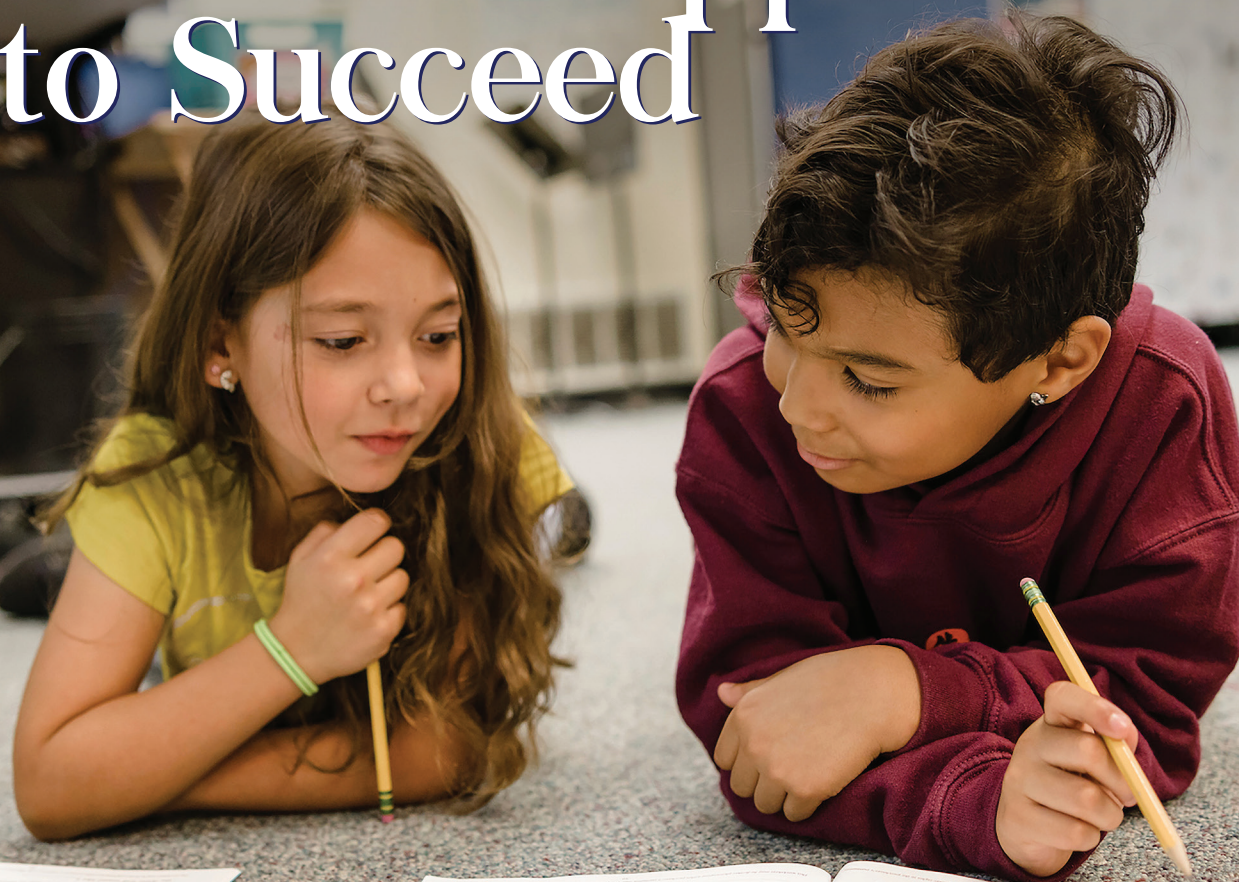


Giving All Students the Best Opportunity to Succeed



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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- Building and Nurturing Inclusive School Environments
- Afterschool Academics Provide Learning Opportunities
- CJH Field Replacement: Capital Levy at Work
- The Benefits of Limiting Student Cell Phone Usage

UPSD Board Closely Monitors District Performance

A Message from School Board President Ethelda Burke



The UPSD Board of Directors is honored to serve the students and members of this community by monitoring our school district performance to ensure all students thrive. Everything we monitor is important, but our main focus is on student academic achievement. We believe each student's success in life is significantly impacted by

what they learn in school, and we take our responsibility to provide this learning very seriously.

