



Community Connections

NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Superintendent's message: Building a culture of kindness

Each year, we choose a district theme that offers a common focus for the school year. For the 2023-24 school year, the NTPS theme is Culture of Kindness! We provide opportunities for students to practice kindness daily and encourage everyone in the community to celebrate kindness in its many forms.

We see kindness in action around our district every day:

- Listening to and learning about our classmates.
- Volunteering and mentoring.
- Practicing relationship building through the NTPS social-emotional learning curriculum.
- Welcoming families to our elementary schools with back-to-school Family Connections meetings.

You can get involved, too! In addition to being our district theme, Culture of Kindness is the 2023-24 Compassionate Community project. Compassionate

Community is a joint project between NTPS, the City of Lacey, and the Lacey South Sound Chamber, where we partner to build a community where everyone belongs and feels safe.

Our Compassionate Community goal this year is to celebrate 100,000 acts of kindness in our community. Please help us reach this goal by being part of acts of kindness and then reporting it! One act of kindness that directly benefits our schools is volunteering. To apply to be a volunteer, visit www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/volunteer.

Whatever way you choose to demonstrate kindness, share it with the community at www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/compassion.

Dr. Debra Clemens
NTPS Superintendent



Growing
COMPASSION



NTPS educators visit Nisqually Tribal Center

More than 800 NTPS educators visited the Nisqually Tribal Center in August as part of our back-to-school professional development! They learned more about the Treaty of Medicine Creek and participated in activities that are an important part of the Nisqually culture, including nature walks to learn about the Lushootseed language. We are so grateful to our partners at the Nisqually Tribe for this meaningful experience!

Learn more about our partnership with the Nisqually Tribe:
www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/governmenttogovernment



Students earn varsity letter by giving back to community

Did you know NTPS high school students can earn a varsity letter in community service? During the 2022-23 school year nine students earned this honor by volunteering more than 250 hours during grades 9-12: Four from North Thurston, three from River Ridge, and two from Timberline! These students volunteered in many ways, including mentoring younger students, coaching youth sports, helping with Girl Scouts, and working in their school library.

All NTPS students must complete at least 20 hours of community involvement by graduation. The purpose is to gain skills, connect with community members, and learn from activities outside of the classroom. Learn more at www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/volunteer.



Summer Scholars supports learning and fun

NTPS students continued learning and had fun during the summer break with our Summer Scholars program. This year, more than 500 Summer Scholars students received academic and social-emotional support!

- 162 elementary students improved their reading skills and built a strong foundation for mathematical problem-solving.
- 48 middle school students engaged in a two-week STEM camp program with hands-on learning activities.
- 339 high school students earned credits toward graduation while building a strong sense of connection and belonging.





NTPS partnership with local law enforcement fosters safety and community



Officer Alisha Howard stands in the middle of the cafeteria during a busy lunch period at North Thurston High School. She exchanges smiles and hellos with students and staff. One student asks her a question about home security. Later, at Komachin Middle School, students on their way to lunch wave as she parks her cruiser.

For more than six years, Officer Howard has served as a School Resource Officer (SRO) for North Thurston Public Schools. Each NTPS school is assigned an SRO from the Lacey Police Department or the Thurston County Sheriff's Office. Our SROs build positive relationships with students and staff to support safety and a sense of community.

"We all feel a greater sense of ease when our SRO is on campus," said Nisqually Middle School Principal Courtney Crawford.

"My role is to make students feel heard," Officer Howard said. SROs work to ensure students and parents understand they are there to listen, help them understand their rights, and share guidance. Aside from being a trusted, familiar presence in the schools, SROs are involved in investigations and checking in with students who may be having trouble.

The partnership between NTPS, the Lacey Police Department, and the Thurston County Sheriff's Office supports district-wide security. This year, the Lacey Police Department and NTPS provided active shooter training for staff. Officer Howard, her supervisor, Sergeant Kevin Landwehrle, and other SROs also conduct security evaluations of NTPS buildings and make recommendations to help ensure our schools are both welcoming and secure.

SROs are a way for the youth in our community to interact with uniformed law enforcement in a positive, community-building way.

"It's important for officers to build those relationships because you can influence kids to go down the right path with the right discussion," Sergeant Landwehrle said.



Celebrating 70 years of NTPS!

NTPS opened as a small rural district in 1953 with South Bay and Lacey Elementary Schools. Now, 70 years later, we are a vibrant and diverse school district with 24 schools, 14,400 students, and more than 2,000 employees!

We will celebrate 70 years of NTPS on Facebook and Instagram throughout the year. Watch for “blast from the past” photos and fun facts.



Nisqually Middle School students in 1980.

upcoming THEATER EVENTS

November 9 and 16-18

Our Town

7:00 pm, Koval Center for the Performing Arts

December 6-9

Anne Of Green Gables

6:00 pm, River Ridge High School Theater

December 7-9

She Kills Monsters

7:00 pm and 2:00 pm matinee on December 9
Timberline High School Theater



NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
305 COLLEGE STREET NE, LACEY, WA 98516-5390
PHONE (360) 412-4400 • FAX (360) 412-4410

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Construction & design update

Thanks to voter support, we continue to ensure our school facilities are excellent places for student learning.

The **Komachin Middle School** modernization is nearing completion. This major project includes a refreshed library, a new student commons, a new classroom wing, refreshed athletic fields, a secure front entrance, and a covered play structure.

The **River Ridge High School** modernization is well underway. Staff and students are settled in their temporary portables, which are new and fully equipped with technology for teaching and learning. Completed improvements to athletic facilities include new tennis courts, a new weight room, new bleachers, and a community entrance between the auxiliary gym and the pool. You can see drawings of how the campus will look when modernization is complete, including the theater, commons area, and front entrance, at www.nthurston.k12.wa.us/buildingourfuture.

Other improvements: We are completing secure entrances at **Meadows** and **Mountain View Elementary Schools** to ensure visitors check in at the front office, replacing the gym roof at **Lacey Elementary**, and completing mechanical upgrades at **Seven Oaks** and **Horizons Elementary Schools**.

The **South Sound Stadium** has new lights that are more efficient and provide necessary lighting for the many events that happen there in the evenings!

