



LYNDEN

SCHOOL DISTRICT

TRADITION + PRIDE + EXCELLENCE

CHECK INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ON THE BOND PROPOSAL



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The Lynden High School pep band is known throughout the state for its loud wall of sound at state tournament events.

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Pep Band: The Sound of Connection

The Lynden High School Pep Band is more than just a “wall of sound.” It’s a sound that relates to the community, connects with the student section, gets LHS music students jazzed about playing and shows off the excellence of the band’s abilities.

“The pep band is really a cool environment to be a part of here,” says junior percussionist Alex Wazny. “Lynden just has a culture of being the biggest and strongest pep band. It is cool to be a part of that and play a big role.”

Likely the largest pep band in school history, under the direction of Trevor Galligan the band keeps growing. It’s projected to continue.

Pep Band isn’t a class at LHS, but it is a way of life for music students. As part of the music program, the 81 students are required to make a few pep band appearances. Typically, Galligan says, students get the bug and want to be there quite a bit. On any given football or basketball evening, the pep band will number at least 50.

Senior percussionist Julius Colborn calls pep band a nice change of pace from traditional band, a chance to be more energetic and get the crowd going. “We are different than any other band in the state,” he says. “We are the biggest and loudest. At state (basketball in Yakima) they called us a wall of sound.”

Galligan says he’s trying to build a culture of cheer, of support, for the pep band. “It is a vibe I am trying to create at games,” he says. “I’m trying to take away the separation of students, band, parents, team, trying to get rid of all those walls whereas a school unit we are all for our pride and our team. It is all about creating that really cool sense of community.”

Part of that connection is the way Galligan spends countless hours turning modern pop songs into pep band arrangements. “It is one of those things that separates the Lynden Pep Band from other bands,” Galligan says. “You might hear something on the radio you just heard last week. I take the time to do that because I think it is another community thing, it pulls the student section and band together.”

Wazny says Galligan transcribing modern songs into pep band songs plays a key role. “You look at other schools playing ‘80s and ‘90s music and we are up to the times,” he says. “It makes for a better environment for the student section. It is more energetic since they know the songs being blasted by the band.”

Colborn says people come up to him all the time commenting on how cool it is to have modern music.

And while the pep band may still have some classics in their repertoire, with a catalog of roughly 50 songs available on any given night, expect plenty of modernity mixed in. “That is something I feel like is necessary to take the time to do,” Galligan says.

The LHS Pep Band has created some cultural moments that



are now traditions at the school. The “Viking Chant” song plays between the third and fourth quarters at all football and basketball games. Galligan credits LHS cheer coach Kellee Wallace with showing him a clip from Iceland to get him planning. Galligan pulled from his own Minnesota roots to put together an arrangement of drums and brass. “It worked so well the first time we did it,” he says, “yeah, this is a thing now.”

Another Minnesota tradition to make its way to Lynden is the band donning hockey-style jerseys, something not uncommon for bands in his home state. Not only does the hockey “sweater” provide a little warmth for football evenings, Galligan says having all 80 students in uniform looks sharp. He adds that many members don’t play a sport at Lynden, so the band jersey is the only one they are going to have from Lynden High School. “We put their last names on there,” he says. “This is a jersey and uniform for when we go out and go to work.”

It all adds up to giving the group a place to excel—the band’s intense rehearsals play a role in that too. “I will never turn away a kid who wants to give music a try,” Galligan says. “If there is a kid who doesn’t feel like they have a spot to be, try out band.”

For the students, Wazny says playing during basketball games is a highlight. Within the enclosed environment, the sound in the gym amplifies the band. And being closer to the fans and the court ups the intensity. Colborn says everyone is just more hyped up. At football, Galligan says the band never stops, playing between downs and becoming part of the vibe of Lynden football.

The final event for the Pep Band every year is the state basketball tournament in Yakima, where the band not only plays for the girls and boys teams from Lynden, but routinely steps in and plays for other schools who don’t have pep bands. In March 2023 that meant playing for all of Blaine’s games. “Anything we can do to help out,” Colborn says. Wazny adds: “Everyone enjoys it, so why not?”

“I think the hard work pays off,” Galligan says. “Rehearsals can be hard, but it makes the game fun because we can show off a little bit. Being one of the biggest groups we’ve ever had is making it fun. It is adding even more energy to the mix.”

