

School Board Named WA Board of the Year

Although the school board of the University Place School District has been named a Board of Distinction by the Washington State School Directors' Association on numerous occasions, this past year it was awarded the highest honor as State School Board of the Year. According to WSSDA, the award "honors school boards that demonstrate effective use of the Washington School Board Standards.

These standards, developed and adopted by WSSDA in 2009, promote research-based governance practices that lead to high levels of student and district achievement." This is the first time UPSD, which was selected from among 23 other nominees statewide, has been voted Board of the Year.

Ethelda Burke Fills Vacant Seat on Board

Following her election to the State House of Representatives,

Christine Kilduff has stepped down from her position as school board president to attend to her new duties. Mary Lu Dickinson was elected to the position of president in December. Ethelda Burke, a long-time resident of University Place and retired educator, has been appointed to the board, filling the vacancy caused by Kilduff's resignation. She is well aware of the quality of education here, having raised twin daughters from kindergarten through graduation.

When the opportunity arose to step into Kilduff's position as an interim appointee, she knew she had something to offer the district, saying it was her moral imperative to "share my passion for public education with the sitting Board of Directors, who have made excellent policy decisions for the students of this community." Burke brings a new perspective to the Board

as a former superintendent of the Tukwila School District, and looks forward to the experience of being part of the School Board instead of administration. She said about public education that it is "the single greatest means available to society to improve students' lives and enable them to contribute to—and enrich—their communities. "This community is centered around education. Whether it's supporting high school sports, building student self-esteem, or developing good citizens, there are forward-thinking visionaries all over University Place. I look forward to helping continue on that path, and hopefully my background in the administrative side of education will bring a helpful viewpoint to the board."

"Each of our boards of the year has shown how a commitment to quality education for all kids can translate into real progress. These boards model true leadership in their passion and their actions."

—Mari Taylor, WSSDA president



Ethelda Burke

New Head Football Coach Paulson Gets 'Dream Job'

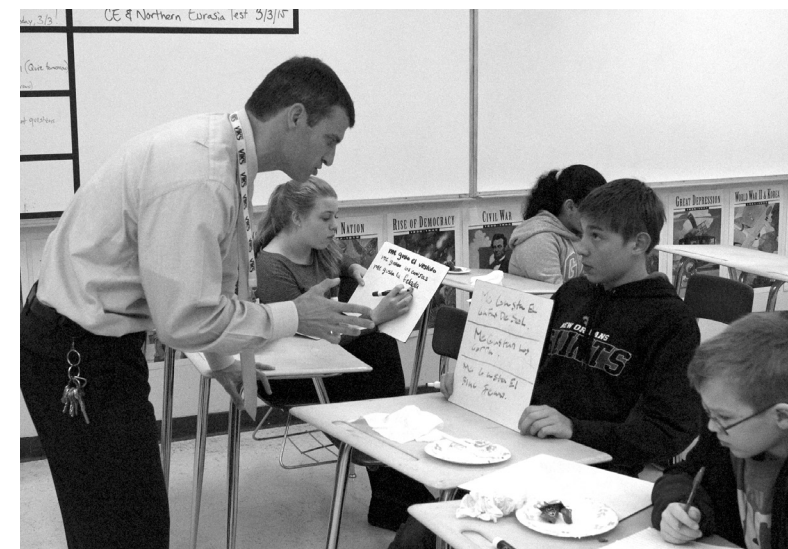


A successful coach and educator at Kentlake High School, new Curtis High School head football coach Chris Paulson said he would only leave the school and football program he had built for his "dream job." When the opportunity came to coach in the University Place School District, it was too good to pass up. "What I love about this district is the community support," said Paulson, who played linebacker for the Washington State Cougars. "The fact

that there's only one high school and such passionate fan support gives it almost a small-town feel, but in a near-urban setting. It's a unique situation that comes with extremely high expectations for its student-athletes both on and off the field."

His coaching philosophy developed from his history as a defensive player. "Our defenses always had difficulty preparing for complex option attacks," he said, "so when I began developing my offense, I took a lot of elements from the triple-option plan similar to that used by the army and air force military academies, but with a bigger threat of the pass as well."

Paulson is also excited to start his classroom position at CHS this fall, where he will teach a new AP European History class. He earned his BA in history and also holds his MASTERS in instructional technology.



Above, CHS assistant principal Tom Adams helps students practice their conversational Spanish. Below left, Spanish teacher Jose Brambila does a role-playing exercise with the adult night class.

