

EVHS sets high bar for state to follow

In only its second year of participation in competency testing for world languages, East Valley High School finds itself near the top of the state leaderboard.

No, this is not a test examining pass rates on required high school language classes, Advanced Placement or Honors courses.

Rather, it is a test for students who speak, read and write a language other than English. It is a program allowing native and heritage speakers (those whose first language is not English and those exposed to a language other than English at home) to earn credits on their high school transcripts.

They can do so by passing a standardized competency test tailored to their native/heritage language. Regardless of the

language, the tests are rigorous, sometimes requiring up to five hours to complete.

While the exams are about language, the results are about numbers, as in how many pass and how much credit they earn. It is in these success measures that EV occupies rarefied air.

In two years of testing, 53 EV students have earned 166 collective high school credits. That equates to more than three credits per student (one credit equals one year-long course).

While the credit total is impressive, EV's results also are counted in the percentage of students who are successful. Consider: The 53 earning credit came from a pool of 54 participants. That's a better than 98-percent success rate.

What languages were tested? The list is larger than most might think. While Spanish and Russian have been the most common language tested at EVHS, the list also includes Filipino, French, Marshallese, Vietnamese, Romanian and Swahili.

Those passing the tests earn a designation of achievement, known as a Seal of Biliteracy, on their high school transcript.

EVHS Spanish teachers Brenda Gaver and Jessica Ruiz have been the lead recruiters for the testing program. While pleased with the results so far, both see even larger possibilities ahead.

The next steps, they say, are financial. Test costs, entirely paid by students, range from \$17 to \$180, depending on the language. For many, the cost can be a barrier to participation. Gaver and Ruiz hope to remedy that through grants that will significantly reduce, if not eliminate, the entire student cost.

Until then, they take pride in knowing their students have set a standard for the state. Rarefied air is sweet, indeed.



Teachers Brenda Gaver and Jessica Ruiz lead the way.

Gaver recognized by Chamber

Brenda Gaver's achievements inside the classroom also are drawing wide acclaim on the outside.

In January, the veteran EVHS Spanish teacher was recognized as an Educator of the Year by the Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce at its Gem of the Valley awards gala.

The annual event honors business and community leaders – including educators from all three Spokane Valley school districts – for their outstanding achievement. Gaver is flanked, in photo at right, by East Valley Superintendent Kelly Shea and Chamber CEO Lance Beck.



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This newsletter is published
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the superintendent. Comments,
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Upcoming Board Meetings

March 26, 2019

April 23, 2019

May 28, 2019

*All at 6 p.m.
Administration Building*

District Calendar

Spring break
March 1-5, 2019

No school or snow make-up
May 24, 2019

Memorial Day
May 27, 2019

High School graduation
June 10, 2019

Superintendent's message

A heartfelt 'thank you' to our patrons

On behalf of the East Valley School District and its Board of Directors, I want to express my sincerest appreciation to the voters of our community for their support of our capital levy back in November.

As a district, we set a record for voter turnout on an East Valley ballot measure with more than 11,000 votes cast. And with 58% approval, voters have provided \$13,000,000 over the next two years to improve the safety and security of our schools as well as investments in our schools' infrastructure, all while reducing the district's tax rate.

The first project is the installation of deadbolt locks for all interior doors in our schools. We are currently in the process of collecting bids to select a contractor to complete the installation of locks. Work should begin this spring and be completed prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

Our second project is the construction of an additional parking lot at Trentwood Elementary. This lot will not only provide adequate parking space for staff and visitors, but also serve as a student drop-off and pick-up for parents who drive their children to school.

Creating the drop-off and pick-up lane will provide a safer area for students away from Wellesley, allow students to quickly access the playground and create greater separation of our school buses and private vehicles.

Architects are currently designing the new parking lot with construction to begin in June and completed by the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

The third project to begin this summer is the relocation of our athletic fields on the middle school campus. With the final phase of the Bigelow/Forker/Sullivan road project scheduled for the spring of 2020, our goal is to construct two new softball diamonds, one baseball diamond, and a practice football/soccer field this summer. These fields will be ready for play beginning in the fall of 2020. Most of this cost will be reimbursed by Spokane County.

These projects are being done with levy revenue collected in 2019. As we collect levy funds in 2020, we will continue our buildings' safety and security improvements (secured single point of entry, cameras, exterior door locks, communication and notification systems, bells, and clocks) with the intent of having these projects completed prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

These are very exciting days for the staff and students of East Valley. Again, I want to thank the East Valley community for its continued support of our district.

Kelly Shea
Superintendent

East Valley quick facts

Did you know...

- With a district enrollment exceeding 4,000 students, East Valley is the fifth-largest school district in Spokane County.
- At 92 square miles, East Valley serves a larger geographic region than both the Spokane and Central Valley districts.

- East Valley exceeds the state average in teacher experience (EV: 15.3 years; state: 13.1 years) and the percentage of teachers with a master's degree (EV: 68.5%; state: 66.9%). Source: OSPI, Washington State Report Card.
- The East Valley School District traces its roots to the old East Trent School District in 1886. Today's modern district evolved from the consolidation of several small districts.

