



presents an invitation to apply
for the position of

SUPERINTENDENT

Goldendale School District
Goldendale, Washington



Goldendale Timberwolves – Empowering Through Education

***Mission:** All children will be equipped to be successful in their next life step*

All children will have quality staff/teachers

All children will be in safe, healthy, learning environments

All children will have the support of their community through ongoing communication and connection



The Goldendale Community...

Goldendale, Washington is a rural community in south-central Washington. Located between the Columbia River Gorge and the eastern Cascade foothills, Goldendale offers scenic beauty, outdoor recreation, and a strong sense of community. The city is approximately 100 miles east of Portland, Oregon, providing access to urban amenities while maintaining a safe, small-town environment.

Goldendale has a population of approximately 3,500 residents. The area has deep agricultural roots, historically centered on wheat farming, livestock, timber, and orchard production. Today, the local economy continues to evolve through renewable energy development, tourism, and small business growth.

The community is known for its natural and cultural attractions, including Goldendale Observatory State Park and Maryhill Museum of Art. Residents value strong community involvement, volunteerism, and local traditions, creating a supportive environment for schools, families, and students. Goldendale combines small-town values with a commitment to growth, innovation, and community partnership.

For more information about the community visit:

www.ci.goldendale.wa.us



The Goldendale School District...

Goldendale School District serves 820 students onsite and another 2200 virtually through partnership with Washington Connections Academy. The onsite students are served in three buildings located on a large city block: Primary School, K-4 (290), Middle School, 5-8 (250), and High School 9-12 (280). Goldendale Middle and High Schools have vibrant Career Technical Education opportunities with the FFA program consistently receiving state and national honors. In addition, the High School offers college level English/Language Arts and Math opportunities for students.

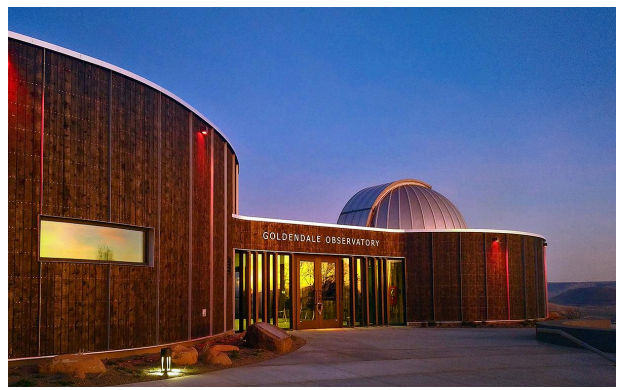
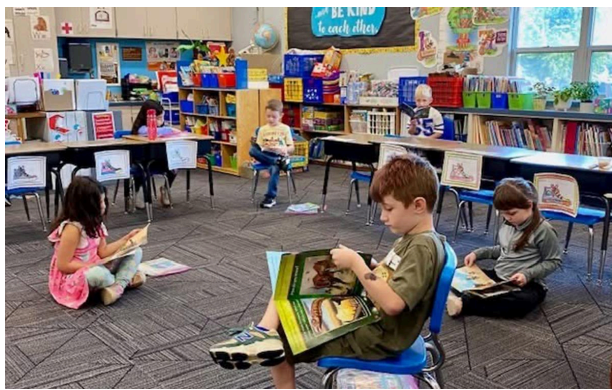
Goldendale staff are dedicated to students with the majority living within the community. They demonstrate their willingness to go beyond on a daily basis ensuring that all students know they belong, are cared for, and hold high expectations for learning.

The Goldendale community will welcome a new track and field complex in the spring of 2025. Through careful planning and fiscal responsibility, the complex will be completed without asking the community for additional bond or levy resources. Goldendale's facilities are well maintained and upgrades have been achieved through grants and long-term planning.

In the summer of 2025 Goldendale School Board adopted a strategic plan that focuses on future ready students, high quality staff, a safe and caring environment, and community engagement and connection. The strategic plan highlights a graduate profile, theory of action and the roles that lead to everyone contributing every day.

