

# The Leavenworth Echo

\$1.00

Volume 124 • No. 5

Upper Valley News Since 1904  
A Ward Media Publication

 leavenworthecho.com



Page A4



Connecting communities  
across North Central  
Washington

NCW News | B1

## Community dinners foster connection in the Upper Valley



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

Guest Bob Perleberg stands between volunteers Alvin Lee (left) and Glenn Ostrem (right). The community dinners have about eight to 10 volunteers to help with preparation and clean up, as well as greeting guests at the door.



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

Volunteer Judy Weaver sits at the helm of a table full of guests. Although the dinners are hosted at the church, they are focused on involving the entire Leavenworth community.

By TAYLOR CALDWELL  
Ward Media Staff Reporter

UPPER VALLEY – Community dinners, hosted monthly at Leavenworth Community United Methodist Church (UMC) and weekly at Cashmere Community Church, bring neighbors together over a shared meal, fostering connection and a sense of community. “It’s not [about the church]. It’s about getting people from the community to be part of it, whether people are hungry or whether they just need the social aspect,” said

Judy Weaver, a volunteer at the Leavenworth community dinner. According to Weaver, Leavenworth Community UMC has historically done community dinners, but hadn’t in the last 12 years of her attendance. The community dinners returned to the church about a year and a half ago, thanks to the initiative of the suppers’ two volunteer cooks, Angela Kelley and Myrene McFarland. “The pastor asked us what we thought our mission should be in the community...And so we went around and we all wrote up what we

said, and I said, ‘Feed people.’ And so that’s what we’re trying to do, and not just with food, with community,” said McFarland. The made-from-scratch dinners, such as lasagna or chicken curry, often include donations from local businesses, like staples from Dan’s Food Market, or strudel from Obertal Inn. They attract about 60 guests each time, ranging from senior citizens to young families, and even Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) hikers in the summer. “[The hikers] were very appreciative of being able to just be

able to sit down and be comfortable and not have to worry about anything...And all the stories you hear are just amazing,” said Weaver. In the future, Leavenworth Community UMC envisions creating a host rotation similar to that of Cashmere Community Church’s community dinners, which shares the hosting responsibilities amongst local community groups. The dinners, which occur on a more frequent weekly basis, remain at the same time and location, keeping

See DINNERS Page B4

## Beaver Valley students share camera trapping project with state leaders



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

Wildlife biologist Kristin Rine makes a special visit to the class to help them set up a hair snare, which will collect DNA samples of the area’s fisher population for analysis.

By TAYLOR CALDWELL  
Ward Media Staff Reporter

PLAIN – Beaver Valley Elementary students were formally invited to share their camera trapping program with legislators from their districts and state agency leaders at the annual Environmental & Sustainability Literacy Student Summit on Jan. 28 and 29.

“We think that all schools should have a camera trapping program. That’s what the kids are putting out there, is why we think all students in Washington should have a camera trapping program, and how it gets the kids out and having fun getting to know their area,” said Beaver Valley teacher Eric Tiegel. The program, led by project lead Jeff Layton, enables students to study



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

Students trek out to their camera site located along Nason Creek.

local wildlife through trail cameras placed through the Lake Wenatchee and Plain area, observing changes in the environment and animal behavior throughout the school year. “It’s a really cool, interesting project, and these kids get to see some really neat stuff. To just be able to share that with the greater community is neat,” said Layton. Each month, Layton visits Tiegel’s

second through fourth grade class to collect and review the camera footage for an interactive biology lesson. Layton spends the first hour discussing what’s going on in the environment with the students, gleaned lessons from the previous month’s footage. As Layton shows the class a diagram of the subnivean layer, or the space

See BEAVER VALLEY Page B4

## From Leavenworth to Norway: CHS graduates embrace the folk school journey

By CAROLINE MENNA  
Ward Media Intern

LEAVENWORTH - An informal but special educational exchange is developing between Cascade High School (CHS) and Nordvestlandet folkehøgskole, a Norwegian folk high school. In recent years, an increasing number of CHS graduates have chosen to embark on a gap year – a period when students take a break from the traditional educational route, most often after completing



COURTESY OF NORDVESTLANDET FOLKEHOGSKOLE

The picturesque campus of Nordvestlandet Folkehøgskole, nestled between mountains and fjords in northwest Norway, where CHS graduates are embarking on transformative gap year experiences.

