A message from Clackamas ESD leaders

The year 2021 reminded us once again that change is the only constant in life. For nearly two years now, a global pandemic has forced Clackamas Education Service District, and the school districts we support, to exercise unprecedented creativity, flexibility and innovation.

Throughout these stressful times, however, we’ve never lost sight of our goal: to provide unparalleled education service and support to the students, families and school districts of Clackamas County. We’re pleased to present you with our 2021 annual report, which offers a snapshot of our achievements in key mission areas. Through data and stories, we hope you will learn more about the daily ways your regional education service district is making a tangible difference in the lives of students and families, and our broader community.

We took on our new roles as superintendent and board chair of Clackamas ESD midway through 2021, and we couldn’t be more honored to serve in these positions. Our organization’s mission to lead, serve and innovate is ingrained in us, and in our staff and board colleagues. As we turn the calendar to a new year, we are well positioned to embrace the opportunities we know 2022 will offer to further improve our service to the children, families and educators of Clackamas County. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in this critical work.

In service,

Larry Didway
Superintendent

Wade Byers
Chair, Board of Directors
Our mission: Lead, serve and innovate for learning

Clackamas ESD uses a strategic compass to guide our work. Leadership, service and innovation are our hallmarks. Our core values are collaboration, integrity, respect and excellence. We seek to infuse equity into our operations and all our decision making, striving to:

- Be good stewards of our resources
- Communicate and engage effectively
- Create an inclusive, barrier-free environment in which everyone participates and fully benefits
- Provide our employees and our customers with high-quality facilities, technology and resources

Who we serve

70,000** students in 10 school districts

87% of ninth graders “on track”**

85% five-year high school graduation rate*

55% of third-graders meeting reading benchmarks* – one of the highest rates in the state

31% economically disadvantaged

18% historically underserved

14 child care slots per 100 children* – below state average

12% English language learners

*Source: The Ford Family Foundation
**ADMw totals vs enrollment
Who we are

Part of a statewide network of 19 education service districts providing regional services to students, families, teachers and school districts

How we’re funded

$87.6 million

Total budget

39%

General Fund

$34 million

61%

Competitive state and federal grants, contracts and other fee-for-service initiatives

$53.6 million

2021 impact examples

• $11.7 million in revenues sent directly to districts to use on ESD services of their choice

• Nearly $8.8 million in core service support to districts in special education, teaching and learning, and technology

• Nearly $23 million in direct support provided to children, families and districts via grants and contracts

• $50,000+ in potential scholarships distributed at the 2021 CESD Regional Art Show

• Nearly 2,000 STEM learning kits distributed to regional students

• More than 1,800 students provided “care kits” during distance learning months

• Nearly 3,500 youth served directly and through district partnerships via special education, early learning, migrant/bilingual education, and career and technical education programs

• 97% of children enrolled in our Head Start to Success program had health insurance at end of their enrollment

• About 1/3 of age- and income-eligible children in Clackamas County served by our Head Start to Success program
Clackamas ESD is governed by a seven-member elected board of directors. Five members represent specific regions of Clackamas County; two members serve at large. Board members serve four-year terms, and come from a variety of backgrounds and professions. They share a common interest in ensuring all youth in Clackamas County have access to excellent educational opportunities.

**Board members** (pictured right):

- **Wade Byers,** Chair, Zone 1
- **Linda Brown,** Vice Chair
- **Nadene Duffield,** At Large
- **Jon Eyman,** Zone 4
- **Len Mills,** Zone 2
- **Greg McKenzie,** Zone 3
- **Susan Trone,** Zone 5

*Re-elected to a new four-year term in 2021*
Board service zones

1. Lake Oswego School District
2. West Linn-Wilsonville School District
3. Gladstone School District
4. Canby School District
5. Molalla River School District
7. Oregon City School District
8. Oregon Trail School District
9. Estacada School District
10. Colton School District
Meet Clackamas ESD Superintendent Larry Didway

Clackamas ESD welcomed Larry Didway as its new superintendent July 1, 2021. Larry came to us after a long career in the Oregon City School District, most recently serving 10 years as superintendent. We asked him to share more about his background, as well as his thoughts about his new role serving 10 regional school districts.

Read an expanded Q&A with Superintendent Larry Didway online at www.clackesd.org/larry-didway/
Q: What inspired you to get into this field of work?
A: I was a political science major at Willamette University. My advisor encouraged me to sign up for a combined degree program in education. So I took his advice and was assigned to a fourth-grade classroom at Highland Elementary in Salem with 24 students. Over half of the students spoke English as a second language, and many had a parent incarcerated nearby. The group of kids there embedded themselves into my heart and inspired me to be a teacher, and I never looked back. I decided to complete the program and make it my career.

Q: You had a lengthy and successful career in the Oregon City School District. What interested you in working at Clackamas Education Service District?
A: I was born and raised in this area. My career has been here. I’ve raised two children in this place, and both my kids graduated from Oregon City High School. During my tenure as Oregon City School District superintendent, I always valued my connections with Clackamas ESD and the service that came from it. I always saw the ESD as a resource that helped me improve and do my work better. I was attracted to the ability to have an impact on the entire region. I really see ESDs in particular as grounded in service. Service is something that feeds my soul.

Q: What have you learned in this new role? How is it different from being a district superintendent?
A: The pandemic has shined a light on how important our connections and relationships are with each other, along with the need for collaborating and supporting one another. I have a better understanding of just how complex the work is. We have a lot of employees here who represent the only person who does their job, as opposed to a school district where you have an array of people with similar work experiences.

