



West Valley School District #208

The West Valley School District achieved Lighthouse System status as a result of its West Valley Pre-K Initiative which includes the school district and 19 “Official Partners” that include community-based preschools, faith-based preschools, and university systems. West Valley uses multiple strategies to ensure a seamless alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and family engagement aligned with early learning community partners and the system’s Pre-K through 3rd grade efforts.

During the 2019-20 academic year, the district was selected by the national Office of Head Start as one of 12 districts in the nation to participate in the national Collaborative Demonstration Project. In the 2020-21 school year, the district was selected by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families as well the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to participate in the 100 Schools Initiative, replicating the Head Start project with a focus on improving preschool-to-Kindergarten transitions for students and families. The system was also selected to continue with the 100 Schools Initiative for the 2021-22 school year.

As a framework to support family engagement, the district uses the Dual Capacity model and the Strengthening Families Five Protective Framework model. In the 2021-22 school year, the system expanded service for early learning to include “Play and Learn” groups at all elementary schools to welcome families with infants and toddlers to their neighborhood school. This approach emphasizes social connections and the establishment of positive relationships with families so that all students in West Valley are ready to enter Kindergarten with positive experiences in social-emotional, executive function, and academic foundations. Additionally, this Learning 2025 Lighthouse System supports a home visiting program using the Parent Child Plus model. Home visitors provide educational games and books to families with visits conducted twice a week. On Friday, families are invited to their respective schools for “Play and Learn” activities, reinforcing the family’s ability to build social connections with caregivers who have similar age children and face similar challenges.

The system offers preschool programs for children ages three and four, provided at each elementary school in West Valley. This approach involves partnering with community agencies such as federally funded Head Start and state-funded Early Childhood Educational Assistance Program. In addition, the district integrates funding for Special Education and Title 1 to provide inclusion preschool classrooms. The result of this comprehensive approach to early learning has resulted in three out of six elementary schools having 100% of kindergarten students in recent years score “at grade level” in the Spring on the iReady Diagnostic Reading Assessment. Additionally, the system recently received \$495,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending to support early learning in rural areas of Yakima County.

The culture of continuous improvement evident in these results includes a sustained focus on the Whole Learner. Progress monitoring is continuous using internal and state assessments such as WaKIDS, the Washington Kindergarten Readiness Inventory of Developing Skills. This observational, authentic assessment process provides data and information about student growth in six domains: language,

literacy, and mathematics, as well as cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. The district also uses Mind Up and Second Step to support social-emotional learning, including extensive professional learning sessions for district staff and early learning partners.

Finally, the West Valley School District stresses that no learner should be marginalized just as the early learning years are a foundation for students' future success. The system emphasizes active family engagement, including family engagement conferences at the beginning of the school year for all grade levels, PreK through Grade 12, in which teachers listen to families and learn about their students' cultural backgrounds and individual interests. This approach reinforces personalization of the learning process and supports culturally responsive instruction. The system also emphasizes students' ownership of their own learning by moving toward a mastery-based system involving a "Badge Book" for grades Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grade 1. Students work at their own pace through the curriculum, preparing them for a future where learning is available 24 hours a day—seven days a week.