See CHS GRADUATES Page B2

## Forest Service seeks public comment on proposed changes to Northwest Forest Plan

By TAYLOR CALDWELL  
Ward Media Staff Reporter

PORTLAND, Ore. – The United States Forest Service (USFS) is currently taking comments on its proposed changes to the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) through March 17.

The NWFP dates back to the mid-1990s, serving as the blueprint for conserving forests and wildlife habitat along the West Coast. It covers over 24 million acres managed by the Forest Service and other federally managed lands, spanning from California and up through Washington.

The proposed amendments intend to provide an updated management framework that incorporates best available scientific information and current conditions in order to better address the social, economic, and ecological changes experienced over the last 30 years.

The proposed changes outlined in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement focus on themes of fire resilience, economic benefits, and forest stewardship, with Tribal inclusion and adapting to changing conditions interwoven throughout these themes.

With fire resilience, the proposed amendments would prioritize proactive fire management to protect communities and forests, such as strategic planning for community safety and risk reduction, the reintroduction of fire to maintain fire-adapted ecosystems, and collaboration with communities to use and develop wildfire protection plans.

Forest stewardship amendments would tailor management for dry and moist ecosystems, combine restoration with timber harvesting activities to maintain ecological health and economic output, use modern forestry methods to improve resilience, and retain mature and old-growth forest conditions.

The forest stewardship amendments distinguishing dry and moist ecosystems could be most impactful for improving fire resiliency in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, which is primarily dry forest.

“The original 1994 plan amendment basically grouped, lumped the whole area to have the same management direction, but we know that dry and moist ecosystems are quite different ecologically, and how fire behaves on those landscapes is quite different. So, one of the goals of this amendment is to improve our ability to restore dry ecosystems, to restore ecological integrity in those dry ecosystems, which is currently difficult to do under the existing Northwest Forest Plan,” said Shasta Ferranto, special assistant to the Forest Service’s regional forester.

The proposed amendments would open up dry forests to more mechanical thinning and burning, while retaining trees older than 150 years.

The amendment would also seek to ensure forests contribute to economic growth for communities, including enhancing the predictability in timber supply while balancing conservation needs, supporting workforce development in forest management, encouraging local businesses, Tribes, and underserved communities to participate in contracts and agreements for restoration projects, and recognizing the importance of outdoor recreation and tourism.

However, conservation groups worry that the proposed changes

See FOREST SERVICE Page B4

### Inside The Echo this Week

5 Things to do this Week.....	A2	Community Calendar.....	A3	Sheriff Report.....	A3
Business Directory.....	B4	Classifieds.....	B4	Sports.....	A4
Cascade Scoreboard.....	A4	Death Announcement.....	A2	Advertising Flyers:	
Church Guide.....	B4	NCW News.....	B1	Safeway, Dan’s Food Market	

**\$1.00**



8 08805 93175 4

Phone:  
**509-731-4392**

[www.leavenworthecho.com](http://www.leavenworthecho.com)





# Sports

We've got Kodiak **PRIDE!**



**Dan's FOOD Market**

From your fresh, friendly LOCAL grocer. 509-548-5611

**Mountain Country Corner**



We've got spirit, **yes we do!**

843 Front St., Ste. A | 509-548-5312

**WARD MEDIA**



*Fueling Champions*

From the court to the mat Ward Media is proud to support the Kodiaks

Let's go Kodiaks!


**State Farm**




**Bruce Cheadle,**  
(509) 782-1659

**ONE SPIRIT, ONE TEAM, ONE WIN!**

Your team in the game, our team providing care - a winning combination!