Q: In your opinion, what value does Clackamas ESD bring to the region?
A: One of the reasons we exist is to help school districts provide opportunities to all kids and do that in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible. But in addition, I think we also offer the opportunity to innovate services and be responsive and nimble when certain needs emerge. The ESD can play a role in leading those conversations and piloting ideas to surface new kinds of opportunities for services or products for our schools and students.

Q: What are your goals and vision for Clackamas ESD?
A: I think CESD has a great mission statement: “Lead, serve and innovate for learning.” My goal and vision for the ESD are to embody the mission through our work and services. We want to lead by developing leaders and being future-focused, responsive and proactive to what we see coming our way. We want to serve by responding to the needs that are expressed by our local communities, our region and each district. And we want to innovate by creating new solutions, tools and strategies through collaboration to fulfill our mission of serving and reaching all.

Q: If there is one message you would like to share with the community, what would it be?
A: We want to be guided by our mission of leadership, service and innovation. We want to be that resource to you that helps serve every single child. We have a dream that every student has what they need to reach their full human potential. The ESD will play whatever role our community needs to help make that happen. We have great community partnerships and outstanding school leadership, and I am honored to be a part of it.

Q: What is something you learned and have carried with you throughout your career?
A: I have a framed Ralph Waldo Emerson quote that has sat on my desk ever since my first year as a teacher: “The secret to education is respecting the pupil.” That quote has been a reminder to me to always anchor my decisions, thoughts and actions on respecting the student, their needs and who they are as a human being. Respect is where it all starts and that guides all of my decision-making.
Coordinating a regional “shot in the arm”

When the first COVID vaccines were approved, and Gov. Kate Brown announced educators would receive priority, Clackamas ESD helped lead a herculean regional effort to get COVID shots in the arms of tens of thousands of teachers and other school staff in a matter of weeks.

We actually laid the groundwork for this effort in December 2020, when Gladstone School District Superintendent Bob Stewart convened Clackamas ESD leaders, and other key regional school and health care officials, in a series of forward-thinking vaccine planning discussions. Together with the Oregon Health Authority, this group created a large-scale model for delivering vaccines to metro-area educators.

Pam Bonner, Clackamas ESD’s executive operations coordinator, devoted nearly every waking hour for two months to help manage the complex effort, in partnership with local school district leaders and two other regional ESDs. Collectively, the three regional ESDs delivered nearly 6,000 hours of staffing support at the mass vaccination site at the Oregon Convention Center. Clackamas ESD provided six staff members to work eight-hour shifts each day for eight weeks. Several of our partner districts also helped staff the vaccination clinic.

In addition, we coordinated with the Clackamas County Department of Public Health to make sure extra vaccination doses at local clinics didn’t go to waste. We established a short-notice on-call program for staff and families, and personally reached out to those on the list when there was a vaccination opening at a moment’s notice.

The result? Between the mid-January 2021 project launch through early March, we helped vaccinate close to 70 percent of the total tri-county educator workforce of nearly 70,000 people.

Throughout the year, we continued acting as a key liaison for our regional districts to the county’s public health department and several state agencies, ensuring our districts had the latest information about constantly changing COVID processes and protocols, and got their questions answered in a timely way. We also served as a point of distribution for personal protective equipment secured by the Oregon Department of Education, coordinating delivery of truckloads of masks, shields, gloves and hand sanitizer to our districts.

Below is one of many notes Pam Bonner received from our school districts, thanking her for her help in coordinating the regional vaccine effort

Pam,

I just wanted to take a quick moment to say thank you for your commitment and dedication to serving on our great team and supporting all of our school district “point people” as we navigate the vaccination process together. I am convinced the communication, organization, and execution would not be as sound without your leadership in this project. Thank you again for all you are doing!

RYAN CARPENTER
SUPERINTENDENT
ESTACADA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Website gets a major upgrade

Thousands of people visit the Clackamas ESD website each year, and it’s now a much better place to find information. We completed a redesign of the website in 2021, with improvements that include simplified navigation, more and better program and service information, and a more mobile device-friendly layout. Check out the new-and-improved site at clackesd.org.

Investing in “grow your own” efforts

We’re invested in helping talented staff at all levels move into new positions that help them grow and learn. We were excited to hire Desi Nicodemus, our first-ever teacher pathway navigator, in 2021. Desi works with classified staff and others throughout Clackamas County to support aspiring teachers through the steps needed to earn an educator license. Desi’s position is funded through a “grow your own” grant from the Educational Advancement Council.

Sharing knowledge, peer to peer

One of the most valuable services we provide to regional districts is the convening of job-alike advisory groups to share information and address collective challenges. We operate nine of these groups for professionals in:

- Business services
- Communications
- English learner support
- Facilities management
- Human resources
- Special education
- Student Success Act implementation
- Teaching and learning
- Technology

A separate group made up of our 10 partner districts’ chief administrators, as well as the president of Clackamas Community College, is convened by Clackamas ESD’s superintendent.

These collaborations continued to be critical as the pandemic persevered in 2021. We worked together to problem solve, share best practices and respond rapidly to fast-changing circumstances in our schools and districts. Clackamas ESD also continued to be an important liaison for our regional districts to the Clackamas County Department of Public Health and several state agencies, ensuring key concerns regarding school operations were addressed.
Expanding our broad support for teaching and learning

Clackamas ESD has a deep and experienced teaching and learning team. We provide a range of professional development opportunities to educators, and offer help to improve curriculum, assessment and instructional practices focused on raising equity and student achievement. Once again in 2021, our team of educators responded to the new realities of the pandemic with practical support and professional learning.