Community Joins For Safety + Security

When David VanderYacht, Lynden Schools superintendent, put out the call for community members to join the newly created Safety & Security Task Force he wasn't lacking for interest. VanderYacht is now joined by roughly 30 community members—current Lynden Police Officer Tanner Holland and former police officer Clark Bourgault co-lead the group—all focused on student and staff safety.

“We want to be the community that walked the walk and not just talked the talk,” Bourgault says about working with VanderYacht to put together the task force to respond to the different world current students are growing up in compared to the past. “We want to be on the front foot of making change so our classrooms and schools can be the safest places possible to foster great learning environments.”

VanderYacht says the goal of the task force is to make recommendations to the district for safeguarding students, staff and community members.

After meeting with parents a seed was planted to “bring together people from a range of backgrounds to develop consensus on topics related to school safety and security.” Then, during work on the Bond Planning Task Force, Bourgault encouraged VanderYacht to take the formal step to create a task force focused on security. And as Holland began discussing school safety best practices as part of the research in cost estimates to replace Lynden High School, VanderYacht says replicating the successful Bond Planning Task Force with one focused on safety and security made sense.

“It is critical that we have people who are willing to commit time to keeping our children and educators safe for generations to come,” Holland says. “Me being a part of this committee shows the community and the school district that Lynden Police and other local law enforcement are taking the safety of our children seriously and plan to do everything we can to ensure they do stay safe. I'm so happy to be in the forefront of school safety and I hope this committee sets a precedence throughout the state.”

- Topics Include:
- Environmental/facility design
 - Staff, student, family training
 - Multi-agency training
 - Relationships with local law enforcement
 - Threat assessment and identification
 - Security cameras and surveillance
 - Resource officer/armed security

“The participation from the community is exceptional,” VanderYacht says. “It really blew me away. It's been a goal of mine to design opportunities to include community members in the community's schools and this opportunity tapped into a lot of expertise and people are willing to volunteer their time to make sure our schools are the safest they can be.”

Holland says seeing so many people willing to donate their time shows how much the Lynden community cares about their children.

With over 80% of the 30 applicants currently serving in law enforcement or with extensive experience in safety and security, the representation from across federal, state and local jurisdictions offers a “clear strength of the group.” Plus, the inclusion of parents, grandparents and health professionals helps diversify the members.



“My hope for this group,” Holland says about the series of seven meetings from October into April, “is to come together as community members and parents no matter what your background is and generate the best practices that can be put into place within the school district for generations to come so that our children and staff can come to school every day and know we as a community and law enforcement have put our best practices forward. I believe this is the first step in our school district being leaders when it comes to school safety.”

“The group is pretty amazing, with years of experience in all different facets of security and safety,” Bourgault says. “Can we start doing something different, better, new that allows us to say we have done our due diligence and we have done our absolute best to keep our schools safe?”



2024 BOND SUMMARY



Maximizes *SCAP matching funds of \$23,888,751 and provides needed capacity for growth at Lynden High School, Isom Elementary and Vossbeck Elementary Schools through 2038.

*School Construction Assistance Program

\$129,732,698

Construct and equip a safe, positive, and productive environment at Lynden H.S. Add Performing Arts Center.

+ Additional expected *SCAP project match funding: \$19,363,160
= Total projected project cost with *SCAP funding: \$149,095,858

\$25,917,302

Add permanent classroom capacity and expand common/shared spaces to meet capacity needs through 2038. Upgrade heating and ventilation systems.

+ Additional expected *SCAP project match funding: \$4,525,591
= Total projected project cost with *SCAP funding: \$30,442,893

\$1,850,000

Install HVAC on upper floors of Lynden M.S. and Fisher E.S.

Superintendent's Bond Message

The Lynden School District, following the recommendations of three citizen groups, is asking our community to consider a Capital Projects Bond in the February 2024 election. This bond aims to rebuild Lynden High School to prioritize safety, provide flexible learning spaces, and expand our community's use of performing arts and athletic facilities. Additionally, it will provide permanent classroom expansion at Isom and Bernice Vossbeck elementary schools to accommodate anticipated enrollment growth through 2038.

The safety, capacity and modernization needs of our district are not temporary, and alternative solutions were thoroughly explored by the citizen groups. Lynden's youth-focused community continues to attract families with school-aged children, and our current high school was not built for the world our young people are having to navigate. We have a responsibility to provide secure environments and the types of learning experiences that will prepare them to access careers in the trades, pursue higher education, and compete for jobs of the future that are currently unknown.

