

Safety Is the Top Priority for Schools and UP Community

If there is one thing in the University Place School District more important than academic achievement, it is safety. "Safety is our first and highest priority," said Assistant Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin. He points out that school safety begins with a daily commitment to getting to know students, supervising them well and attending to the needs of individuals. "Our teachers, counselors, and administrators make an effort every day to supervise students in classrooms and common areas to

ensure that they are making safe choices and treating one another with respect," he said. "UPSD staff work hard to get to know each child well, and to respond quickly when they see potential problems. We are also very proactive in our efforts to deal with issues such as bullying. Students receive regular instruction and reminders about school expectations. This is done on a personal level when appropriate or with school-wide events such as assemblies, class meetings, and orientation activities."

Preparation for Larger Events Is District-Wide

When considering safety, most people think first of a larger event—an earthquake, a fire or a dangerous intruder or student. For UPSD, preparation for these serious incidents involves a district-wide approach. Throughout the school year, each school conducts regular fire drills, simu-

lated earthquake and evacuation procedures, lockdown drills, and other emergency procedures. ESB 5620, a new law passed by the Washington State Legislature, addresses standards for the number and types of drills required of all school districts in the state. Chamberlin says that University Place already meets or exceeds those standards. UPSD recently participated in The Great Washington ShakeOut, a statewide program to promote earthquake preparedness.

Collaboration with UP First Responders

Larger events require coordination that extends beyond the school district. To that end, UPSD has developed partnerships with other community agencies and departments. The school district meets regularly with first responders in University Place, including the police department, the fire department,



UPSD's School Resource Officer, Mike Cooney, discusses emergency preparedness with Jayne Hofstrand, Curtis Junior High School principal. Cooney is a full-time deputy in the UP police department, and is in charge of security and incident response.

and the director of public works to discuss effective response and prevention procedures.

University Police Chief Mike Blair has personally attended lockdown drills as well as evacuation procedures at all of the district's schools. "University Place is blessed with a great school system," he said. "Student and faculty performance at these drills has been extraordinary—"textbook" in every way."

In addition, the police department and the school district jointly fund the position of School Resource Officer, currently held by Mike Cooney. Cooney is a full-time deputy who spends his day at the schools and knows the district intimately. He advises principals and administrators on safety procedures and is available to respond to incidents immediately.

Chamberlin says communication among these groups is critically important to school safety, and that some of the funds in the forthcoming Safety and Technology levy measure will be used to improve security camera systems, phone communications, and internal and external intercom systems in the event of an emergency. "When the safety of our students and staff are at stake, we cannot afford to take anything for granted," he said.

Instructional Technology Is Key to Future Success

Students today are growing up with technology constantly at their fingertips. Schools need to view technology as an opportunity to engage students academically, according to Jeff Loupas, executive director of UPSD's Teaching and Learning department. "School cannot be the least technological part of students' lives," he continued. "If we want our students to take advanced classes and be prepared to excel in college or in the workforce, we need to continue to improve technology within our curriculum, our infrastructure, and in the classroom."

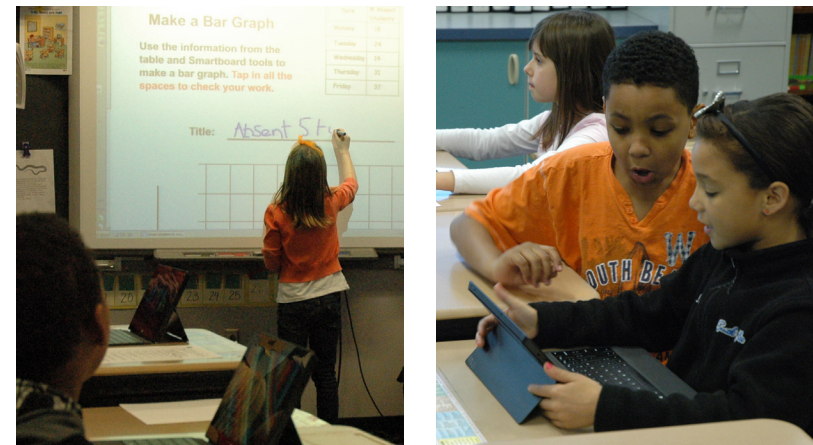
To that end, schools hope to update current computers and increase student access to touchscreen tablets using funds from the upcoming Technology and Safety Levy. Classroom teachers and librarians are currently piloting five different devices within the district, according to Loupas, to let teachers and students provide feedback on the most useful combination in classrooms. Every building is also increasing their wireless capabilities and bandwidth in order to keep up with current standards.