Equity is an important driver of our work. We’re dedicated to ensuring all students have access to opportunities to learn and succeed, customized as needed. That commitment extends to all the educators and staff members who work so hard to engage and support students every day.

In 2021, we held panel discussions with building leaders from across the country to learn and problem solve together. We helped teachers and school teams use Google Classroom, Zoom and other digital tools. We held even more frequent meetings with our teaching and learning colleagues in each district, supporting each other in the intensive work to provide meaningful distance learning opportunities for families. The following pages share a few other examples of our across-the-board instructional and staff support.
Elevating equity at all levels

“You’re the gift I didn’t know I needed.”

Those were meaningful words shared in summer 2021 with Dawnnesha Lasuncet, Clackamas ESD’s equity and inclusion coordinator, from one of the school district staff members she had been coaching for several months.

Dawnnesha’s role to support districts and CESD staff in their equity efforts has expanded in unexpected ways during the COVID pandemic. One day she’ll be helping a team create an outline for a day of equity-focused training. The next she’ll pivot to the needs of another team who wants coaching on handling specific issues that arise around equity and anti-racism, and the ability to debrief with a trusted partner.

“My services fill a huge consulting bucket,” Dawnnesha said. “I’m a culturally responsive educator. Districts want thought partnering, coaching and consulting as they work to be culturally responsive and become more antiracist.

“The work is long and hard. Each district’s needs are unique, and the work looks and feels different everywhere. That’s why Dawnnesha, who started her career as an elementary school teacher, is trying to spend as much time in classrooms as she can.

“I can’t coach and collaborate with my teammates if I don’t understand what they do,” she said.

One goal for the current year is to advance equity work started regionally in 2021 with Dr. Sharroky Hollie, an educator who has provided professional development in cultural responsiveness to more than 150,000 teachers nationwide. In the meantime, Dawnnesha is stretching her skillset to meet daily district needs.

“My job is relationship-based, and built and maintained on trust,” she said. “I’m gratified when our school teams know that when something hard is happening, they have someone at the ESD they can call for help.”
Creating a rich “online school”

Clackamas ESD’s teaching and learning and technology services teams stepped up to provide enhanced support for online learning in the Gladstone, Molalla River, Oregon City and Oregon Trail school districts throughout the year. We supported an online learning platform called Schools PLP, and our help included weekly problem-solving sessions with administrators, K-5 and 6-12 teacher support sessions, and liaison work with Schools PLP staff.

Gregory Cimmiyotti was a brand new administrator of Oregon City’s fully online program, and her district chose the Schools PLP platform.

“I had a steep learning curve and felt I was far behind the rest of the participating districts,” she said. “I can’t thank the CESD team enough for the support they gave to the teachers and me. I felt comfortable asking questions so I could ‘catch up’ with others. Their support, training and encouragement allowed us to not only survive but thrive.”

Gregory called out the team’s “outstanding” organization and attention to detail, and the heavy lift of integrating Schools PLP with the Synergy student information system.

“I know the team was very busy, yet they met with us weekly to support the implementation of online learning,” Gregory said. “I learned so much and appreciate them even more.”

Coloring the world through art

Not all children have equal access to the joy of making art. Clackamas ESD was pleased to partner in 2021 with the Lake Oswego Festival of the Arts and regional middle school teachers to expand the festival’s “Art in Color” project to reach more children. We printed full-color workbooks and funded art kits that were delivered to more than 240 students at Kraxberger Middle School in Gladstone and Tumwata Middle School in Oregon City.
Angie Arends has a passion for hands-on learning, which is a valued tool in her areas of focus: the “STEM” subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

In her five years as Clackamas ESD’s STEM consultant, Angie has fostered partnerships with our regional school districts, as well as throughout the community and the state, to connect schools and teachers with the resources they need to engage students in STEM education.

“I feel like an important part of my role is to keep current on trends in STEM learning, and to look ahead to what support districts may need,” Angie said.

She was definitely put to the test during a year of mostly distance learning, when she looked for new ways to partner with district staff to engage students and families.

“In some ways the pandemic provided opportunities,” Angie said. “All students had devices, and the distance learning environment forced teachers to think differently and shift their perspectives.”

For example, Angie partnered with the principal and staff of Redland Elementary School in Oregon City to integrate social and emotional learning, engineering and design into fun home-based learning experiences. In partnership with the Redland team, Angie and her team created lesson plans for teachers, and distributed nearly 700 supply kits to families. Students learned about perseverance, and practiced that skill as they used kits to build leprechaun traps and marble ramps, and post their experiences on Flipgrid, where their videos were viewed close to 7,000 times.

Angie also collaborated with the South Metro STEM Partnership to bring “Making 2 Learn” professional support to 16 teachers and administrators in the Estacada, Molalla River and Colton school districts. Angie assembled close to 2,000 supply kits for students and families across the region, and nearly 900 of those kits were distributed to students in Clackamas County for hands-on STEM lessons at home. She also organized a series of workshops to introduce teachers to “making” activities for students.

“We’re helping teachers build their skills in supporting project-based learning, structuring lessons and scaling up activities,” Angie
said. “Especially important, we're helping them learn how to give students 'voice in choice' and exercise creativity in the activities they choose to build STEM skills.

“The projects provide such a sense of joy and excitement. We’ve had an overwhelming response from teachers wanting STEM support. More than 100 teachers wanted to participate in our program last year, and we couldn't accommodate them all.”

Fortunately, many schools – particularly elementary schools – have created new "maker spaces" that are allowing students new outlets for creativity and learning.

