CHEHALIS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

FRIDAY
CONNECT
Oct. 13, 2023

SAI Showcase 2023

Begun in 2013, the Chehalis School District's Student Achievement Initiative was founded to solve the problem that only 20% of W.F. West Graduates were completing any kind of post-secondary degree. The ambitious goal of raising that number to 60% by the class of 2022 was the aim. This month, students and staff got the chance to show current and potential stakeholders just how far they've come.

The SAI Showcase, held Oct. 5 at W.F. West High School, was a celebration of the completion of the first decade of work in SAI for those who have been involved, as well as a chance to introduce some new faces to the work of Chehalis SAI. Almost 50 non-district guests attended the event. "The foundation of our SAI is our teachers and their focus on instructional practices and building strong relationships with students," explained Executive Director of Student Achievement Rick Goble. "I wanted to do something to honor the teachers and students because they have done so much work."

Some of that work is reflected in the numbers educators are seeing in the Chehalis School District:

- 48% of the class of 2018 has already received some sort of post-secondary credential, while 63% of them are projected to do so within 8 years of graduation
- The class of 2023 had a 95% graduation rate (the state average is 83%)
- 62% of this year's 10-12 graders are enrolled in a college level, dual credit or Advanced Placement course

Read About The SAI Showcase in The Chronicle Here

OUR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TEAM
Dr. Christine Moloney
Superintendent
Chehalis School District
Kevin Smith
Pinnacle Wealth Management

A Simple Start, A Complex Issue

Guest speaker Kevin Smith of Pinnacle Wealth Management, distinguished W.F. West Alumni and brother of the late Orin Smith, was part of the very beginning of the SAI effort. Smith recalled touring a STEM program in Chehalis and Orin Smith noting that the district was doing impressive work for STEM students and then following up with a simple question that made him really think: How are students in other programs faring?

Kevin Smith noted that by 2030, 70% of high-demand, family wage jobs will require some sort of credential or post-secondary degree, which requires a shift in focus from simply getting students to graduation.

"This is a change from a caps and gowns culture to a career and college readiness culture and that hasn't been easy," Smith said. "We believe you have to start early. You can't start in high school."

Smith praised the support services the Chehalis School District has created. He said he does not know of another school district that has staff members such as a dedicated middle school Career and College Readiness Specialist, Freshman Transition Specialist or Retention Specialist.

"This was all about making Chehalis kids be as successful in life as possible after high school and I think we're on track for that," Smith said. "I do really think we're onto something big and it seems really simple but it's actually very complicated."

It Takes a Community

Attendees at the SAI Showcase had the opportunity to hear from a number of Chehalis staff, including: a panel consisting of SAI staff members including Kerri Chaput, Autumn Ledgerwood, Becky Moon, Lynn Panther, Oscar Escalante, Adrian Jimenez, DeeDee Judd and Cecilia Jimenez; board member J. Vander Stoep; Rick Goble; and Superintendent Dr. Christine Moloney.

Moloney praised staff throughout the district for their hard work and for being true pioneers in addressing student achievement. "Our hope is what we are doing here can be replicated across the state and nation," she said.

Duane Baker, founder and President of the BERC Group, also praised the work of not only the faculty and staff but also community partners such as The Chehalis Foundation and Centralia College. The Chehalis School District hired the BERC group in 2013 to help identify metrics that could be used to gauge student success. Right away, Baker said he noticed that there was something about the connections in the Chehalis community that pointed toward a high probability for success.

"I think this can be replicated but you have to have the will to do it and the people here have the will to do it," Baker said. "This is a very unique situation, unique place, unique group of folks and I just really hope you continue the work because it's really special."

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE
WFW
Photo by W.F. West Photography Class
Photo by W.F. West Photography Class
Photo by W.F. West Photography Class

Teachers Let Students Shine

After being given the facts about SAI, guests of the event also got to see that work in action during a Student Expo. Nearly 50 high school students representing 17 areas of study showed visitors what they have been working on - from screen printing and sports medicine to molecular genetics and robotics.