New Tablet Approach Increases Efficiency in Mobile Computer Labs

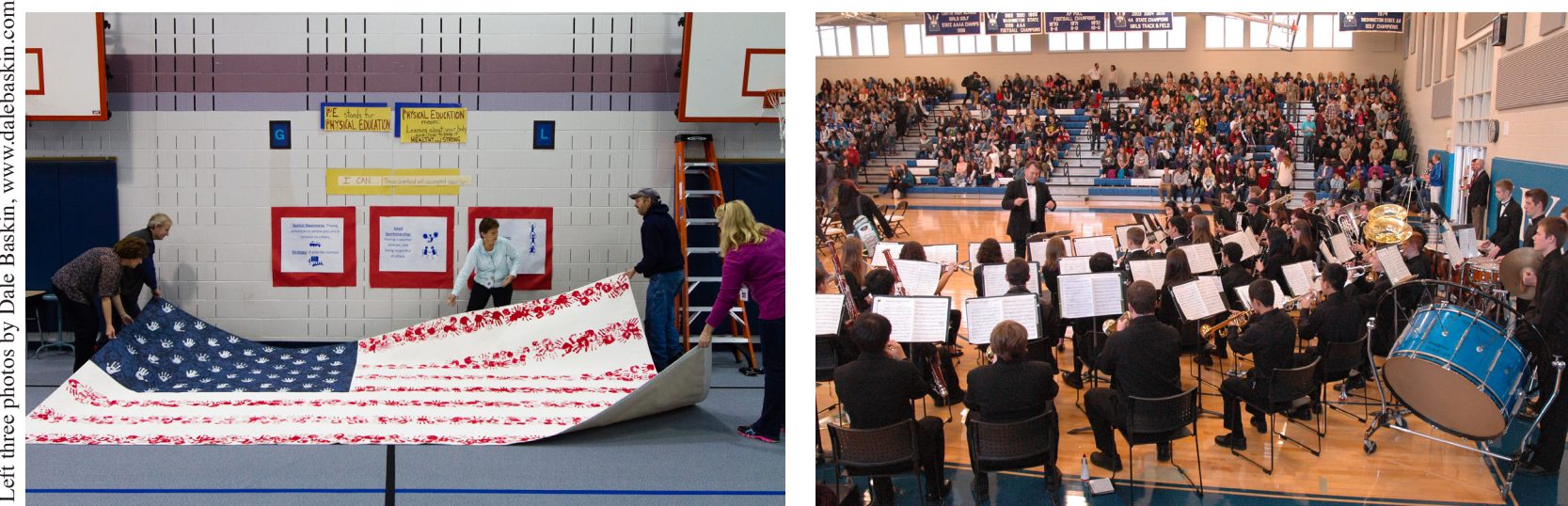
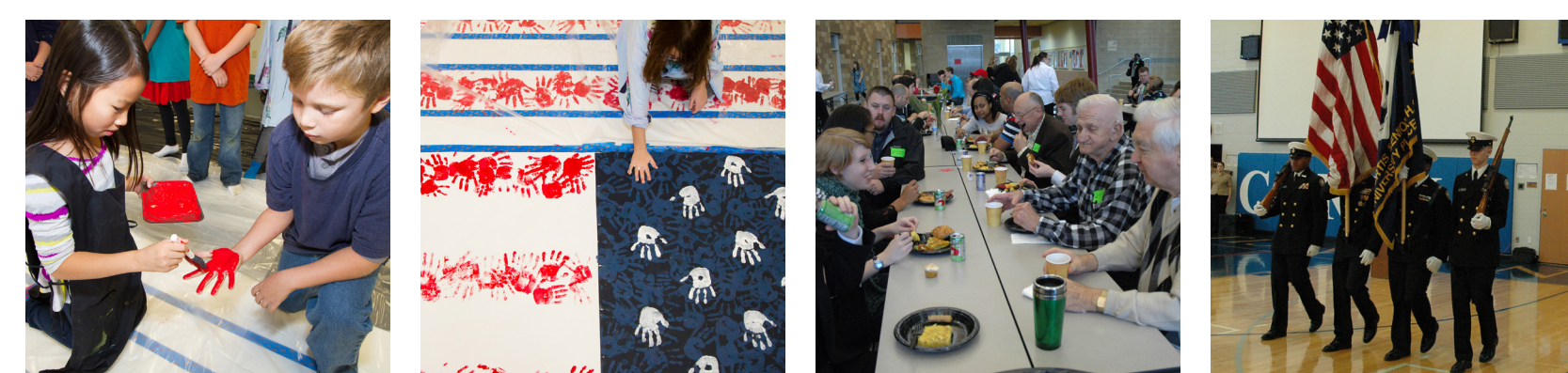
Increasing the technology available at the high school increases opportunities for students to take advanced courses. Updating of computers is a necessity, said Troy Hashagen, a math and programming teacher at CHS, if we want to provide options such as his Java programming class. "We offer this computer science class as part of the UW in the High School program, meaning that any student completing a semester here gets an actual UW transcript with full credit as a class in college." Taking classes involving advanced technology provides Curtis High School students a better opportunity to compete for college enrollment and jobs in the technical field. "Unfortunately," said Hashagen, "we're often fighting for time in the computer lab. There's just too much demand for time on these machines."