**CASCADE MEDICAL**  
PARTNERS IN YOUR HEALTH

**ONE SPIRIT, ONE TEAM, ONE WIN!**



709 Front St. Leavenworth  
509-548-1158  
www.munchenhaus.com

ALL PHOTOS BY SEBASTIAN MORAGA/FOR WARD MEDIA

**CASCADE SCHEDULE**

Girls Basketball				
Fri, Jan 31	6:00 PM	Tonasket	Home	
Tue, Feb 4	5:45 PM	Manson	Home	
Boys Basketball				
Fri, Jan 31	7:30 PM	Tonasket	Home	
Tue, Feb 4	7:15 PM	Manson	Home	
Girls Wrestling				
Sat, Feb 1	10:00 AM	Quincy	Away	

**CASCADE SCOREBOARD**

Girls Basketball					
Tue, Jan 21	Cascade	55	Liberty Bell	38	Win
Sat, Jan 25	Cascade	40	Entiat	10	Win
Boys Basketball					
Tue, Jan 21	Cascade	30	Liberty Bell	76	Loss
Sat, Jan 25	Cascade	76	Entiat	52	Win

## Kodiaks shake off slow start, cruise past Entiat 76-52

The Cascade Kodiaks' boys basketball team endured a rocky first half to defeat Entiat, 76-52 on the road Jan. 25.

Will Biebesheimer (15, at left) diving for a rebound against Entiat on Jan. 25. The Kodiaks won 76-52, snapping a two-game losing skid.



A trio of Kodiaks (from left, Graham Campbell, Ethan Davis, and Artie Northrup) put pressure on an Entiat player during the Kodiak visit to the Tigers' court, on Jan. 25. The Kodiaks proved irreverent guests, winning 76-52.



Graham Campbell (11) drives past Entiat's Brayan Muñoz during the Kodiaks' win over the Tigers 76-52 on Jan. 25.

## Kodiaks win shortened game 40-10 amid injury concern at Entiat

The Cascade Kodiaks endured a gamut of emotions during their trip to Entiat Jan. 26, with a resounding win 40-10 happening along a scary moment when an Entiat player had to be taken out of the court on a stretcher, with 1:29 left in the fourth quarter.



Rylie Songer (10) plays some strong defense against the Entiat Tigers' Sofia Tucker. In a game that was called off with about 90 seconds to go due to a serious injury to an Entiat player, the Kodiaks bested Entiat 40-10.



Sydney Melody (12) in action against the Entiat Tigers, which faced Cascade on Jan. 25. The visiting Kodiaks won 40-10.



Kaylee Lewis looks for an open teammate during the Cascade Kodiaks' game at Entiat, on Jan. 25. Cascade won 40-10. The Kodiaks travel to Bridgeport on Tuesday and host Tonasket on Friday.

## Kodiaks claim 11th place, five medals at Mat Animal Tournament

The Cascade Kodiaks put on a good show at the Mat Animal Wrestling Tournament, finishing 11th out of 26 schools that made the trip to Quincy last weekend. Abraham Gonzalez finished fourth at 120

lbs., Tristan Sharpe finished fourth at 150 lbs., Damian Sandoval finished fifth at 132 lbs., Aengus Gillikin finished sixth at 126 lbs., and Daniel Guerrero took first in the consolation bracket at 190 lbs.



Abraham Gonzalez (bottom) battles Daniel Gonzalez (top) of Othello during their 120-lb. match at the Mat Animal tourney in Quincy. Cascade's Gonzalez lost to Othello's Gonzalez, with the latter going on to lose in the finals, and the former losing in the match for third place.

Jonah Peake of Cascade wrestles Zayvier Olazcon of Othello in the 165-lb. bracket at the Mat Animal tourney in Quincy. Olazcon outpointed Peake and went on to win the consolation finals.



Daniel Guerrero tries to overcome the pressure from Wapato's Aiden Badonie during their 132-lb. match at the Mat Animal tourney in Quincy. Guerrero lost to eventual third-placer finisher Badonie 8-5, but rebounded from the loss and went on to finish fifth.