Each January, district administrators present the "Academic Ends" policy to the Board. During this presentation, district staff explain progress in several key areas including overall academic achievement, achievement of specific student groups and achievement gaps among groups. There is always room for improvement, but we are already pleased with the progress made towards post-pandemic learning recovery.

As we continue to focus on the academic performance of our students, the Board of Directors will also work to improve citizenship and student health and fitness.

We invite you to learn more about how the Board monitors the district's performance by visiting our website or attending a Board meeting.

JANUARY 2023 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 UPSD students outperformed state and national peers in every grade level and subject in grades 1-12.
- 2 Scores on state literacy and math exams have rebounded from 2021 by an average of 5.4% in literacy and 9.5% in math. This recovery has outpaced state trends by 3.3% in literacy and 7.3% in math.
- 3 Achievement gaps have decreased since 2021 with many returning to near 2019 levels.
- 4 The "on-time" graduation rate for UPSD students was 94.4% in 2022. This is more than 10% above the state's rate. Also, all UPSD student subgroups (race, income, etc.) outperformed state peers by between 6% and 17%.
- 5 The 2-year post-secondary attendance rate for CHS graduates is 4% higher than the state. The 4-year post-secondary rate is 8% higher than the state (class of 2019).

Interested in Serving on the UPSD School Board? Here's How!

School Board directors are local citizens who are called to invest their time towards making a positive impact for our students and district. Each school board director is elected to a four-year term and must reside in the boundaries of UPSD. All eligible voters in UPSD may vote for each 'at-large' seat. Visit https://www.upsd83.org/school_board to read further details about the UPSD Board of Directors.

For detailed information on how to file, please visit the Candidates tab on the Washington Secretary of State's website at <http://sos.wa.gov/elections/>, call (360) 902-4180 or (800) 448-4881 or email elections@sos.wa.gov.

KEY DATES FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CANDIDATES:

In November 2023, three of the five University Place School Board seats will be up for election. Individuals who want to run for one of the open seats must file with Pierce County Elections between May 15-19, 2023.

Primary Election:
August 1, 2023

General Election:
November 7, 2023

Board Service Begins:
December 2023



Meeting the Needs of Every Student



A Message from Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin

I am proud to work in a school district that is committed to continued growth and improvement. We always want to get better. This has long been a hallmark of our organizational culture and aspirations. To do this, we need to be honest about how we define success. We also need to be honest about what needs improving. This requires constant reflection and self-assessment. Students, parents and community members help us in this effort by telling us about their experiences with- and hopes for- University Place School District.

Understanding and meeting the needs of our diverse student population is the heart of our improvement efforts. In this issue of the Dialog you will find several examples of our commitment to providing extra support and learning opportunities for students. After school academies at all four UPSD primary schools are one example of this commitment. These academies are funded with local levy dollars and led by certificated teachers from each school. They provide additional instructional time for students in literacy and math in small group settings. You can learn more about after school academies on page 7.

Over the last several years it has become clear that making schools more equitable and inclusive is a need here in UPSD and elsewhere. It is critical that each student feels like they belong in our schools. Respecting and celebrating the many different cultural backgrounds and experiences of students is one way to construct an inclusive environment across the district. Individual teachers, grade level teams, building committees and district leaders continue to focus on how we can improve inclusivity through our relationships, curricula, events, and other activities. These efforts to become more inclusive are highlighted on pages 5 & 6.

Every employee in the district contributes to student success. Everyone helps students get what they need. However, our teachers play the most important role in the work. The Spotlights section of this issue focuses on one of our many amazing teachers, Elisa Jones. Like so many others in UPSD, Ms. Jones supports students as learners inside the classroom and through a wide range of activities that build character, strengthen relationships and bring joy.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. If you have any concerns, questions or suggestions for UPSD, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at jchamberlin@upsd83.org or call (253) 566-5600.



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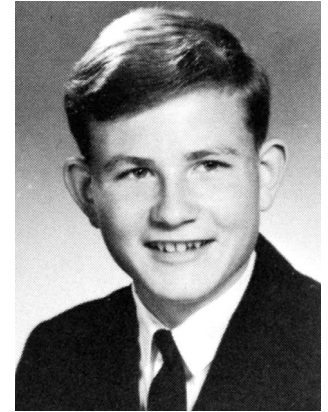
UP Spotlights

Alumni Spotlight: Gary Larson, American Cartoonist, the Creator of The Far Side

Born and raised in University Place and graduating from Curtis Senior High School and then from Washington State University with a degree in communications, UPSD Alumni Gary Larson is an American cartoonist, environmentalist and former musician.

