



# Cultural Bridges

INFORMATION TO HELP FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT ENGLISH



## Innovation in Education

Pg 3

If You Don't Go to College, it's Ketchup or Mustard!

Pg 10

To All White and Nonwhite Families

Pg 18

Dear Readers,

Now, more than ever, I am amazed by the tenacity, talent and compassion that parents, educators and community members have shown to ensure the continued safety and high-quality education for our children. I know that the road hasn't been easy and that there is still a lot of work to do to be able to have inclusive and equitable online teaching. We are living in unprecedented times. Nonetheless, there are silver linings to be found, even surrounding the darkest clouds. For some of our children, this might be a good time to discover new passions and talents. By using their intuition and by being curious and reflective, perhaps they can consider activities that inspire them and that help them find their path to a successful and happy life.

As Gibson Ek student, Nathan Graham explains on page 10, these developmental years are about exploring options. Graham expresses his concern about misleading students with false hopes, signing them up for massive debt and a potentially not-so-happy future. The fact that he feels comfortable sharing his ideas and that our kids have Gibson Ek as a choice for high school, suggests that our District is constantly working to inspire a generation of innovators that take control of their path to success.

We are also constantly working on how to be more culturally sensitive. You'll find multiple stories in this issue about developing cultural competence and empowering our children through modeling and conversations.

Cultural Bridges helps the District by filling in the gaps and has grown considerably under the leadership of Marisol Visser. This month, she will be stepping down to take a new job with the City of Issaquah. We will be forever grateful to her. I personally feel very blessed to have had these years to work side-by-side with Marisol. But I know we will continue working together, in one way or another, to make our community more inclusive and welcoming for people of all backgrounds. Marisol shares in her own words, "It saddens me to leave; this is a very emotional moment. I have been giving this program my all and I believe in its potential and all the great things that will keep coming from it."

I am happy to announce that I have accepted the opportunity to be the next Cultural Bridges Program Manager. I will do my best to honor and continue Marisol's legacy. I am certainly inspired and passionate about the work we do, and very thankful for this opportunity with the Issaquah Schools Foundation to keep supporting our diverse community.

I hope you find something to get you inspired! Have a wonderful and intentional fall!  
Alicia Spinner



Issaquah Schools Foundation	3
Issaquah School District	5
Kindergarten	6
Elementary School	7
Middle School	8
High School	10
Calendars	12
Nourishing Network	14
Cultural Connections	18



## Cultural Bridges

Issaquah Schools Foundation

Building relationships between families from diverse cultures, their children, the Issaquah School District, and the broader Issaquah community.

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To receive the magazine in PDF format, email [culturalbridges@isf.org](mailto:culturalbridges@isf.org)

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# Innovation in Education

Thank you for entrusting your child's education to the Issaquah School District! For the past 33 years, the Issaquah Schools Foundation has driven resources to help students reach the promise of their potential. While circumstances look much different today, we remain steadfastly committed to our mission and our students. Your child deserves the best education possible! The Issaquah Schools Foundation is adapting to meet the emerging needs of our students and teachers in response to the challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- During these tough economic times, we are actively working to meet basic student needs by pooling resources with community partners to provide students with over 1,000 backpacks with grade appropriate school supplies, while seeking food resources for our families facing food insecurities.
- The Foundation believes equitable access to educational resources is key to student success. With the unprecedented demand for technology and digital resources, we are providing vital tools for learning by supplying headsets, small desks, supporting log-in help for Clever and Canvas learning platforms, and funding K-12 online digital resources for reading and writing including Reading A-Z by RazKids for elementary, Newsela for middle school, and No Red Ink for high schoolers.
- We recognize the importance of providing resources to make learning easier. Through our close work with the district, we are creating in-person and/or virtual academic support options to help alleviate the burden of individual learning challenges and homework battles. The Parenting Toolbox on our website provides you with useful tips, artistic support including lessons, and more to aid at home schooling.
- The mental and emotional toll on students and parents is alarming. By funding speakers and workshops, we address critical topics such as stress, anxiety, suicide prevention, and racial trauma in a manner that empowers and educates students and parents.
- Funding teacher grants, professional development training for faculty and staff is critical to help bring innovative ways for students to learn in both remote and in-person classroom settings. We help them become proficient in Clever, Canvas, MS Teams, on-line curriculum, and training on topics of equity, cultural competency, and racial trauma.

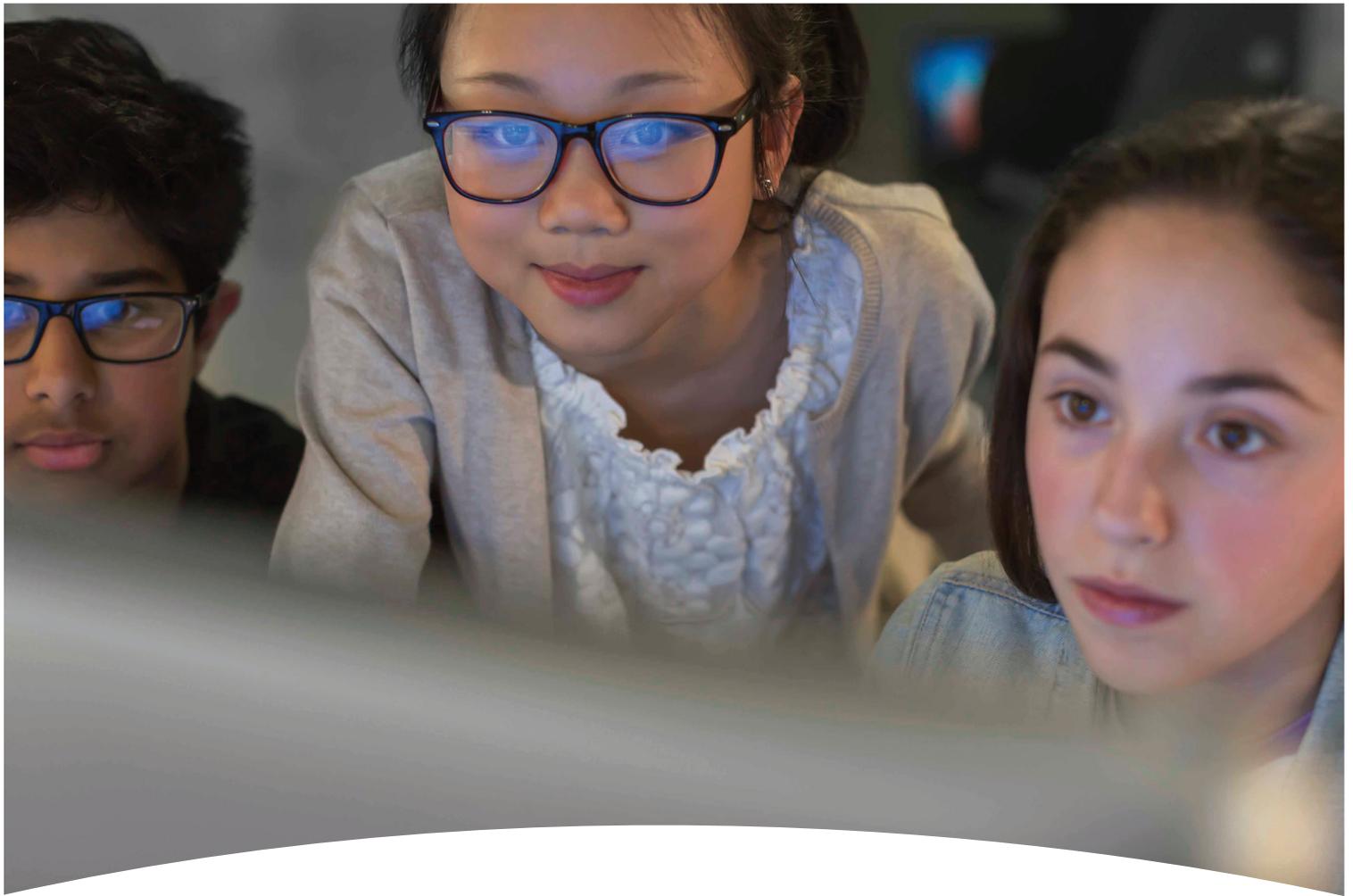


## Apply for a Grant!

Teachers, staff and administration in the Issaquah School District may apply for grants from the Issaquah Schools Foundation to fund programs to enhance the learning environment of students and to respond to a compelling need that reflects innovation in education.

