle Ground just continues to just drive along without any major issues. So I think they're doing really well. Not counting the recent failure of the levy, which is significant and unfortunate. Aside from that, I think the district is doing quite well.

Dilley: You oversaw the creation of Battle Ground Public Schools' most recent long range facility plan, the timeline would've seen multiple schools renovated or replaced via the passage of tax-funded bond measures, one of which was run during your tenure in 2016, then two following in 2018. As you likely know, all three of those bonds failed and the plan is now substantially behind schedule. Do you have any insight or concerns on how it may arise into a larger problem?

Hottowe: Even when I was there

there nine years ago, the district hadn't passed a bond in a while. We had needs, but we understood that just to put a bond out would be a certain failure. The only way we thought we could have a chance to pass a bond was to make sure the community told us what they would and wouldn't support. We created this committee and it went a long time. We tried to do every methodical thing we could do to create a plan that made the best sense, and involved a number of community leaders on that committee. We met weekly and tried to create a plan that would take little bites out of the need as opposed to having a great amount of obligations all at once.

We tried to identify what the priorities were, then secondary priorities, then third priorities. While also having as many community people as we could on the docket. Then we went, took that plan out to the community and met around the district in different places to share it with them before we ran the bond. So we felt like we had a decent chance of passing the bond, but even though we had great community representation, it just wasn't enough and the bond failed miserably.



What is ESD 112?



ESD 112 is one of nine educational service districts in Washington state, designed to assist public school districts. The local ESD provides centralized services for districts like BGPS that help schools operate more efficiently and cost-effectively.

ESD organizations act as intermediaries between local districts and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and insure that state education policies are implemented at the district level while also tailoring support to regional needs.



Defunct Schools



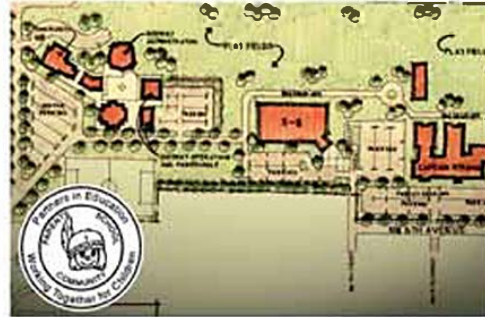
Battle Ground HomeLink
Closed 2012

Battle Ground HomeLink (originally the Home-Link Technology Center) was founded in 1993 and served as the precursor and later sister school to CAM High School and River HomeLink. The program opened in Brush Prairie and moved to Battle Ground in 1995, the same year that River HomeLink (then the River Home-Link Technology Center) was opened in Camas and a year before CAM High School opened at the same Battle Ground campus.

In 2011, River HomeLink was made to move to Battle Ground where it co-existed with the original HomeLink before they were consolidated in 2012 at the Maple Grove Longhouse building.

Now, what was Battle Ground HomeLink simply exists in the heart of the modern-day River

HomeLink—CAM High School grew to accept primary school grades and now operates as the independent CAM Academy near the Lewisville campus.



Chief Umtuch Primary
Closed 2005

Chief Umtuch Primary School was part of a unique grade-structure at the heart of Battle Ground for decades—the primary school served students in grades kindergarten through second, before sending third through fifth graders to the neighboring Captain Strong Elementary School, who then advanced to Lewisville Middle School and Battle Ground High School.

In 2005, a successful bond measure led to the dismantling of Chief Umtuch Primary School, seeing Captain Strong expand and a new Chief Umtuch Middle School built in its place to take over operations of the aging Lewisville.



Lewisville Middle
Closed 2009

Lewisville Middle School was opened in 1963 and served as the central middle school in Battle Ground for decades, predating every modern BGPS school with the exception of Glenwood Heights Primary.

With a population that at times reached over 1,000, Lewisville would have the third largest student population by today's standards, just behind Prairie and Battle Ground high schools. Following a similar path to Chief Umtuch Primary, the 2005 bond allowed for the construction of a new middle school just north of Lewisville that relieved overcrowding and led to the middle school campus becoming surplus.