Popular Spanish Night Classes to Continue

Curtis High School is offering free beginning and intermediate Spanish night classes for both adults and students of all ages. Now in its second year, the program is free for any interested University Place residents, according to CHS Assistant Principal Tom Adams. He and Spanish teacher Jose Brambila—both of whom volunteer their time—started the program last year as a way of sharing their passion for Spanish and giving back to the community that supports the school district so well. "We believe in the mission of our schools," said Adams, who majored in Spanish at the University of Washington and lived in both Ecuador and Spain. "We wanted to give back to the University Place community because the citizens of U.P. support our district in so many

ways. We value the school and district's connection with the community." Last year he and Brambila thought up the idea to team-teach the class for adults, focusing on conversational skills. It was an immediate success, and during the year a lot of requests came up from parents in the class to teach students as well, primarily as a preparatory class for high school Spanish, but also just as an introduction to a useful foreign language for younger students. "Spanish is becoming more and more prevalent as our world changes," said Brambila. "It's such a useful skill to be able to speak it." So this year they split into two classrooms, with Brambila teaching adults and Adams teaching students, peaking at 34 students.



If there is sufficient interest, a new session will start after the April spring break. Contact Tom Adams at tadams@upsd.wednet.edu to sign up.

Science Olympiad Team to Compete at State Level

Now in its fifth year, the Curtis High School Science Olympiad team qualified to go to the upcoming state championships, where they hope to take home a medal April 18. According to coach Nick Stephens, the team is growing in membership every year, and the young 38-person team is learning how to succeed at tournaments. The key, he said, is encouraging independent motivation by the students. "The credit goes entirely to the team," said Stephens, a science teacher at Curtis High School. "They run the meetings, learn their subject areas, and plan strategy. I'm there just for advice and administration, so their successes are entirely their own."

The tournaments are a combination of knowledge-based testing, hands-on experiments, and projects completed prior to the competition, according to team captain and four-year member Christine Phan. For each tournament, they select students to participate in one or several of the 23 total events, and points are awarded based on how they fare against the other schools. The school gets a final ranking for their cumulative total in all events, so ideally they will have several students proficient in every subject area.

Before every tournament, they select their varsity team, strategizing to give them the strongest performance across the most subjects with 17 participants. They also field a B and even a C team for some tournaments, to give their younger members experience. "We've been to the state championships a few times now," said Phan, "and have elevated our goals this year to the point where we can realistically try to win it and make nationals. The future of our team is very bright."



At top, the Curtis Science Olympiad team poses after a long day of intense competition at Highline College. Below left, Annaliese Wegner and Nolan Wool prepare to test the efficiency of their balsa wood bridge by suspending a bucket of sand from it. Points are awarded for lightweight bridges that are capable of holding heavy loads. Below right, Marissa Lordahl and John Park make the final adjustments to their air trajectory device. The goal of this event is to use gravity to pneumatically launch a ping pong ball to precise targets at various distances.

Non-profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Tacoma, WA Permit No. 411

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Educational Service Center 3717 Grandview Dr. W. University Place, WA 98466



DEVELOPING COMPETENT CONTRIBUTING CITIZENS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

SCHOOL DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY PLACE

Dialog

Volume 35

Number 2

Spring 2015

The State of the District Is Strong

A Message from School Board President Mary Lu Dickinson



The commitment to develop competent, contributing citizens continues in the University Place School District. Through the caring and diligent efforts of our strong governance team and our wonderful administration and staff, we continue to be one of the top performing school districts in the state.

After interviewing six very well-qualified applicants

to fill the vacancy on the school board created when Christine Kilduff was elected to the legislature, we welcome Ethelda Burke, appointed on January 28 to the Board. It was heartening to have so much interest in our schools. The Board has demonstrated a commitment to ensure diverse perspectives and representation while maintaining its focus on what best meets the needs of all of our students.

High academic expectations have led to continuous improvement as UPSD students continue to score significantly above their state and national peers at every grade level. Our students are acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for success in post-secondary education, the world of work, and as contributing citizens.

UPSD students demonstrate the individual character qualities, emotional strength, and social skills to succeed. They are learning the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect their future education and career opportunities. They contribute to the betterment of school and community, and understand their responsibility to contribute to both family and society.

Students are gaining knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes of a healthy and fit lifestyle that will successfully carry them into adult life.

The Board continues to look for ways to improve and is interested in linking with the community to listen to your thoughts. Please contact Board members if there are any school issues you would be interested in hearing more about. We look forward to working with you to develop competent, contributing citizens and to create the best schools possible. We thank you for all of your support.