Families and PTSA members are welcome to write a grant on behalf of a teacher/staff member with their approval. Grant applications are currently closed but will open again in November.





# At home in the community.

It's more than hospitals and clinics. It's knowing what your family needs.  
And your first name. It's getting kids to be active, and young adults through college.  
Making it easier to live well. It's creating healthier communities, together.

## **SWEDISH ISSAQUAH**

751 NE Blakely Drive  
Issaquah, WA 98029  
425-313-4000  
[www.swedish.org/issaquah-kids](http://www.swedish.org/issaquah-kids)



# Parent Panels

By Lorna Gilmour  
Issaquah School District Equity and Family Partnerships Specialist

The Issaquah School District is becoming more and more culturally diverse. In 2001, the District was about 85% white students and 15% students of color. Currently, we are about 50% white students and 50% students of color.



In recognizing this change in student demographics, the Issaquah School District is committed to ensuring that the staff is culturally competent through trainings to heighten awareness, knowledge and skills. Since about 90% of our classroom teachers are white and primarily have education experiences in the US, the district has been providing teachers with the opportunity to learn more about school systems in other countries.

One of the many opportunities for teachers to gain more cultural awareness and knowledge has been through professional development (usually on Wednesday for all teaching staff) at the schools. Parent Panels have presented at various schools in the ISD. Parent Panels are composed of parents who had K-12 education in another country such as China, India, Korea, Mexico, Columbia, Denmark, and Ukraine.

During the Parent Panel, the parents answer questions about and discuss what school systems are like in other countries, how parents and teachers communicate with each other, what are norms regarding classroom and school behavior; and what homework, testing and grading looks like in other countries. Such information has been very helpful for our teachers on their cultural awareness journey.

For example, very few teachers (unless they grew up in another country) knew about the ranking system that is very common in many Asian countries. As a result, when talking to parents about "how is my child doing?" or "how does my child rank in class?" there were cultural disconnects as to the why such a question would be asked. In the US, students are not ranked by a cumulative percentage from all classes and individual student performances are not made public.

Another example is how classroom participation is viewed differently in the US versus many other countries. In the US, students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning, to question, critique and discuss the content being presented. One of the goals of this type of interaction is to help students learn how to learn. In many other countries, however, education is about gaining knowledge, learning facts and information and then testing that knowledge on final exams. Classroom discussions and questioning material presented is not common in other countries. In some countries students are expected to be quiet and not ask questions. In fact, questioning may be considered a sign of disrespect.

Parent Panels have resulted in teachers having a better and deeper understanding of many of our culturally diverse families. This knowledge and awareness has helped them gain skills to teach our students and communicate more clearly with families. It has also helped build trusting relationships between parents and teachers as they communicate with each other.

Parents who have participated in Parent Panels have reported that the opportunity also helped them better understand the US schools system, identify what disconnects they have had with schools in the US and communicate better with teachers.

## Parent Panels

Beaver Lake - November 18 at 8 am  
Grand Ridge - January 20 at 2 pm

Creekside - March 24 at 2 pm  
Newcastle - April 14 at 2 pm

If your child's school is not listed here but you would like to be a part of one of these discussions, please send an email to Lorna Gilmour: [gilmourl@issaquah.wednet.edu](mailto:gilmourl@issaquah.wednet.edu).

# Tips for Supporting Your Student to be a Bilingual and Biliterate Learner

By Jill Klune, NBCT, RPCV  
Issaquah School District Secondary ELL Specialist

A great first step in supporting your child as he or she learns in multiple languages is to understand some common Issaquah School District terms.

- **ELL:** English Language Learner.
- **Multilingual learners:** active ELL students, dual language learners (Clark & IVE, Kinder level); bilingual students who are not receiving active ELL services.
- **Oral language development:** practicing speaking and listening skills in many different contexts; a focus on meaningful communication.
- **Social language:** basic interpersonal communication; informal language more commonly used with peers and family.
- **Academic language:** the language of school; the formal language of texts & writing, as well as occupational language.
- **Asset:** a mindset that focuses on honoring student use of languages as an asset within various contexts, may include translanguaging (as opposed to seeing language development as a deficit; i.e. "The student is so low in \_\_\_\_\_ in English.")
- **Translanguaging:** the process of communicating by integrating multiple languages (often simultaneously). This will vary based on individual proficiency and comfort levels in each language.

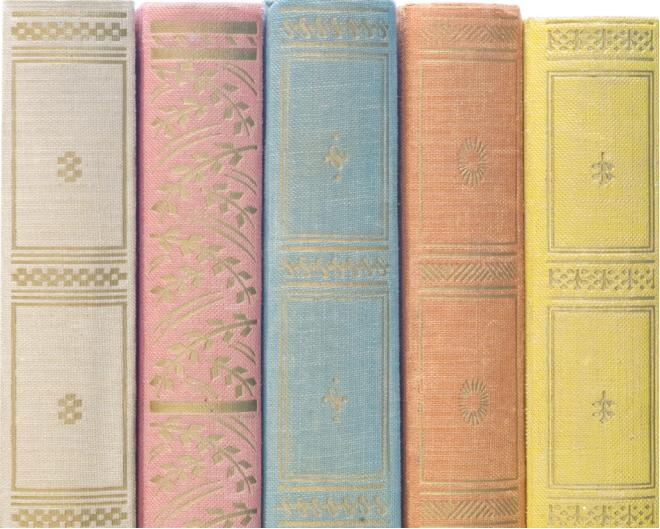
## How may I best support my language learner at home?

Provide opportunities for my student to communicate learning and other needs through conversation. This supports the goal of [social and academic] oral language development, self-advocacy, language choice and biliteracy development. Follow the student's lead in determining which language(s) to use (especially important if you are multilingual yourself).

## What is the most important thing we can do as a multilingual family that supports our student's success and language development?

Reading in your home language. This will transfer to biliteracy and bilingualism. This includes talking about what you are reading in your home language, reading out loud together in your home language (taking turns to alternate pages between readers).

Also, have conversations in your home language about what your student is learning in school. This is important to develop social and academic language proficiencies in both languages. This builds brain connections that will support learning academic language in English. As a proficient speaker in your home language, this is unique support that only you can provide to your student.



**Reading to your kids  
in your home language  
will help them become  
better readers!**

## CLEVER and SEESAW

### Clever

Clever is the online single sign-on portal (SSO) for elementary student access to a variety of curriculum tools and technology resources. Clever eliminates the need to remember multiple usernames and passwords.

To support remote learning, all classroom teachers have a page in Clever to direct and manage student learning. Clever provides access to tools.

Live and recorded lessons and learning activities are facilitated through Seesaw and/or Teams.

Clever provides access to Zearn (Math), Quaver (Music), and other educational technology tools.

Each student has a Clever account, once they are logged into Clever they are able to access the other programs.

Student usernames are the first four letters of last name followed by the first three letters of the student's first name and then their two digit graduation year. The student password is the student's 7-digit student ID number.

Username Example for a student named John Smith, graduating in 2030: SmitJoh30  
Password: is the student's 7-digit student ID number.

This number can be found in Family Access: <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/FamilyAccess>  
Once logged into Clever, click on the Seesaw icon.



#### What is Seesaw?

Seesaw is a secure site from our district where students can view teacher announcements, view posted videos, post to their journal, and complete activities. When students complete activities on Seesaw, their teacher and their parents can login and see their awesome work!

#### How do students see the classroom pages?

In a student's account, students have access to their Classroom Teacher's Seesaw class, as well as their Music, PE and Library classes. It is important for students to select the specific class they will be working in.

In Seesaw, click on the student's name in the upper left corner and click on the specific class name.

#### What can students do in Seesaw? Students can...

- use Seesaw learning tools to post to their journal.
- view and respond to activities ("assignments" from the teacher).
- view announcements from the teacher.
- comment on their own work.

