

# Tahoma Community News

January 2018

Tahoma School District

Maple Valley, WA 98038

## Inside:

- 9th-graders get a boost
- Stretching middle school learning
- Green River classes start soon

## Voters to decide on 3 levies Feb. 13

### 2 replacement measures, 1 bus levy would fill state funding gaps

The Tahoma School Board is asking voters to approve two replacement levies and a bus levy on the Feb. 13, 2018 election ballot.

"This funding is essential to the operation of the school district," Superintendent Rob Morrow said. "If folks like the levels of learning, service, and programs that their students are receiving now, passing these measures is the way to maintain that."

The replacement levies include one for technology; and another for educational programs and operations (EP&O). Those levies would be collected over four years, beginning in 2019. They would replace existing levies, though at a lower overall tax rate, and would provide funds for equipment, services and staff positions that do not receive state funding. A new state education tax, which is part of the Legislature's funding formula, goes into effect in 2018. Local levies are still permitted and Tahoma is among many other districts seeking renewed levy support. District 5 legislators confirmed their support of the EP&O levy in a letter to the school district.

The levies pay for different things than the construction bond measure approved by voters in 2013. The construction bond pays only for capital projects, such as the new Tahoma High School and new Lake Wilderness Elementary School. By law, the 2013 bond funds cannot be used for ongoing expenses, such as employee salaries and extracurricular programs, or buses.

The Educational Programs and Operations levy is estimated to cost property owners a maximum of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed



Students at Tahoma High School focus on a class assignment, using school district laptop computers provided through the current technology levy.

value each year, which is half of what is currently being collected. The levy would pay for employees, supplies, transportation staffing and program costs not funded by the state, including special education.

The technology levy is estimated to cost 39 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value the first year and would raise \$2.75 million each year to purchase computers, communications network equipment, software, and pay for technology support staff.

The Tahoma School Board also authorized a two-year levy to purchase buses that will enlarge the fleet and also make it possible to retire older buses that were purchased in

the 1990s. The \$2 million levy would be collected in 2019 and 2020 and would pay for as many as 15 large buses. The estimated cost to property owners is 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in 2019 and 13 cents per \$1,000 in 2020. The district has not asked for a bus levy since 2002.

The combined estimated cost of all three levies would be \$2.03 per \$1,000 in 2019, compared to the current combined levy rate of \$3.46. A home valued at \$400,000 would pay \$812 per year for the three levies, compared to \$1,384 this year.

The school board decided to seek levy approval because, even with changes in how

Washington state funds schools, there is still a gap between state funding and what Tahoma needs in order to provide students with a well-rounded education that meets district standards. The new state funding plan, approved last summer, does not pay for most classroom technology and does not fully fund staffing costs, special education, athletics and other extracurricular activities, professional learning opportunities, or additional program offerings beyond basic education.

The levies would help Tahoma maintain its current programs and staffing. Projections indicate that Tahoma taxpayers will see a reduction in the local school tax rate when the new levies begin, due to the lower rate for the Educational Programs and Operations levy and the expected increase in property value throughout the school district.

Morrow will share further details and answer questions in a series of meetings, including each parent-teacher group, the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, and more. Additional details are on the Tahoma website.

### Levy information events

Tahoma School Board and Superintendent Rob Morrow will discuss the levies and answer questions in two public meetings at Central Services Center on Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 10 a.m. and on Wednesday, Jan. 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Central Services Center is at 25720 Maple Valley-Black Diamond Road SE, next to Rock Creek Elementary School.

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# New class boosts 9th-graders' chances to succeed

When the ninth-grade class joined the sophomores, juniors and seniors at the new Tahoma High School this year, teachers and staff introduced a new program designed specifically to help them thrive. Called "LAUNCH," (Learning Academies Under Ninth-grade Core Humanities), the effort aims to provide students with skills such as goal setting, organization, time management and relationship-building to help them connect with their peers and staff members.

"It's all brand new, designed and created in part to be a soft start for freshmen so we aren't just dropping them into this huge school with no additional supports," said Associate Principal Chris Feist, who is overseeing the program. "There are more than 600 freshmen in this class -- over a fourth of our school -- so being able to start the school year feeling connected and safe is really important. We wanted to get those kids dialed in."

