



Home of the Eagles

# PIONEER SCHOOL DISTRICT

112 E. Spencer Lake Road Shelton, WA 98584

360-426-9115 | [www.psd402.org](http://www.psd402.org)

School Board: Dr. Susan Day, Chair | Dr. Stephanie Schlitz | Robert Clark | Richard Lee | Ellroy Rowe

## News From The Superintendent

It is hard to believe that this school year is coming to a close on June 20th. This has been a year of transition for the Pioneer School District as we have hired so many new staff as well as placing existing staff in new roles. We currently have 137 employees in the District and of those, 46 are new to the District.

As we begin reviewing this school year, I look back at the many initiatives and accomplishments our District has provided to improve teaching and learning in our District.

First off, our building principals are all new to their roles this year in the District. They have embraced their roles and provided leadership to the staff and students that has helped change the culture and climate in each building. We have new staff at the district level in Human Resources, Payroll, Accounts Payable, and Special Education. These employees have done a great job this year in those roles, helping to establish our protocols and procedures to ensure we are compliant with state and federal guidance.

We also welcomed new teachers and paraeducators to our District that work directly with our students. Each one has contributed to the success we have experienced this year. They blended well with our returning staff to create an environment that is conducive to student success. We anticipate this next year to have 4-5 new teachers and 3-4 new paraeducators to replace those staff who are leaving our District. We do expect a strong candidate pool to fill these positions as Pioneer is continuing to work on being a school district where people want to come and work. Some of the initiatives we have introduced and continue to develop are our Character Strong in our Social Emotional Learning arena, Professional Learning Communities for monitoring student academic progress, lesson development, and reviewing our standards-based curriculum.

Our District Leadership Team, comprised of

certified and classified staff as well as a parent and school board member, have been working on the development of a Strategic Plan for the District, which will guide our work over the next five years. Each building created a Building Leadership Team that focuses on issues in the building, including evaluation process, climate and culture, and best practices in working with student behaviors that sometimes impede student learning.

As we look to the future, we will have a new reading curriculum for our elementary school next year. A team of teachers researched the best evidence-based curriculums, visited schools that use these reading programs, and recommended CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts). We also will have a new middle school social studies curriculum.

This next year, we will be looking at adopting a new K-8 math curriculum as well as a progress-monitoring tool that will assess student learning. We also will be expand our Professional Learning Communities to take a deeper dive into student progress, interventions in reading and math, and continue to address our instructional practices. Our social-emotional curriculum, Character Strong, will be fully implemented next year, including behavior interventions that will help our students learn how to better resolve conflict, take responsibility, and build upon their abilities to solve problems and advocate for themselves.

Lastly, I again want to thank the community for supporting our levy election in February. This will help stabilize our funding over the coming years and allow us to continue moving forward in the education of children in the Pioneer School District.



**Jeff Davis**  
Superintendent

Have a wonderful summer and we will see you when school resumes in September.

## Teacher Feature Kamala Budge



**Mrs. Budge** has been teaching for six years at Pioneer. She currently is teaching 4th grade. Prior to coming to Pioneer, Mrs. Budge taught at Mountain View Elementary as a Fine Arts Specialist. She also was the Site Coordinator for the 21st Century Grant through ESD 113 at Oakland Bay Junior

High and Olympic Middle School. In this role, Mrs. Budge ran after-school programs, summer academics, and enrichment programs.

When asked what brought her to Pioneer, Mrs. Budge replied that her husband, Bracken, was hired as a counselor, then interim principal. At that time, the District needed a science specialist mid-year and since her husband had fallen in love with Pioneer and the staff, she applied for that position and has stayed here ever since. She earned her Bachelor's Degree at Whitman College in Walla Walla. She became a teacher because she was inspired by the creative, resilient, and magical minds of our youth. Mrs. Budge said that working with kids helps her become more of a part of that world. She thrives off the energy, honesty, and purity of her students. Mrs. Budge says she teaches because she is able to help children feel that energy, but also to help them understand they are valued and that they are necessary and needed in this world.