Known for portraying comedy, satire and surrealism throughout his work, Gary is the creator of The Far Side®, a single-panel cartoon series that soon grew into a cultural phenomenon. During the height of its popularity, The Far Side was syndicated internationally to more than 1,900 newspapers for over fifteen years. His cartoons consistently amused and baffled its followers leading to 23 books of collected cartoons, selling over 45 million copies.

Although the series officially ended with Larson's retirement in early 1995, Gary recently engaged his audience online through The Far Side® website. Here, readers can enjoy selections of classic The Far Side® comics and browse through some of the early rough drafts, sketches and doodles directly from his own sketchbooks.



Gary Larson,
10th Grade Yearbook
Picture—1968
*American Cartoonist and
the Creator of The Far Side®*



Elisa Jones, *CHS Family and
Consumer Sciences Teacher and
Girls Wrestling Assistant Coach.*

Photo credit: Blair Lindberg

Faculty Spotlight: Elisa Jones

Family and Consumer Sciences teacher, Elisa Jones, is the epitome of Curtis High School PRIDE. As a culinary arts, catering and fashion design educator, Black Student Union advisor and girls wrestling assistant coach, Elisa believes in the positive impacts of diligence, integrity and character in the classroom, on the wrestling mat and as an active CHS community member. Now in her fourth year, this Seattle Pacific University alumna has proudly earned the CHS Staff Excellence Award, Viking PRIDE Award, been recognized as the WIAA Region 3 Girls Wrestling Assistant Coach of the Year and received the CHS Dedicated to Service Award.

Inspired by three key mentors, Ms. Jones learned the art of cooking, how to be passionate about all you do and the importance of a smile from her mom. She credits mentor and retired UPSD educator, Cindy Pratt, for her teaching success and lastly, Jackie Thomas, CHS Assistant Principal, for providing inspiration and support on how to effectively balance multiple roles.

As a member of the UPSD District Equity team, Elisa finds great reward in working with her colleagues to promote excellence throughout the district. And although she loves CHS activities ranging from score-keeping for basketball games to attending the plays and choral concerts of her talented students, she also enjoys spending time with her family and 7-month-old puppy named Junie.



Ella Bonds
4th Grade Student at UP Primary

Student Spotlight: Ella Bonds

Ella Bonds, a 4th grader at University Place Primary, is an energetic 9-year-old who enjoys cheerleading, dance, art and math. But the solution to the math equation that continues to impress those around her is Ella's commitment and heart for feeding the homeless in her community.

When Ella was only 7 years old, she noticed an increasing number of displaced families, individuals and children living in cars, tents and campers. After learning about the conditions many were facing, she told her mom she wanted to make a hot meal for those living on the street.

Now in its third year, this past January, Ella raised enough funds to feed 150 homeless people and distribute backpacks filled with toothbrushes, toothpaste, hats, gloves, socks, ponchos and gift cards for a future meal. In addition to her friends and family, Ella's school is extremely proud of her community service as well. University Place Primary Principal, Christina Oliver, shared, *"Ella's activism and humanitarianism at a young age is so inspiring. She has always been a thoughtful and insightful student. Giving back to her community is one of the ways she is making a difference. We are so proud of Ella and can't wait to see what else she does in the future!"*

With a dream of one day becoming a daycare provider, Ella's joy and enthusiasm for helping others is evident in all she says and does. *Inspiring job, Ella!*

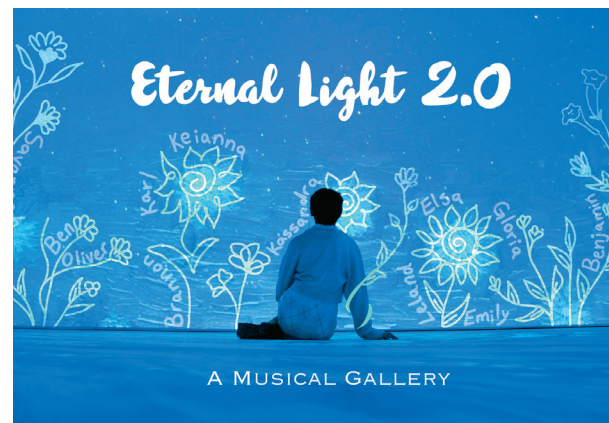
Community Partner Spotlight: Symphony Tacoma

Building community through music. As UPSD partners for over six years, Symphony Tacoma believes in supporting our schools by teaching future artists, musicians and audience members the importance of creative collaboration and the difference each student can make through their individual artistic contributions to the whole.

