Dear SPS Community,

I started at Seattle Public Schools three years ago by traveling around the district to hear from you. Your voice and thousands of other students, families, and community members helped create our strategic plan, Seattle Excellence, which commits SPS to centering students and families furthest from educational justice in everything we do.

Our district’s strength is in our commitment to equity and justice. Our staff and educators have shown incredible leadership in this work and the advocacy of our families and students continue to move us forward. I am humbled by the accomplishments that we have achieved together as we work to dismantle legacies of racism and build an anti-racist educational system that ensures every student gets a great public education.

Together, we have established the Office of African American Male Achievement, working to ensure that the educational environment across the system supports the brilliance and excellence of Black boys and teens. We worked to create safe and welcoming schools and transform our system to improve racially biased discipline practices. We centered student voice in district decisions by establishing the Superintendent’s Student Advisory Board and the AAMA Student Leadership Council. We increased hiring of staff of color throughout the organization because young people told us how representation matters. When the pandemic started, we worked to re-focus our energy and resources to support our students’ and families’ basic needs. And the joy on students’ faces as they returned to buildings this month made the very difficult work of this past year even more rewarding.

It has been an honor to serve you – our staff, students, and families – for the last three years. As I wrap up my last week, I am confident that you, along with Interim Superintendent Brent Jones, will continue the important work of transforming our district to ensure all students thrive and provide the educational opportunities they all deserve.

In partnership,

Denise

Interim Superintendent Brent Jones Starts Monday, May 3

Dr. Brent Jones will start his position as superintendent of SPS on Monday, May 3. As the former SPS chief equity, partnership, and engagement officer and assistant superintendent of human resources, Dr. Jones is returning to the district from King County Metro where he served as the assistant general manager.

“Dr. Jones’ brings critical stability and clarity to Seattle Public Schools during this time of uncertainty and transition. He is an experienced district leader with a proven track record supporting student outcomes, community, and staff of color while remaining deeply committed to operational excellence and systems improvement. This is a new day for SPS and I couldn’t be more excited to begin working together toward bright futures for our students,” said Board President Chandra Hampson.

More information will be shared next week.

School Beat
The Seattle Public Schools Newsletter
seattleschools.org | April 29, 2021

To make sure all our families have access to the latest 2020-21 updates and resources, we have created web pages in each of our community’s top six languages: Amharic, Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

High School Graduation Ceremonies

Following guidance from OSPI, we will hold in-person high school graduation ceremonies that are aligned to safety protocols, including limiting the number of audience members. Each student will be allowed four ticketed guests, however this number could decrease based on guidance from Public Health. District staff are also exploring the option of live streaming. Dates and locations for the 2021 graduating class are now available and more details will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

Graduation Dates

Attendance Policy for Grades 6-12

We are thrilled to have welcomed students in grades 6-12 back to in-person learning on Monday, April 19. As expected, many things look different from remote learning, including how attendance is taken.

Attendance will now be taken twice every day for each period – once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Students will be marked absent if they do not participate during afternoon instruction.

Attendance Policy

No Spring Smarter Balanced Assessments

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has determined that Smarter Balanced Assessments and the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science will not be administered to students this spring. Instead, the state summative assessment window for the 2020-21 school year will be this fall.

Smarter Balanced Assessments

Technology Tips

Student Devices During In-Person Learning
Elementary students may be asked to bring their devices into their classrooms to support learning. Please contact your student's teacher for questions on if devices will be needed in your student's classroom.

How-To Videos and Answers to Your Technology Questions

We’ve put together technology resources for families and students. We have translated videos to support logging in to Clever, logging in to SeeSaw, Microsoft Teams for Students, setting up an SPS iPad and laptop, and setting up parent Schoology accounts.

Tech Support FAQ and Videos

Technology Resource Centers

Our Technology Resource Centers are open to support families and students with remote learning software, devices, and general technology information.

Tech Resource Centers

Spring Student Survey and Fall Results

Beginning May 5, students will be given a link to respond to our spring 2021 survey during their school day. Questions will focus on students’ experiences during the pandemic, access to and quality of remote and hybrid instruction, and questions on school climate and culture. The spring survey will ask demographic questions, including race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Findings from this spring’s survey will be available in early summer.

Fall Survey Results

Updated Spring Survey Questions

Restraint and Isolation Policy Community Events

The district is in the process of revising Policy 3246 – Restraint, Isolation, and Other Uses of Physical Intervention to align to our values of anti-racist actions and working towards de-escalation and trauma-informed responses. We will share the draft policy to be brought in front of the board during this session. These sessions will be facilitated by district staff and Director Rankin and Director Hersey.