As superintendent, my duty is to address student needs with fiscally responsible solutions. As a member of this community, asking residents for an additional tax is something I do not take lightly, but it is the way our state requires school construction to be funded. We've learned from previous projects that the longer we delay, the more costly it becomes to address these needs.

I would be happy to share details about how this plan was developed and the individual project costs.

– David VanderYacht

“Your students are safe, but it’s because we know the building well and have created specific operations to address any need. The building just makes keeping students and staff safe more difficult. The recommendation is to completely replace Lynden High School with new safety and security standards as part of that design.” – Officer Tanner Holland, Lynden PD, as stated to the Bond Planning Task Force in May 2023

Student Capacity



Growth is predicted to increase by 14% across the entire district adding more than 450 students by the 2030-31 school year.

134+

Isom E.S. and Vossbeck E.S. are currently over capacity and will need to house 134 more students than the existing facilities were meant to serve by 2030-31 school year.

240 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS BY 2030-31

Lynden H.S. is designed for roughly 700 students and currently serves 870. This same facility will need to serve 1,110 students by the 2030-31 school year.

Spaces that promote community building and a sense of belonging support student mental health and wellbeing. The current facility lacks the natural light and areas for connection that create a safe, positive, productive environment for students.



Safety & Security



Lynden H.S. has over 70 entry points and an open campus that forces students to leave the building to go from class to class.

Malfunctioning building systems frequently force students, teachers, and staff to prop open doors to manage student comfort.



College and Career Readiness, and Community Assets

Lynden SD provides exceptional Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. A new high school provides the future-focused facilities that support changing programs and technologies needed to prepare students for high demand jobs.



74% of all students are enrolled in CTE courses. 43% of students are enrolled in two or more CTE classes.

A new Lynden H.S. would provide community organizations with year-round use of athletic facilities (including soccer) and a performing arts venue. The district plans to expand community use to host regional music, theater, and athletic events.