#### What are assigned activities?

Teachers can assign specific activities to your student. In each specific class, students will see a notification if there are activities to complete.

\*The activities do NOT show up in the Parent App.

#### To respond to an activity...

Students click on the "Activities" tab to see assigned activities in the specific class they are in.

- Tap +Add Response.
- Read/listen to the activity directions.
- Complete the activity.

**-Be sure to click the green checkmark (at the top right of the work) to submit it to their journal.**

If you made a post using the directions above and don't see it posted, it is most likely that the teacher has not reviewed the post yet, but will.

#### What are some ways students show their work?

Students may use a variety of tools to show their work. Sometimes the Activity will give specific posting directions, or the student might have the following tool choices:

- Photo: Students can take and post a picture.
- Drawing: Students can draw or write, just like a whiteboard.
- Video: Students can record and post a video.
- Upload: Students can upload something they already created, like a picture or video.
- Note: Students can type a message to post.
- Link: Students can post a link to something else.
- Click the green checkmark to add their work to their journal**



Please contact your child's teacher with any questions about Seesaw or visit <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/district/departments/Technology/elementarylogin>. With your help, we can continue building our school community of lifelong learners!

*Adapted from work created by Robin Wall, ISD Website.*

# CANVAS



Canvas is Issaquah School District's Learning Management System for students in grades 6 - 12. Through Canvas, students can access all coursework, turn in assignments, and connect with their teacher and classmates.

## Student Login to Canvas

Username: same as your school network/computer login which is:

first four letters of your last name,  
first three letters of your first name,  
2-digit graduation year

Example for Jane Smith, graduating in 2026:  
smitjan26

Password: 7-digit student ID number + ISD

## Parent Login to Canvas

Parents have an Observer Role in Canvas, which allows access to view their student(s) courses.

Username: Input email associated with you in Skyward as your username.

First time logging in? Click "Forgot Password" and follow the instructions to reset your password.

For login assistance please email:  
canvashelp@isfdn.org

The Issaquah School District is committed to providing a clear and consistent digital learning platform for students, staff and families. Canvas streamline the learning experience for students. Students can find all of their classes on the Canvas Dashboard.

Through Canvas students are able to:

- Access teacher information, course syllabus and class expectations.
- Participate in live stream lessons.
- View recordings of missed live sessions and instructional videos.
- Locate and access course assignment information and instructions to complete and turn in assignments.
- View a single calendar with due dates and for all classes.

For more information, please visit the website:

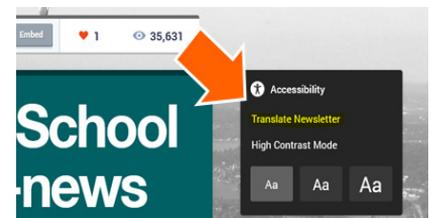
<https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/district/departments/Technology/canvas>

## Tech Support Line

For technical issues with District technology, students and families can call the Issaquah School District tech support line at 425-837-6371.

## How can we get information in languages other than English?

You can get information from the district website or your students school website in your preferred language. Use the "select language" tab at the top right hand side of the district website. Select the language you speak and the district website will be translated into your preferred language.



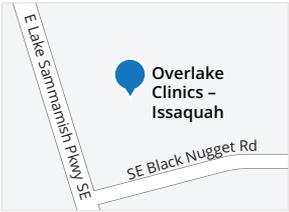


**The doctor can**

**see you now.**

*Really, we mean now.*

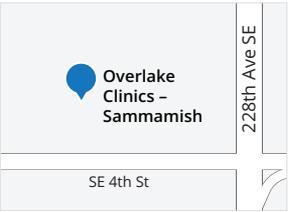
Get in line online at [overlakehospital.org/urgentcare](http://overlakehospital.org/urgentcare)



**Overlake Clinics - Issaquah  
Urgent Care**

Every Day, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.  
Phone: 425.688.5777

5708 E Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE  
Issaquah, WA 98029



**Overlake Clinics - Sammamish  
Urgent Care**

Monday-Saturday, Noon-10 p.m.  
Phone: 425.635.3080

22630 SE 4th St, Suite 300  
Sammamish, WA 98074

# If You Don't Go to College, it's Ketchup or Mustard!

By Nathan Graham  
Senior at Gibson Ek High School



I believe in the value of 2 year, certificate, and apprenticeship programs. At Gibson Ek High School, during your Junior and Senior year, students must complete a senior project that identifies a need in the community and try to solve it. I have made it my senior project to leave an impact on my peers with what I have learned about these alternative educational programs through my research. Over the past 2 years I have made the trades my main focus as I look at career paths, and I want to help others who are also wondering what they are going to do with their lives.

**"If you don't go to college, it's Ketchup or Mustard." By this, he meant that without a four-year college education, my only career option was going to be in the fast food industry.**

For me, much of my motivation comes from my father's words echoing in my ears, "If you don't go to college, it's Ketchup or Mustard." By this, he meant that without a four-year college education, my only career option was going to be in the fast food industry.

I understand that he believes in the college experience, and thinks it is best for everyone. But I feel strongly that something else has to be out there, something that has hidden value and is underappreciated. Proving my dad wrong is 50% of the motivation for my project.

Talking with adults in my area has reaffirmed my sense that there is a stigma about trade jobs and education. They'll ask a question like, "Where are you going for college?" or, "What field are you going into?" I can tell you that becoming an electrician is not what comes to their minds. I know that they are trying to find something to talk about, but I also recognize the look of concern they give me when I say that I don't plan to go to a university. And I think that we can all agree that trade school isn't really even given a proper mention in our high schools. The truth is, with the main emphasis on college for all high school students, businesses in our area are finding it hard to find qualified workers, and to fill jobs right now that do not require a 4-year degree.

**The belief that traditional college will give everyone the same drive and earn everyone the best experiences of their lives is a falsehood. My goal is to help you all see a little more of what's out there - real hands-on, satisfying, potential occupations.**

Taking time to think about what you want to do, and exploring your options is a very good decision. Regardless of whether you have found your dream job or not, learning more about different trade jobs, and what is done during a typical day at that job, will help you decide what works for you and what doesn't. I know what I learn best from: by doing, by creating and discovering, not by sitting in a 100-person class listening to a lecture. I know that in these times and in this area, college is considered a necessity. It really isn't that simple, and success means something different to every person. I found out how trade schools and apprenticeships can prove to be a serious benefit to myself and my peers.

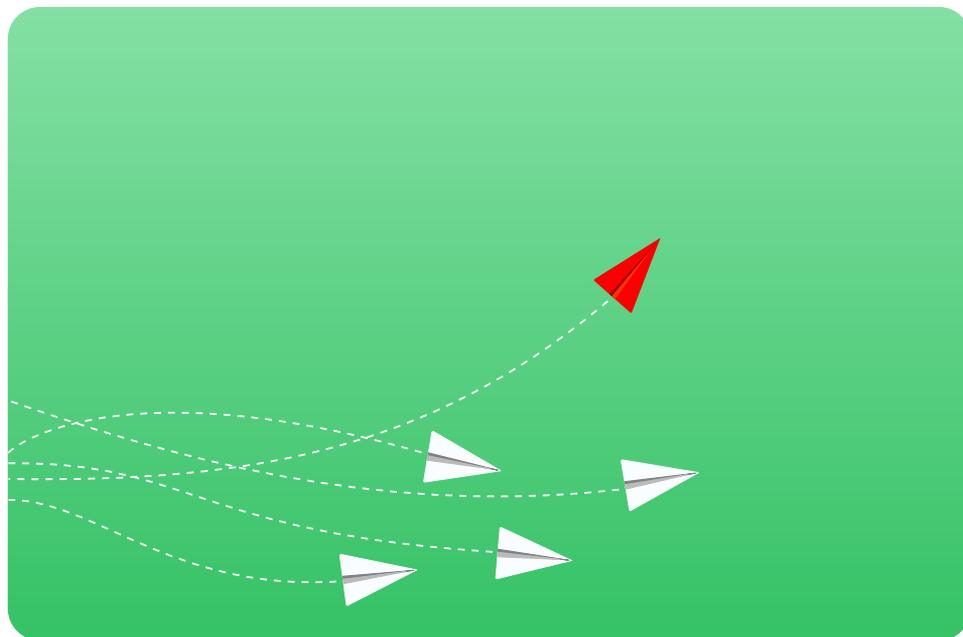
**\$1,600,000,000,000 -**

**This is the amount of student loan debt in the U.S., second only to Mortgage debt. (\*)**

Here are some notable opportunities that are classified as trade jobs: Electricians, Sheet Metal Workers, Welders, Wind Turbine Technicians, and Elevator Constructors. Wind Turbine Technicians, for example, are expected to experience a 57% job growth in the next 10 years. Let's say you want a job that is a little less dangerous. How about Architectural Drafting, Dental Hygienist, Radiation Therapist, or Ultrasonographer? It only takes an associates degree to become a Dental Hygienist, and over the next ten years, job growth is expected to be above average at 11%, with pay at \$35 dollars an hour (near \$75,000k per year).