The freshman success component is built into the humanities courses, including English Language Arts and

history. But it also goes beyond the day-to-day, in-class elements: Speakers such as John Norlin from CharacterStrong, and efforts by the Bear Crew leadership students are part of the work as well. And, the new "Power Hour"-style lunch, when staff members meet and mingle with students, helps relationships form as well.

The high school as a whole has a new focus this year on the "Three Cs," and

it's the goal of staff and student leaders to make them come alive.

"How do we make 'Community, Character and Commitment' more than just words in our school?" Feist asked. "What does it feel like to make someone feel welcome? ... We're doing deliberate, little things that can reach someone and help them feel recognized even if just for a moment. It's (being) upbeat, positive, smiling and deliberately going out of their way to make someone feel welcome."

Statewide, nearly 23 percent of ninth-grade students have at least one failing grade. At Tahoma, the average is 15.6 percent -- but it's a figure that school leaders want to reduce.

"It's proven over time that this is a high indicator of on-track graduation," Feist said. "We want kids to start strong. This program was deliberately designed to support not just reduction in failing grades -- it'll be working when there are zero Fs in the freshman class. It's a shift in the adult

**"We want kids to start strong."**

Chris Feist, associate principal

mindset: What kids are capable of."

Parents can help support the effort at home by being deliberate about starting conversations about what being a successful freshman this year looks like, and helping their student create a plan to make that success happen, Feist said.

Some of the elements the LAUNCH teachers have been teaching are from the book "Seven Habits of Highly Effective



Ninth-grade students in Shawn Martinson's class at Tahoma High School listen during a recent lesson.

Teens."

Freshman Camryn Elliott said she thinks the "7 Habits" book has a lot of good information. Classmate Michael Piekarski agreed, and said it's helping him recognize how to distinguish good habits from bad ones. Other students said they think the habits will be easy -- and helpful -- to apply to their lives in and out of school.

Adrian Enciso, also a ninth-grader, said the LAUNCH curriculum is applicable in other courses.

"I like what we're doing in the class, because it helps me understand what we're doing in the curriculum," Enciso explained.

The program is designed for flexibility so that students can get to know other mem-

bers of the freshman class besides those on their own LAUNCH roster. For example social studies teacher Laura Venemon and English language arts teacher Matt Brashears are paired, and can swap and mix students for LAUNCH curriculum and activities -- something the students said they think is a great idea.

Principal Terry Duty said the LAUNCH effort is central to helping ninth-graders flourish.

"Nationally, we know the freshmen year is pivotal to a successful high school experience," Duty said. "We designed LAUNCH from the ground up to best position Tahoma freshmen with the skills they need to be successful through high school and beyond."

## High school students adapting well to walking, biking to campus

The people whose focus is on student safety each day are pleased with how Tahoma High School students have adjusted to walking and biking to school.

Karin Weihe, Tahoma High School security officer, said students have responded well and there have been few problems.

The new high school's location in the center of Maple Valley made walking, biking and even skateboarding to school possible, which is a big change from the former high school on the district's west border, where there are no safe-walk routes. THS students who live within a 1.5-mile radius do not have school bus service and must get themselves to school.

Though there is no accurate count, hundreds of students now get to school on foot or bicycle. So many students are riding bikes to school that there is a shortage of storage racks. Additional racks, created by students in the school's metals fabrication program, will be installed soon.

School and district officials have worked with city of Maple Valley and state Department of Transportation traffic experts to evaluate where safety and traffic improvements



A crossing guard assists students near the east entrance to Tahoma High School, where the Cedar River Trail crosses Tahoma Way.

can be made. One of the changes already in place is posting an adult crossing guard on Tahoma Way, which is the east entrance to the high school, to assist students as they

arrive and at dismissal. Other changes, including the addition of a left-turn arrow from Tahoma Way to SR 169, and improved street lighting are under consideration.