“This is real hands-on learning that is inspiring and joyful,” Angie said. “I love that it allows teachers to see kids in a new light. Kids who may not have been successful in reading or math, but you give them a ‘maker’ project and they just shine. They don’t want to leave the classroom because they’re having too much fun learning.”

Want to discuss more STEM support for your school or district? Please contact Angie Arends at aarends@clackesd.org.

“The teachers and the students LOVED these science lessons. Truly a game changer for both teachers and kids. These units were wonderful. Thank you so much for all your work in putting them together and helping me figure everything out to make it happen. Summer school would have been a bummer without your help and support.”

CHRISTINA NEWMAN
READING SPECIALIST AND ACTING SUMMER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MULINO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MOLALLA RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
CTE team helps build sheds for fire-devastated residents

During the past year, our CTE team updated 72 program areas of study, including expansion of health care offerings and career resources for students. But one of their most meaningful projects was a response to community trauma. The CTE team partnered with Associated General Contractors and construction teachers at Canby High School and the Sabin-Schellenberg Center in the North Clackamas School District to construct sheds for those in need in the Santiam Valley, following the devastating wildfires in the fall of 2020.

C-TEC Youth Services highlights

- **207** youth served
  - 100% had dropped out of school
  - 30% were involved in the justice system
  - 44% qualified as low income

- Hosted first Clackamas Virtual Youth Career Fair, connecting youth job seekers with local businesses hiring for entry-level positions

- **23** participants earned GEDs or diplomas, despite very limited GED testing opportunities

- **15** new virtual platforms C-TEC staff learned to use to connect with youth

- Partnering with many other organizations, started a new grant project to provide employment and education services for homeless youth

- **300** hours of staffing provided for employment assistance hotline that C-TEC helped launch

Helping youth find their way to meaningful work and careers

Clackamas ESD coordinates two key grant-funded programs aimed at helping older students and young adults gain hands-on technical experience, learn more about career pathways, and connect with community resources:

- **Our Career and Technical Education Consortium** – a partnership with Clackamas Community College – helps high school students access career education and work-based learning

- **C-TEC Youth Services**, which includes many district and community partners, helps out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24 gain more education and obtain employment
Engaging migrant children through summer school

Summer is the busiest time for Clackamas ESD’s Migrant Education Program — not only do we coordinate a summer school program, but we also visit the farms, fisheries, canneries, nurseries, logging sites, poultry plants, beef processing plants and dairies where migrant families work to enroll more children in educational programs and share information about the wrap-around services available to them, such as help accessing food, clothing, extended day care, dental care and accident insurance.

The Migrant Education Program gives migrant students pre-K through age 21 access to year-round educational experiences and support at every level of need. The program focuses on four learning goals — reading, mathematics, school readiness and graduation — achieved through bilingual instruction, cultural activities like music and dance, and wrap-around support.

Clackamas ESD’s four-week, federally funded summer migrant education program served 200 students at multiple sites in the Canby, Molalla River, Oregon City and Oregon Trail school districts in 2021. While some students attended summer school in person, most students were served online, due to families’ continuing concerns about exposure to COVID-19. We partnered with the Oregon Child Development Coalition to provide wrap-around services at in-person sites.

One of those in-person locations was in Gresham, where our summer migrant education program served 14 students from Fresno, California who traveled to Oregon with their families for work opportunities. At their end-of-school celebration, students tie-dyed tee-shirts, shook maracas along to folk songs in a virtual visit from binational teacher Fatima Flores and cooled off on the playground with squirt bottles.
Taking “student success” to heart

Nearly two years of a stressful COVID-19 pandemic have elevated the need to provide more physical, emotional and mental health support to students. Fortunately, funding from the innovative Student Success Act has allowed Clackamas ESD to step up and better help districts meet these critical health needs.

Over the past year and a half, we’ve zeroed in on student physical and mental health. Our team now includes registered nurses and experienced mental health support specialists. Here are just a few examples of the support we have provided to our partner districts and the families we collectively serve:

- Multiple Spanish language workshops on physical and mental health for families in districts served by our Migrant Education Program
- Suicide prevention, trauma and crisis response training to staff across all districts
- YouthTruth survey on school climate and social emotional wellbeing funded for 4,700 students in two partner districts
- Monthly professional learning and support opportunities offered to school nurses and school counselors
- Community engagement support with digital tools, surveys and focus groups, and translation services

“Care and Connection” visit pilot program

During the long months when all or most learning was happening from home, educators were concerned about staying connected with students. We collaborated with five school districts to spearhead a “care and connection” pilot program that included physical visits to students who were “under the radar.” We connected with several community partners and, thanks to grant support from Kaiser, we put together “care kits” that were dropped off to more than 1,800 students during home visits between August 2020 and May 2021.
About 20 years ago, Sandy Mathewson attended a school safety workshop where she was asked to sum up her learning in one sentence. Sandy landed on this: Prevention works, and so must I. That phrase has guided a career spent trying to prevent student crises.

She likens student trauma, such as suicides and other mental health crises, to turbulent rivers leading to a waterfall.

“Let’s look for signs a waterfall is coming,” Sandy explains. “Let’s get way upstream from the waterfall, and teach prevention skills to stop bad things from happening.”

Sandy started her position as Clackamas ESD’s mental health, safety and prevention specialist at the start of the pandemic, after spending most of her career leading youth services for ESD 112 in southwest Washington. She was instrumental in securing a $10 million federal grant following the Sandy Hook school shooting disaster that helped all Washington schools improve mental health services for kids, and increase training for adults and students alike to reduce mental health stigma.