College debt is, without question, one of the biggest drawbacks of attending a four year college. A full trade school education will often cost 20% of the tuition at a 4-year university. My dad graduated from college in 1991 when the average yearly tuition cost was about \$9,500. Nowadays, average tuition costs about \$20,500/yr. Also, the average monthly loan debt in the year 2005 was \$227, now it is \$393. The number of 4-year college graduates with \$50,000+ in student debt has more than tripled since 2000, increasing from 5 percent of borrowers in 2000, to 17 percent of student borrowers in 2014. (That's all taking inflation into account.)

The fact is that there is a need for trade workers now, and the need will only grow in the future. Based on statistics, there are more people retiring from the trades than people going into them. So only 70% of these jobs will be filled in ten years time. Many jobs that require a 4-year degree will have very limited job stability, while skilled trades have a steady need for workers. Around Washington State, and especially here in Issaquah, there are businesses that offer scholarships to pay for the education that will give you the certification you need to come work for their company.



\**Educationdata.org*

In trade schools you can achieve an associates degree and transfer in to a 4-year college to get your bachelor's degree, if needed, for much less cost. An example of this is a degree in Nursing. Apprenticeships and Scholarships are going unfilled with a stigma against a "trade job." I implore young people to be curious and learn more about alternative education and careers. There are really awesome opportunities out there, and I hope that you may find your passion.

### **Great Careers Conference** **December 17 [8:30a.m.-1:30p.m.]**

This event held in partnership with the Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, introduces students to secondary education options outside the typical four-year career path. The goal of the conference is to educate Issaquah School District high school students about careers they can pursue through certificated, apprenticeship, or two-year degree programs. The day is filled with speakers in student-selected career choices, soft skills 101, lunch and a college campus visit. District supported transportation as well as lunch are provided for all students!

For more information, visit: <http://isfdn.org/our-purpose/connecting-students-to-their-future/great-careers-conference/>

# SCHOOLS EVENTS

## ALL SCHOOLS

Oct 19: Teacher Work Day, no school  
 Nov 11: Veterans Day Observance, no school  
 Nov 26-27: Thanksgiving holiday, no school  
 Dec 21-Jan1: First Winter Break, No school

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Communicating with Teachers at Parent-Teacher Conferences Event  
 November 5, 6:30-7:30pm

K-5 Parent Teacher Conference is an important opportunity to discuss your child's progress at school, discuss plans for the student's future and find solutions to academic or behavioral concerns if needed. This event will provide some suggestions on how to make the most of the conference and provide you with some resources as you prepare for the conference. You will also have an opportunity to sign up or learn how to sign up for the conferences on December 4 and 5 on Family Access. All Issaquah School District elementary school families are invited to attend. Specific information for seniors will be communicated to students and families by their high schools.

For more information:  
<https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/cultural-and-family-partnerships/events>

Dec 2-3: Parent-teacher elementary conferences, no School.

### Apollo

Sep. 30, PTA Membership meeting 6:30 p.m.  
 Nov. 13, 6:00pm: PTA Reflections reception

### Briarwood

Oct 26, 6:30pm: PTSA Meeting  
 Nov.16, 6:30pm: PTSA Meeting (Grand approvals)

### Cascade Ridge

Oct. 5-9: Cascade Ridge Coyote Challenge Remote learning means that we are spending a lot of time sitting in front of the computer. The Cascade Ridge PTSA is hosting a week-long step challenge to keep our bodies active, and see how many steps we can collect as a community.

### Challenger

Nov. 17: PTSA General Membership Meeting

### Clark

Nov. 24, 6:30pm: PTSA General Membership Meeting

### Cougar Ridge

Oct. 20, 7pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Nov. 17, 4pm: PTSA General Meeting  
 Dec. 15, 4pm: PTSA General Meeting

### Creekside

Fundraiser event Otter-thon: Nov 6-Nov 13

Nov. 30 - Dec 4: Book Fair  
 Nov. 12: Reflections Awards Ceremony  
 Dec. 15, 7pm: PTSA General Membership Meeting

### Endeavor

Nov. 17, 7pm: PTSA General Membership Meeting

### Grand Ridge

Nov. 16: Community Connections & PTSA Meeting

### Issaquah Valley

Oct. 16-26: Virtual Scholastic Book Fair  
 Oct. 30: Reflections Art Competition Deadline  
 Oct. TBD: Trunk or Treat / or Fall Event  
 Nov. 14: Goodwill Fill the Truck Event  
 Nov. 17: PTA General Membership Meeting

### Maple Hills

Oct. 22, 6:30pm: PTA General Membership Meeting

### Newcastle

Nov. 18, 6:30pm: Principal Chat Time

### Sunny Hills

Oct. 14-27: Scholastic Book Fair  
 Oct. 15, 10am: PTA General Membership Meeting

### Sunset

Sep. 28-Oct11: Scholastic Book Fair

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

### Issaquah

Oct. 28, 6:30pm: General Membership Meeting  
 Nov. 18, 6:30pm: General Membership Meeting

### Maywood

Oct. 15, 6:30pm: General Membership Meeting  
 Nov. 10-13: Bookfair

### Pacific Cascade

Oct. 14, 3:00pm: General Membership Meeting  
 Oct. 23: Reflection Art Contest Entries Due

### Pine Lake

Oct. 21, 1:00pm: General Membership Meeting

## HIGH SCHOOLS

### Skyline

Oct. 3, 9:00 am: Mock ACT virtual test  
 Oct. 10, 9:00am: Mock SAT virtual test  
 Oct. 14, 7:00am: Mock ACT & SAT score results meeting

### Gibson Ek

Oct. 15, 6:30pm-8pm: Gender Diversity in

Children: Navigating the Journey with Aiden Key

Topics to be covered:

What does the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction offer to WA schools to address gender inclusion? What areas still need work?

Gender identity: We'll briefly explore the scientific, social, and medical community perspectives to gain a current understanding of this concept.

Your child (or your child's close friend) says they are transgender or nonbinary – Now what?

What can/should families expect from schools regarding the support of gender diverse children?

Why the emphasis on pronouns and bathrooms and why is there debate/resistance to these changes?

Oct. 22, 6:30pm: PTSA General Membership meeting

### Issaquah

Oct. 1, 7pm: Paying for College without going broke  
 Oct. 7, 21, 28, Nov. 4, 10:00am: virtual college visits  
 Oct. 12: Senior class photo due  
 Oct. 13, 7:00pm: General Membership meeting  
 Oct. 16, 1:25pm: Club Fair  
 Oct. 30, PTSA Reflection Art contest due date  
 Nov. 2: Senior yearbook Ad and portraits due  
 Nov. 5: New Family Ambassadors: Coffee with the Principal  
 Nov. 7: Practice Test-ACT  
 Nov. 13, 9:30pm: General Membership meeting  
 Nov. 14: Practice Test-SAT  
 Nov. 15: First Deadline to purchase a yearbook  
 Nov. 17: Reflections Celebration  
 Nov. 18: Practice test – scores back session  
 Dec. 9: New Family Ambassador: Trip to Molbaks

### Liberty

Oct. 6, 6:30pm: General Membership Meeting Join us to approve our 2020-21 budget, share updates on PTSA Committees; Senior Events Update; School updates from our LHS Principal Sean Martin; Special Guest Speaker Hilary Cohen, Swedish Mental Health Counselor, to share information about services for our Liberty Students.