Student and Youth Community Meeting: Thursday, May 6, 2021. 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
Community Member Meeting: Thursday, May 13, 2021. 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Restraint and Isolation Policy Community Events

Resources For Families

Learning in Places - Preschool Science

SPS is currently piloting a Learning in Places science program with preschool students across the district. This program provides preschool students and their families with outdoor learning experiences that focus on family connections and establish a strong foundation for science practices and curiosity.

Learning in Places

Enroll Now for Head Start 2021-22

Head Start programs in Seattle Public Schools serve three-year and four-year-old children and offer full-day and half-day programs at various schools across the district. Head Start is a federally funded child development program for children of low-income families. Enroll today!

Open Enrollment Results Are Available

The student assignment lookup tool, which reflects 2021-22 open enrollment results, is now available along with waitlist information. Students who receive a new assignment as a result of open enrollment will be emailed their confirmation this week. Students who do not have an email on file will be mailed a letter to their home address. Open enrollment results are also available in the Source.

Open Enrollment Results

Student Meal Distribution

Our 40 meal sites are open from 10:45 a.m. -1:15 p.m. Bus routes deliver meals on Wednesdays only. Grab and go breakfast and lunch will be available for students learning in-person at each school site.

Student Meals

Secondary "Incomplete" Grades

If your student earned an "Incomplete" final grade during the first semester of this school year, they have until the end of the second semester to complete a learning plan to earn a letter grade and course credit. If your student has reached out to their teacher regarding a learning plan but have not received one, email ccr@seattleschools.org.

Secondary Incomplete Grades
Celebrating our SPS Volunteers

April 19-25 is Public School Volunteer Week. Formally and informally, SPS families have been volunteering this school year by helping students access learning, taking care of families who needed food and rent assistance, and by standing up against racial injustices the pandemic amplified. To thank volunteers, we asked one of our recent graduates to perform a song SPS volunteers could enjoy from home. Check out the music video and read stories about some of our amazing school volunteers.

Occupational Therapy Month

Oriental therapists provide specialized services to support students with disabilities in participating in their learning environment and in social situations. One of the wonderful occupational therapists in Seattle Public Schools is Harriet Hsieh. Harriet works with a wide range of students to engage them in their learning and prepare them for participation in meaningful life pursuits after completing their education in SPS. To celebrate Occupational Therapy Month, we interviewed Harriet about her work.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Licton Springs K-8

Licton Springs K-8 School has a new home in the newly modernized Daniel Webster building. Watch Superintendent Juneau, Director Duty, and Principal Butler as they cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening. The ceremony is followed by a virtual tour lead by Principal Butler and Head Teacher Dante Rhodes.

Seattle School Board

West Seattle Property Exchange

On April 20, the School Board held a public hearing on the proposed exchange of district property located at West Seattle Elementary School and City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department property located at Walt Hundley Playfield. The property exchange is necessary to complete a new 12-classroom addition to provide student capacity relief. Feedback on the property exchange is also being accepted through Let's Talk, the district's online feedback tool, until Monday, May 10 at 12 p.m. More information can be found on the property exchange website.

Adoption of Emergency Waivers for Graduation

On April 21, the board approved the use of emergency waivers of graduation requirements for individual students in the class of 2021. Students may have credit or graduation pathways requirements waived if they were on track to complete graduation requirements pre-COVID. Counselors will work with eligible students on a case by case basis.

To learn more about the School Board and their work, public meetings, and upcoming policy initiatives, visit the board webpage.

Upcoming Dates

May 3: Special Education Community Forum: DHH Family Community
May 5: Regular Board Meeting
May 6: Board Special Meeting: Operations Committee
May 7: Madison Middle School Combined Building Addition and Field Improvement Projects
May 10: Board Special Meeting: Audit & Finance Committee

View the District Calendar for details as well as more upcoming events and school year dates.

May 10: ERAC Meeting
May 11: Board Special Meeting: Student Services, Curriculum & Instruction Committee
May 12: Board Special Meeting: Executive Committee
May 13: Student Advisory Board Meeting
May 13: Native Education Indian Parent Advisory Committee Meeting

Resources

- The Source
- Schoology
- Family Resources
- School Year Dates
- District News and Events
- Departments and Services

Washington States Public Schools

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Follow us for more news and events.