Mrs. Budge was influenced in becoming a teacher by two "fantastic" science teachers at Garfield High School, Mr. McGowen, who taught Marine Biology, and Mrs. Valentine, who taught Genetics. She said, "they were rigorous classes that tapped into my visual and kinesthetic learning style. Everything was hands-on and project-based".

Her favorite sport is soccer and her favorite team is the Lacey United Football Club. Her favorite foods are avocado, plantains, sweet potatoes, watermelon, and carrot cake. She said her favorite movie depends on her mood. She listed the Harry Potter series, Lord of the Rings, Practical Magic,

Amistad, and All Dogs Go to Heaven as some of her favorites. When asked what was her best attribute, she said physically her forearms, and internally, "it does not take much to make me smile or laugh".

Mrs. Budge's dream vacation would be to go back to Portugal and spend time on the Azores. She said the Azores are "beautiful and peaceful and the people are very kind and compassionate". When she is away from school, she likes to run, walk, paint, and crochet. She also likes to listen to audiobooks and she says she is obsessed with young adult fantasy fiction. Mrs. Budge says her perfect day would be spending time with her mother, sunning in her childhood backyard. Her mother would be of sound mind and body and would regale her with her childhood memories. "She would have complete recognition of me and who I am to her". Her favorite quote is: "The two most important days of your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why".

Mrs. Budge's advice to parents and guardians is: "I would advise parents to focus on their student's effort and progress and to encourage their child to view all challenges as opportunities for growth. I would encourage parents to create an environment in the home which allows students to practice the skills they need to become successful learners and responsible citizens".

Pioneer School District is fortunate to have Mrs. Budge teaching our young children. Her passion and commitment to her students is outstanding.



# GO EAGLES!

# Classified Corner

## Kirsten Tratnick



This edition of our newsletter highlights Kirsten Tratnick, a highly valued para educator who has worked at Pioneer for 25 years. Prior to coming to Pioneer, Mrs. Tratnick worked as a CNA in a nursing home as well as providing home health care to seniors.

Mrs. Tratnick grew up between Bremerton and Shelton. She lived in Bremerton and visited Shelton until high school when she attended Shelton High School.

She began her career at Pioneer as a bus driver before becoming a grade-level para educator at the Elementary School. She currently supports our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program, supervising the Responsible Ability Center (RAC) room in the elementary school.

When asked what she likes most about working at Pioneer, Mrs. Tratnick responded “My students are what I like the most about working here. Teaching tiny humans how to navigate the world is the most challenging and the most rewarding thing I do!”

Mrs. Tratnick’s favorite color is black, but she also likes purple and pink. She says black goes with everything and purple and pink...she likes it just because. Her favorite food is steak. But her “go-to” food is chips, both salty and crunchy. Mrs. Tratnick is also a fan of desserts.

When Mrs. Tratnick is away from school, she enjoys riding her Harley motorcycle. It is her favorite thing to do and she would do it all the time, weather permitting. If it is raining, she enjoys working on her mini-farm and spending time with her family.

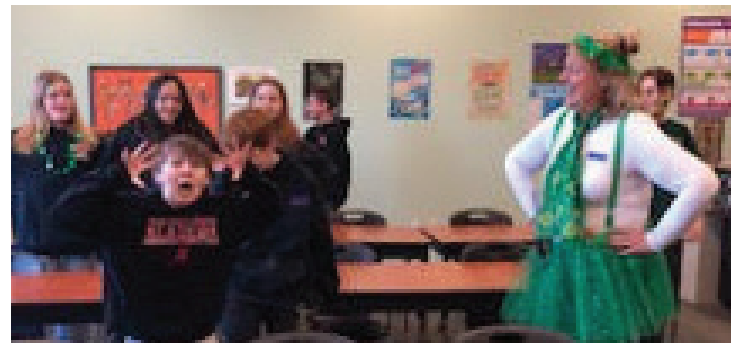
Her best part of the day is when she can connect with a student and see a positive change in their behavior, which helps them succeed in school.