Students have had opportunities to learn more about pedestrian and bicycle safety at school, including two bike safety classes taught by School Resource Officer Carl Bonnell. Among the many safety tips offered as part of the class, Bonnell said he stresses the need for bike riders to always keep in mind that sharing the road with cars requires them to be alert and to clearly signal to drivers when they are turning or stopping.

Both Bonnell and Weihe said one of the more challenging lessons they are trying to impress upon student walkers and riders is to wear light-colored or reflective clothing, along with helmets and lights for cyclists. Another difficult lesson is to persuade students to avoid using smartphones and other devices that take their eyes and ears off the road or sidewalk.

Maple Valley Police have provided emphasis patrols to enforce speed limits and traffic safety laws on streets that serve the high school.



## Lake Wilderness students learn lesson about 'different-abilities'

The I.D.E.A. (Interactive Disability Education Awareness) Project visited Lake Wilderness Elementary School recently, to help students learn more about one another. Headed by Tahoma parent Allison Bureau, the nonprofit program brings assemblies and hands-on activities to schools throughout the region.

"We all have 'different-abilities,' rather than thinking of it as 'disabilities,'" Dean of Students Jennifer McPherson said. "This subject is not only an integral piece to thinking about our school culture in general ... It was a perfect follow-up to our month-long, school wide preventative efforts in October alongside Anti-Bullying Month, and will serve as a great reference point in launching future work with student culture around being kind that we have planned for this year."

All grades and classes participated in the

activities, including SAIL students. Activities ask that students try to complete school-related tasks, while experiencing different sensory and processing difficulties. For example, they might be asked to wear headphones that are playing loud static while they try to listen to verbal instructions; or, they might try to put on and button up a jacket while wearing gloves. At another station, students try to complete a maze looking only in a mirror. "Parent feedback has been overwhelmingly positive," McPherson said. "The general feeling was that this was an important piece to our school culture, and that the IDEA Project was a great way to start the conversation with students."

KOMO Channel 4 News visited during the presentations, and aired a feature piece about the IDEA Project.

To learn more: <http://theideaproject.org/>



Lake Wilderness students participate in a marshmallow activity, which helps them understand what it might be like to speak with a speech impediment.

## Newly elected board member eager to begin

Val Paganelli is eager to begin the next chapter of her involvement in public schools as the newest member of the Tahoma School Board.

Paganelli was sworn in at the board's Nov. 28 meeting by Superintendent Rob Morrow. Tahoma voters elected Paganelli on the November ballot, and also re-elected Tami Henkel for a new term. Henkel ran unopposed.

A parent of two, including a current Tahoma senior and an older son, Paganelli moved to Maple Valley with her family in 2010. She said volunteering and participating in the classroom, in fundraising and in other efforts, has always been a priority regardless of which school district her children attended.

"I think to me, the school district has been a place to be able to make an impact and a difference that is felt. ... I would say (serving on the school board) is the continued evolution of being involved and being engaged," Paganelli said. "Kids take you places that you can't script. We just generally have given and participated as they grew."

Her education includes a bachelor's degree in business administration and economics, and she has worked as a consulting actuary and in the business actuarial unit for a large company. In recent years Paganelli has worked as a financial



Val Paganelli

advisor in Maple Valley. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, watching baseball, being outdoors and with her family's animals, which include dogs, cats, chickens and a horse.

Since the community approved the 2013 construction bond, she has served as one of the parent representatives on the Bond Oversight Committee, which reviewed project updates, spending and projections on the new high school, the new Lake Wilderness Elementary and the other projects funded by the bond measure.

"It was certainly a runway to considering a run for School Board," Paganelli said, noting that she felt her time on the committee was a good introduction to reviewing district procedures, asking questions and representing her fellow community members.

## Middle school students start the day by stretching their learning

When Maple View and Summit Trail middle school students start the second semester at the end of January, they'll have a new Stretch learning class to attend.

Each morning, Monday through Thursday, students at both sites will have the chance to take 45-minute classes such as Guitar, Introduction to Babysitting, Current Events, Computer Programming, Debate and "Sounding off on the Puget Sound."