Last year, students from multiple UP schools were given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to submit original music, lyrics, drawings and poetry that reflected their interpretation of "eternal light" or whatever inspired them. Symphony Tacoma received 14 music compositions and 40 artwork interpretations, a true testament of student creativity, visualization and artistry. When Eternal Light was later performed through a collaboration at University Place Presbyterian Church with students ranging in age from 8 to 18, the performance was not only a celebration of art, music and language, it also showcased the musical talents of UP students playing everything from string instruments to hand pan.

Symphony Tacoma Music Director and Conductor, Sarah Ioannides, who is also the mother of three current UP students shared, "The creativity of the students and the strength of the teacher and music programs are inspiring. We are continuously amazed by their talent and entrepreneurship and the quality of the musical concerts."

For more information on Symphony Tacoma, please visit <https://symphonytacoma.org>



You can watch and listen to this amazing Eternal Light performance, by scanning this QR Code.

Promoting Equity and Inclusion in UP Schools

In UPSD, we want to be sure that every student feels like they belong at their school. Efforts to celebrate diversity, establish inclusive schools and promote equity happen throughout the year at all 8 University Place schools. In January, students across the district celebrated the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in a series of events and assemblies. In February, CHS students put on the long-standing Cultural Assembly where students present elements of their cultures to classmates. Black History Month was also a focus of celebration and recognition at all schools. One example is at Chambers Primary where students gathered for the second annual all-school sing-along of ***“We Shall Overcome.”*** This tradition allows students to unite their voices by singing and using sign language to convey a message of hope and harmony. At the junior and senior high school levels, ASB/Leadership students shared video and written messages encouraging service to others and the importance of understanding and respecting all cultures.

Teams Focus on Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Equity advisory teams at both the district and school level help to provide direction and focus to our efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. These teams are composed of staff members and their mission is to review current practices and provide guidance to school leadership and staff that will ultimately result in more inclusive and equitable schools.

The District Equity Advisory team was formed in 2017 and building level teams began in 2021. Members of the equity advisory teams partner with the district’s Teaching and Learning department to ensure curriculum and library resources represent all voices and perspectives. They also help to analyze data from multiple sources with an “equity lens” to improve achievement, access and experience for all UPSD students. The teams look at school events to ensure they are welcoming to all and work with our Human Resources department to help attract and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of our student population.



Chambers students sing “We Shall Overcome.”

As Lainey Mathews,
co-chair of the District
Equity Advisory team noted,

“Equity teams continue to learn and grow together through conversations, data review and more formalized professional development. This is just another real-life example of how first recognizing an area of need and then actively cultivating a more just and equitable way to represent all voices continues to be a priority throughout our district.”



Clubs and Activities Celebrate Diversity and Deepen Students' Sense of Belonging

A variety of student clubs at CHS and CJH also operate year-round in support of our diverse student body. Students in these clubs led efforts to plan assemblies and other events.

Curtis High School Principal, Tom Adams further shared...

"Our Black Student Union, Cultures United club, and our ASB / Leadership students worked together to ensure our Cultural Assembly represented and highlighted the many wonderful and amazing cultures at CHS while also recognizing Black History Month. We are happy to support the inclusive work of our students in ensuring we celebrated all the fantastic elements of every language, culture, race, religion and ethnicity represented at Curtis."



CJH Students learn more at Black History Month Assembly



CHS students on the Native Teachings Field Trip

Activities that build inclusivity and deepen a sense of belonging are also important. The Native American Teachings field trip organized by Mr. Jason LaFontaine as part of the UPSD Native American Education Program is one example. 20 students in grades 4 and 5 from Drum, NVI, Evergreen, UPP, and Sunset attended this event in January and made their own traditional medicine oils, designed their own wooden eagle feathers, played hand drums and rattles, watched classmates with Puyallup heritage do a traditional dance, and listened to a traditional story told in both Lushootseed and English.