Frank Rosario, right, and Jonah Bowles, left, wrestling during the Mat Animal wrestling tourney in Quincy. Although the picture makes it look like the only thing missing is the Twister mat, the two teammates took the challenge seriously, with Rosario prevailing in the second round, via pin.

PICTURE PERFECT, NOW

**WAIT UNTIL YOU TASTE IT**



**Butcher's Savory Collection** SAVE 52%

- 4 Butcher's Cut Filet Mignons (5 oz.)
- 4 Air-Chilled Boneless Chicken Breasts (5 oz.)
- 4 Boneless Pork Chops (5 oz.)
- 4 PureGround® Filet Mignon Burgers (6 oz.)
- 4 Individual Scalloped Potatoes (3.8 oz.)
- 4 Caramel Apple Tartlets (4 oz.)
- 1 Omaha Steaks Seasoning (3 oz.)

**8 FREE PureGround® Filet Mignon Burgers (6 oz.)**

78045ZMJ separately \$269.94 **\$129.99**  
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE


**GET 8 FREE FILET MIGNON BURGERS**  
A \$37 value!

**ORDER NOW!** OmahaSteaks.com/Savory1330 | 1.833.685.0091  
Ask for your FREE burgers with offer 78045ZMJ

THE BEST STEAKS OF YOUR LIFE OR YOUR MONEY BACK

Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. Limit 2. 8 free 6 oz. burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes 78045. Standard S&H added per address. While supplies last. Items may be substituted due to inventory limitations. Some products may not be available for sale in your area. Sales are subject to OmahaSteaks.com/terms-of-use. Expires 03/31/25. 24M7123 | Omaha Steaks, LLC

**NORTHWEST SWAG WORKS**  
APPAREL & PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS




**YOUR Brand**  
Front and Center

CUSTOM PROMO PRODUCTS  
MADE EASY

Tailored solutions and personalized service to make every step effortless. From selecting the perfect items to ensuring timely delivery, our white-glove approach puts your needs first. Let's make your brand unforgettable!

**WWW.NORTHWESTSWAG.COM**  
509-731-3624





# Confluence Health adds new security dog



COURTESY OF CONFLUENCE HEALTH  
Members of the Confluence Health security team pose with Atlas, a German Shepherd who recently joined the hospital's new K9 security program. Atlas and his handler completed extensive training before beginning their duties.

NCW News  
Ward Media  
WENATCHEE - Patients and visitors to Confluence Health Hospital's Central and Mares campuses soon might see the newest member of

the Confluence Health staff on duty, and this staff member wears a fur coat rather than scrubs. A part of the newly launched security dog program at Confluence Health, Atlas - a male 3-year-old German

Shepard originally from Slovakia in Eastern Europe - and his handler, Justin Bennett, recently returned to the Wenatchee area after completing their extensive training. The four-legged addition to the security team is

one of two dogs planned, with the second dog and handler arriving later in the year.

"Like programs at healthcare facilities around the country, our new security dog program features animals that are rigorously trained along with their specially selected handlers to help make Confluence Health patients and visitors, as well as staff and providers, feel safe," commented John Urdahl, security and emergency preparedness director at Confluence Health. "While trained for a wide range of situations, the dogs' primary roles will be to deter violent behavior by assisting their human counterparts in their rounds in the various facilities."

Though they are working dogs, rather than pets, and their primary role is in assisting security, these new canine officers also love to interact with and visit staff and visitors while performing their duties, though dog-lovers should always be sure to ask the handler first before interacting with the security dog so as to not interfere with their work.

"Atlas is a real sweetheart to me and everyone he meets," commented Bennett, Confluence Health's first security team K9 handler. "Like most working dogs, he lives with me when not on duty and he has shown himself to have a really goofy and fun personality when not on the clock. In particular, he loves to run and explore new smells,

like most dogs."