All are welcome! Meetings will be held by zoom, please look for the login information posted on homepage of website at [www.libertyhighptsa.com](http://www.libertyhighptsa.com)

# ParentWiser Events



ParentWiser is a non-profit organization, which serves as the parent education committee of the Issaquah PTSA Council. They host local and nationally-known experts who share the latest information on effective parenting with caregivers of the Issaquah School District. Through lectures, webinars, discussions, and documentary films they offer resources and tools to support parents in raising healthy and confident K-12 students.

ParentWiser is funded through a partnership of the Issaquah Schools Foundation, Swedish Medical Center, Issaquah PTSA Council and Overlake Medical Center & Clinics. Don't miss these events!

## You Can Do This! Motivating Teens to Get Stuff Done

Guest Speaker: Sharon Saline, PsyD.  
Wednesday, October 7 [1:00 - 2:15 p.m.]  
Does your teen have a tough time starting and completing things? Learn how to successfully motivate them using Dr. Saline's strength-based, collaborative approach. Instead of arguments and frustration, you can increase their buy-in, their motivation and their success. Discover effective, practical strategies that have helped hundreds of families teach executive functioning skills and foster independence in their adolescents. Your teens will procrastinate less and get their stuff done!

## Building Better Brains: 5 Easy Steps For Improving your Child's Organization, Focus and Planning

Guest Speaker: Sharon Saline PsyD.  
Wednesday, October 14 [1:00 - 2:15 p.m.]  
Are you tired of struggling with your child or teen over school, homework or chores? Fostering progress at school means sharpening kids' executive functioning skills such as organization, focus and prioritizing. Veteran psychologist, Dr. Sharon Saline, relies on current research about the developing brain, clinical experience and real-life examples from students themselves to give you a deeper understanding of executive functioning skills and why they're critical to the learning process.

## Life Skills

Guest Speaker: Julie Lythcott-Haims  
Wednesday, November 18.  
The time and description is TBD, please make sure to check the ParentWiser website for all the details!

## Beyond Behavior; Understand and Solve Your Students' Behavioral Challenges

Guest Speaker: Mona Delahooke, PhD  
Wednesday, December 9 [7:00-8:15pm]  
Are you trying to parent through tantrums and unpredictable behavior? What about aggressiveness? Mona Delahooke, PhD will share neuroscience-based tools and strategies to reduce behavioral challenges

and promote psychological resilience and satisfying, secure relationships. Dr. Delahooke will also point out important signals that we should address by seeking to understand a child's individual differences in the context of relational safety.

Mona Delahooke, PhD is a licensed clinical psychologist with more than 30 years of experience caring for children and their families. She is a senior faculty member of the Profectum Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting families of neurodiverse children, adolescents and adults. She is a trainer for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Dr. Delahooke has dedicated her career to promoting compassionate, relationship-based, neurodevelopmental interventions for children with developmental, behavioral, emotional, and learning differences.

ParentWiser events are FREE to attend for PTA or PTSA members of any school in Issaquah School District, or \$10 donations requested for non-members or guests from other districts. Some of the speakers are also video recorded and posted online at <http://ParentWiser.org/watch-online> for access by any PTA or PTSA member of Issaquah schools. All parents are invited to join your child's school PTA or PTSA for ParentWiser and other benefits! Visit your school website for details.

## Community Events

**Reading with Rover**  
**Tuesdays of October [4:00 to 5:00 p.m.]**  
**Saturdays of October [10:00 to 11:00 a.m.]**  
King County libraries

Reading with Rover is a community-based literacy program working with schools and libraries throughout the greater Seattle area. Build reading skills and confidence by reading aloud to a certified therapy dog in a live video chat. Please register for a 30-minute session and provide your email address. We'll use Zoom to video chat. You will receive an email with a link to the session by gam the day of the program. For more information, contact Ms. Monica: [mesands@kcls.org](mailto:mesands@kcls.org)

**11th Annual Issaquah Turkey Trot**  
**Thursday, November 26 through Sunday, 29**

4 days and 7 routes for socially distanced, community-building FUN! Since 2010, this event has become a time-honored holiday tradition for Eastside families, drawing 4,200 participants in 2019. In 2021, we hope to return to our normal model, where sponsors can be right in the middle of it with a booth on event day. But with everyone's health and safety in mind, the Issaquah Turkey Trot will take place over the entire Thanksgiving weekend, starting on Thanksgiving (Thursday to Sunday) and there will be 7 different routes to choose from to help with social distancing. For more information: <https://www.issaquahturkeytrot.org>

## Cultural Events

### National Hispanic Heritage Month

King County Library System will be celebrating the National Hispanic Heritage Month virtually with a "Salsa" theme, a video tutorial to know how to make paper maché maracas, a salsa party with La Clave Cubana, and a virtual class on how to make a delicious salsa, accompanied by a bilingual read aloud. For more details: <https://www.facebook.com/bibliotecaskcls/>

**Stories & Music of Ghana**  
**Saturday, October 17 [2:00 - 2:45 p.m.]**

Experience the rich culture of Ghana through folktales told by Kofi Anang, who will accompany himself with the peaceful tones of the kalimba and the powerful sounds of traditional drums. Register by 5 p.m. on October 16. You will receive a Zoom link the next day. For more information, contact Julia Gibson: [jgibson@kcls.org](mailto:jgibson@kcls.org)

**Day of the Dead Celebration**  
**Saturday, October 17 [2:00 - 2:45 p.m.]**

This year, the Latino Club of Issaquah is preparing kits for families to bring the fun and joy of this important holiday into their homes. Each kit will contain all the materials families will need to create a *nicho*. While the community won't be able to celebrate in person this year, the Latino Club of Issaquah can't wait to see what families will create from their kits and hope to see all of the families at the interactive Zoom classes that go along with the kits on Sunday November 1. These kits will be free but there is a limited number, so make sure to sign up for yours soon! For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/LatinoClubIssaquah>

# TECH Teen to Teen: Staying Connected and Healthy in a Time of Distress

• TEENS ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY HEALTH •

By Abby Zehnpfennig, Julia Kroopkin & Kyle Jackson

TECH (Teens Encouraging Community Health) Influence the Choice's Youth Board

## COVID has been especially hard for teenagers

As we approach month 7 of quarantine, the effects of COVID are hitting harder than ever. The beginning of the school year is usually marked by Friday Night Football games, the Homecoming dance, and back to school festivities. Our lack of social interaction accompanied by staring at a computer screen all day has had devastating impacts on teen mental health. Teens are plagued with feelings of depression and hopelessness, but it is important to remember that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We will get through this, but for now, here are some things we can do to keep ourselves positive and healthy.

## Battling Quarantine Depression and Isolation

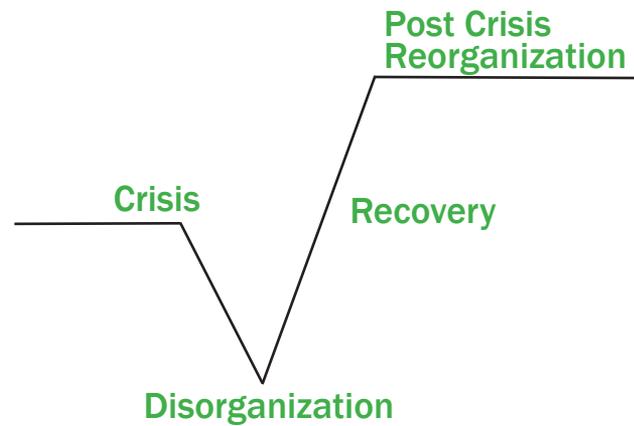
**Physically** First and foremost, exercise is important. It can be hard to pull yourself off the couch but keeping in shape is essential to the health of our minds and bodies. Exercise helps us feel better. Experts say that we need about 30 minutes of exercise a day to release BDNF, which helps our brains learn and adapt. If you can't exercise, it's important to still get outside. Spending some time in the fresh air and under the UV light is great for your mental health. Exposure to ultraviolet light affects your mood and allows your brain to release endorphins. In addition, it is important to get enough sleep each night. Your body needs to go through 5-6 sleep cycles per night for optimal rest, which equates to 7.5-9 hours of sleep per night. Try to go to bed and wake up at a consistent time every day for better results. Lastly, eat healthy. This seems basic, but what we eat does make a huge impact on how we feel. Eating healthy foods helps us to stay healthy physically and mentally.