“Sustainability was always our goal,” she says. “With the grant, we developed sustainable services that are still going on.”

In her current role, Sandy supports, trains and collaborates with school safety prevention specialists in our regional school districts and throughout Oregon. Together, they tackle big topics, such as behavior safety, crisis management and suicide prevention.

“It’s a group of smart people who are passionate about what they’re doing,” she adds. “I love working in a statewide team with people to create systems that are sustainable and can make a lasting impact. A small group of people who are very passionate can change the world.”

The training Sandy facilitates is a big part of her job, and it focuses heavily on student risk assessment and suicide prevention.

“A huge passion of mine is being able to train counselors, psychologists, nurses and all those who are most likely to have troubled children referred to them,” she says. “I especially enjoy summarizing things down so you can easily remember what to do if you encounter a crisis, whether it’s at a coffee shop or by the bus stop.”

Sandy Mathewson: A passion for preventing student trauma

Sandy is heartened by stories of her training being put to use.

“I love hearing, ‘I actually used what you trained us on,’ and ‘I applied what you taught in my life and it has actually made my life better,’” she says. “That’s the best kind of feedback – that what I taught mattered and actually changed someone’s life.”

She had her own life-changing experience in middle school, when a caring counselor stepped in with wise words that ultimately influenced her career path.

“Most of us can remember a person in education who changed our lives when we were particularly uninspired or naughty,” Sandy says. “Someone who tells you, ‘Hey, you’re worth it. I don’t like your behavior, but you – I like.’ For me, that person was Mr. Arnie Lund. I wanted to spend my lifetime emulating him and doing what he did for me because he really changed my life.”

If you have questions about how Clackamas ESD can provide additional mental health and related crisis support in your school or district, please reach out to Sandy at smathewson@clackesd.org.
“Creating an atmosphere where staff, support personnel and students can explore and make mistakes, but then find it within themselves to move forward and continue trying – that’s been really meaningful for me.”

~ JOSLYNN
BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SPECIALIST
Providing customized learning for students with special needs

Many students in our region experience cognitive, physical, emotional or behavioral challenges that impact their ability to learn. Clackamas ESD has a team and several programs dedicated to supporting these students, in partnership with their home school districts. We work closely with families and schools to tailor services to each child’s individual needs, always with the goal of returning students to their home schools as quickly as possible. As we entered year two of the pandemic, we continued to find creative ways to engage and educate students both online and in the classroom, following strict COVID protocols.

Our direct student support includes:

Life Enrichment Education Program
LEEP serves school-age children with complex and multiple disabilities who are referred to us by their home school districts. We work closely with families to develop custom plans to help these students learn in a supportive and engaging classroom environment.

Heron Creek Therapeutic Program
Students enrolled in our Heron Creek program are experiencing significant social, emotional, behavioral and academic challenges. We focus on collaborative problem solving, helping students address their barriers to success and learn new self-regulation skills.

Transition Network
We work with educators in five counties to help students with developmental disabilities ages 16 to 21 make the shift to integrated, competitive employment.
Taking a LEEP to serve students during a pandemic

Keeping students engaged and on a positive learning trajectory has taken lots of creativity during the pandemic, particularly for educators serving students experiencing many complex disabilities. Through all the challenges of distance and hybrid learning in 2021, our Life Enrichment Education Program staff stayed focused on caring for the needs of each individual student, and heavily engaging families. Early in the year, several LEEP teachers reflected on their experiences. A few highlights of the positive lessons learned about the resiliency of students, the dedication of families and the power of partnership with colleagues:

“Being able to collaborate and come together as teachers has been amazing. I’ve learned so much from other teachers, and we’re able to share ideas, share the workload.”

– ANNE
MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My kids are amazing. They are engaged. They are following along with the lesson. It’s way better than I ever could have imagined it being.”

– PERI
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
“I think my biggest accomplishment is getting to know the families really well. You’re forming those relationships where they can trust you and understand what’s happening with their kids.”

– ABBY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I’m literally amazed every day at what teachers are doing and how much they’re putting into their programs and their support for kids. The bridge between home and school is stronger and healthier than it ever was before, and I think we’ve learned that it’s an integral part of our program.”

– JAN
TEACHER ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
Summer programs focus on learning ... and fun

Summer school always has been a staple for some Clackamas County children, but Clackamas ESD made extra efforts in 2021 to make sure students who wanted to extend their learning into summer break had that opportunity.

At our Heron Creek Therapeutic Program, some students used the summer to work on finishing classes for credits. We also offered a popular four-week STEM camp, in partnership with Angie Arends of our teaching and learning team (read more about Angie’s STEM work on p. 16). Students studied varied topics from art to robotics through a range of fun hands-on learning opportunities. They even got to enjoy a birds of prey exhibition as part of their ecosystem unit.

About 30 of our Life Enrichment Education Program students with highly specialized needs also took part in a summer enrichment experience. We added two speech language pathologists to our team for the summer session to provide intensive communications skills support to these students – much needed after a year of mostly online learning.

“We have to be adaptable. Because every day is different; every student is different.”
– SARA ART SPECIALIST

Meet Jared Hayes, Clackamas ESD’s new special education director

Jared Hayes joined Clackamas ESD as executive director of special education Aug. 1, 2021. This is a homecoming of sorts for Jared, who has deep experience supporting students and staff in diverse environments. He began his career as a school psychologist, and previously served in special education administration roles at Clackamas ESD prior to taking leadership positions in the David Douglas School District, first as elementary special education administrator, and later as student services administrator.