Bennett himself is also new to the Confluence Health team, having been born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. Growing up with dogs as a kid, he moved to Chicago after going to two of the top dog trainer schools in the country and later served as a training director for another dog training facility. Following this, Bennett then worked as an explosive detection K9 handler for the United States Department of Energy at both the Y-12 National Security Complex in Tennessee near the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and then at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, protecting the nation's nuclear stockpile. In addition to his canine co-worker, Bennett also has another dog at home named Maple.

Along with the money provided by Confluence Health for the handlers' positions, the Confluence Health Foundation contributed significant funding to help secure the dogs, their training, and the necessary vehicles for this new program.

"The Confluence Health Foundation works each day to enhance and support Confluence Health's ability to provide safe and superior healthcare close to home," explained Suzanne Carté-Cocroft, vice president of philanthropy at Confluence Health. "Because of its important focus on staff and patient safety, we knew this was an important program to be a part of and it had enthusiastic support from our

board."

In thanks for their contribution, the security team offered to allow the Confluence Health Foundation to select the name for the new four-legged member. The Foundation Board, in turn, reached out to Confluence Health staff and providers to help narrow down the list of names from those provided by the security officers, conducting an organization-wide vote held at the beginning of this year.

"We were so excited to see the engagement and enthusiasm from the staff," continued Carté-Cocroft. "Staff and providers could vote for up to five of the 10 possible names. After 2202 votes cast by 930 people, the name 'Atlas' was the clear winner. Ultimately, the board wholeheartedly agreed with the staff choice and we're all looking forward to meeting Atlas when he arrives."

"We are excited to start up this new canine security program at Confluence Health," remarked Dr. Andrew Jones, CEO of Confluence Health. "I have seen similar programs around the country and have witnessed the amazing benefits this brings, not only to the safety of patients and staff, but also in the joy it brings when the security dog visits on their rounds. These canine officers build community, as well as protecting it, and we're looking forward to Atlas joining our team to help us in continuing to better serve and care for all the residents of North Central Washington."

## After arson, WA lawmakers advance bill to warn of ballot box tampering penalties

By JAKE GOLDSTEIN-STREET  
Washington State Standard

OLYMPIA - Following an arson attack ahead of last November's election that torched hundreds of ballots in a southwest Washington drop box, state lawmakers are looking at modest ways to better secure the boxes.

On Friday, a state Senate panel advanced a bill to include messaging on drop boxes about criminal penalties for tampering with them.

Senate Bill 5011 would require each visible side of ballot boxes to display two messages. One would note the box is the property of the county that bought the box. The other would state tampering with the box may violate state and federal law.

The bill's sponsor, Sen. Jeff Wilson, R-Longview, said the deliberately set fire in Vancouver before the election inspired the legislation.

"What is contained in those boxes is the most precious thing I can certainly think of, which is everybody's vote," Wilson told the Senate's State Government, Tribal Affairs and Elections Committee last week. "That individual's vote is to be protected and guarded."

Some wonder whether signage alone would deter bad actors.

Wilson thinks it could help.

"The label does matter," he said.

Authorities still haven't arrested anyone in the October attacks on ballot drop boxes in Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. The FBI is offering a \$25,000 reward for information leading to a conviction in the ballot box fires. Early the morning of Oct. 8, someone in a Volvo S-60 sedan placed an incendiary device in a downtown Vancouver ballot box, causing minor damage, according to the FBI. On Oct. 28, officials believe the same suspect placed similar devices in two more boxes, one in Vancouver and one in Portland.

The Vancouver fire damaged nearly 500 ballots just days before the election. The fire in Portland damaged only three.

The devices used thermite, a mixture of metal shavings and iron oxide, authorities said last week.

Brian Hatfield, the legislative director for the secretary of state's office, called the actions "terrorism." Hatfield, a former state lawmaker, said the bill "is at least talking about the issue and saying we need to do something."

Washington has between 545 and 560 drop boxes. Officials project the new labeling proposed under Wilson's bill would cost about

\$1,000 for each box.

But the cost could vary by county. For example, Kittitas County paid \$222 to wrap each of its nine boxes, while King County estimates it will cost \$1,350 per box.

