

## School Board Again Named WA Board of the Year as New Member Welcomed

The Washington State School Directors' Association has awarded the 2014-15 school board of the University Place School District its highest honor for an unprecedented second consecutive year—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,

*"Each of these boards was very focused. They adopted goals such as increasing graduation rates and reducing achievement gaps, and they used data to develop solutions and monitor results. They have all been successful."*

—Chris Nieuwenhuis, Former WSSDA president

promote research-based governance practices that lead to high levels of student and district achievement." The award was based on the following standards:

- Conducting business in a fair, respectful and responsible manner.
- Leading the development, articulation and stewardship of a vision of learning.
- Providing for the safety and security of students and staff.
- Measuring student academic progress and needs based on valid assessments.
- Ensuring board and district transparency through an open and accountable process.

2013-14 was the first year UPSD's board, which was selected from among 23 other nominees statewide, had been voted Board of the Year, and winning it again is a testament to the leadership of



retiring president Rick Maloney (see story this page) and the great work done in the 2015 school year by Mary Lu Dickinson, Ethelda Burke, Michael Ehart, and Annie Fitzsimmons.

### Board Members Take On New Roles

Michael Ehart has taken over the office of president of the school board. Ethelda Burke, appointed to a seat during the last term,

won her first election to retain the seat, and will serve as vice president. Mary Lu Dickinson and Annie Fitzsimmons both return as well, bringing a wealth of experience to their positions. T'wina Franklin is the only newcomer to the board, winning her first election. See story on page 2 for more details on Franklin's background and what she brings to the table.



### 2nd Grade Showoff Day

Since 1975, when the first pool was built in the district, University Place has been proud to teach all its students introductory swimming and water safety, according to Holly Arasim, assistant pool manager and swim coach. During second, fifth, and eighth grades, students receive a substantial block of swimming during the course of the year as part of their PE class.

The UP Primary second-graders shown on this page are showing off their skills as the culminating event of their swimming classes under the tutelage of Dennis Piccolotto. Parental involvement is a big part of the showoff day. "Students are proud of what they accomplish here—some of them have never been in the water before," said Piccolotto, who also coaches the swim team. "Part of the tradition is each student has a parent, relative, or teacher waiting for them at the end, ready to receive a big, wet hug."



## At Promise Program Produces First Graduates

Senior Aushanti Potts-Woods, star basketball player at Curtis High School, credits four faculty members with much of his success on the court, but even more so off the court. Potts-Woods will be the first graduate to benefit from a program called "At Promise," a UPSD-supported program that he says kept him on course to graduate on-time and hopefully continue both academically and athletically in college. At Promise was originally the brainchild of three district employees: school psychologist Deanna Sanders, guidance counselor Sophia Williams, and now-retired teacher Betty Gray. "We were seeing a pattern with African-American students who were struggling with their confidence and focus in class," said Williams. They decided to start the program to give struggling students a boost—developing their organizational skills, motivating them to put effort into their schoolwork, and checking in with each of their initial group of eight at UP Primary before and after school to make sure homework was being done.

From this small group of students, the idea took root and began to expand into other schools. Sanders eventually began working at Narrows View Intermediate, and the three decided to begin a similar program there, changing focus slightly to maximize the needs of the older students. "We all felt that with the challenges of the intermediate level, they needed more than just homework help and check-ins during the day," said Sanders. "At that age what is most critical is a positive group of their peers to support each other, chal-

lenge each other, and be good role models for each other." At Narrows View, students meet as a group and receive mutual support for both academic and social issues.

Another aspect added to At Promise was exposure to adult role models and other real-world activities, according to Gray. "We thought it was important to see what their effort is for," she said. "Bringing in regular, successful African-American community members to speak to them has done so much to inspire and motivate the students. Just hearing it from someone who has walked in their shoes and been through the same struggles shows these young people the success they can have if they apply themselves." They also added field trips to colleges, museums, and other places to engage their interest.