Efforts to build inclusive communities in all of our schools will continue in May which is Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month.



Afterschool Academies Provide Additional Learning Opportunities at UPSD Primary Schools

The University Place School District is committed to offering multiple levels of intervention to ensure all students are provided opportunities to achieve at high levels. While many of these opportunities happen during the school day, teachers are always looking for more opportunities to serve their students. The UPSD Afterschool Academy intervention program is offered at all four primary schools and extends the time teachers have to meet the individual needs of students.

Achievement gaps are often the result of disparities in opportunities for students. If students have existing differences in prior knowledge, they may find it difficult to learn new or upcoming content. When students have a stronger foundation of background knowledge, they can learn more, and faster. The Afterschool Academy program is intended to close these gaps by providing struggling students with additional opportunities to learn essential content in a small group setting with certificated teachers from their own schools. Certificated classroom teachers identify the students in greatest need through a collaborative process. They then determine the most appropriate and timely intervention for these students. Assistant principals and office staff subsequently collaborate to invite students, arrange district transportation and plan for snacks to be provided. Schools typically run three sessions per year, each lasting 4-6 weeks. Students at each primary school attend Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour after school dismisses.

"The goal of our Afterschool Academies is to provide an additional opportunity and time for our lowest performing students to learn essential content in a way that boosts their future learning. Our teachers monitor student progress of targeted learning goals and use classroom assessment data to identify the impact of extra instruction provided during these sessions."

Jeff Loupas, UPSD Assistant Superintendent

At the Mustang Academy, for example, grade level teams identify critical reading and math content. Providing a pre and post assessment for targeted instruction, teachers monitor progress towards their goals throughout the session. This targeted instruction helps students build their skillsets in specific areas so they can access and apply their learning to core content. The Mustang Academy is taught by certificated staff including intervention staff, ELL teachers, the school librarian and certificated teachers.

Content is deemed essential when it is identified by teacher teams across grade levels as important background knowledge for future learning. Some content is important but won't necessarily help students learn more in later grades. Content that provides the foundation for future learning supports both an immediate benefit for our students and a boost for later learning. This essential content is the focus of after school academies.

Curtis Junior High Field Replacement: Capital Levy at Work!

In February 2022, a voter approved capital levy was passed to finance the repair and improvements of facilities and grounds throughout the district. Last year, these funds helped replace the HVAC system at Evergreen Primary. This year, capital levy funding will be used to replace the lower grass field at Curtis Junior High with a turf field and surrounding exercise track. As our community is aware, there have been long-standing drainage issues with the field at Grandview and Olympic causing poor field conditions and seasonal flooding.

Learn more details about the CJH Field Replacement Project here:

What are the details of the CJH lower field replacement project?

The current Curtis Junior High Lower Field will be replaced with artificial turf and a small track which will surround the field. The turf field will be lined for football, soccer, unified lacrosse and feature three running/walking lanes.

What is the advantage of replacing the CJH lower field with turf?

Not only can a turf field be used year-round, but because it does not need water or mowing, a turf field also reduces district maintenance and facilities costs.

What is the timeline of this project?

The expected timeframe for the CJH field replacement project has a start date of April 2023 with a completion date of mid-September 2023.

What are the advantages of the field replacement for the UP community?

When not in use by UP schools, community groups will have the opportunity to reserve this area for non-school related team practices and competitions. Individual citizens will also benefit from the recreational use of the track and field.

What are the benefits to UP schools once the field is replaced?

After the field is replaced, both Curtis Junior High and Curtis High School will be able to use this improved facility for their Physical Education programs year-round. In addition, CJH and CHS athletic programs will use the turf facility to hold practices and games for a variety of sports.

What will the finished project look like?

Below is a preview of what the finished CJH Field Replacement will look like:



The Benefits of Limiting Student Cell Phone Usage

At the beginning of the school year, Curtis High School Principal, Tom Adams, offered a presentation to parents and guardians regarding the negative effects of smartphones. The response was positive. He was told how many families were thankful for the research he provided as well as the pragmatic tips for how to promote positive cell phone habits both at home and at school.