Hatfield said he hoped the state would budget money to reimburse counties for the labels.

Greg Kimsey, the auditor in Clark County where Vancouver is located, said in an interview Friday he doesn't see the harm in adding the labels.

But "I'm also not sure it does much in the way of deterring someone from bad behavior," he added.

Another measure Wilson has proposed, Senate Bill 5010, would create a grant program in the secretary of state's office for counties to install cameras around ballot boxes. That bill hasn't been scheduled for a public hearing.

Kimsey said Clark County is already working to install cameras at each of its drop boxes by this year's general election. The fires last October spurred the effort.

Washington State Standard (www.washingtonstatestandard.com) is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

## Help lead healthcare in our community!



Cascade Medical is seeking a visionary leader to fill our open Hospital Commissioner seat.

Contribute your perspective and leadership skills to help shape and sustain healthcare for the Upper Valley.

Interested applicants can send questions or a letter of interest and resume by February 13 to [melissag@cascademedical.org](mailto:melissag@cascademedical.org).

delicious  
**Strudel**  
for  
Holiday Entertaining

**ORDER AHEAD**

**Obertal Inn**  
Leavenworth, Wa  
509-548-5204

**CASCADE MEDICAL**  
PARTNERS IN YOUR HEALTH

# Washington farmers want agritourism law reforms

By MARY FEUSNER  
Washington State Standard

OLYMPIA - Farmers across the state say regulations are getting in the way as they develop products they can sell directly to the public.

From pumpkin patches to u-pick berry farms, the impacts are real, a state panel was told Jan. 16.

“Without the agritourism industry to supplement our income, we wouldn’t be able to make it,” said Robby Rutledge, owner of Rutledge Family Farms in Tumwater.

To carve out new rules, Sen. Judy Warnick, R-Moses Lake, introduced Senate Bill 5055.

The bill establishes new zoning laws for all farms, which in turn would lower property taxes. The bill also allows farmers to repurpose areas of land unsuitable for agricultural use and remove commercial standards now in place for agritourism. It would also allow agritourism venues to receive beer and wine licenses. Hilary Jensen, president of Jensen Farms in Kittitas County, said the state issued a cease-and-desist order in October 2016 during the height of her pumpkin selling season. The order said the farm was operating illegally because buildings were approved for residential use

only. Jensen had to apply for a commercial building permit and retrofit the buildings to sell pumpkins legally.

“It cost \$6,000 to do all that at a time when I was only open eight to 10 days out of the year,” said Jensen.

Keith Stocker, president of Stocker Farms in Snohomish, said this year his family could not have survived off the commercial market price for blueberries. If Stocker had sold to canneries they would have received 68 cents a pound. Instead, with a u-pick operation at the farm, they were able to make \$3.25 a pound.

According to the Washington State Department

of Commerce, agriculture and food manufacturing operations support more than 171,000 jobs in the state of Washington. The industry is responsible for over \$21 billion in revenue each year. Jensen said she believes the state should be hands-off and less restrictive so counties can decide what they want their agritourism landscape to look like.

Washington State Standard (www.washingtonstatestandard.com) is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.



Sen. Judy Warnick, R-Moses Lake, is seeking reforms to agritourism regulations.

# In tight budget year, pressure builds to boost WA school funding

By JERRY CORNFIELD  
Washington State Standard

OLYMPIA - Lawmakers have begun another hard conversation on what it may cost the state to amply fund basic education in public schools as required by Washington’s constitution.

A state Senate panel on Wednesday held a hearing on bills that would collectively boost funding for special education, transportation and operations by \$2 billion in the next budget, and bring the state closer to covering its share of the tab in those three areas.

Superintendents of school districts on both sides of the Cascades voiced strong support, saying they are forced to use local levy dollars to pay for programs and services that are the state’s financial responsibility.

“Without a solution that addresses the true costs of doing business now and in the future, schools will face growing financial pain,” Ben Ferney, superintendent of Cheney Public Schools told the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is already keeping close watch on the finances of several cash-strapped districts.