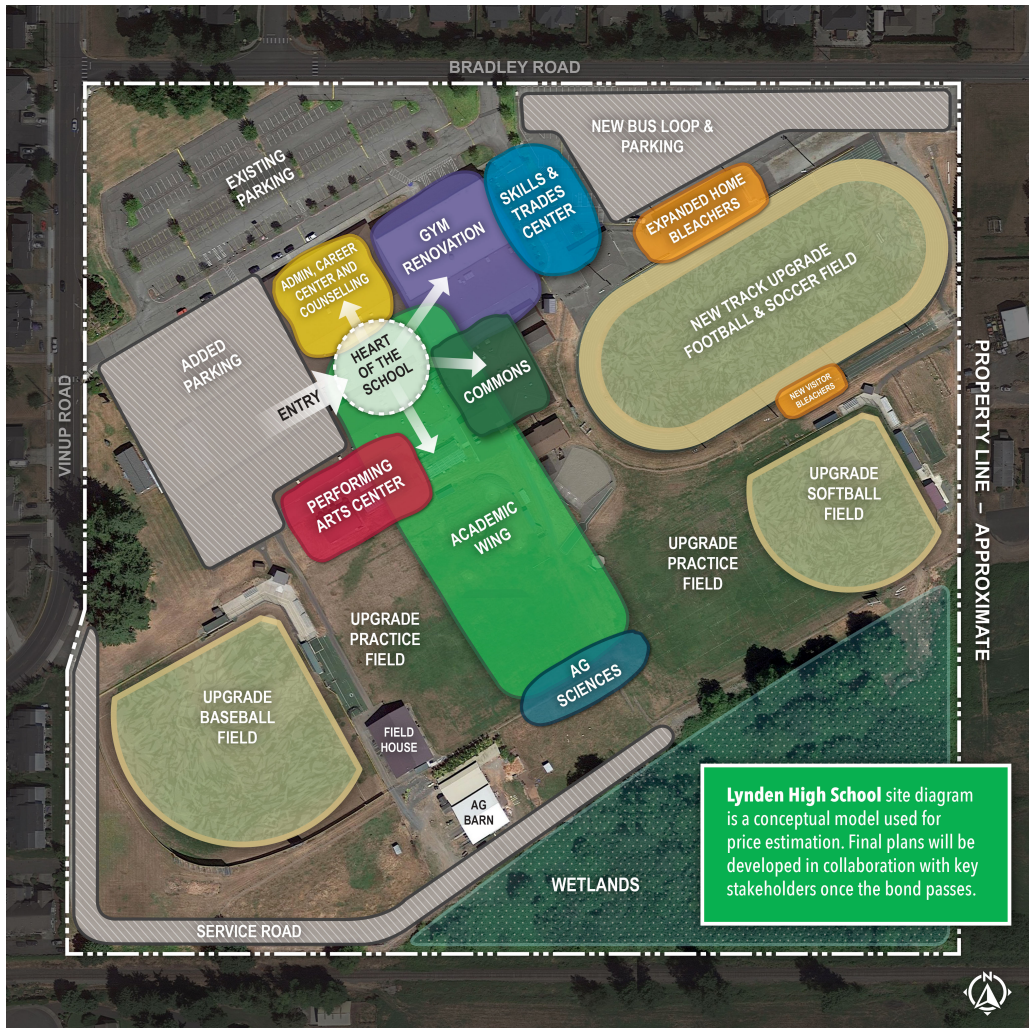


Projected Combined Bond + Levy Costs

Listed as per \$1,000 of assessed property value

Year	Bonds	2024 Bond	Tech Levy	EP & O Levy	Total
2002	\$ 1.80	-	-	\$ 3.02	\$ 4.82
2003	\$ 1.73	-	-	\$ 2.99	\$ 4.72
2004	\$ 1.54	-	-	\$ 2.78	\$ 4.32
2005	\$ 1.45	-	-	\$ 2.84	\$ 4.29
2006	\$ 1.33	-	-	\$ 2.80	\$ 4.13
2007	\$ 0.87	-	-	\$ 2.52	\$ 3.39
2008	\$ 0.36	-	-	\$ 1.91	\$ 2.27
2009	\$ 0.38	-	-	\$ 2.27	\$ 2.65
2010	\$ 0.36	-	-	\$ 2.36	\$ 2.72
2011	-	-	-	\$ 2.48	\$ 2.48
2012	-	-	-	\$ 2.52	\$ 2.52
2013	-	-	-	\$ 2.98	\$ 2.98
2014	-	-	-	\$ 2.95	\$ 2.95
2015	-	-	-	\$ 2.90	\$ 2.90
2016	\$ 1.32	-	-	\$ 2.74	\$ 4.06
2017	\$ 1.27	-	-	\$ 2.67	\$ 3.94
2018	\$ 1.21	-	-	\$ 2.62	\$ 3.83
2019	\$ 1.13	-	-	\$ 1.50	\$ 2.63
2020	\$ 1.04	-	-	\$ 1.79	\$ 2.83
2021	\$ 0.96	-	\$ 0.24	\$ 2.12	\$ 3.32
2022	\$ 0.83	-	\$ 0.21	\$ 1.97	\$ 3.01
2023	\$ 0.70	-	\$ 0.18	\$ 1.70	\$ 2.58
2024	\$ 0.62	-	\$ 0.15	\$ 1.54	\$ 2.31
2025	\$ 0.59	\$ 1.53	-	\$ 1.84	\$ 3.96
2026	\$ 0.59	\$ 1.53	-	\$ 1.84	\$ 3.96
2027	\$ 0.59	\$ 1.53	-	\$ 1.84	\$ 3.96
2028	\$ 0.59	\$ 1.53	-	\$ 1.84	\$ 3.96

Senior Exemptions: Senior citizens or persons with disabilities may qualify for a property tax reduction or exemption. Please check with the Whatcom County Assessor's office for details at 360-676-6790 or www.whatcomcounty.us/265/Property-Tax-Exemption.



Lynden High School site diagram is a conceptual model used for price estimation. Final plans will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders once the bond passes.

“Students need a building where we feel safe and that allows us to feel a sense of community. People need to see each other and be seen. We can say that we want to implement certain activities to help students feel safe and that they belong, but unlike LMS, we don’t have the spaces to do it.” — Mason Namminga, LHS student, as stated to the Bond Planning Task Force in May 2023



LYNDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

WELCOMING ENTRIES that balance security standards with the feeling of openness to create a safe, positive environment. Encourage community use with effective, safe access.