Research shows that when it comes to cell phone usage, moderation is key. By teaching kids how to use cell phones safely and appropriately, their wellbeing is prioritized. Without these limits, smartphone usage has been linked to negative health issues such as:

- 1 Reduced concentration levels while driving, studying, listening and socializing
- 2 Unpredictable or broken sleeping patterns which are essential to short and long-term good health
- 3 Less availability for exercise, homework and family time
- 4 Increased chance for cyber-bullying on social networking sites or on the Internet
- 5 Greater levels of depression
- 6 Underdeveloped social and interpersonal skills
- 7 Poor posture and heightened eyestrain



But if the pandemic taught us one thing, as Principal Adams noted, it is the need for belonging and connection has never been more important. For teenagers, their phones help meet this need for inclusion, providing easy access to the latest apps, social platforms and the ability to communicate quickly with friend circles.

Knowing 80% of high school students currently own smartphones, these devices disguise themselves as the key to belonging, but the addictive nature of how apps are currently designed and marketed to teens also presents a difficult challenge in both the home and academic settings.

To help limit the amount of time students were spending on their devices in UPSD schools, phones are only allowed for educational purposes such as surveys or research that directly supports the learning environment. Through limiting cell phone usage throughout the district, there is more student focus and engagement in the classroom as well as less distractions.

And in the Home Environment?

Here are some key tips for parents regarding how to limit cell phone usage outside of the classroom.



Five Tips for Parents Regarding Student Cell Phone Use:

- 1. TURN OFF ALL DEVICES ONE HOUR BEFORE BED:** With less light and stimulation, teens have a better opportunity to fall asleep faster and more deeply.
- 2. ESTABLISH CLEAR RULES AND EXPECTATIONS:** Set guidelines for when and where cell phones can be used as well as what type of activities can be used on their phones.
- 3. MONITOR USAGE:** Keep an eye on your child's phone usage, including how much time they are spending on their phone as well as what apps and websites they are visiting.
- 4. EDUCATE YOUR CHILD ABOUT CYBER SAFETY:** Teach your child about the potential dangers of excessive phone use, cyberbullying, technology addiction and privacy.
- 5. BE CONSISTENT:** Follow through on any consequences you establish for breaking the rules and be a personal example of modeling positive phone habits.

By continuing to partner with our UPSD families and emphasizing the positive impacts of cell phone limits, together, our home and learning environments will benefit.



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UP Dialog

The Dialog is published periodically by the University Place School District for University Place residents and businesses.

The University Place School District complies with all federal and state laws, rules, and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including language), sex, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, creed, religion, age, veteran or military status, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in student education programs, co-curricular 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. University Place School District is committed to providing access to all District programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For elevator access at school sites, contact the principal's office. The University Place School District is a drug-free/smoke-free work place and educational setting. Direct inquiries regarding compliance, grievance, or appeal procedures, or concerns involving students, should be made to the District Affirmative Action Officer/Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator/ Title IX Officer/HIB Compliance Officer/Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator, Executive Director of Secondary Education, **Lainey Mathews**, lmathews@upsd83.org; or Section 504/FAPE/ADA concerns should be made to Executive Director of Special Services, **Kelly McClure**, kmcclure@upsd83.org. Both can be contacted at (253) 566-5600, 3717 Grandview Drive West, University Place, WA 98466.

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Upcoming Events

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Registration for the 2023-2024 school year is now open! Early registration is encouraged and can be completed online at www.upsd83.org for all new students in Kindergarten–12th grade. Please note, the registration portal is best accessed via computer. If you need access to a computer, please call (253) 566-5600 for assistance.

April 22	Clean UP (Earth Day Community Event), CJH, 8am
May 1-5	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 6	Senior Prom
May 23	Senior Awards Night
May 29	Memorial Day, No School
May 30	Night of Champions at CHS, (time TBD)
June 9	Curtis High School Graduation, Viking Stadium, 6pm
June 16	Last Day of School
June 19	Juneteenth, District Offices Closed

For more information on events and the district calendar, please visit our website at www.upsd83.org.

Upcoming Board Meetings

May 10	@ Curtis High School (during the school day)
June 14	@ Educational Service Center at 6:30pm
July 12	@ Educational Service Center at 6:30pm

All Board Meetings are open to members of the public. A full list of School Board meetings is posted to www.upsd83.org/school_board/meeting_schedule.



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www.upsd83.org