“It’s an honor to return to Clackamas ESD and re-join a team completely devoted to helping students reach their full potential, no matter what challenges they face,” Jared said. “Having worked in multiple school districts, I have an even better perspective on the importance of the special education services we offer to students, and the support we provide to families. I’m inspired by that mission and the potential we have to make an even greater impact on children’s lives.”
Celebrating success:
LEEP and Heron Creek graduations

We were excited to celebrate in person with our 2021 LEEP and Heron Creek graduates. Our LEEP graduation included individualized ceremonies for each student, attended by their families, teachers and other special guests. We held our Heron Creek graduation ceremony outdoors at our new program home on the Marylhurst campus.
“One thing our program is really good at is seeing kids’ needs and accommodating them.”

Stacey Sibley
Assistant Director of Therapeutic Programs
Heron Creek gets a fresh start for fall

Our Heron Creek Therapeutic Program officially moved into its new home in Marian Hall on the former campus of Marylhurst University in summer 2020. But the building was devoid of students until spring 2021. The beginning of school in fall 2021 marked the first time all students and educators were together at one time in Heron Creek’s new home. Staff went out of their way to make that “homecoming” special.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on mental and emotional health – an area of concern for all students, but especially those we serve at Heron Creek. As we transitioned back to in-person learning, our team worked hard to strengthen relationships with students and create welcoming spaces for everyone. Stacey Sibley, who leads the Heron Creek program, had a strong vision for one particular space.

“I had a dream during the summer that the downstairs in our Heron Creek school was a cafeteria and a library,” she recalls.

And so Sibley and colleagues Ryan Musser, Tatiana Bushey and crew got to work. After a week of hauling boxes and furniture, cleaning, repainting, moving shelves and books, and installing a refrigerator and a warming oven, Heron Creek had a new library, cafeteria and dedicated space for students to undertake sensory activities with occupational therapists.

For Sibley, it was a labor of love to make sure students and staff felt welcome in a “new” school.

“My goal was to set everything up this summer so people know we care,” she said. “We are caring for them by caring about their space.”

When students resumed classes at Heron Creek in late August, it was clear Sibley achieved her goal.

“Students are excited to be back to school,” Sibley said. “Staff are so happy to have the kids back and to be back in a routine. And they also have a renovated staff lounge where they can take a break during the day.”

The expanded spaces give staff new opportunities to bring calm and healing to Heron Creek students.

“We’re seeing a lot of fatigue in our students,” Sibley said. “They need more support building their concentration, social and classroom skills. They are having to learn how to get along again. Everyone’s been so isolated this past year.

“One thing our program is really good at, though, is seeing kids’ needs and accommodating them.”

Sibley started the year with more good news: She’ll get access to more classroom space on another floor of the building, so Heron Creek can potentially take on more students (right now it’s at capacity). And a gym in a nearby building on campus will become available to Heron Creek students for physical education and other activities during the cold-weather months.

“We’re so excited about having access to this extra space,” Sibley says. “Staff are over the moon. It’s really helping show students we care about their wellbeing.”
Preparing young children for a life of learning

So much learning happens before children reach kindergarten. Language and social skills are formed, and minds full of curiosity constantly seek to understand the world. These critical early learning years are foundational, yet many young children don’t get the support they need to be ready for school and stay healthy. Whether a child has a learning delay or is experiencing a disability, our teams of caring professionals are helping families successfully navigate these challenges in multiple ways:

**Head Start to Success**

Our comprehensive free preschool program serves three- and four-year-old children who are experiencing poverty. Head Start to Success partners with school districts throughout Clackamas County to serve more than 200 eligible children, helping them get ready for kindergarten and access important medical care.

**Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education**

Eight school districts in Clackamas County partner with us to evaluate pre-K children who may be eligible for early learning intervention (ages birth to 2) or special education services (ages 3 to 5). We offer those services in family homes, community preschools and child care centers, and self-contained classrooms. During the pandemic, we have become very creative and flexible, discovering ways to evaluate and support children and families virtually and outdoors, for example. Our partnerships with regional Head Start programs and school districts ensure all of the young children we serve have inclusive opportunities to learn.
More space for our youngest learners

It’s no secret that Clackamas County serves only a fraction of the needs of our pre-K learners. Our ability to expand our early learning services and support more children and families is one step closer to reality, thanks to the summer 2021 purchase of a building owned by Adventist Health next door to our headquarters in Clackamas. This one-time opportunity to use early learning funds for a capital project will help us expand our partnerships and create more inclusive environments for children.

A “visioning” process is well underway to gather input from community and district partners and other stakeholders on how to...
make the best use of this new facility. We already have several ideas, from creating demonstration classrooms, to developing better evaluation and assessment spaces. Our goal is to make sure our new building helps address the county’s most urgent needs of preschool children and their families.

Space for early learning programs in Clackamas County is hard to get. We feel very fortunate that the stars aligned to give us this opportunity: A willing building seller next door, lifted restrictions on use-or-lose money, and a long-term need to increase support for children receiving early childhood services.

“Oh, the places you’ll go ...”

While we worked hard to make distance learning meaningful during the months where it was the only option we could provide, students and staff alike missed those important in-person moments. So in February 2021, our early learning staff decided to make one of their weekly materials pick-up sessions much more fun. They went all out to dress up as Dr. Seuss characters, and delivered distance learning materials to families in a special “drive through” event at our Clackamas ESD headquarters. You can imagine the honks, waves and smiles these costumes generated!

Child Care Resource and Referral

To support high-quality child care throughout our region, we offer a range of professional development, training and technical support to child care providers. We also provide comprehensive support to individuals interested in becoming providers, and resources for parents looking for high-quality child care.