Mrs. Tratnick’s favorite movie is Goonies, but she also has a few others. She likes a lot of songs, as long as it is from the rock genre. Her favorite quote or saying is; “The proof is in the pudding.”

When asked what advice she would give to a parent or guardian who have students in school, it is “to be consistent with everything and do what they say they are going to do, positive or negative. When adults aren’t trustworthy, kids don’t trust them. Please don’t make promises you cannot keep”.

Lastly, Mrs. Tratnick’s favorite place to go would be a tropical oasis that is warm and beautiful... and without a lot of people.

Kirsten Tratnick is a valuable member of the Pioneer Team and has helped hundreds of students become successful in school due to her commitment to them and her “never quit on a student” attitude. Pioneer is fortunate to have Mrs. Tratnick working with our students.



## Middle School March Madness

The luck of the Irish wrapped around seventh-grade students in Mrs. Michelsen’s English Language Arts (ELA) on St. Patrick’s Day. Students learned a wee bit of Irish history and engaged in Irish festival activities to celebrate the day.

Working collaboratively, they practiced writing skills by creating and sharing limericks. Then to liven up the classroom, students participated in the Irish River Dance. They were astonished at how fast their feet needed to move!

Next, they moved out-of-doors to team up with a partner in the three-legged race. Finally, it was the Welly Wanging contest and students worked as a team to throw a welly (a rubber boot) the farthest. After each event, students received participation prizes.

To end the Irish day, each class shared a St. Patrick’s Day cake. It was a grand celebration with smiles and laughter. The Irish leprechaun was proud of the positive engagement by all!



## Elementary School STEM News

We've had a hectic few months in the Eagle Garden with the elementary STEM classes. In March, we began preparing our raised beds for our cool-weather crops by clearing them of winter crops rye and vetch. We also spent a significant amount of time planting cold-weather crops like peas, carrots, lettuce, radishes, arugula, and spinach. In addition, we planted many varieties of tomatoes and basil that were put onto heating mats indoors and then placed under grow lights to give them a good headstart before planting in the ground when the weather warms up. In April, we were lucky enough to receive a rather large donation of native plants from the Mason County Conservation District. Elementary students planted many of the plants including Oregon Grape and Kinikinik among others near our new outdoor learning pavilions.

We continue to work on planting in our garden. Students have been learning about companion plantings such as asparagus with strawberries and using peas and green beans to grow vertically up an arbor. We are learning how to mulch plants to retain necessary water, and how to appropriately water plants too. We are excitedly preparing for our Garden and Games Night.

All of our garden work would not be possible without the help of many volunteers and donations. I would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support of the Eagle Garden:

- Laurie Williams - Endless hours coordinating volunteers and assisting with garden maintenance and lessons.
- Jeannine Polaski - buying blueberry bushes
- Teri King - buying blueberry bushes
- Amelia Savinova - Endless hours of garden volunteering, donation of artichoke plants
- BCP Landscape Supplies - Donation of garden soil
- Dianne Krause - Procuring plant donations, donations of Pieris and Heaths
- Brothers Nursery - Donation of plants, Pieris, Heaths, and berry bushes
- South Sound Fruit Society: Brian and Francesca - Providing advice about fruit trees and berries