**Mentally** Humans are social beings; we need to interact with others to be happy. While we all know that it is important to stay in touch with friends and family, it can be hard to feel connected when we aren't seeing them in real life. Facetime, Skype, and Zoom are great programs for seeing people face to face and getting the real-time experience. With the Netflix party feature, you can watch movies together at the same time! We also can feel good by doing good things for other people. If you live nearby your friends and family, it can be fun to bake cookies or leave a little note on their front step to make their day. On a smaller scale, giving a hug to those closest to you can have a huge impact! Hugging can lower your risk of anxiety, depression, and illness, but make sure you're careful about who you hug because it can also spread the virus! Next, take breaks. COVID is already stressful enough and balancing online school and extracurriculars on top of it can feel impossible at times. It's okay to get your mind off things for a little bit and allow yourself to recharge. Remember to take care of yourself first and don't get frustrated with yourself for struggling. Lastly, remember that this is not forever. There will come a time when life will return to normal, even if it doesn't feel like it right now. Keep preserving, we are all in this together!



## Thinking About Stress

A crisis can take many forms; unexpected, expected, physical, psychological, or environmental. A potentially unanticipated effect of crisis can be its longevity. As visualized in this graphic, crisis is often met with a period of confusion, discomfort, and high-risk emotions. However, systems then adapt by accessing resources and support and become better equipped to cope with the next complex event. Sometimes, an unprecedented crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or other large crises, the sheer size and scope calls for a profound response. During a major crisis, we simply aren't yet able to reorganize and recover.



### How Anxiety Presents Itself

Anxiety is a complex issue as responses to crisis and stress can vary widely. You know your baseline better than anyone. Trust your judgement and acknowledge the reality. We are all impacted in different ways and manifest anxiety uniquely.

### What does it look like?

Struggles with sleep, paralysis, panic, anger, struggles with concentration, depression/withdrawal

### Accessing Support and Strategies

Just as presentations of anxiety differ, so do the support and strategies individuals will respond to. This depends on many factors including age, personality type and role. For younger children, safety and security will be paramount, whereas middle/high school age students might want facts to fill in the hole that uncertainty creates. For some, cognitive restructuring or challenging irrational thoughts or beliefs may be helpful when anxiety peaks. For others, finding purpose and returning to gratitude might serve them well. In general, resilience-based strategies, as well as mindful practices, can go a long way in supporting ourselves and our community with regard to this crisis.

#### Taking Care of Us

- Stay Informed, not inundated
- Stay in the present
- Be productive, find purpose, be of service
- Stay connected
- Holistic health
- Find gratitude

#### Taking Care of Them

- Remain calm/present
- Assure safety
- Support routines
- Acknowledge reality
- Fill in the gaps
- Focus on response

## Supporting the Health and Wellness of our Youth

This prevention science-based approach of environmental strategies of change allows families to be intentional in their efforts. As parents, this information is very valuable to be able to help our children to take control of their future.

### Common Protective Factors

- Delayed use/Abstinence
- Consistent community message
- Be part of the village/See something-say something
- Access barriers
- Opportunities to contribute in the community
- Family, schools and community programs should work together
- Set high standards/expectation regarding substance use and acceptable behaviors
- Exist in all aspects of your young person's life
- Seek help!

### Common Risk Factors

- Genetics
- Peer Influence or pressure
- A lack of supervision
- A lack of community resources/opportunity
- Unclear expectations regarding drug use/behaviors
- Inaccurate perception of peer use and parental concern
- Sense of entitlement
- Alienation/marginalization

Influence the Choice works to reduce substance use and other unhealthy patterns of behavior while supporting mental, social and emotional wellness in our youth by working to impact risk and protective factors. For more information, visit this community coalition's website at [www.influencethechoice.org](http://www.influencethechoice.org).

## Rotary Club of Issaquah

The Rotary Club of Issaquah exists to serve our local community and the greater world community, while their members build and enjoy a network of friends and business alliances. They are a diverse group of adult women and men of all ages and backgrounds, spanning a wide range of professional, business, and vocational interests.

Check their website ([www.issaquahrotary.org](http://www.issaquahrotary.org)) to learn about all the local and international programs they serve, and to see the calendar of their meetings. Their doors are always open; if you want to get involved in the Issaquah community, this is a great opportunity!

Some of their local programs that are making a difference in the lives of our Issaquah School District students are Partners for Work, Student of the Month, and even Scholarships.

### PARTNERS FOR WORK

This project supports the Issaquah School District, Academy of Community Transitions students (ACT) program. The Rotary Club helps prepare disabled youth for meaningful employment by facilitating mock job interviews for several students and hiring a Club Greeter for real on-the-job training. This fabulous project builds inclusion throughout the community and King County.

### STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Each month during the academic year, Issaquah Rotary recognizes outstanding students selected by their teachers at Issaquah, Liberty and Tiger Mountain High Schools for achievement in a variety of academic, athletic, and leadership activities. Students are featured at a Club meeting, accompanied by their parents and a teacher who helps tell their story. Typically, Student of the Month celebrations are everyone's favorite Club meetings—inspiring worthy young people to even higher goals and reinforcing our confidence in youth to shape a better and more understanding world.



ISSAQUAH  
**Rotary**   
[www.issaquahrotary.org](http://www.issaquahrotary.org)

### February Students of the Month

Cameron Zielinski [Music, Issaquah High], Alaina Dean [Drama, Issaquah High], Shelby Wengreen [Career and Technical Ed, Issaquah High], Jackson Poile [Music, Liberty High], Sebastian Méndez [Music, Gibson Ek].

### SCHOLARSHIPS

The Issaquah Rotary Foundation provides scholarships for continuing education to select high school students graduating from Issaquah, Liberty and Gibson Ek high schools. If your student will be graduating this school year then you may be eligible for this scholarship. A team of Rotarians will select students for interviews in early May and will then decide on the scholarship recipients. For details on how to apply, go to <http://www.issaquahrotary.org>.

# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS!



**Cultural Bridges** serves Issaquah School District families to increase parent engagement and lead to greater student success.

We provide navigation support, host parent/student events and publish quarterly magazines translated in seven languages.



## To All White and Nonwhite Families

By ALICIA SPINNER  
Cultural Bridges Program Manager

Did your parents ever give you the chance to talk about race? For more than two years, Dr. Caprice Hollins has been working with the Issaquah School District staff to share the message of equity and cultural understanding. Last February, families of the district also had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Hollins about how to be a culturally competent family. Here I am sharing my personal reflections.

She started the conversation by asking the public what they were taught about race when they were growing up. Dr. Hollins explained that most white families were taught that noticing race was bad (and "color blindness" was good), that racism was a thing of the past, or that they can use their relationships with diverse people to "prove" that they don't have any more work to do to be culturally competent. Perhaps they had a friend in the military or even a girlfriend in college who was a person of color. For all these reasons, white families don't talk much to kids about race.

In contrast, Dr. Hollins described, how people of color come to know at a very young age that race really matters. Many first generation immigrants didn't even know they were a person of color until they got to this country and quickly they learned through first-hand experience about the stereotypes associated with their race. Therefore, people of color frequently have to talk to their kids about race.

After coming from very different perspectives as it relates to race, white people and people of color find themselves intertwined tightly together in the diverse schools and communities of today, where small but impactful micro-aggressions happen on almost a daily basis.

**Dr. Hollins explained that the majority of people mean no harm, but the reality is that what they are saying feels like: "You are not an American."**

The Dictionary defines a micro-aggression as "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)."

Dr. Hollins explained that the most common micro-aggression is to ask someone: Where are you from? For me personally, when a person notices my accent or my broken English, they normally ask me where I am from. They might only be curious about my nationality or because of my looks they already guessed that I am Latina but they want to know what country I am from. Sometimes they are dying to tell me that they love Mexican food or a specific restaurant. I cannot tell you how many times this has happened to me.