FFA program off and running

In her first 17 years as a teacher at East Valley High School, Leah Lucero harbored a dream. It was a dream to add a program she thought would be a perfect fit for the school's demographics.

She dreamed her students could enjoy the same experience and opportunity she had as a high schooler through FFA. In the wide open spaces of the East Valley region, she knew an FFA program would appeal to students naturally attracted to agriculture, science and natural resources in all their diverse forms.

Growing up in Clarkston, she was an active FFA member herself. She knew first-hand of the valuable educational and leadership training opportunities that translate well to many career fields. She wanted the same for her own students.

Last fall, at the start of year 18, her dream became a reality. Today, Lucero's second-floor classroom is the proud new home of the region's newest FFA program. Twenty-seven students are currently enrolled, engaged in problem-solving research, career exploration and leadership development events.

Just as Lucero predicted, the cast of 27 is a diverse group that includes students interested in plants, animals, health, entrepreneurship and a few adventurous spirits simply interested in trying something new. The class is open to all students in grades 9-12.

About the FFA

The original FFA, Future Farmers of America, was founded in 1928 with a mission to prepare future generations for the challenge of feeding a growing population. Sixty years later, recognizing that the mission was broader than just agricultural production, the name was officially changed to National FFA Organization. Today's FFA welcomes members who aspire to careers as engineers, entrepreneurs, scientists, teachers, veterinarians and more.

Guided by the FFA motto of "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve," Lucero provides opportunity through a three-part model that includes classroom instruction, experiential learning and personal growth/leadership development. Public speaking and presentations are imbedded throughout.

For Lucero, the FFA program also completes a three-part professional circle of sorts, adding to her existing duties in career and technical education and special education.

Starting a program from scratch has been labor-intensive, she says, but worth the effort because it has allowed her to develop a playbook customized to East Valley student interests.

And the customization will continue, she says, making the program bigger and better in the years to come. Based on the experience of one semester, the launch has exceeded expectations. The journey to bigger and better already has begun.



Part of the FFA inaugural class. Front row: Abigail Willey, sophomore; Grace Ribbeck, junior; Gwendolyn Skeen, sophomore; and teacher Leah Lucero. Back row: Dakota Hanson, senior; and Megan Walsh, freshman.

Hanson receives coaching honor

The honors keep coming for veteran East Valley High School wrestling coach Craig Hanson.

In November, the veteran coach added to his substantial resume with one of the highest and most enduring honors in all of coaching. He was one of five people inducted into the Washington State Wrestling Coaches Association (WSWCA) Hall of Fame.

Hanson, an East Valley teacher and coach since 1995, also is a four-time recipient of WSWCA coach of the year honors. Along the way, he has mentored hundreds of student-athletes who have excelled on the mat and the classroom. Congratulations, Coach Hanson.

At right: **This is how you do it.** Craig Hanson and his assistant coaches don't just talk technique – they also demonstrate it.



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A history lesson like no other

In the East Valley School District, no holiday or event matches Veterans Day for solemnity and respect.

Every year, veterans are invited to the schools for inspiring student-led programs honoring those who have worn a uniform. A school program traditionally includes music, readings and a keynote address by a distinguished veteran, often a person with family ties to the school.

While East Valley Middle School followed tradition in its Veterans Day observance last fall, the day was far beyond ordinary. Why? Because the keynote speaker was a veteran of World War II.

Retired Lt. Col. Dean Ladd, spoke of the sacrifices and pride associated with his service as a United States Marine in the South Pacific nearly 80 years ago. For students, he offered a rare and fast-vanishing personal account of history, lessons in leadership and the value of public service in both military and civilian life.

Ladd was a decorated Marine (two Purple Hearts) who fought in some of the fiercest battles in the Pacific theater – Guadalcanal,

Saipan, Tarawa and Tinian. At 98, he is one of the nation's oldest living Marines (perhaps THE oldest).

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, only about 3 percent, fewer than 500,000 – still remain.

Ladd's war experiences will live in perpetuity through Faithful Warriors, a memoir he published in 1993. Years from now, however, only a relative few will be able to say they were honored to see, hear and meet him in person; to hear his memories in his own voice; to hear his love of country and love of service.

Indeed, only a fortunate few will be able to say they learned history from a person who made it.



Retired Marine Corps Lt. Col. Dean Ladd inspires EVMS students in Veterans Day address.

Once a Knight, always a Knight

If there were ever any doubt about the enduring loyalty of East Valley High School graduates, look no further than the Class of 1988.

While every school has its loyalists who profess love of alma mater, how many are willing to prove it with their wallets? Last summer, at their 30th high school reunion, the Class of 1988 proved it in a big way

When the weekend festivities were over, \$3,500 still remained in the reunion budget. But rather than issue refunds, class organizers had a better idea – give the money to today's students in the form of a gift benefiting all.

Thanks to their generosity, the school will be outfitted with

something students and staff have long requested – bottle-filling water stations.

Plans call for the installation of at least two modern dispensers (first floor, east wing and second floor, west wing) with the donation. Thank you, Class of '88.

*At right: **Not your parents' drinking fountain:** Modern dispensers, similar to the one shown here, include touchless, sensor-activated functions.*