Today, the Lewisville Middle School campus serves as the home of the Battle Ground school board and a handful of other academic programs.



Maple Grove Schools

*Closed 2013, 2018**

Some may be confused by the heading above, as Maple Grove Primary School is still thriving with a student population of over 500—however, there were multiple iterations the school went through before getting to where it is today.

The idea of a Maple Grove school dates back to the early settlement of Battle Ground, but the story of the modern school started in the 1980s when the current campus was built—having Maple Grove Elementary School housed in the Longhouse and Maple Grove Middle School in the larger building.

In 2012, RHL was moved from an interim location in Brush Prairie to the Longhouse, this pushed Maple Grove Elementary to consolidate with the middle school to form one Maple Grove K-8 School.

Maple Grove stayed united until 2018, when the redrawing of boundary maps to relieve overcrowding left Maple Grove as simply a primary school, feeding middle school students to Daybreak, Tukes, and Laurin.



Summit View Middle

Closed 2017

In 2012, a spur program of Summit View High School designed to support at-risk middle school students opened on the Chief Umtuch Middle School campus.

Little information is available about the program, however it is known that it served seventh and eighth graders in roughly the same style that SVHS serves its high schoolers today. It was shut in 2017 with an enrollment of only 13 students after support services in the district's traditional middle schools were advanced to cater to the SVMS population.



Associated Student Bodies

Every middle and high school, as well as most of the alternative schools in Battle Ground Public Schools have an Associated Student Body (ASB) organization. These are groups of student leaders, democratically elected by their peers. ASBs are responsible for allocating funds for events like dances and socials, as well as clubs like Yearbook. The groups also work to foster community by planning assemblies and spirit weeks.

Featured below are blurbs written about a few ASB groups in BGPS by students from those respective organizations.

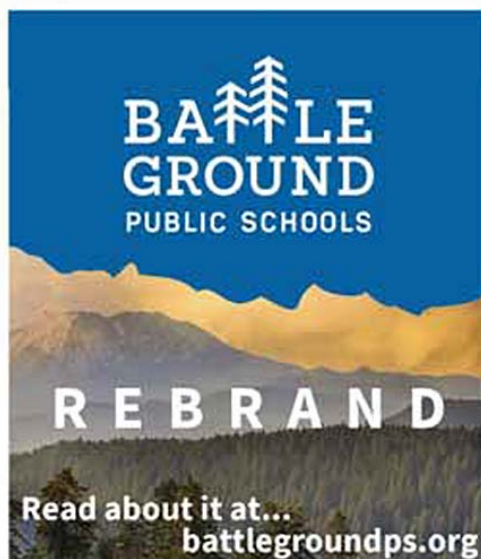


Amboy Middle School

By TEAGAN AVERY

I love being in ASB. I love being able to take charge in our school and be a student voice for what we need to change. Student store and drawings are a big part of ASB as well as assemblies. It's so fun to watch

kids from my school have fun with the activities that ASB helps put together. One of our favorite games is called "Chair Extraction" which is like musical chairs but you have to go into the audience to find an object that the Principal calls out like a student ID card. Last one back is out and we keep going until only one person is left. The student store and drawings are so fun too. Kids earn Eagle Bucks (our currency) for good behavior—being safe, responsible and respectful—and you get to spend them at the student store on stuff like stickers, gum, candy, and pop or put them into drawings for bigger prizes like local companies' sweatshirts and hats that were donated to us. Amboy Middle School Rocks!



CAM Academy MS

The CAM Academy middle school ASB has done many fun activities this year, working as a team, and pushing through the better of our school, and to make it a fun and safe place to come to each and every day. We have done many activities this year. For one of our fundraisers we had the "Walk-A-Thon" in which we rewarded the top two students who raised the most money as well as the top two students who ran the most laps. In November 2024, we had our "Harvest" party, which included jeopardy, games, and fun activities for those who came. In February, we had a "Valentine's Dance" for our seventh and eighth graders and a "Luau" in April for our fifth and sixth graders. About every month or so we held a spirit week and the chosen winners earned fun incentives for their specific day. We have had a winter and spring assembly with

fun games and group activities. We've had a food drive and a clothing drive, and with the donated items going to those in need in our community. We learn and grow together as a group for the better of our school. Working together we help out our community and our school.