"Our students did amazing," said CTE department chair and W.F. West teacher Alison Clinton of the student showcase. "It was so cool to see them all together, representing their programs so well. It's one thing to present to your teachers or parents, but it creates a whole new sense of pride when they are able to show the community what they have been working on. We were all so proud of them."

W.F. West teacher Mike Stratton, whose students presented about Molecular Genetics, said as a teacher, the only work he had was making a list of the students he wanted to present. He explained that his class actually stresses students working independently in the lab and really taking ownership of their education so he knew they could easily represent their area of study. "I know the kids and I know what they're capable of and ultimately, the goal is that they're at the center of the teaching and learning," Stratton said.

Science department chair Krista Wilks, whose students demonstrated their work with the STEM wing's Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), said she was so proud of the work students did preparing for the event.

"They took the initiative to prepare displays and make the video to demonstrate their knowledge and also show people their excitement about the scanning electron microscope and what they're doing in class," Wilks said. "I was so proud of them."

W.F. West Assistant Principal Mark Westley, who oversees the CTE program, said he was most impressed to see how well the student ambassadors held themselves and talked about their programs with confidence. He said these students were examples of the positive culture Chehalis teachers have created.

"It was amazing and I was in awe of just teachers and administrators stepping back and letting the kids shine," Westley said. "And that's just the tip of the iceberg. We have classrooms full of kids like that. They represented their classmates and many, many more could have done the same thing."

Photo by W.F. West Photography Class
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What's Next For SAI?

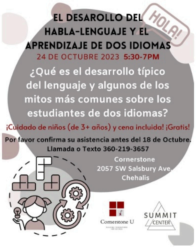
Goble said he could see at least the Student Expo portion of the SAI Showcase becoming something the Chehalis School District does again, perhaps every four or five years. But whether or not they're showing it off to the public, the work of SAI continues, he added.

Goble said he is most excited for the opportunity to continue to look at how the Chehalis School District can create career pathways for all students of all talents and interests.

"It's going to be more and more of a focus on career and technical applications, trades, credentials, being more intentional and helping students find their way," Goble said. "We want all of our kids to have as many open doors and options as possible at the end of their high school career."

He noted that there are still more than 30% of students not seeking some sort of post-secondary credential and he's most interested in figuring out how to reach those students and support them. "We want the students' decisions to be in alignment with their career choices and not because of missed opportunities."

Cornerstone Presents Family Nights


HOLA!
Cornerstone U
SUMMIT CENTER

EL DESAROLLO DEL HABLA-LENGUAJE Y EL APRENDIZAJE DE DOS IDIOMAS

24 DE OCTUBRE 2023 **5:30-7PM**

¿Qué es el desarrollo típico del lenguaje y algunos de los mitos más comunes sobre los estudiantes de dos idiomas?

¡Cuidado de niños (de 3+ años) y cena incluida! ¡Gratis!

Por favor confirma su asistencia antes del 18 de Octubre.
Llamada o Texto 360-219-3657

Cornerstone
2057 SW Salsbury Ave.
Chehalis

The Cornerstone Program is pleased to present “Foundations for Parenting,” a parent education series designed to build confidence for the parenting challenges we all face. Fourteen parent nights have been scheduled throughout this school year, beginning October 24th with a special class for Spanish-speaking parents, “Speech-Language Development and Dual Language Learning.”

This class will focus on typical language development and debunking some of the most common myths around dual language learners and children who live in households where more than one language is spoken.

Families are welcome! Dinner will be served from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. and childcare for ages 3 and older will be provided beginning at 6 pm for the one hour class. Please RSVP by October 18th (so we can provide enough food) by calling 360-219-3657.

Notice of Non-discrimination
Anti-bullying Policy and Procedure