The first semester Stretch class has been filled with new curriculum, including lessons focused on Future Ready skills, real life skills such as learning about finances and study and organization skills. The idea behind the second semester classes (broken into two quarters) is to create additional opportunities for students to explore their interests beyond the previous offerings, Summit Trail Principal Sean Cassidy said.

"The Stretch classes provide a venue for students to get that chance within the school day," Cassidy said. "Many of these topics are personal passions of our staff members and allow them to connect curriculum in unique ways for our kids. I'm excited to see how these themes grow and change based on interactions between students and staff over the next few years."

Maple View Principal Andy McGrath agreed.

"This fits very closely with some of the goals identified in the (curriculum) model review: The need for middle school stu-

dents to have more choices in order to explore fields of interest and decide on paths they might like to follow in high school and college," McGrath said. "The first two quarters have been prescribed with little choice for students. Third and fourth quarter, we will really open up the student choice portion of Stretch and take a step closer to what this program was designed to do for students."

Additional choices at both schools will include Walking for Fitness, Creative Writing, Strategy Games, Solution Seekers and Greek Mythology. Students recently completed a survey to indicate their top few choices; they will be placed in classes with an effort to match each student with one of those choices. Students will primarily stay within grade levels, but some sixth-graders may be placed with seventh-graders, and some seventh-graders may have class with eighth-graders.

"The whole idea of the enrichment portion of Stretch was to pique students' interest in new and exciting topics that they may have wondered about and want to better understand," McGrath said. "It is exciting because it also challenges the creativity of our staff. A number of the Maple View staff members have created a new class that they developed specifically for this program, using the interests that they hear their students talking about around school."



## Green River College hosts classes this winter at Tahoma High School

Green River College is preparing to offer seven community education classes in January, February, and March at Tahoma High School, which is the first step toward the regional learning center component of the new high school.

The classes were chosen in response to a community survey by Green River College and Tahoma School District. Additional classes are planned as the new program evolves, with the goal being 15 classes per quarter.


Amy Torrens-Harry, assistant director of Tahoma Teaching and Learning, said the school district and college have spent many hours discussing and planning the community education classes. She said college officials are excited to be part of the regional learning center and are looking to add more classes. Discussions are underway to bring college-credit classes to the high school, for both high school students and community members, she said. There is no firm timeline for college credit classes, as the college and district navigate through numerous state and college rules that determine how classes can be offered away from Green River's main campus in Auburn.

"It's more complicated than you would think," Torrens-Harry said. "This seems like the best way to build a relationship with the college, by getting to know them and introduce them to the community."

The first seven classes are: Ceramics I; Beginning Drawing; Crafting the Story; Digital Photography I; Yoga for All; Resistance Band Workout; and Seeds to Sprouts this Spring.

Green River College is advertising the classes in its winter quarter catalog: <https://www.greenriver.edu/media/content-assets/documents/academics/schedules-and-catalog/2018-Winter-CE-Schedule.pdf>.

### TAHOMA REGIONAL LEARNING CENTER CLASSES



Green River College Continuing Education is excited to announce a new partnership with the Tahoma School District. This January the College will begin offering several personal enrichment classes at the Tahoma High School and Regional Learning Center as a "soft start." In the coming year the Continuing Education department expects to launch a Grand Opening by offering a wide array of classes including professional development, small business and additional personal enrichment programs.

#### Ceramics I

Wheel Throwing and Hand Building are taught in this beginner's ceramics course. Learn centering and tool use for shaping thrown items such as simple forms, cylinders, bowls and plates. In the introduction to hand building, learn how to create functional and decorative work using a variety of techniques. Projects develop from your skill level and personal ideas. Fee includes \$25 studio supply fee. See website for recommended tool kit. Fee \$225

Check the website for date and time.

#### Ceramics II

This class is designed to engage students in more advanced ceramic techniques and projects. Students will develop and enhance skills learned in the Ceramics I class, as well as refine and experiment with new materials and techniques. Fee includes \$25 studio supply fee. See website for recommended tool kit. \$225

Check the website for date and time.