New “child care for all” task force

Too many families in Clackamas County face significant barriers to accessing affordable child care and non-school-time activities. Meanwhile, low pay and minimal support for child care providers lead to tremendous turnover at child care facilities. And the situation for working families and child care providers has only worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clackamas ESD is pleased to be part of an ambitious new effort to address these major challenges. We’re one of several organizations partnering with the Early Learning Hub of Clackamas County to create a Child Care Task Force. This group will develop strategies and policy recommendations to expand access to high-quality, affordable child care across the county, and address workforce and infrastructure issues. The community wisdom provided by parents, early learning professionals, businesses and community efforts will help us take tangible steps and create real change to support children, families and child care providers in our region.
Clackamas ESD’s Head Start to Success program serves more than 200 preschool students throughout Clackamas County. We are grateful for our partnerships with the Canby, North Clackamas and Oregon Trail school districts that provide valuable classroom space and other support. This feature on our HSS program at Beatrice Morrow Cannady Elementary School highlights the joyful return to “hybrid” learning in spring 2021, after months of distance learning.

**Head Start returns to the classroom**

The beautiful new Beatrice Morrow Cannady Elementary School in Happy Valley opened in fall 2019, and then went dark when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. But in spring 2021, it began teeming again with young learners – including two classrooms full of eager pre-kindergarten students.

“It’s nice for the children in our classes to be in a ‘big school’ environment and be around older elementary school children,” said Angie Koehler, an education specialist who supports Clackamas ESD’s Head Start to Success classrooms at Beatrice Morrow Cannady Elementary. “It helps prepare them for moving on to kindergarten.”

During the spring hybrid learning model, each teacher had one group of children who came to class two mornings a week, with four afternoons a week spent working with children online. Nearly all preschoolers at this site chose to come back for some in-person learning in the spring, rather than remaining completely virtual.

“Being in a hybrid environment, you get to see the kids on the computer after they’ve been there in person,” said Rachel Jones, a Head Start to Success teacher. “The other day in an online session, one of my students pretty much recalled every single thing we had done at school that morning. And they’re asking questions like, ‘Tomorrow do we go on the bus?’ and ‘Tomorrow do we come to school?’ It’s great to see they are really taking in everything that’s happening at school and they’re able to tell their families about it at home.”

Prepping for the return to in-person learning was a true team effort, and as in classrooms at all grade levels, significant safety precautions were put in place. Classrooms were completely reimagined and set up to give children their own spaces or “home bases,” provide them with supplies they don’t share with others, and give them access to roam individually to different “stations” in the room. Extra staff were on hand to help with constant cleaning and disinfecting of toys and other items.

The Head Start team admits to the challenge of coaching young children to stay physically distant from each other, while encouraging the friendly interactions so important to the school experience.

“They’re learning each other’s names, and they have kids they like to play with,” said Kelly Dale, another Head Start to Success teacher at the school. “Kids haven’t gotten that social emotional experience the last year, so it’s really fun to watch them build relationships with others. They’re also figuring out the routine of preschool, and learning accountability for themselves. It’s setting them up to be great learners in a school.”

“Being back in the classroom, you snap back into that teacher role and you start realizing all of the moments you were so deeply missing,” Rachel added. “My anxiety has been eased a lot by seeing how capable the kids are of wearing their masks. They’re so resilient and they’re able to adapt to all that’s going on.

“You can feel how happy they are to be back with other kids. We had a kid who slipped and fell and got hurt, and immediately one of the other kids came over and said, ‘Can I help?’ He was wanting to comfort his friend, and it’s moments like those that I was missing the most. Seeing these children interact together, play together, imagine together.”

Once in-person learning resumed, the Head Start team noticed an immediate difference.

“We’re all seeing huge differences academically and personally,” Kelly said. “I’m glad kids get to experience this. It’s really been a big learning point for all of them. Even when they go home and jump on their online class, they’re excited about it. That’s huge for me. I want my students to want to be at school. And you can see it in their eyes now. They’re enjoying it, and they want to learn.”
Our early learning team is highly successful in providing timely, family-centered support, engaging participating children with their age-group peers, and guiding whole-child development:

- **99.8%** of evaluations for pre-K special education services completed within 60 school days of request
- **99.8%** of evaluations for pre-K special education services completed within 60 school days of request
- **99.7%** of evaluations of infants and toddlers for early learning services completed within 45 days of request
- **62.8%** of pre-K children receive most of their special education services in a regular childhood program

At the end of children’s enrollment in our Head Start to Success program:

- **99%** are up to date on vaccinations or are exempt
- **97%** have health insurance
- **87%** received a dental exam
- **72%** received a medical exam
Tackling tech improvements as pandemic persists

Technology stayed front and center as we entered year number two of a pandemic. Once again, we doubled down on being responsive to our districts’ and other customers’ needs. We pivoted literally from one week to the next, making sure we were responding to the latest situational twists.