IN THIS ISSUE

Martin Luther King, Jr. Honored around the District



A Guide to SBAC Testing — Frequently Asked Questions

New School Board Member Ethelda Burke



Science Olympiad Team to Compete in State Finals

Introducing New CHS Football Coach Chris Paulson



Spanish Night Class Open to All University Place Residents

Better, Higher Standards Benefit Students

A Message from Superintendent Patti Banks



Dear Friends and Families of UPSD:

Our students' progress toward meeting the rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in math and English language arts will be the focus of state mandated testing in grades 3-11 throughout the spring. Both the CCSS and, particularly, the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) have been topics of controversy and on-going media coverage in recent months.

This issue of the *Dialog* will provide you with detailed information about the many challenges of the new assessment system, not the least of which is the requirement that all testing will be on computers, with no paper and pencil option at any grade. District administrators and our excellent technology support staff have worked very hard to prepare for these changes. More important, however, are the tremendous efforts made by our teachers and administrators to teach the significantly more rigorous content reflected in the CCSS—efforts that we strongly believe benefit the learning of all our students.

The CCSS were developed to improve the quality of education for our nation's public school children by increasing the rigor, focus and coherence of instructional content in math and English, to ensure that students graduating from high school are truly college and career ready. The standards were designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn at high levels—to reduce excessive college remediation and drop-out rates and prepare students for living-wage jobs. The rationale for national standards is in part the need to mediate the negative impact of high rates of student mobility, not just from state-to-state, but from district-to-district and even from school-to-school within Washington. You might be surprised to learn that in 2013-14, the mobility rate for UPSD's four primary schools was nearly thirty percent. This means that, on average, seven students in every classroom will have moved into or out of the class during the course of the year. Common and coherent standards for learning support these students and their families by eliminating learning gaps caused by widely variable curriculum expectations encountered by students each time they move to a new school, district, or state.

In UPSD, teachers have been working very hard to implement the instructional shifts required by the CCSS; we have done this work because, regardless of the many political issues that have been raised, the standards themselves articulate valuable knowledge and skills that we know our students can learn. These include, for example, requiring all students to be able to read and learn from complex text, and to demonstrate their learning in text-based writing. The CCSS are the first standards to require teachers in social studies, science, technology and the arts to guide students in reading a wide range of material in their disciplines; this type of wide reading increases both

students' subject area learning, and their reading skills.

Raising our standards for student learning is demanding work, and we know that the first round of test results will produce lower initial test scores that reflect the higher expectations and increased rigor of the CCSS. However, we are confident that all of our students, regardless of their background or income level, can do this work, and that test scores will rise with each year as students, teachers and support staff become more familiar with the content and the test.

My little granddaughter, Maddie, will start kindergarten this year; I want her to have the opportunity to learn to read, write, think and do math at the high levels reflected in Washington's CCSS, so that she will be ready, when the time comes, to succeed in college and career. If she were to attend school in UPSD, I know that our excellent teachers, support staff and administrators would ensure she had this opportunity to learn; it's the opportunity they are providing daily for all our students.

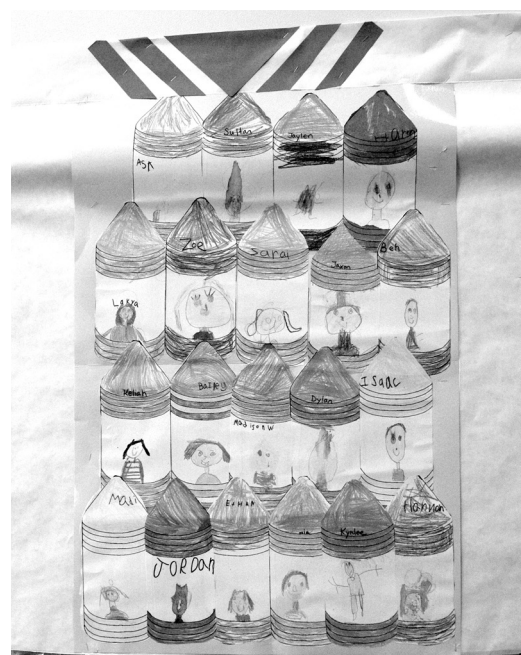
Dialog

The *Dialog* is published periodically by the University Place School District 83, 3717 Grandview Dr. W., University Place, WA 98466, for University Place residents and businesses. The District complies with all federal laws, rules, and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or disabilities in student education programs, cocurricular activities and employment practices. The District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer encouraging application of qualified minorities, women, and disabled persons for employment and other opportunities. For elevator access at a school site, contact the principal's office. The UPSD is a drug-free and smoke-free workplace and educational setting. Direct inquiries regarding compliance, grievance, or appeal procedures, or concerns involving students, should be made to the District Affirmative Action Officer/Section 504/FAPE/ADA/Title IX Officer, John Sander, (253)566-5600, 3717 Grandview Drive West, University Place, WA 98466.