- Francesca Ritson - Helping select new fruit trees and teaching middle school students about grafting rootstock to different varieties of branches
- WSU Master Gardeners: Christy, Mary, Maria, Amelia, Jeanne, Dorothy, Jack, Laurie, and more - Advising students and staff on plants, insects, how to plant seeds, harvesting procedures, composting, and garden care
- WSU Master Gardner - Amelia Savinova - Grafting fruit trees, teaching students how to plant seeds, taking care of plants, watering, and teaching how to transplant plants
- Peggy Flom - Donation of stacks of newspapers for paper pots
- Mason County PUD: Troy - Donation of truckloads of woodchips
- Peninsula Landscape Supply - Donation of garden soil
- Mason Conservation District - Donation of native plants and helping with scotch broom removal
- Kiwanis - Donation of money used for science equipment, grow lights and setup, tables and benches in the garden

Our very heartfelt appreciation to all of you who make our garden a truly wonderful place. Your support enables 500 elementary students a week to experience the joys of gardening and exploring a living science laboratory. Thank you for your continued support!

## Earth Day Native Planting At Pioneer Middle School



In preparation for Earth Day this year, Grady Graham from Americorps along with Jen Thurman-Williams from Mason Conservation District (MCD) and WSU

master gardeners Laurie Williams and Amelia Savinova were here on April 12 to facilitate planting native plants around the Eagle's Garden, green belt and walking trails. Pioneer Middle School teachers, Coral Shelly Warren, Brenda Roth, and Megan Thurston took all of the 220 students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th outside to remove the scotch broom and replace it with native plants. Over 700 native plants were purchased through RCO Outdoor Learning Grant by Mason Conservation District.

Students removed an impressive amount of scotch broom, an invasive species that when left unchecked can overtake large areas of disturbed landscapes. Scotch broom offers little to no benefit to native wildlife and pollinators. On

average the plants have 10,000 seeds per plant that can remain viable for 30 years making it a constant fight to keep it away. Students replaced the scotch broom with native plants such as Osoberry, Red Flowering Currant, Pacific Ninebark, and many more. By planting these species, we are helping rewild our green spaces which benefits our local wildlife and provides learning experiences for our students.

If you have a scotch broom problem at home or want to incorporate native plants into your landscape, Mason Conservation District has resources available to you. Mason Conservation District rents out the tool we used to remove the scotch broom for free. Check it out at [masoncd.org](https://masoncd.org) and keep an eye out for their native plant sale this upcoming winter.



## Third Grade Students

Third graders sprang right into scientific discovery immediately after spring break. The Pacific Shellfish Institute got them up and moving as they investigated shellfish in our region. Students learned about phytoplankton in the water, classified shells, and then ended with an up-close look at phytoplankton under microscopes.

## Elementary Girls On The Run Program

Girls in third, fourth, and fifth grades had the opportunity to participate in a program called Girls on the Run. We filled two teams with a total of 30 girls completing the season.

Girls on the Run is a program that empowers girls! Some of the lessons that the girls participate in include standing up to bullying, being a good friend, what to do when we experience hardships, and how to be courageous. Each practice includes a lesson and a workout. The girls have been working all season to increase their endurance, so they are able to run a 5K at the end of the season.



This season, the 5K took place on Saturday, May 20th, at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds. We appreciate everyone who came out to support these awesome girls! To get more information, please visit <https://www.gotrws.org>.

## New Middle School Electives

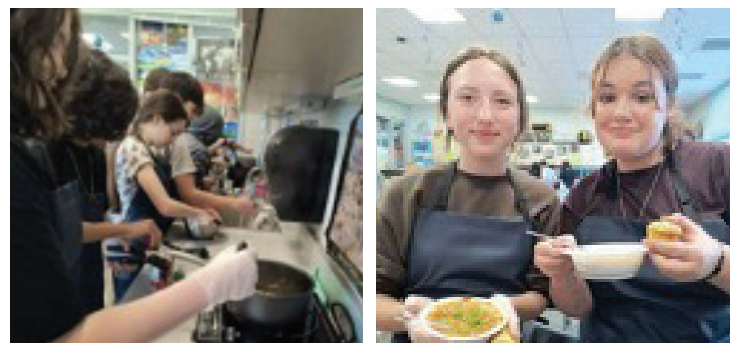
There are a variety of electives available to students at Pioneer Middle School. One elective that is in its first trimester of existence is Miss Coral's and Mrs. Roth's Garden-to-Table cooking elective.