Given expanded district support, they later started programs at the junior high and high school level, evolving over time into what they are today—an elective academic intervention class under the supervision of Jackie Thomas, a teacher and coach at Curtis High and former advisor of the MAC Scholars program, as well as Betty Gray, who took a position after her retirement. According to Thomas, all of the students in the class benefit from the positive interactions within the group, many of whom are maintaining excellent grades. "The bottom line is that kids who participate in these programs are finding success in school and as citizens in our community—which is the whole purpose," said Curtis High Principal Eric Brubaker.



Aushanti Potts-Woods became part of the first class of At Promise students, and over the years credits the four faculty members at top with his success in the classroom. At bottom, he and other members of the Curtis High School basketball team visited Chambers Primary as part of their Commitment to Learning program, teaching young students the value of commitment and hard work in the classroom as well as in their athletic endeavors.

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

Volume 36 Number 2 Spring 2016

# Dialog

## The State of the District Is Strong

A Message from School Board President Michael Ehart



I am very honored to be the new president of the University Place School District Board of Directors. I am humbled by the responsibility placed on this board to oversee our nation's most valuable resource: our children and their education. I intend to continue the long tradition of maintaining and nurturing one of the best school districts in the state. Superintendent Patti Banks, who

has served the community and our students, teachers, and parents admirably through her many years of service, is retiring, and we recently appointed a new one to build on the amazing foundation she has created. Her strong guidance, wisdom, and clear vision have been an inspiration to us all.

I would like to talk about the board's efforts to seek community input on selecting a new superintendent. This process was a long one, as every member of the board was concerned that we see the best possible candidates and choose a superintendent that would best exemplify our board's motto of "kids come first."

Throughout the process, we had a strong desire to connect with the community and hear the voices of its constituents. Through a series of public meetings held at the UPSD offices and at Curtis Junior High School, we were able to hear the many and varied voices that make up our amazing school district. We also conducted a web survey that reinforced and enhanced the community concerns that we hire not only the best candidate possible, but also continue the culture of excellence and achievement so capably fostered by Superintendent Banks. Among the topics most important to our community were music programs, STEM, athletics, academic achievement, vocational training, and cultural issues like continuity of programs and "how things are done." We heard from parents, teachers, students, classified staff, and members of the community at large.

The board gave opportunity for input, listened well, discussed the current state of affairs and opted to promote from within. You spoke, and we listened. This decision, based on community and staff input, reflects the current quality and stability of the district. The board interviewed and ultimately hired Deputy Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin. We were struck with his abilities, his energy, and his commitment to the community values and educational excellence that has come to represent the University Place School District. You can read about Jeff in this issue, and I think you will agree that he was an excellent choice to both continue the legacy of Superintendent Patti Banks and to start his own legacy of excellence and achievement.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Farewell Message from Patti Banks	2
New Board Member T'wina Franklin	2
Thank You to Rick Maloney	2
New Superintendent to Be Jeff Chamberlin	3
District SBAC Testing Update	4
School Board Named Board of the Year Again	5
At Promise Program	5
Second-grade Showoff Day at Pool	6

## District Moving Forward in Good Hands

### A Farewell Message from Superintendent Patti Banks



As you know, I am retiring at the end of this school year, after nearly 20 years in UPSD. I want to thank you all for the extraordinary honor of serving in this fine district. I'm anticipating retirement; I look forward to more time with my husband and family, especially my little granddaughters, Maddie and Izzy. I look forward to some extended travel that's not bound by the school calendar; I look forward to more reading and gardening. And I especially look forward to an evening snowfall without worrying throughout the night about making the right "Snow Day" call at 4:30 in the morning.

At the same time, I will often look back and miss the exceptionally talented, dedicated, and hard-working teachers, support staff, and administrative colleagues with whom I've been so privileged to do such important work on behalf of our students and community. Thank you! There are too many of you to name, but I will especially miss my long time administrative assistant, Lois Frick, who can literally do anything. Lois is retiring, too, and I am not the only one who will miss her competence, formidable work ethic, and unflinching graciousness.