Spivey's classroom, along with more than half the classrooms in the district, is also equipped with Smartboard technology, which enables teachers and students to interact directly with the projected images on the board. The interactive tools provide hands-on practice with technology while encouraging students to be more involved in the lesson each day.

Curtis High Principal Eric Brubaker commented, "The high school wants to provide the opportunity for students to build on their existing ability to use technology which, in turn, increases their employable skills in preparation for life after high school and college. We must have a vision for what we want students to learn, communicate that vision to the public, and then ask for the public's support to make that vision a reality in our schools."



The top three photos show Evergreen Primary students testing a classroom set of new Microsoft Surface tablets, one of five options being considered for use in new mobile labs next year. Below, Troy Hashagen helps students prepare for a test in his Java programming class. He is a certified instructor for the UW in the High School program, enabling students to take a university-level class and receive full college credit while still in high school.



UP Schools Honor Veterans with Commemorative Events

Veterans Day has always had special significance for the University Place School District. The presence of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base has meant a large population of military children in the schools, many of whose parents are serving their country here and abroad. UPSD celebrated the day with a breakfast for veterans and students at Curtis Junior High School, followed by a school-wide assembly at Curtis High School, complete with a color guard and other exercises performed by NJROTC members, speeches, a patriotic audio-visual show, and musical accompaniment by the high school band. Evergreen Primary School celebrated the event with the installation of a massive American Flag in the school gymnasium. The flag's unique Stars and Stripes are made up of handprints of every student in the school and was prepared over a period of weeks. The project has been selected for inclusion in a new book to be published this year featuring distinctive and unusual ways the American flag has been rendered in projects across the country.

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 34
Number 2
January 2014

A Lasting Legacy

A Message from School Board President Christine Kilduff



The University Place community has a distinct history that has long honored education. The very name—University Place—expresses its importance and stems from the efforts of early settlers to entice the University of Puget Sound to build its campus in this beautiful waterside hamlet. Although that early endeavor proved unsuccessful, committed and involved citizens went on to build a strong public school system and a lasting legacy. The fall of 1895 marked the formal birth of University Place School District No. 83, when the Superintendent for Common Schools for Pierce County granted a petition to form the district. Shortly thereafter, the superintendent approved the district's boundaries, spanning 10 square miles, which largely mirror the city's borders today.

Since that time, we have grown from seven students to more than 5,300. We have expanded from a simple one-room structure on 27th Street and Elwood Drive to a district that includes four primary schools, two intermediate schools, one junior high school, and one high school.

There were many milestones on this arc of progress. Construction of the combined junior high and high school in the late '50s assured residents that their children could continuously attend school in-district from kindergarten through 12th grade. The first Curtis High School graduating class was in 1962. The U.S. Department of Education recognized Curtis as a National School of Excellence for the years 1982-1983 and 1999-2000. In 2012, an independent research organization named University Place among the top 5 percent of school districts in the state. Today, 118 years after the founding of the district, our students achieve at high levels. Talented staff focus relentlessly on instruction and preparing students for college, career, and the global economy. We strive to live up to the vision of those who came before us.

February 11, 2014, will bring an opportunity to directly influence the future of our schools and community when we consider two levy measures the Board approved to be placed on the ballot. These replace expiring levies and are not new taxes. The first, the Educational and Programs Operations levy, amounts to nearly 24 percent of the district's budget, or one in four dollars needed to fund our current educational program. If approved, it would pay for teachers, staff, and programs that are not funded by the state. The second proposal, the Technology and Safety Capital Improvements levy, would upgrade district security and classroom technology and enhance student safety at each of our eight schools.

The early settlers of University Place laid the important groundwork for what we now treasure—outstanding schools for our young citizens and a strong community. Their sacrifice, tenacity, and foresight were critical to these successes. I am confident that future generations will look back and see that we fully embraced and honored this legacy.



UPSD Board of Directors Honored

The district's board of directors was recently honored by the Washington State School Directors' Association as a Board of Distinction. The annual award honors school boards that demonstrate effective use of the Washington School Board Standards. The standards promote research-based governance practices that lead to high levels of student and district achievement. The board, from left, includes Annie Fitzsimmons, Michael Ehart, Mary Lu Dickinson, Rick Maloney, and Christine Kilduff, president. Superintendent Patti Banks is shown at right.

Left three photos by Dale Baskin. www.dalebaskin.com