Daybreak Middle School **By HARLEY HENDERSON**

This year, the team and I at Daybreak Middle School have achieved many things to improve and change our school. Our team has hosted multiple memorable dances that students in grades fifth through eighth have enjoyed. With the PTO's help, we have also had huge pizza fundraisers. Raising tons of money to put into new things to improve the space we share and learn in. In addition to this, we donated a huge amount of food, and toiletries to the North County Food Bank helping those in need of those specific

items. Our school also creates amazing spirit weeks and spirit assemblies that kids engage in and have had a great time. We have many programs for middle schoolers to help the primary school, to engage with and help the kids learn. Furthermore, we have two spectacular book fairs each year, and we have middle school students volunteer to help the primary students count and purchase books and small toys they will relish and love. This all concludes the bigger things our ASB team has achieved, in only this year.



Pleasant Valley Middle School **By MIA PACE**

Pleasant Valley's ASB has been busy this school year! We have done two fundraisers selling popcorn and our Color Run which is coming up on May 23.

We have had two spirit weeks this year to go with our all school red/blue and red/green games.

Our officer team does the daily announcements and our biggest community involvement was our food drive for the North County Food Bank. This was our largest collection year to date.

Pleasant Valley's ASB works together really well and everyone shares their ideas and we make good decisions.



Summit View High School **By ZACHARY BRACKEEN**

At Summit View High School, our ASB has held several drives, such as multiple blood drives for the Red Cross, a hygiene product drive for the FCRC and a pet supply drive for the North County Food Bank. We also hold several parties to help students connect with one another. Some of the parties held this year include a Halloween party where any student could come in and carve a pumpkin and watch *Beetlejuice*, a Christmas party