You can be confident, however, as you look forward; the district is in the best possible hands. Our Board's decision, following extensive engagement of the community and staff, to promote Deputy Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin to lead the district as superintendent has enabled a smooth transition—a transition that is, in fact, already well underway. I have worked closely with Jeff for the past 10 years; his intelligence, integrity, and commitment to UPSD's students, staff, and community ensure that our culture of excellence will continue for years to come.

Keep calm and carry on,  
— Patti

## T'wina Franklin Wins Seat as First-Time Board Member

A resident of Washington for the last 15 years since her husband was stationed at JBLM, T'wina Franklin has been heavily involved in education and schools, both as a career and a volunteer as her children have worked their way through the district. She served on multiple PTAs and coached the UP Jr. Vikings, also co-founding Ladies First, a school program empowering young women. Outside the district, she teaches for the Metropolitan Development Council, a community outreach organization that helps fight poverty and provides services for economically disadvantaged citizens. "My career has been devoted to helping students prepare for college and career," said Franklin.

She grew up surrounded by mentors who strongly influenced her values and instilled in her the importance of education.

She attended the University of Puget Sound, and began to dedicate herself to serving the needs of schools and students around the district that was her new home and where her children would be raised. "I've always enjoyed politics," she said. "Running for the school board was my chance to advocate for more students. My heart is in this community and in education. I'm excited to learn."

*"Running for the school board was my chance to advocate for more students. My heart is in this community and in education. I'm excited to learn."*

— T'wina Franklin, Board Member



Rick Maloney

## Thank You to Maloney For 20 Years on Board

The University Place School District would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Dr. Rick Maloney, who served the district with distinction as a member of our board of directors from 1995-2015. Dr. Maloney initiated the process through which the Board engaged the community in developing UPSD's rigorous academic, character/citizenship, and health/physical fitness standards. These high expectations, adopted as board policy, articulate the community's values and priorities for our schools. Dr. Maloney was active in school board leadership at the regional and state level. He served on the governing board of the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA), and was invited regularly to present at state and national school board conferences. He is the author of many articles devoted to quality school board governance published in national educational journals. Additionally, he has served as a consultant to school boards throughout the state. Due in large part to Dr. Maloney's leadership, WSSDA has recognized the UPSD board as a Board of Distinction five times and as Board of the Year the past two years in a row—an unprecedented achievement. Dr. Maloney modeled effective, positive, service-oriented school board leadership that continues to play an important role in UPSD's earned reputation for excellence.

As a truly dedicated board and community member, Rick has given countless hours to UP, according to Mary Lu Dickinson, who served alongside him for many of those years. His leadership in engaging the community for input into the policies that guide our district ensured that the board was responsive to the community's priorities, she continued. "I credit much of the success of our district to his advocacy of our administrators, giving them the support and trust they need without overstepping the role of the school board. His voice, his focus on putting students first, and his hard work will certainly be missed," said Dickinson.

## Dialog

The *Dialog* is published periodically by the University Place School District for University Place residents and businesses. UPSD 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, Deputy Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin, jchamberlin@upsd.wednet.edu; or Section 504/FAPE/ADA concerns should be made to Director of Special Services, Maria Hetland, mhetland@upsd.wednet.edu. Both can be contacted at (253) 566-5600, 3717 Grandview Drive West, University Place, WA 98466.

**Board of Directors**  
Michael Ehart, *president*  
Ethelda Burke, *vice president*  
Mary Lu Dickinson  
Annie Fitzsimmons  
T'wina Franklin  
Patti Banks, *superintendent*

# Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

## UPSD Students Measure Up on State Tests

Each Spring, students across Washington take required tests measuring their academic progress. In the last few years, the state has made two beneficial shifts in testing that raise expectations for students and schools. First, the state adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for math and English Language Arts (ELA). Second, Washington began implementation of a new set of online tests called the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAs) to help measure how well students are learning. Teachers and administrators in UPSD have been working diligently for many years to make sure our students benefit from these changes. Students benefit in three main ways:

1. The new CCSS standards for math and ELA represent higher academic expectations for students.
2. The SBA tests provide timely, comprehensive results that give teachers and parents better feedback about student progress
3. The new standards better prepare students for careers, technical schools and colleges.