Special education emerged Wednesday as the area where the gap is largest between what districts receive from the state and what they pay for with local dollars. There were two bills heard, each of which would increase funding by roughly \$1.5 billion in the next budget.

Senate Majority Leader Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, and Senate Minority Leader John Braun, R-Centralia, are the co-sponsors of one. It calls out special education as a component of basic education that the state has a duty to fund.

“These are kids in our public schools who have disabilities of one sort or another, and state and federal law require our school districts to provide them services. So in what world can we say with a straight face that that is not basic education,” Pedersen told the committee.

Pedersen emphasized to reporters earlier in the week that it is a statewide concern.

It will be expensive. Those costs come at a time when lawmakers are trying to solve a budget shortfall estimated to be around \$12 billion spread over the next four fiscal years.

“How much we can actually fund this year, I’m not sure,” he said Tuesday. “But every school district that I have talked to tells me that a significant amount of their extra resources that ought to be available for enrichment is now going to pay for the needs of kids with disabilities.”

In 2012, in the landmark case known as McCleary, the state Supreme Court ruled the state was not meeting its constitutional obligation to provide ample funding for basic education. It took the state six years to comply.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal said recently that the state has backslid on its investments since then and is at risk of getting sued again.

Pedersen agrees, especially in the arena of special education.

“We are in a position already where we should expect to be sued if we fail to provide the money to amply

fund education for kids with disabilities,” Pedersen said.

Breaking it down Special education funding is distributed in Washington using two key guidelines.

First, there is a cap on the percentage of a school district’s student population that can receive extra dollars for special education services.

Under current law, the state only provides additional funding for up to 16% of a district’s student population. In other words, if 20% of a district’s population requires special education services, the district cannot get additional money for the remaining 4%.

Second, the state distributes an amount of money for each student enrolled in a school plus additional dollars for each special education student under a formula known as the multiplier.

Both Senate Bill 5263, Pedersen’s bill, and Senate Bill 5307, sponsored by Sen. Lisa Wellman, D-Mercer Island, would remove the enrollment cap and increase the multiplier in order to drive more dollars to districts.

Pedersen’s bill also simplifies the formula used by the state

to determine how much will be provided per student.

Both bills also look to make it easier for districts to qualify for additional special education dollars through a safety net program run by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Neither proposal is cheap.

The bill from Pedersen and Braun carries a \$1.64 billion price tag for the next two-year budget, according to a fiscal analysis. That grows to \$1.93 billion in the 2027-29 biennium. Wellman’s bill, which Reykdal requested, would cost a little less — \$1.55 billion in the next budget and \$1.83 billion in the 2027-29 period.

The other stuff In addition to special education, materials, supplies and operating costs — called MSOC in state budget lingo — are also weighing on districts’ finances. These costs, which cover non-employee-related expenses tied to a district’s daily operations, have been on the rise.

Sen. T’wina Nobles, D-Fircrest, has authored Senate Bill 5192 to increase the state’s allotment for this line item by \$300 million.

And on student transportation, Wellman introduced Senate Bill 5187 to come up with a new funding model that pays districts an amount that more accurately reflects mileage and ridership.

Wellman, who chairs the Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, said when lawmakers worked on getting the state in compliance with McCleary, it was understood that special education, transportation and MSOC are part of basic education.

“This has got to be our number one responsibility. It is the paramount duty of the state,” she said. “We intend to honor that duty.”

Washington State Standard (www.washingtonstatestandard.com) is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.



## CHS graduates

Continued from page A1

high school before enrolling in college - at Nordvestlandet, opting for an exceptional and transformative experience.

The more than eighty folk high schools in Norway, which welcome international students, do not grant academic degrees, nor do they issue exams or grades. Instead, the focus of these boarding schools, which vary in size, location, and program structure, is on the development of practical skills.