It’s always a good thing when infrastructure simply works and goes unnoticed. We excelled at that in 2021, when our bandwidth consumption hit an all-time high yet our firewalls didn’t flinch, even as we were dealing with multiple challenges, including an ice storm that forced lengthy use of back-up power to keep our servers running. Key service achievements in 2021:

**District support in a COVID environment**

We continued ramping up our efforts to help districts, staff and students use a range of tools to support constantly changing learning environments, include a long stretch of comprehensive distance learning. We helped districts manage student data, and come up with efficient ways to create contact logs for COVID contact tracing. We created new methods to count attendance in an online environment, devising a plan to automate attendance calculations and then refining final products created by a vendor. We helped several districts configure their “virtual schools” in ways that supported the online curriculum products they were using, bending over backwards on “rush” jobs to integrate student data with those products and tools.
A broad reach for technology support

Clackamas ESD is well known statewide and beyond for our excellent technology services. We manage and support a range of information management systems for not only our 10 partner school districts, but for a diverse group of other clients – including two other education service districts, and several local governments and state agencies. Even more new clients joined us in 2021. These organizations trust us with their sensitive information because of our solid record of secure, exceptional service at a competitive price. Our growing list of customers allows us to lower the costs of purchasing and maintaining server capacity for our partner school districts.
Telecommunications co-op launch

For several years, we’ve been working with districts to transition them to lower-cost and more efficient phone systems. In 2021, we launched a formal telecommunications cooperative, and partnered with nearly all of our regional school districts to begin rollout. The new open-source phone system is supported by a full-time staff member, and will be substantially cheaper than districts’ existing systems.

Synergy data system improvements

Clackamas ESD manages a student information system called Synergy for most of our partner school districts. Critical data such as student records and grades are stored on this platform. In 2021, following months of planning, we spent several weeks reworking the Synergy environment and migrating it to a new platform, layering in additional levels of security.

more than 654 device repairs

completed in July 2021 by a single staff member – more than double the output in a typical repair month. Our technology team manages a technology repair service that has been kept humming during the pandemic.

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- Clackamas County public school districts
- City of Gladstone
- City of Happy Valley
- City of Hermiston
- City of Hillsboro
- City of Milwaukie
- City of Oregon City
- City of Sandy
- City of West Linn
- Clackamas County
- Clackamas County Library System
- Clackamas Community College
- Clackamas Fire District #1
- Hoodland Fire District
- Sunrise Water Authority
- Christ the King School
- Good Shepherd Community School
- LaSalle Preparatory High School
- Multnomah Education Service District
- Newberg School District
- Northwest Regional Education Service District
- Oregon Health & Science University
- Oregon Institute of Technology
- Park Academy
- Parkrose School District
- Portland Public Schools
- Riverdale School District
- Yamhill-Carlton School District
- LINK Oregon
- State of Oregon – Department of Administrative Services
- State of Oregon – Department of Education
A year of celebrating student and educator excellence

No pandemic can put a damper on two of our most meaningful yearly events: the Clackamas ESD Regional Art Show, and selection of our Regional Teacher of the Year. And 2021 brought an extra honor to celebrate.

Oregon Teacher of the Year

On September 29, Clackamas High School English teacher Ethelyn Tumalad arrived for what was billed as a routine early-morning staff meeting. Instead, she was stunned to learn from Gov. Kate Brown, Oregon Department of Education Director Colt Gill and other luminaries that she had been named 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year.

Earlier in 2021, Ethelyn was named one of 16 Regional Teachers of the Year in a surprise announcement at her school. Clackamas ESD coordinates our regional selection, and our blue-ribbon panel of judges was deeply impressed with how Ethelyn has used her experience as an immigrant (she arrived in the U.S. at age 5 from the Philippines) to hone her values of community, identity and culture, and become a strong teacher leader, student advocate and equity champion.

As Oregon Teacher of the Year, Ethelyn receives a $5,000 cash prize, a matching grant for her school and the opportunity to be the public face of teaching excellence at events across the state in 2022.

Several Clackamas County educators have been named Oregon Teacher of the Year through the decades, but our last winner was in 2006. We are so excited for Ethelyn, and proud that one of our many exceptional regional teachers has received statewide recognition.

Watch Ethelyn being named Oregon Teacher of the Year: www.clackesd.org/2022toy-video/
Watch Ethelyn being named Regional Teacher of the Year: www.clackesd.org/2022toy/
“A metaphor of my classroom is a dining table. There’s always a seat at the table, and whatever my student is hungry for, they’ll get.”

ETHELYN TUMALAD
CLACKAMAS HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER
2022 OREGON TEACHER OF THE YEAR

“Ethelyn infuses her classroom with community, belonging and empathy – all critical components for ensuring students feel welcome and safe”

COLT GILL
DIRECTOR
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Clackamas ESD Regional Art Show

Diverse artwork from more than 100 middle and high school students representing most Clackamas County school districts was displayed in our 2021 all-virtual Clackamas ESD Regional Art Show. We presented two dozen juried awards at our April 27 awards ceremony, held via Facebook Live. In all, more than $50,000 in potential scholarships and other prizes were distributed during the event. You can still view all this amazing student art at clackesd.org/artshow/2021-gallery/.

Lacking
Reese Stame, 11th grade
Lake Oswego High School, Best of Show Award

A Woman's Stare
Carlin Dudevoir, 9th grade
Milwaukie Academy of the Arts

Climate Change Anxiety
Eva King, 10th grade
Molalla High School
“It’s such a beautiful opportunity for students, and a testament to how art and art expression can get you through difficult times. It’s very emotional to see students’ work on display. It feels like a moment where we can come out of our isolation and share our work with the world, share ourselves with the world.”

HEATHER LONGFELLOW
ART TEACHER
OREGON CITY SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY

Grief Comes in Waves
Hannah Olson, 10th grade
Clackamas High School

Cardinal Sculpture
Michelle Luna, 10th grade
West Linn High School

Egg
Haven Flett, 6th grade
Kraxberger Middle School

Pelindaba Lavender
Riley Hirsch, 11th grade
Lake Oswego High School, Staff Choice Award