In this afternoon class, students split their time between caring for and contributing to our District's garden and cooking easy whole-food recipes.

So far this trimester, students have made deviled eggs, pickles, bread, cornbread, and chili. In celebration of Cinco de Mayo, student groups made their very own salsa recipes and while enjoying the nacho bar, students and guests were able to vote for the best salsa!

Future culinary events include a cookie fundraiser, "Elements Week" and a 70's inspired Fondue Feast!

Students are excited each and every day and several have already used their new recipes to prepare meals for their families at home. This elective will get a reboot over the summer and continue next fall with new recipes and freshly harvested food from the Pioneer Garden.



## Elementary Book Vending Machine

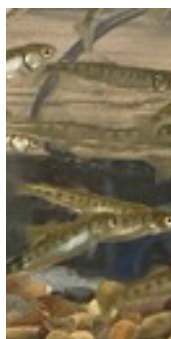
At the Elementary School this year we have been working hard to increase our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at the school-wide level. This has included bringing Eagle Assemblies back, celebrating our students of the month who are chosen based on our Character Strong curriculum traits, and introducing SOArtificates. SOArtificates are given to students exhibiting Safe, Organized, Accountable, and/or Respectful behaviors around the school and are turned in each Friday for a weekly drawing where two students from each grade receive prizes.



Recognizing the importance of celebrating students making the right choices, and wanting to foster a love of reading, we decided to invest in a book vending machine that was delivered to the school in early April. Our Friday SOArtificate drawing winners now receive a token that they can use to “buy” a book of their choice from the machine. Student response to the machine has been overwhelmingly positive, with students eager for their names to be drawn to earn a book. Our hope is that throughout the school year, every student will have the opportunity to earn at least one book from the machine.

Our focus this year in our food service department is building our scratch-cooking recipes. We were fortunate to host Chef Kent with our food service staff and deliver a scratch-made meal.

## Salmon In Classroom



On March 28th, 6th-grade Pioneer STEM students traveled to the Theler Wetlands in Belfair to release chum salmon they had raised during the winter. Biologists from “Salmon in the Classroom” guided STEM students through stations showing salmon diet items, estuary habitats, and a riffle where the salmon were released. See you in 3 or 4 years, salmon babies!

## New Physical Education



## Equipment Arrives At The Elementary School

Pioneer Elementary students will be noticing a variety of new physical education equipment in their gym this week. “I think it’s really important for the students to have top quality sports equipment,” says Kalie Enlow, Assistant Principal at the elementary school. Third grade students were excited to see the new PE equipment..“It is cool because PE is my favorite classes.”

In addition to sports equipment, the school received a new basketball switch to raise and lower the hoop to play full court basketball. We also recieved new posts and nets to teach students about volleyball, badminton, and racquet ball. The Pioneer School Board supported the \$15,000 to purchase the new PE equipment in order to support the social and physical wellness of students.

Wellness is an emphasis for all students as they transition back from the pandemic. Physical education classes are a big part of bringing back students with a focus on health, and the new equipment is greatly appreciated. However, if asked, most of the students would tell you that new equipment is just plain fun.

## Summer 2023 Reading Program

All students K-7 are invited to borrow books to keep their reading strong over the summer! This reading can bring hours of joy with a good book and prevent the summer slide where students can lose several months of hard earned growth. We will even have a book exchange at the Elementary School on July 19th to refresh the reading materials. Stay tuned for more information coming home soon.

# Pioneer Middle School Students Excel At Regional Science & Engineering Fair

Results from the Discovery Regional Science and Engineering Fair have been posted and Pioneer Middle School students were well represented with 17 entries and multiple 1st place finishes. Special awards have yet to be announced.