### Higher Expectations Benefit Students

Setting aside the politics associated with testing, the new standards and exams better reflect the high expectations that have existed in University Place for many years. Simply put, the CCSS introduces more challenging content at earlier grades. In ELA, these changes require students to read more

difficult texts and to practice "close reading". "Close reading" asks students to make notes, highlight important information, cite evidence from the text, and reread passages multiple times with different questions in mind. These activities help students to develop a deeper, more precise understanding of what they are reading. In math, students learn more challenging material at early grade levels and practice applying what they learn to more complex problems.

The CCSS also applies to social studies, science, and other subjects. In these courses, students still learn traditional history and science content, but they are also expected to develop a wider set of skills important to each content area. For example, students in science classes will develop skills in researching and technical writing that are important to "doing science" at the same time they learn about earth science, biology, chemistry and physics.

Higher expectations will have a positive cumulative effect for students over time. As students reach for higher expectations with more involved texts and more challenging mathematics year after year, they will learn more and be better prepared for life after high school.

### Quality Tests Provide Information for Parents and Educators

Some people argue that testing takes too much time. While it does take some time to give the SBA exams, students spend less than 3% of class time taking

state exams. The time devoted to testing is well worth it because test results provide critical information to teachers about how to adjust teaching methods and provide better support for students. The new SBA exams provide better, more useful information about what students know and can do. The computerized SBA test is adaptive, which means the test questions get harder or easier according to student performance. This shortens testing time while maintaining a high degree of score reliability. Another benefit is that high performing students are given questions above their grade level and lower performing students get questions closer to their level. By matching ability levels, both groups of students will have more accurate measures each year. This was not possible in older testing formats.

On top of these more accurate measures, the new test provides "vertical scale score" that allows parents and teachers to monitor student growth over multiple years. On the previous tests, scores could not be compared year to year and it was very difficult to measure growth over time. The new test scores allow us to see trends in learning across grade levels and to monitor student progress over time.

### Preparation for Life After High School

All of these changes in standards and assessment are geared toward the same goal—preparing students for productive careers, workforce preparation programs and college. The CCSS are

designed with these outcomes in mind. The standards at all grade levels are aligned to prepare students for success after high school. UPSD realized years ago that preparation for career and college pathways begins long before students reach high school, and the new standards share this view.

The skills measured on SBA exams at eleventh grade align with the expectations of most careers and college classrooms. Colleges in Washington have recognized this much needed shift and have agreed to recognize proficiency on the SBA high school exam as evidence that students can skip remedial courses and start taking credit bearing course right away. This reduces the cost of a college education for families and sets students up for success.

### Committed to Academic Excellence

Last spring, in their first attempt at the new tests, students in University Place outperformed their peers in every other Pierce County district and posted strong and encouraging scores in both math and ELA. In 2015, UPSD third through eighth grade students met standard on the SBA Math test at a rate 18.7% greater than the state average. On ELA exams, our students met standard at a rate 13.4% greater than the state average. Our kids are definitely up for the challenge of the new CCSS standards, the SBA exams and, most importantly, the world of work beyond high school.

## All Eight Schools in UPSD Win State or National Awards



### Curtis High School Ranks Highest in Pierce County

Curtis High School was awarded a Silver Medal in the latest *U.S. News and World Report* national public high school rankings, placing them in the top seven percent of the more than 21,000 high schools in the country and the highest-ranked in Pierce County. The magazine analyzed data from public high schools across the U.S. to identify schools that, in the opinion of the magazine, are best preparing students for college and careers.

Among other factors, they looked at graduation rates, test results, and Advanced Placement results combined with enrollment data such as diversity and free- and reduced-lunch statistics, according to their website. This is the first year graduation rates have been included in the rankings.