Board of Directors

Mary Lu Dickinson, *president*
Rick Maloney, *vice president*
Michael Ehart, *legislative representative*
Ethelda Burke
Annie Fitzsimmons

Patti Banks, *superintendent*



MARTIN LUTHER KING was honored and remembered in many ways across the district. At Narrows View Intermediate (top photo), students read excerpts from *The Story of a Great Man*, and the 7th-grade choir performed "If You're Out There." In the bottom two photos, students in Mrs. Hardwick's class at UP Primary School created artwork, decorated their hallways, and learned about Dr. King's life through classroom exercises and projects.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

State's Mandatory Tests Measure Progress Toward Common Core Standards

For the last 20 years, all students in Washington State have taken required tests every spring. This year is no different. All students in grades 3-8 and 11 will take state-mandated tests in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) between now and the end of the school year. Students in grade 10 will take the state mandated test in English language arts (ELA). Some students in grades 9-12 may also take course-specific tests in Algebra, Biology, and/or Geometry. While spring testing is not new, students will take the new "Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium" tests (or SBAC) for the first time this year. These exams are the first to measure progress toward the new, more rigorous, Common Core State Standards. We hope our answers to the following questions will help you understand these new tests and how they will be implemented in UPSD. The chart also provides information about what tests are given at each grade level, when they are given, and how long they will take students to complete.

Q: Why is the acronym "SBAC" used for these exams?

SBAC stands for "Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium." This consortium is a group of researchers, educators, and policymakers from over 20 states. Representatives include testing experts, teachers, curriculum specialists, and university professors. This group develops, distributes, and scores the exams for all school districts in Washington.

Q: When will the tests be given to students?

Different grade levels will test at different times during the months of March, April, May, and June. Each grade level is assigned a window of time when they are required to take the tests. Not all students in a grade level will test on the same day. Information about when each grade level will take the exams is included in the chart. Parents of UPSD students will get more exact information about testing dates and times from individual schools in newsletters, school messenger emails, and websites.

Q: How much time will students need to complete the SBAC tests?

Just like state tests taken in prior years, the SBAC tests are not timed. Each student will be allowed whatever time they need to complete the tests. The chart provides estimated testing times for students by grade level and test. The actual time that each student will need for testing will vary. Overall, required state testing will take between 4 and 10 hours in grades 3-8, 10 and 11. This accounts for less than one percent of total instructional time and equates to about 1-3 additional hours compared to previous years.

Q: What do the SBAC tests measure?

Students will take one exam in math and one in English/language arts (ELA) each year in grades 3-8 and 11, and students in grade 10 will take one exam in English/language arts. ELA tests focus on both reading and writing skills. The tests are based on the newly adopted Common Core State Standards and are designed to assess each student's progress toward college and career readiness. The standards are higher than previous standards. As a result, initial results may seem lower, but the results will help teachers provide students with the skills they need to be successful in their chosen pathway.

Q: How are SBAC exams different from the MSP (Measurement of Student Progress) and the HSPE (High School Proficiency Exams) students have taken for the last decade?

SBAC tests are different in at least four important ways. First, the tests are slightly longer than older tests for most grade levels. Secondly, there are two types of SBAC tests (math and ELA) compared to four types of tests in the old system (math, reading, writing, and science). Another important difference is that the SBAC exams are based on an entirely new set of learning standards (Common Core). Lastly, SBAC tests must be taken on computers or tablets.

Q: Does University Place School District have enough computers for students to use for testing?

Thanks to the ongoing support of local taxpayers, UPSD recently added more than 500 new computers to our classrooms to support student learning throughout the year. These computers will also be used by students to complete the SBAC tests. Our recent investment in this technology will allow for testing to be completed in shorter time frames and will minimize the disruption caused by the testing at each school.

Q: Are the SBAC exams harder or easier than the MSP and HSPE tests?

SBAC exams will definitely be more challenging for students and scores will likely be lower. Practice tests were given to some school districts around the country and results show passing rates between 30 and 50 percent. These numbers are substantially lower than the scores we have seen on MSP and HSPE math, reading, and writing exams in UPSD. The Common Core State Standards are clearly more rigorous and challenging for students. We welcome this new challenge and we know that our students' performance will continue to grow and improve over time.