Dr. Hollins explained that the majority of people mean no harm, but the reality is that what they are saying feels like: "You are not an American."

I am a person of color who always tries to ignore that this kind of aggression is having an effect on me. I love to talk about Mexico. I am extremely proud of the country where I was born. But I have to admit that uncomfortable thoughts linger in my mind: Are they wondering about my path to this country, and if I crossed the border legally? Are they thinking that I am here to take away their jobs? Do they think that is the reason why I was given the opportunity to study at an Ivy League University? Are they honestly OK with me being here or do they harbor anti-Mexican sentiment?



**Think before you speak: If someone says you offended them, listen. Drop the defensiveness and be open to learning.**



So, while micro-aggressions may appear innocent, they contain powerful hidden messages, and even if I would like to avoid thinking about them, I know that dealing with these **everyday psychological arrows** has an effect on me and on all people of color and marginalized groups.

Now, Dr. Hollins stated that micro-aggressions can also be committed by people within marginalized groups. This made me remember my aunt. Years ago, she visited me from Mexico, and we were walking together in the streets of New York when a group of black teenagers walked by us. She immediately got stiff, and I was mortified. When I asked her why she had done that she said: "I am not racist. I am just afraid of them." I did not know what to say. I knew that she was a good person and that all she knew about black teens she had learned in television shows filled with stereotypes. She had likely never spoken a word to a young black person in her life. However, her response stayed with me forever, and when I feel a micro-aggression, I try to remember my aunt.

I know I have offended people as well. I clearly remember when I was taking English classes in a San Francisco community college shortly after my arrival in the US, and a woman of Asian descent started speaking with me in flawless Spanish. I immediately told her how good her Spanish was. She gave me a wry half-smile and replied: "Well, I am Costa Rican." Now I realize that the message I was sending to her was: You don't belong in MY group. I wish I had stopped myself, but I didn't. What I have done is tell this story to my children and make them understand how easily micro-aggressions happen.

My son came home one day telling me kids at school had been call him the "Honorary Asian" because he is really good at math. Children thought they were giving him a compliment, but the message they were suggesting: Latinos and Americans are not smart.

Dr. Hollins explained in her talk that when a micro-aggression occurs, people of color might blame or shame white people. Many times, they just try to avoid the conversation altogether, pretending it never happened. In contrast, white people tend to become their own personal experts on the reality of people of color. They take it upon themselves to "decide" if people of color are exaggerating or being oversensitive. They claim that they don't see color and that their intentions about the comment or action are misunderstood.

These are difficult convesations but talking about racism (and listening to the experiences of others) is the only way we can do better. Dr. Hollins told us that we all need to know how to have conversations after a micro-aggression has occurred. We are not taught how to have these conversations at our home or at our schools, but if we don't figure out how to talk to one another, we won't be able to dismantle the institutional racism that still so clearly exists.

**So, the big question is, how can you empower your children to be culturally competent through your own modeling and conversations?**

Dr. Hollins detailed that if kids ask a question about why a person is different from them, why is this person (so dark/ speaks funny/has that instead of hair/is so white/has small eyes)? we should use those opportunities to talk to them. Don't shush them! The message you will be giving to your children is that we don't talk about differences, and that there is something wrong with being different.

**1. WONDER** Slow the conversation down and ask questions.

If they are the one bringing up a race question, ask them why are they asking? Understand where are they coming from. What are your thoughts? Why do you think that? What is your understanding about this?

**2. KNOWLEDGE** The more info you have about other cultures, the better you will be able to understand them. (This is the reason our magazine always has articles about the experience of being a person of another race in our District.)

**3. SKILLS** Don't wait until your children ask you a question. Start conversations with them about events that are happening around you. Help them develop skills, and give your children (and yourself) grace. The goal of Cultural Competence is ongoing work for all of us. Culture is always changing. I can assure you that being a Mexican was very different 20 years ago when I came to this country, compared to what it is now. What does it mean to be a member of a group? What is it like to be a person of that race or group in this country? What is it like to be black/Asian/Latinx/white?

After attending Dr. Hollins event, I went home and I talked to my kids about what it is like to be Latinx in this country this year. And even though my children are used to me talking openly about race, using the tools that Dr. Hollins gave us in her talk made my conversation with them much richer. Let's help our children develop the skills they need to have a culturally competent community that is always honoring its differences. It's everyone's job: white or nonwhite.



**Micro-aggressions can be sent verbally, nonverbally or environmentally.**

## VERBALLY

"You speak good English." = You are a foreigner.

"You are so articulate." = People of your race are not intelligent.

"Why do you have to be so loud?" = Leave your cultural baggage outside.

## NONVERBALLY

When a person of color passes on a sidewalk and a woman clutches her purse or a man checks for his wallet. = People of color are dangerous.

When a person of color is followed in a store. = People of color are criminals.

Assuming an Asian person is good at math and science. = I see your color, you are an alien in our land.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY

Symbols like the confederate flag. = You don't belong.

The use of images referring to Native Americans and First Nations people as the mascot for sport teams. = I am portraying your cultural group as a savage.

The use of cultural costumes such as Day of the Dead skulls, a kimono or an Arabian long tunic riding a camel. = I have the right to make fun of your culture.

### ParentWiser

If you would like to learn more about this topic or increase your understanding of equity vs. equality, privilege, implicit bias, and learn how to effectively engage our children and work together to dismantle institutional racism, please watch the video of Dr. Hollis' event at <https://www.parentwiser.org/watch-videos>. All PTA/PTSA members have free access to this and other great educational videos.





# Jewish in Issaquah

By Dena Kernish  
Issaquah School District Parent

There is no one way to define the American Jewish experience, and every Jewish family has their own story. Nine years ago, my family and I moved to Issaquah from Cincinnati, Ohio. We were excited because, despite our active involvement in the Cincinnati Jewish community, we anticipated an even more multicultural and inclusive experience in the Pacific Northwest.

Although my husband, Mike, and I met in Cincinnati, neither of us are originally from Ohio. Mike was raised in Miami, and I grew up in suburban New Jersey, close to New York City. Mike's mother was raised in Israel and his father was born in the US to Jewish parents. I am the grandchild of Holocaust survivors. Our family members live all over the United States, Europe, and Israel. Our home is visibly Jewish, with books, art, and ceremonial objects. Our daughter, who is in 5th grade at Grand Ridge, also attends Hebrew School and looks forward to representing Israel at the PCMS cultural fair next year. Our son, a 9th grader at IHS, decided to become more observant in middle school. He always wears a small, round head-covering called a kippah and an undershirt-like garment with four tassels hanging down called tzitzit. Even though the other men in our family do not wear these all the time as he does, we are very supportive of his choice to deepen his religious practice.

Judaism is diverse and worldwide. The concept of Klal Yisrael--"all of Israel"--refers to all Jews, and it promotes a sense of community regardless of background or religious observance. So, you may see our son sit out of Friday night extra-curricular events because he is observing Shabbat (sundown Friday to nightfall Saturday) and not eating some foods because he keeps kosher (follows dietary restrictions). Other Jews may differ in how they display their religious or cultural identities. However, like everyone, we appreciate when our voices are a part of the conversation and practice of the diverse American experience.