Students concentrate in areas such as: outdoor life and sports crafts, including skiing and snowboarding, hiking and mountaineering, sailing and kayaking, climbing, horseback riding, and hunting and fishing; or arts and crafts, including painting

and drawing, photography, ceramics, textile work, music (vocal and instrumental), and acting and theater; or media and communication, including filmmaking, journalism, graphic design, and social media. Like a typical college year, the folk school term lasts nine months, from August to May. Student life plays a big part in the calendar with organized events, whole-school trips, formals, and a myriad of other social activities.

Nordvestlandet folkehøgskole, set beneath a ring of mountains on a bucolic white clapboard, slate roofed campus above a dazzling confluence of two fjords in, as its name suggests, the northwest of the country near to the west coast, has taken as its motto “built for movement.”

Consistent with that maxim, to date, CHS alumni attending Nordvestlandet have selected

either the school’s “Basecamp” or “Powder Surf - Japan” lines (or majors). The former is billed as a way to experience the Norwegian northwest “through trips, activities, and overnight stays outdoors;” the latter, which includes a multiple week February trip to ski in Japan, “for those who want to challenge themselves and have an action-packed school year with a focus on surfing, skiing, and varied outdoor activities.”

Stella Johnson, a junior at Montana State University, CHS’s first grad to enroll at Nordvestlandet folkehøgskole, during the 2021-22 school year, recalled that “a college friend of my dad’s had a daughter that went to Nordvestlandet, and they told me about it. It seemed interesting, and a wonderful way to have a year of skiing, friendships, and new culture! My family comes from Norway. So, after hearing

about the folkehøgskole from our friends, it was a way to get to a place that I’ve always been interested in.”

Tonio Aurilio, a freshman at Western Washington University and 2023 graduate of CHS, attended Nordvestlandet for the 2023-24 term because he was “looking for something different” and knew how much Johnson loved her time at the folk school. “It was a completely life-changing experience. You arrive to a place out of your comfort zone, but soon make friends, learn a new culture, explore the world, and push yourself. On a lot of the [Basecamp line] trips, you are outdoors the whole time – sometimes for several days. That’s not something most of us have experienced; but you feel good about yourself afterwards.” Aurilio’s CHS classmate Olen Johnson attended Valdres folkehøgskole

the same year in Norway’s mountainous central region.

CHS class of 2024 alumna Isabel Menna is halfway through her year at Nordvestlandet, before heading to Dartmouth next year, and soon leaves with her fellow “Powder Surf” classmates and instructor for deep powder skiing in Japan. Current CHS seniors Amiano Coronado and Ezra Swart both plan to attend Nordvestlandet next year.

The emphasis on community is a cornerstone of the folk school experience. “The folkehøgskole setup is something lovely,” Johnson shared. “You eat four times a day with people, go outside with them, play games, talk about life, travel with them. It’s a place where friendships grow fast and strong. Many of the people I went to school with I stay in contact with, and

have seen multiple times since leaving, which is no small feat due to the continent and ocean that separates us.”

The growing connection between CHS and Nordvestlandet represents a promising trend, with students like Johnson, Aurilio, Menna, and those to follow gaining invaluable life experiences, forging lasting friendships, and developing a deeper understanding of the world.

For more information on Norwegian folk schools generally, see: folkehøgskole.no. For Nordvestlandet folkehøgskole: nordvestlandet.no; Valdres folkehøgskole: vintereventyr.no.

Caroline Menna is an intern for Ward Media and a senior at Cascade High School, where she serves as Editor-in-Chief of the school’s Publications Group.

COME SEE US, FEB 1ST & 2ND AT THE BUILDING NCW HOME SHOW

REVOLUTIONIZING MODERN CONSTRUCTION

**LUMARAIL** ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS

TOWN TOYOTA CENTER, WENATCHEE, WA

LAKE CHELAN HEALTH

**DERMATOLOGY**

APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

509-682-8511

No Referral Needed

February 6 & 7  
March 6 & 7

Full Body Skin Exam, Medical, Acne, Eczema, Moles, Psoriasis and more general services.

Seeing patients 8 years and older for medical consultations  
Cosmetic services not available.

www.lakechelanhealth.org