Q: Are the SBAC tests the only tests required by the state this year?

No. The math and ELA exams will replace some tests, but not all. Students in grades 5 and 8 will continue to take the MSP Science test this year. All students enrolled in a Biology class will take an End-of-Course (EOC) test. Students in grades 9-12 will also take either the Algebra EOC and/or the Geometry EOC if they have not already passed one of these exams. The chart explains what tests will be taken at each grade level.

Q: What other tests are UPSD students required to take this year?

In addition to the required state tests, UPSD gives several district tests to students in math and reading throughout the year for the purposes of monitoring their learning progress and providing additional support. The tests are different at each grade level and include the GMADE, DIBELS, GRADE, GMRT, and quarterly assessments. Parents are encouraged to contact their student's school if they have questions about district tests.

Q: Will students in UPSD be able to take practice tests before actual testing?

Students in grades 3-8, 10, and 11 took practice "interim assessments" in classrooms in February and March. These interim assessments give students and teachers a chance to try out the technology and practice responding to new questions. Interim assessments will not be scored and results will not be available to staff, students, or parents. Official SBAC tests began in mid-March at grades 3 and 10. Most testing will take place in April, May and June.

Q: When will we know how well our students did on the SBAC tests?

UPSD does not score the tests, and we have no way of controlling when results will be provided. The state intends to return grade 3 test scores before the end of the school year. Other scores will likely be released this summer and reported to families, staff members, and media.

Q: What will the Smarter Balanced scores look like and what will they mean?

Students are scored on a 1 to 4 scale. Students who score a 3 or 4 are on target to be college and career-ready by the end of grade 12. A level 4 rating means a student exceeds standards. This score represents advanced mastery of skills and knowledge in a subject. A level 3 score means a student meets standard and has mastered the skills and knowledge in a subject. A level 2 score means the student is below standard and has only mastered some of the skills and knowledge in a subject. A level 1 score means the student is well below standard. Students at levels 1 and 2 will receive additional academic support to help them meet or exceed the standards.

Q: How will Smarter Balanced test results be used?

The results for SBAC exams will primarily be used as a way to measure the progress of each student and our system as a whole. Most importantly, the scores will tell us how well individ-

ual students are mastering the Common Core State Standards in math and ELA so that parents and teachers can provide the right kind of academic support to help all students be college and career ready. Taken collectively, the scores will give each school and the district information about the knowledge and skills students are learning well, and where improvement is needed in our system. The new assessments will also allow us to compare student performance across schools and districts statewide and throughout the country.

Q: Are students required to pass the SBAC exams in order to graduate high school?

Nearly all 11th graders taking the SBAC tests this year have already passed the HSPE tests as 10th graders and have met the requirements for graduation in spring of 2015 and 2016. The first group of students who could be impacted by SBAC graduation requirements is the class of 2017 (current 10th graders). Unless changes are made to state law, students will be required to pass SBAC exams to graduate in future years.

Q: Will special education students also take these exams?

Some students receiving special education services will take the SBAC exams with accommodations and/or modifications. Other students will take a Developmentally Appropriate Proficiency Exam (DAPE) or complete a portfolio to submit to the state in place of the SBAC tests.

Test	SBAC Practice	HSPE* Writing	HSPE* Reading	EOC* Biology	EOC* Algebra or Geometry	MSP Science	SBAC English/Language Arts (ELA)	SBAC Math	Estimated TOTAL Testing Time
Testing Window	Feb.- March	March	March	May-June	May-June	April-June	March-June	March-June	
Grade	Estimated Time for Testing (in hours)								
P-2	NO REQUIRED or PRACTICE TESTING								
3	ELA & Math						4	4	8
4	ELA & Math						4	4	8
5	ELA & Math					2	4	4	10
6	ELA & Math					2	4	4	10
7	ELA & Math				2	2	4	4	10-12
8	ELA & Math				2	2	4	4	10-12
9					2				0-2
10	ELA only			2	2		4		4-8
11	ELA & Math	3	3	2	2		4	4	8-12
12		3	3	2	2				0-10

○ PRACTICE test only (times vary)

● SOME students test

● ALL students test

SBAC Practice- These "interim" assessments are practice tests for students. Results will not be collected or distributed.

SBAC - Smarter Balanced Assessment (NEW this year- ALL students test at each level)

MSP - Measurement of Student Progress (ALL students test at each level)

***HSPE** - High School Proficiency Exam (ONLY given to students who need to pass for graduation)

***EOC** - End-of-Course Exam (ONLY given to students enrolled in specific courses who need to pass for graduation)