With this in mind, here are several points that I recommend families and school personnel to consider in order to build a more inclusive community:

1. The Jewish High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot) are in the fall, usually in September or October. Many attend synagogue for several days instead of going to work or school. I always notify schools ahead of time that my kids will be absent. These are the most important observances of the year.
2. There is also Passover for eight days in the spring. This is celebrated at home, not usually at the synagogue, but it is notable because there are days when we may not attend work/school as well as observing the dietary restriction of not eating bread or leavened foods, something which has become easier these days with all the gluten-free options!
3. Jewish holidays start at sundown the night before. Our calendar is luni-solar, adjusted with an additional leap-month every three years to keep the holidays in their correct seasons. Even Jews following the Gregorian calendar have to look up the dates. A website like Chabad ([www.chabad.org/holidays/default\\_cdo/jewish/holidays.htm](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/default_cdo/jewish/holidays.htm)) lists all holidays. It is important to be mindful of these dates when planning school-sponsored or PTSA events, and this site notes all of the evening observances and other customs.
4. Although Hanukkah is a festive holiday and falls during the same season as Christmas and other holidays, it is not the Jewish equivalent. While some families celebrate more than one holiday, our family only celebrates Hanukkah. Jewish families have a broad range of comfort levels with participating in Christmas events.
5. Anti-Semitism has never gone away, and some would say it has increased in the current political climate. Many synagogues and Jewish organizations unfortunately feel compelled to post armed security at their doors, and those who did not added security after the October, 2018 shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Holocaust education is an important way to combat anti-Semitism. According to a survey by the Claims Conference, nearly 50% of Americans cannot name a concentration camp, a quarter of millennials have not heard of the Holocaust, and nearly one-third of all Americans do not believe that more than 6 million Jews were killed in WWII ([www.claimscon.org/study/](http://www.claimscon.org/study/)). Only 11 states require teaching about the Holocaust in school, and Washington is not one of them. Last April, our state passed legislation "strongly encouraging" Holocaust education in middle and high schools. This is a good step, but we still have a long way to go. For more information, see [www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/images/Education/FAQs-Legislation\\_Final.pdf](http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/images/Education/FAQs-Legislation_Final.pdf) and the workshops, webinars, and events run by the Holocaust Center for Humanity ([www.holocaustcenterseattle.org](http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org)) in Seattle.

My family and I are grateful to live in Issaquah and Greater Seattle. We seek out opportunities to engage with many cultures and faiths represented here as well as the diverse Jewish community itself. We all have more in common than not, and we feel very fortunate to live in a town where various cultures are respected, appreciated, and celebrated.

# Raising Culturally Aware Children

By Laura Ni  
Issaquah School District Parent

Even though I understand that education here is mainly focused on Western culture and literature, I wish my daughters could have the opportunity to learn about different countries and cultures at a deeper level. I would love to see them doing research and sharing interesting facts related to our Chinese heritage and also to other cultures with their classmates. And for younger students, it would be wonderful if teachers could read or teach kids about other cultures. I always have a feeling that even though Western kids have some idea of other cultures, they have either very limited or biased knowledge. I believe that all of our kids need to learn more about what's happening outside of the United States. It's great that some schools have multi-cultural nights, but one event is not enough.

**It would be great for all kids and school staff to identify the culture of their family. We all have a heritage.**

It would be great for all kids and school staff to identify the culture of their family. We all have a heritage. I think that this would help students when many of them feel lost when trying to find their identity between the culture of their family and the one of their adopted country.

We try our best to encourage our daughters speak, listen and read in Chinese. We think that this is the best way to understand Chinese culture and our ancestors. They do struggle at times, but we tell them that this knowledge will help them to have a better chance to be successful in the future because not only their parents or grandparents are from China! And being comfortable with other cultures will give them a great advantage since the world is more tightly connected than ever.

It is important to me to make them understand that we are not isolated, that we need to open our eyes, minds and ears to know, understand and listen to others who live in other countries with different cultures. Our kids have the natural ability to learn another language and culture and I want our daughters to feel proud of it. Here are some ideas to help children become more culturally aware (even if they are not getting this from the school).

## Ten Ideas for Raising Culturally Aware Children

- 1- Buy food at international grocery stores and teach children to make traditional dishes. In our case our girls enjoy helping us prepare Chinese wontons and dumplings. But it is equally important to learn to cook food from other cultures. Take a cooking class together!
- 2- Celebrate Holidays or assist at cultural festivals with classmates or friends from other cultures. (See page 13 for cultural events in our communities.)
- 3- Encourage your children to learn another language. If your family doesn't have a second language, use one of the foreign language apps for kids as Duolingo or Babbel. For Mandarin, I recommend iChineseReader.
- 4- Read books from other cultures.
- 5- Watch cartoons or foreign movies together! We like the classic Chinese cartoon movies like "The Monkey King" or "Nezha Conquers The Dragon King" and the funny series "The Big Head Son And Little Head Father".
- 6- Listen to kid's stories to improve their listening skills and comprehension. Libraries have wonderful resources! My girls' favorite audiobook is "Mi Xiaoquan School Notes" which is a contemporary story of a fourth grade Chinese boy. It's very funny and easy to understand.
- 7- Play some traditional or popular foreign games. We play Xiangqi or Chinese Chess, Go, Five In a Row, Chinese Rubber Band and Hand Rope.
- 8- Make crafts or art projects. My girls enjoy creating Shuriken or paper stars, cranes, and junk boats.
- 9- Visit a museum to see art from other cultures.
- 10- Travel as a family to understand and experience first-hand, other countries. If your intention is to experience the culture, make a plan for next year!

There are many inexpensive activities that you can do with your kids such as walking around the International District, taking a cooking class or enjoying an online event! All it takes is a little bit of curiosity and planning.

# ISD Student Equity Council

By ISD Student Equity Council Team

Racism is not a universal experience. Neither is ableism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, classism, and all other forms of discrimination on the basis of identity. Living in the same nation in which George Floyd was murdered, anti-Semitic crime reached record-levels, government healthcare policies discriminate against the LGBTQ+ community, and more, we find ourselves questioning what progress in equity we have actually made. Our families attend a school district in which 88.8% of the teachers are white and outnumber black teachers 296:1. Our institutions continue to send apology letters when an 'incident' arises, implement 24-hour 'trainings,' and flatter us with performative activism with the hope of calming down the desperate calls of equity. Day after day, our communities' marginalized groups falter in a world made for the privileged; after years of reform, discriminatory issues are still ever-present in daily life.



This is the lived experience of millions of Americans. This is the lived experience of the thousands of people throughout the Issaquah community. This is the lived experience of students—who are banding together with the passion of equity accumulated throughout their youth.

The Issaquah School District Student Equity Council consists of a diverse group of marginalized students and allies from across the District. Meeting for several hours each week, these students discuss solutions to address inequities prevalent in schools, utilizing the driving force of their personal experiences to amplify the urgency of activism in schools.

With desires for their work to progress as urgently as possible, students recognized the disappointing commonality of institutions to mistakenly group all marginalized people—regardless of individual identities—as ones with similar experiences. Acknowledging the intersectionality of equity and that equity is personal to the experiences of the affected, the council organized affinity groups' for members to directly advocate for their identifying group. Each group prioritizes the needs of identifying members while simultaneously addressing equity through a community-wide lens, upholding inclusive values to bridge the gaps of society.

The affinity groups' student-led projects are central to the council's work, with past work including presentations about the importance of preferred pronouns, development of mentorship programs designed for students of color, proposals for safe spaces for displaced students, and reimagine of a school-year calendar inclusive to all religions. Equity entails the collective efforts of all people to aid historically and modernly divested individuals, and the work of affinity groups is hopeful to not only enlighten the community of the daily struggles of disadvantaged students, but to address it from the perspective of those whom it affects.

For this purpose, the ISD Student Equity Council actively advocates to overcome the equity barriers that no student should have to encounter in their educational career. In direct collaboration with administrators and adult leaders as the amplified voice of the student body, the Council continues to strive for an equitable future. To learn more about the Council and its projects, visit <https://isdequity.wixsite.com/website> or send an email to [isd.equity@gmail.com](mailto:isd.equity@gmail.com).

## The Welcoming Center at Bellevue Libraries

Are you an immigrant, refugee or new to the community and need help finding resources? Connect with a Welcoming Ambassador, a friendly person who can help you find information and services. Visit their page: <https://kcls.org/welcoming-center/>

- Basic Services
- Education
- Immigration and Legal Matters
- Social or Religious Connections
- Census Information
- Health
- Employment
- Library Resources and Services

Can you help us?

# Step Up for kids



Our community is facing unprecedented times. No matter what shoes you walk in, we've all been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this rapidly changing educational environment, your support of the Issaquah Schools Foundation is critical.



Since 1987, the Issaquah Schools Foundation has been funding programs and resources for students and teachers. We inspire innovation while meeting emerging needs - including technology and on-line tools to support remote learning for more than 20,000 students.

If you are able, please donate. Help us stay agile and make an impact in our community.

Step Up for Kids at [isfdn.org](http://isfdn.org)!



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