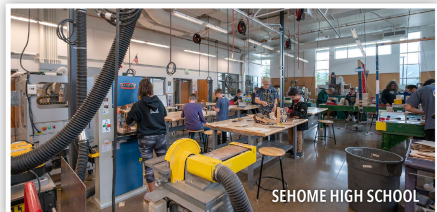
FERDALE HIGH SCHOOL

COMMONS/CAFETERIA encourage human connection and a sense of belonging for all students in a healthy comfortable space with multiple uses.



LYNDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACES allow students to engage in critical career skills like collaboration and problem solving. Adaptive spaces give teachers opportunities to utilize dynamic education approaches that continue to develop over time.



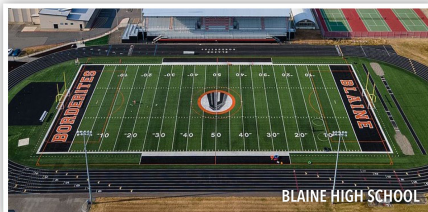
SEHOME HIGH SCHOOL

SKILLS & TRADES CENTER SPACES designed with academic and industry standards allow students to explore career opportunities and to graduate prepared for the workforce.



SEHOME HIGH SCHOOL

PERFORMING ARTS SPACE gives students the opportunity to develop life skills in public speaking and performance and creates a needed space for community use.



BLAINE HIGH SCHOOL

RENOVATED ATHLETICS FACILITIES that maintain Lynden's tradition of excellence and pride while providing year-round community use for youth sports.

Renewal of the EP&O Levy

The proposed four-year Educational Programs & Operations (EP&O) Levy replaces a pair of expiring four-year levies approved by the community in 2020. This is not a new tax. There is a gap between what the state funds and what it costs to ensure we are meeting the needs of every learner and the high standards the community has for our schools. This levy would continue funding to support safe and secure learning environments, academic and instructional programs, and positive student experiences such as electives, sports, clubs, and student activities.

— David VanderYacht, Superintendent



Safe & Secure Learning Environments

- Districtwide counseling, nursing staff and mental health coordinator
- Security system maintenance and LHS security staff
- Dean of Students and student supervision positions
- Facility maintenance
- Bus monitoring technology



Academic & Instructional Supports

- Staff to maintain lower class sizes and competitive salaries to employ the best teachers
- Paraeducators to support learning for all students
- Extended day, AVID, Highly Capable, multilingual and social and emotional learning programs and staff
- Robust elective offerings and specialist classes
- Special Education staff and services not fully funded by the state



Positive Student Experiences

- 100% funding of extracurricular activities, which include athletics, band, music, drama and clubs
- Community use of schools and facilities for free or minimal cost

The EP&O Levy has been in place for 40-plus years and makes up 14% of the district's annual budget. Renewing this levy continues funding to maintain our current level of service to students, staff and schools.

What is the cost?

Due to an expiring Capital Levy, the tax rate for the EP&O Levy Renewal is projected to stay at a total of \$1.84 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This rate could decrease as more properties and businesses are built in our area.

For more information about the Lynden 2024 funding measures, please scan the QR code.



The Power of a Buddy (Bench)

In a school of hundreds, individual students may at times feel a little lost or lonely. There's a bench for that.

In an effort that's been thriving at all three Lynden elementary schools for years—some longer than a decade—the Buddy Bench Program extends support to students who may feel a little lost. It provides them a place to be seen.

“The purpose of the Buddy Bench was to help give a physical place for kids to meet new friends, to sit when they needed someone to play with,” says Tausha Caldarella, Fisher counselor. “It helped to create a sense of belonging and community amongst students.”

The Buddy Bench, located outside where students participate in recess, gives students who are quiet, shy or lonely the chance to connect with a potential friend, says Tanya Robinson, Bernice Vossbeck counselor. “The idea is that when a student feels lonely or left out, they sit on the bench, signaling peers that they would like to engage with someone.” Other students are encouraged to keep a watchful eye on the bench and when they see a student there, invite them to join their group or game.

“The kids really took it to heart,” Robinson says. “They very intentionally watch for people to go sit on the bench, talk to them, and invite them to play. The student who initially sat down would be whisked off to join a game.”

The physical iterations of the benches have taken differing forms over the years at the various schools. Some benches have needed replacing and others have turned into something completely different. The evolution at Fisher has turned what was once a traditional bench into round picnic tables with benches, a solution that fits the needs of both the students and the community after hours and still maintains the purpose of the Buddy Bench Program.

“Kids who normally would be sitting by themselves or just talking with one student has become a group of students finding commonality, finding friendship, belonging and community,” Caldarella says.