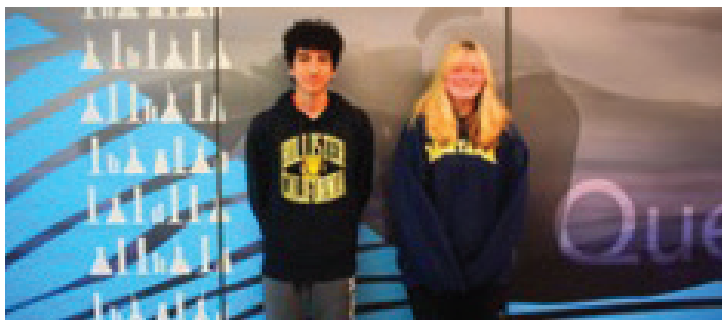
Congratulations to students and teachers all around!



1st Place: Isabella York and Milo Matsuda (6th); Also won a nomination to the ThermoFisher Junior Innovators Challenge; a national award for the top 10% of projects in the country. This team also placed 2nd at the Washington State Science and Engineering Fair; Samuel Simmons (6th) Diego Zepeda Soto (7th)



2nd Place: Jeremiah Vopat-Steiner (6th) Jeremiah also placed 3rd at the Washington State Science and Engineering Fair. Talesha Smith (6th); Henry McClara (6th); Jady Smith (7th); Lane Weisenbaugh and Courtney Brown-Lawler (8th); Mitchell Sarda (8th)



3rd Place: Aiden O'Connell (6th); Tayleigh Garlinghouse (6th); Eban Shanks and Oliver Price (8th); Jamonta Thomas and Santiago Barrios (8th)

# The Eagles' Garden

June already! Where has the time gone; it seems like school began last week not nine months ago.

Pioneer Students have been incredibly busy in the garden this spring. Elementary students have transplanted and potted all kinds of fruits and vegetables, and in order to celebrate Earth Month, students pulled scotch broom and planted native plants such as Ninebark, Oregon oak, and flowering currant.

We want to give a big thanks to the generosity of Mason Conservation District for the help with pulling scotch broom, providing the native plants, and helping us to plant them! In April, a group of Master Gardener volunteers donated six blueberry bushes and two artichokes which came from Buffalo Agate Farm. Again, we are so thankful for the wonderful support the garden receives.

In addition to plants, we have also had volunteers donate their irrigation and engineering expertise. Amy Wisch, Brandi Henry, and Brad Sukolsky donated time and ideas to install a drip irrigation system into the raised beds and cool sprinklers around other plant beds. Lloyd Smith, our facilities manager, set our timers for the raised beds. Timers! Tricky things, yet they are working. In addition, this irrigation system was made possible by a gift from the Harstine Island Garden Club.

Finally, as we come to the end of the school year, there are two people we want to thank—Laurie Williams and Amelia Savinova. These volunteers and master gardeners have been instrumental in gathering donations and volunteers to help Pioneer have a beautiful garden. They work tirelessly with all of our students and teachers to share their love of gardening and outdoor education. They are a huge asset and work wonderfully with students and teachers. Thank you, Laurie and Amelia!



# GO EAGLES!

Pioneer School District  
112 E. Spencer Lake Road  
Shelton, WA 98584



## *Scratch Cooking with Chef Kent*



**MAY 9TH, 2023**

## **IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES**

**June 16, 2023**

Full Day of School

**June 20, 2023 - Last Day of School**

Elementary Releases at 11 AM

Middle School Releases at 12 Noon



The Pioneer School District will provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with disabilities. The following employees are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Civil Rights Coordinator, Jeff Davis, [jdavis@psd402.org](mailto:jdavis@psd402.org); Title IX Coordinator, Amy Koster, [akoster@psd402.org](mailto:akoster@psd402.org); and Section 504 Coordinator, Amy Dahlberg, [adahberg@psd402.org](mailto:adahberg@psd402.org).