Community Connection

Working Together for Education, Safety, & Fire Response

SWSD Superintendent *Dr. Becky Clifford*

Superintendent Salutations

As we settle into a new school year, I am filled with gratitude for the continued support and partnership of the South Whidbey community.

Our students and staff are off to a great start, and I am especially excited about the energy and leadership our new principals and staff are bringing to our campuses. They have quickly become part of our school communities and are building strong relationships.



Pictured above are elementary students on their first day of school

Thank you to the families who joined us for the school Curriculum Nights! It was wonderful to see so many families and guardians connecting with teachers, learning more about their student's courses, and gaining insight into the learning experiences planned for the year ahead.

I am also grateful for our School Board's commitment to listening and engaging with the community. Our October 14th School Board Community Meeting provided valuable opportunities to hear directly from taxpayers, families, staff, and community members.

Your ideas, questions, and feedback on incorporating a two-way dialogue into the board's work will directly help shape the future of our schools. On October 28th, our principals provided their 26-27 School Improvement Plans. Please use the QR code above to open Board Docs and watch the video presentation as well as to view the slides within the agenda.

Homecoming Week brought Falcon spirit to life across South Whidbey! Students and staff embraced a fun-filled week of creative spirit days, showing their school pride and celebrating what makes our community special.



Pictured above is Homecoming Spirit

One of my personal priorities is staying connected to classrooms. Through weekly school visits, I am committed to spending time in every classroom each month to hear from our students and educators while seeing learning in action.

Thank you, South Whidbey taxpayers, for investing in our students and believing in their future.

SW Fire/EMS Fire Chief, *Nick Walsh*

Big News for South Whidbey: A New Fire Station is Coming!

South Whidbey Fire/EMS is proud to announce the upcoming construction of a new, modern, and fully staffed fire station—Station 32—located in the vicinity of Cultus Bay Road and Deer Lake Road.

This strategic initiative directly addresses the evolving safety needs of our growing community by replacing two aging, outdated facilities—the Clinton and Maxwelton stations—with a single, state-of-the-art emergency response hub.

While building a new station is a significant investment, it ultimately reduces long-term operational overhead. By consolidating operations into Station 32, the agency will surplus the old Clinton and Maxwelton stations, sell the land they sit on, and reduce our fleet size, saving taxpayer dollars on maintenance, utilities, and duplicate equipment.



Pictured above is the concept design for the New Station 32

The primary goal of the new Station 32 is to put more firefighters on the scene of emergencies faster. This strategic location allows South Whidbey Fire/EMS to reach emergencies in the critical Southeast portion of our district in less than 10 minutes.

Planning, procurement, and design phases are currently underway, with the ultimate target of having the station fully completed, operational, and staffed by the year 2030.

Your support for this new station directly translates to better, faster response times when it matters most.

Thank You! 🙂

Power Up Your Devices with Fire Safety in Mind

National Fire Protection Association
Fire Prevention theme:

"Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower,"

This focuses on the simple steps people can take to recharge safely. Safe charging means making smart choices every time you plug in.

The way you charge your lithium-ion battery devices can make a difference in helping prevent home fires.
It comes down to using simple habits each time you plug in.

Use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer. Using the wrong charger can damage the battery and increase the risk of fire.

Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell. These are warning signs that the battery may be damaged or failing.

Unplug your device when it is fully charged. Do not leave it plugged in longer than needed. Leaving a device plugged in too long can increase heat and stress on the battery.

Charge larger items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside and away from exits. These batteries are larger and store more energy. If they fail, fires can grow quickly and spread.

Charge devices on a table, desk, or other hard, flat surface. Do not charge them on beds, couches, or under pillows. Devices and chargers produce heat during normal charging. Soft surfaces can trap heat and block airflow, which can cause the battery to overheat.

*Buy products listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as UL, ETL, or CSA.**
Listed products meet important safety standards.
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Can Emergency Vehicles Reach You?

When every second counts, emergency responders need safe and reliable access to your property. Take a few minutes to check your driveway and help ensure crews can reach you quickly in an emergency.



- Trim vegetation to provide at least 12 feet of width and 13½ feet of vertical clearance.
- Remove obstacles such as rocks, posts, gates, or other objects that could block access.
- Maintain a stable driveway surface that can support the weight of emergency vehicles, especially during the softer spring months.
- Keep turnaround areas clear so fire engines and other emergency vehicles can safely maneuver.