Giving students a place to go during recess has opened fresh connections throughout the school. “We wanted students to have the ability to ‘ask’ others if they can play in a safe way,” says Elizabeth Grant, Isom counselor. “Students know that if someone is sitting on the Buddy Bench, they want to be included at recess. It is used often, and students know to look for students sitting on it.”

The supervisors at Isom report, Grant says, that younger



students often use the bench more. It also allows the supervisors to support students who may need help building friendships at recess.

Robinson says the evolution of the Buddy Bench concept has been organic over the years. Now she sees, at times, when one student sits only to have another soon join and the two strike up a conversation. Sometimes fresh connections are made between two students who wouldn't have otherwise united.

Bernice Vossbeck also has a Peace Patrol, the school's version of conflict managers, where students are trained to manage conflicts and remain proactive in seeking out students who may seem lonely, such as a student sitting on the Buddy Bench. “The

Buddy Bench is the first place Peace Patrol has been told to look,” Robinson says. “If they see a student sitting on the bench they go over and invite the student to

join the game they are organizing.”

The Buddy Bench is a concept that now permeates the entire school. “It is exciting to see how it has been so effective for kids,” Caldarella says, “but how also this concept is growing amongst the community who come to our school during the weekends or evenings to congregate at the tables and building community and belonging.”

“It's a great tool to help kids, but one of many we implement to support students' social-emotional development,” Robinson says. “Personally, I believe that although the kids may not need the bench a lot, knowing it's there as a backup is comforting.”

“If they see a student sitting on the bench they go over and invite the student to join the game.”

****ECRWSS*****
POSTAL CUSTOMER
BOX HOLDER

Lion Pride Tickets Change Culture

There's a culture shift happening at Lynden Middle School. And Lion Pride tickets play a key role. As part of a new effort across the building to promote positive behavior, a fresh system of explaining expectations and rewarding positive behavior has started to take root. The students are buying in.

"It is telling kids to think first, and then you want to do good in school," says Drake Russell, an eighth-grader at LMS. "You want that drive to do good. That tickets makes you feel good, and you get prizes for it."

While officially a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program, the Lion Pride effort sets out clear behavioral expectations for students and staff and rewards students for that behavior with Lion Pride tickets. Those tickets are then redeemable monthly at the Lion Pride store—run by volunteers and stocked thanks to a generous donation by a community member—that allows students to trade in tickets for prizes, anything from a bag of chips to front-of-the-line privileges at lunch or elevator privileges for a week to a donut party for an entire class.

"It is a game-changer for developing positive culture," says Vince Riccobene, LMS principal. "It changes the dynamic of what you do in a school. It is about impacting the relationships, which in turn changes the culture."

The project eliminates the barrier to understanding what the behavioral expectations are. "We can't take for granted the students know that," Riccobene says. "We teach the students that and then reward them. It needs to be explicitly taught and revisited and reviewed."

Jocelyn Kohrs, an eighth-grader at LMS, says that when people are positive it brings the energy up throughout the school. She notes it is easier to have a positive attitude when you're working toward earning something.

"With over 700 students and more than 80 staff," Riccobene says, "getting us on the same page culturally is critical to our success."

While the behavioral expectations are clear—high-visibility posters spell out the expectations via a PRIDE acronym for every facet of the building.

"It is not a given," Riccobene says. "Teachers walk around with a stack of these all the time. It is a way of highlighting when something goes well and a way to have a positive relationship with you and a student."

He adds that LMS needed and wanted to improve the culture and that can't happen without the students. "Getting us to row the same way by creating shared expectations in common spaces and classrooms and then rewarding students for it is how we interact and engage," he says. "It has been powerful."

The stories of how the tickets have been used range wildly. It may be as simple as Russell landing a new Seahawks poster or another student grabbing a model

airplane set (pictured). Or could be as intricate as a student buying a "positive call home," where one student who had been in a challenging time earned enough tickets to have a staff member call home to let his mom know what a great job he was doing. Riccobene says it was significant for that family.

There are other learning moments too. It takes 100 tickets to earn donuts for an entire class. In the first month one class learned that by pooling their tickets they could make something fun happen for everyone, getting a little extra economics lesson along the way.

"It changes the culture and how the kids act now," Russell says. "The last couple of years kids have struggled with being nice to each other. Now that this whole Lion Pride thing is it is actually helping with kids."

