



A Note from the Superintendent

Dr. Tammy Campbell | JUNE 2018

Dear Colleagues, Families and Neighbors,

Our vision for exceptional schools means we are solely focused on providing highly effective learning environments where scholars feel known, cared about, challenged and successful in acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to persist to graduation and beyond.

As a mother and superintendent, I know a school district's most important job is to keep our staff and scholars safe and engaged so they can learn at the highest levels, to be ready for college, career and the workforce. As a former classroom teacher, I also know safe and civil classrooms are essential to successful learning and effective teaching. And, as a member of the community, I know that school safety is everybody's business. We count on one another and we need one another to be successful.

In reflecting on the last three years of our strategic plan efforts, we have made significant headway in many areas. For five years in a row graduation rates in Federal Way Public Schools have been on the rise, hitting 83.1 percent for the class of 2017 with one of the highest graduation rates in the region. We're outpacing the region in our early learning indicators, and College Bound Scholarship sign up rates. Our retention rate for teaching staff is also on the rise with our latest numbers above 90 percent of our teachers returning for the 2018–19 school year. FWPS ranks second in the Road Map District for the percent of all high school graduates who directly enroll in a 2- or 4-year postsecondary institution. These are just a few examples of what happens when we focus and partner internally and externally on having the best school system.

We are relentless about collecting key stakeholder voice from scholars, families, staff and community to solve complex problems and challenges. More than three months ago, I met with leaders and members of our teachers' union to see how we can strengthen safe learning environments. Perspectives were shared on challenges regarding unsafe and uncivil behavior in some of our schools, and I have seen evidence of some of these concerns when the Leadership Team and I substitute and spend time in schools across the district. FWPS board members, Leadership Team and I are in schools on a routine basis to monitor safety and the learning environment.

At a recent school board meeting, parents, teachers and scholars from a few of our schools spoke about safety, discipline challenges and concerns related to inclusion. (More information to come about our special education program efforts.) There were perspectives shared about causes and impacts of poor behavior, as well as what we can and should do in the arena of prevention and response. On behalf of the school board, I want to thank all who spoke and shared their concerns. As you will read in this letter, we have clear next steps to address concerns.

Similar to the other 295 school districts in Washington state, FWPS has areas to improve. At a recent meeting with 30 superintendents across the region, almost all talked about safety being a topic we are all grappling with in our respective districts.

I want you to know the district is making a significant investment to address safety concerns. Building on our past good work, listening to people in our schools and communities, and learning from best practices from across the country, we are taking the action steps listed to the right of this letter.

We have many schools across the district utilizing strategies that result in safe learning environments that could be implemented across the district. We are committed to having the conversations both inside and outside the district that will allow us to take best practices and make them common practices.

Making sure this happens in every school means we have to be relentless in focusing on the goals outlined in the strategic plan, *and* we must have the full support of parents, families, and our larger community. Quite simply, **schools can't do it alone**. We need each of you to be champions for our schools. Parents and families, please help us by reinforcing our high expectations that children are respectful, engaged and academically successful.

One of the most important engagement strategies for our families and the community will be open forums at each of our 38 school sites in the fall of 2018. At these school forums we will be sharing what each school is doing to support safety—what's working, what's not, and how families and community can partner with us to ensure our schools are safe.

Currently, we have over 200+ mentors in our schools and we are in need of more mentors and volunteers in our schools. The district currently benefits from over 200+ organizations including businesses, non-profits, faith-based and others who lean into our schools every day. Please reach out to your school or the central office to share with us how you can be of support to our school community.

Thank you for your support and commitment to providing the best educational services to each and every one of our scholars.

In partnership,

Dr. Tammy Campbell, Superintendent



**FEDERAL WAY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

SCHOOL SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Action Steps in the Next 100 Days

Increase school resources and training for prevention, response and intervention for problematic behavior.

We will:

- Double the number of Behavioral Specialists in FWPS from four to eight. Although each school will have access to Behavioral Specialists, they will be strategically housed in schools with the greatest need.
- More than double the number of full-time Teacher Mentors with the goal of helping our new teachers master skills in classroom behavioral management and effective discipline implementation.
- Add two Safety Officers to support security in schools, respond to hazardous situations, and have more eyes, ears, and hearts assigned to student behavior.
- Continue to strengthen our relationship with our local law enforcement partners including the Federal Way Police Department, and build upon our phase I active shooter training held at each of our schools this past spring with phase II beginning in the fall of 2018.
- Increase focus and training on our nationally recognized programs like Second Step and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) that support social emotional learning and teach appropriate learning behaviors.
- At the start of the 2018–19 school year, each school administrator will work with their school teams to review, reinforce and implement effective site-based discipline plans.

Increase our commitment to non-classroom time safety and civility. We will:

- Continue our work in building trusting/caring relationships with our students and their families.
- Review ways to increase monitoring and correction of any misbehavior in common areas like the playground, hallways, lunchroom, etc.
- Install 300+ security camera upgrades during the summer to increase visibility and safety across the district. This is as a result of the 2017 bond package our voters supported that includes these safety enhancements as well as addressing outdated buildings with multiple entry points.

Strengthen community engagement and partnerships. We will:

- Host open forums meetings at every school in the fall of 2018 to outline the district's and the schools' specific plans for campus safety and hear from community members on specific areas of concerns and how we can improve.
- Remind parents and guardians of the role they must play in establishing and supporting high expectations for behaviors for their children when they are in school.