A little preparation today can make a big difference when emergency services are needed. Help us help you by keeping your driveway emergency-ready.

Fire Prevention Week! 🔥🚒

Our crews got to visit schools across the south end of Whidbey Island and spend time teaching students about staying safe!
Each class and grade learned about topics suited to their age, including helmet safety, first aid, water safety, natural disaster preparedness, and fire safety. We also shared a little about what we do as firefighters, the gear we wear, and how it helps protect us while helping others.

One of our favorite parts of these visits is giving students a chance to ask questions and get comfortable with the firefighters they might see during an emergency.
Thank you to the schools, teachers, and students for welcoming us! We love getting to connect with our community and help our youngest neighbors learn skills they can carry with them.
❤️

South Whidbey Fire EMS Mission Statement:
"Protect Lives, Serve with Compassion, Respond with Excellence"
Core Values:
Integrity, Professionalism, Compassion

South Whidbey Schools Building for the Future: Our Bond Construction Update

As we move further into the 2026-27 school year, I want to take a moment to recognize how seamlessly our students and staff are adapting to the changes that come with major construction.

As I shared in our August 21st construction press release (please use the QR code above to open), in September, even with significant work continuing across our campuses, we were ready on time to welcome students back to school. Our administrators, principals, teachers, and staff worked closely with the construction team to prepare learning spaces and establish safe, workable routines.



Pictured above is the new main entrance of the high school middle school with the added safety doors into the student areas

The bond work remains an important investment in the future of South Whidbey Schools. Many items were completed during the summer including half of the mechanical systems. Current projects include redesign of the main entrances to increase safety measures to both campuses.



Pictured left is the new siding on the high school /middle school

At the high school and middle school, crews are focused on exterior work including the roof, the blue air barrier, insulation, metal siding, and interior work renovating the Cougar Den (PKA New Commons) and middle school main stairs. The track and field are steadily progressing and we are still hopeful they will be ready in the Spring.

Although approximately half of the building is closed during construction, our students and staff continue to navigate these temporary changes with remarkable patience and flexibility.



Pictured above is the work in progress on the Falcon/Cougar Athletic Field

Several projects are nearing completion, including the elementary mechanical upgrades, the extended student drop-off and pick-up loop, and the middle/high school northside exterior siding, new windows, and mechanical upgrades.



Pictured above, the new elementary drop off/pick up loop

Why this work matters: Our facilities face real challenges, from leaking roofs and aging siding to uneven athletic fields, safety, and heating needs. By taking these on, we are building not just for today's students, but for generations of Falcons, Cougars, and Orcas to come.

Thank you for your continued patience, partnership, and pride in South Whidbey Schools.

JOIN US FOR UPCOMING BAND/CHOIR CONCERTS:

- Thursday Oct 29 Creepy Concert
- Thursday Dec 10 Winter Concert

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South Whidbey School District Mission

In collaboration with our community, every student will be supported to be a resilient, innovative, compassionate, and productive graduate prepared for a diverse and dynamic world.

South Whidbey School District
5476 Maxwelton Road
Langley, WA 98260



South Whidbey Fire EMS
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Community Partnerships



Pictured left:: South Whidbey Fire completing the check and all clear for the Great ShakeOut

Partnerships beyond our campuses are equally essential. We maintain a close collaboration with the Sheriff's Office to ensure safety across all school grounds, and we are equally grateful to South Whidbey Fire & Rescue for their ongoing support. From leading fire prevention activities and bringing a fire truck to South Whidbey Elementary, to hosting community traditions like Trunk-or-Treat in the High School parking lot, their presence enriches our district. Most recently, they joined our Great ShakeOut earthquake and evacuation drill, running their own response drill alongside our student evacuation. Both agencies are critical members of our District Safety Team, and these connections help our students see just how many people in our community care about their safety and success.

Honoring Our Crew: Wildland Deployment in Eastern Washington

Our firefighters recently stepped up to protect communities across the state, deploying to Eastern Washington.

Under demanding conditions, they were put straight into action and our crew utilized their wildland training to battle the Little Giant Fire before transferring to assist with the Colwash Fire.

Their commitment to answering the call—no matter how far or dangerous the assignment—represents the very best of public service.

Thank you for ALL you do!





Pictured left:: Lt. Peter Lund and FF/EMT Cooper Ullmann