### Seven of Eight UPSD Schools Recognized

The other seven schools in the district, meanwhile, were all awarded the Washington Achievement Award, marking the most received by the district in the seven-year history of the awards. They are based on performance over the previous three years, using data from the state's Board of Education Achievement Index to select recipients in the following seven categories, according to the Washington Office of Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) website:

1. Overall Excellence
2. High Progress
3. English Language Arts Growth
4. Math Growth
5. Extended Graduation Rate
6. English Language Acquisition
7. Achievement Gap

The Index measures school performance, emphasizing improvement and recognition. "The Achievement Awards recognize schools and educators making a difference in student outcomes. Award recipients are schools that have made measurable progress helping students prepare for college, career, and life," said Isabel Muñoz-Colón, State Board of Education Chair. "The Achievement Awards are one way we can learn more about the successful strategies Washington schools are using to help our kids."

"OSPI and the State Board of Education have spent a lot of time on the achievement index," said Randy Dorn, superintendent of public instruction. "We're very proud of the schools recognized for their performance on the index. Each school shows sustained growth or excellence, or both. I congratulate each and every school for the hard work they've done."



## Board Selects Jeff Chamberlin as New Superintendent

Upon completion of an exhaustive round of community outreach with parents, staff, and other community members, both the school board and retiring superintendent

Patti Banks unanimously felt Deputy Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin was the best candidate to lead the district into the next chapter, according to the new president of the board, Michael Ehart. "The last 20 years has seen the growth of our district's reputation and academic excellence in virtually every category," said Ethelda Burke, vice president of the board. "Patti Banks has done wonders over that time, weathering tough financial situations, changes in the district's student profile, and everything in between, while keeping our schools highly competitive at the state level. If you examine student performance data, it's so easy to see how impressive her work has been. We on the board have seen Jeff Chamberlin's work in our district already, and know that he has similar values to

community's success, and the people of University Place understand this. I don't think you will find a better-quality district or better-supported schools anywhere."

Said long-time board member Mary Lu Dickinson of Chamberlin, "Our community wanted to keep the ball rolling, ensuring the current mission of developing competent, contributing citizens. We have the utmost confidence in Jeff, watching what he's done with all of the policies from the board. He has demonstrated all of the traits we were looking for in a leader over time.

In his current position he was given a lot of responsibility, and has made great progress. What we heard over and over again from the staff and our citizens was that there was no need for a lot of change; they wanted someone to

*"We on the board have seen Jeff Chamberlin's work in our district already, and know that he has similar values to Patti to continue in the same direction, while bringing a new style of leadership and his own excellent instincts and intellect to bear as well."*

— Ethelda Burke, Board Vice President

take over for Superintendent Banks until July 1, but until that time Chamberlin will be working to connect with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to hear about their hopes and needs as the district moves forward. He brings a wealth of education and administrative experience to the table—qualifications that lead Patti Banks to hire him as principal of Curtis Junior High in 2006, and later to select him as deputy superintendent.

Of the opportunity, Chamberlin said, "working as a member of the University Place School District team for the last

*"It is a privilege to work in a community with such strong support for our schools and with the incredible staff, teachers, and administrators that we have in University Place. I look forward to working with this amazing community and team to continue to provide our students with the highest-quality education for many years to come."*

— Jeff Chamberlin, Incoming Superintendent

ten years has been incredibly rewarding. I am very proud of the work we have done in our schools and I am honored to have been selected to work with our Board of Directors to lead this work in the years ahead. It is a privilege to work in a community with such strong support for our schools and with the incredible staff, teachers, and administrators that we have in University Place. I look forward to working with this amazing community and team to continue to provide our students with the highest-quality education for many years to come."



Incoming Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin

## Education

Roosevelt High School, Seattle

Bachelor of Arts in American History, University of Puget Sound

Master of Arts in Teaching, University of Puget Sound

WA State Administrative Certification, University of Puget Sound

WA State Superintendent Certification, Washington State University

## Experience

Middle School Teacher, Tacoma School District 1994-2002

Assistant Principal, Tacoma School District 2002-2006

Principal, Curtis Junior High School 2006-2013

Deputy Superintendent, University Place Schools 2013-2016

## Community Involvement

Tacoma Narrows Rotary Member

United for U.P. Advisory Board

WIAA WCD Executive Board

UWT Professional Educator Advisory Board

Volunteer Coach – Youth Sports

## Family

Married Courtenay Chamberlin in 1999

Two boys, Asa (8) and Owen (11)