#### Digital Photography 1

Move beyond the "auto" mode of your digital camera and take great photos in any situation! Through this basic hands-on course, you will explore modern photography in simple, real-world terms. You will learn about exposure, shutter speed, focus, flash, aperture, depth of field, ISO and much more. Class requirements include a digital camera, with user guide, that is capable of full manual control. Fee \$135

Check the website for date and time.

#### Watercolor Painting

Paint scenery and still life paintings as you learn the basic techniques of watercolor painting: various washes, glazing, dry brush, lifting color, masking, image transfer. Learn design skills, color mixing, negative painting, pen and ink, special effects, and more. Supply list provided for you to bring to the first class upon registering. Fee \$119

Check the website for date and time.

#### Drawing for Beginners

Learn the basics of creating strong and accurate drawings in this fundamental class, working from a variety of still life objects. Exercises expose you to key concepts and artistic principles to accurately render line, shape, proportion and negative space. Explore various drawing media, including pencil, pastel and charcoal. Fee \$115

Check the website for date and time.

Classes are listed in the Green River College course catalog.

## Preschool parents invited to kindergarten readiness classes

Parents of preschool children, ages 2-5 who will be entering kindergarten in 2018-2021, are invited to attend workshops aimed at helping them prepare their child for kindergarten.

This is Tahoma's second year offering the "READY! for Kindergarten" program, which helps parents and caregivers learn specific, fun strategies centered around language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social and emotional skills.

Those who attend the three 90-minute workshop sessions receive a binder with 26 age-appropriate targets, along with resources, educational toys/games and training.

Here is the workshop schedule (child care provided):

- Wednesday, Jan. 17, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, March 14 6-7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 25 6-7:30 p.m.



Topics include:

- Language and literacy.
- Math and reasoning.
- Social and emotional.

There are three age group options:

- Ages 2-3 workshop
- Ages 3-4 workshop
- Ages 4-5 workshop

There is a materials fee of \$150; scholarships are available, sponsored by Maple Valley Rotary.

To register for a parent workshop, visit <https://goo.gl/DiuqA2>.

## Kindergarten preregistration ends Jan. 10

Kindergarten preregistration is open for students who will enter kindergarten in the fall of 2018; it will remain open through Jan. 10.

To complete the preregistration, please visit the Tahoma web page, Teaching and Learning Department: [http://www.tahomasd.us/pages/Tahoma\\_School\\_District\\_409/Departments/Teaching\\_Learning/Kindergarten](http://www.tahomasd.us/pages/Tahoma_School_District_409/Departments/Teaching_Learning/Kindergarten).

After families preregister their child for kindergarten, they will receive a registra-

tion packet in the mail in January. Parents will bring their child's completed packet to the elementary school office the week of Jan. 22-26 to finalize the registration. Those who preregister will also receive monthly "Kindergarten Learning Connections" newsletters via email; and other early learning information.

If you know of a family with a child in the Tahoma School District who will be 5 by Aug. 31, 2018, please share this information with them.

## Shadow Lake's playground taking shape



A large crane visited Shadow Lake Elementary School recently to lift concrete sections in place for an underground drainage vault that is part of the new playground being constructed on the site. The new playground will use Foreverlawn, a synthetic ground covering that will allow usage regardless of weather conditions. The playground is paid for with funds from the 2013 construction bond.



Tahoma Community Report is produced by the Tahoma School District Communication Office and mailed to all school district residents four times a year. Contact the Communication Office by calling 425-413-3409 or by email to Kevin Patterson, communication director, at: [kpatters@tahomasd.us](mailto:kpatters@tahomasd.us)

The Tahoma School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following employees are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

#### Title IX Officer

Director of Human Resources  
25720 Maple Valley Highway  
Maple Valley, WA 98038  
425-413-3400  
[TitleIX@tahomasd.us](mailto:TitleIX@tahomasd.us)

#### ADA Coordinator

Director of Human Resources  
25720 Maple Valley Highway  
Maple Valley, WA 98038  
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#### Section 504 Coordinator

Director of Special Services  
25720 Maple Valley Highway  
Maple Valley, WA 98038  
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