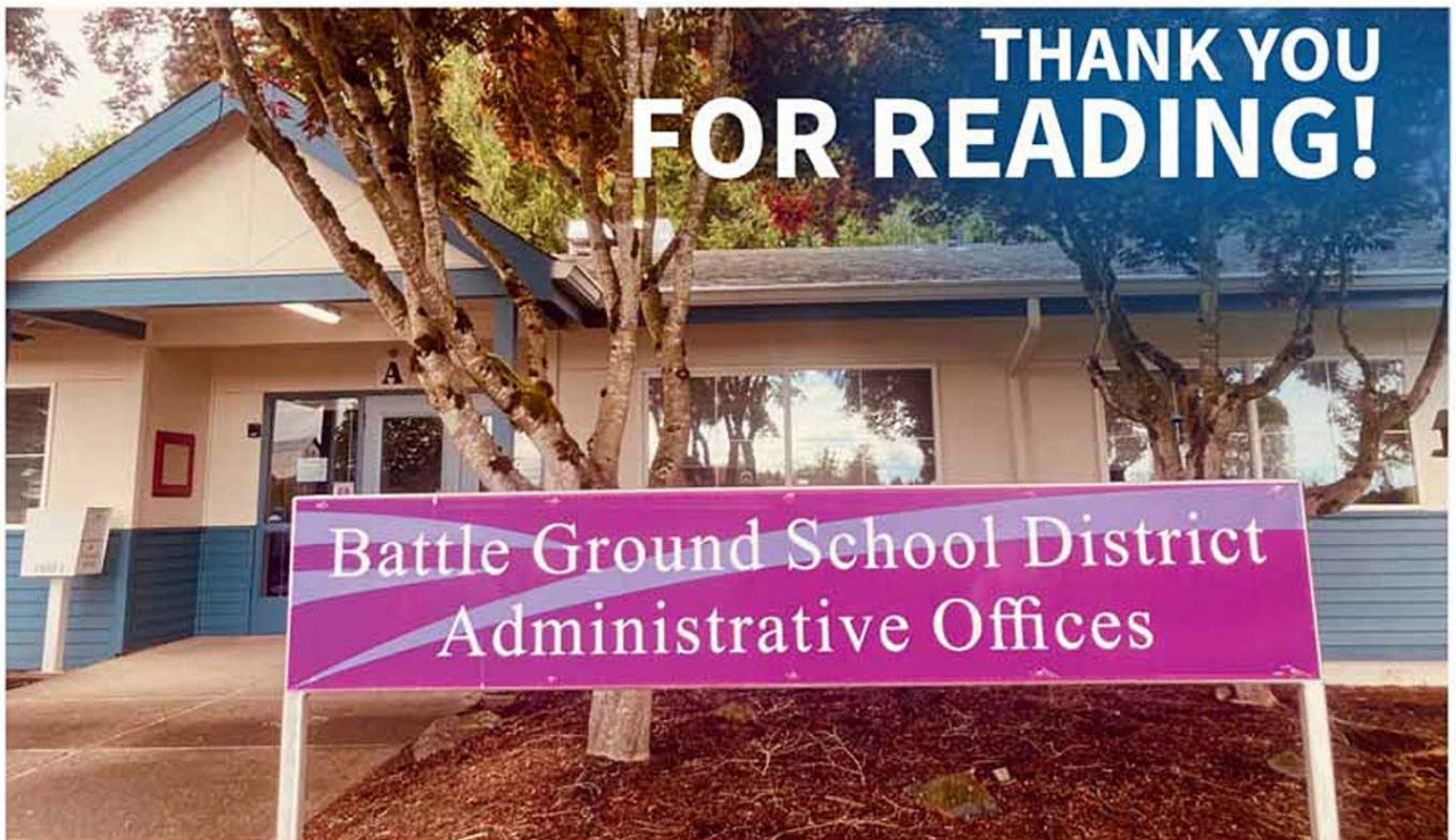
where we did a white elephant present exchange. We have a bulletin board in our school where every month an ASB member decorates it to be themed around a topic. The bulletin board topics that were selected this year include mental health awareness, alcohol awareness and many more! The year will be finished with a tie-dying party and barbeque for all students. Members of the ASB have also been making leis to sell at graduation.



Tukes Valley Middle School

The Tukes Valley Middle School ASB team has been up to a lot this school year. We've hosted a multitude of spirit weeks, featuring classics such as Comfy-Cozy Day and Color Wars, as well as TVM original Penguin Day and Swag Day. In November and April, we hosted our two annual

socials—these allow students the opportunity to enjoy themselves with their friends and ASB-funded catering. Also in November, we helped organize our school's annual Veterans Day assembly that saw our ASB officers, principal, and eighth grade band all deliver amazing performances for the audience. Together, we have worked to foster school spirit and self-belonging at TVM—from the large events to the small things we do around our school—our number one mission is to make Tukes Valley a better place.



NINETEEN SCHOOLS,



ONE COMMUNITY.



(and CASEE)

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Letter from the Editor

Every school has its own unique community, and a school district is a collective of dozens of such unique communities. Battle Ground Public Schools is no different, spanning nearly 300 square miles from Yacolt to Vancouver, and serving over 12,000 students, there are so many stories to tell that are often overlooked.

The goal of reviving *Your Battle Ground Public Schools* was to tell some of these stories and give students the ability to tell each other's stories.

With a short window of time at the end of the school year to make this project happen, I am ecstatic to see this publication finished and I hope to continue it in the future.

Thank you for reading *Your Battle Ground Public Schools*.


RYE DILLEY





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Your BATTLE GROUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDENT MAGAZINE ISSUE 001



REMAKING HISTORY

Your Battle Ground Public Schools started in 2009 as an insert in The Reflector to inform the community about the ongoing on the district. Ending in 2013, the publication was lost to history... Until it was rediscovered by a Tukes Valley Middle School student in 2025, who partnered with 12 other students and the BGPS Communications Department to revive the old newspaper in the form of a magazine. With a fresh look and new management, Your BGPS has been reintroduced with the same mission to inform the community and give a voice to students.



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