For more information about the Goldendale School District visit:

www.goldendaleschools.org



District Strengths

- **Committed, long-tenured staff**
Goldendale benefits from teachers and staff who have been in the district a long time, care deeply about students, and are willing to go above and beyond to support kids and families.
- **Strong student programs**
Programs such as CTE, FFA, athletics, music, and extracurricular activities are a point of pride and play an important role in keeping students connected to school and community.
- **Positive student outcomes**
Board members noted strong graduation rates and that many students leave Goldendale prepared for work, further education, and life beyond high school.
- **Family connection when trust is present**
Families are supportive and involved when they feel informed, respected, and confident in the direction of the district.
- **Staff willingness to step up**
When challenges arise, staff members are known to put in extra time and take on additional responsibilities to ensure students are supported.



Challenges & Opportunities

- **Enrollment trends and long-range planning**
Like many rural districts, Goldendale is experiencing enrollment decline, prompting thoughtful conversations about long-term sustainability, facilities use, and program alignment.
- **Financial stewardship and levy planning**
Close levy margins and ongoing funding pressures require disciplined fiscal planning, clear communication, and steady leadership to maintain community confidence.
- **Navigating state expectations within a local context**
State-level policies and mandates can present challenges when they intersect with local values, creating an opportunity for thoughtful leadership that balances compliance with community voice.
- **Strengthening trust through communication**
Board members noted that when communication is unclear, skepticism can grow. A key opportunity exists to build understanding, trust, and shared purpose through consistent, transparent engagement.
- **Leading change while keeping families connected**
As the district responds to state requirements and evolving student needs, there is an opportunity to implement change in ways that are thoughtful, inclusive, and responsive to families.



Professional Qualifications

- **Small-town and rural experience**
The Board seeks a superintendent who understands rural communities and the realities of leading a small school district.
- **Strong instructional grounding**
Classroom experience and a focus on core academic areas - math, reading, science, and ELA - are important to the Board.

Personal Characteristics

- **Relational and approachable**
The next superintendent must be a people person who listens carefully and helps others feel heard.
- **Highly visible and present**
Board members want a leader who is both seen and active in schools and in the community.

- **Ability to work with people**
Board members emphasized that working effectively with people matters more than degrees or titles.
- **Comfort with disagreement and pushback**
Experience managing conflict and working with skeptical or strong-willed individuals is essential.
- **Understanding of governance**
The superintendent must understand the board-superintendent relationship and work productively with a board that is still developing as a team.
- **Superintendent experience not required**
Prior superintendent experience is viewed as a plus, but not a requirement.

- **Poised and steady**
The ability to manage criticism, community pressure, and conflict without becoming defensive is critical.
- **Strong, but flexible**
The superintendent must be confident and decisive while remaining open and willing to adjust.
- **Willing to step in and help**
Board members value a leader who is willing to pitch in when needed and lead by example.
- **Patient and deliberate about change**
The Board wants a superintendent who will take time to understand Goldendale before pushing major change and who leads change thoughtfully and carefully.



Board of Directors

Chris Twohy *Director 1*
Board Chair (4 years)

Betty Richards *Director 2*
(10 years)

Deborah Heart *Director 3*
Vice Chair & Legislative Rep (33 years)

Heather Wilder *Director 4*
WIAA Rep. (1 year)

Chris Siebert *Director 5*
(5 years)

Compensation

Goldendale will negotiate a three-year contract with compensation comparable to school districts of similar size.

Application Packet

A completed application packet should include the following:

- A formal letter of application
- A completed Goldendale application form (available from any of the addresses below)
- A current resume
- Three to five letters of recommendation from current and recent positions
- The candidate is to select two of the five Challenges and Opportunities noted in the Job Posting/Brochure, and provide a written, one-page statement for each of those challenges and opportunities selected

Send an electronic copy of all application materials to:

Joel Aune, Owner/Chief Operating Officer: gunderaune@gmail.com
Tom Rockefeller, Owner/Chief Operating Officer: rockefelleratom34@gmail.com

Applications received by April 10, 2026 will receive first consideration
The District retains the right to accept applications until a superintendent is selected

Application materials will become property of NWLA and the district, and will not be returned to the applicant

Please do not contact the school district directly regarding the selection process for this position.

All inquiries, including those from applicants with disabilities who need help in completing application materials, should be made to the following NWLA Associates

Joel Aune | Email: gunderaune@gmail.com

Northwest Leadership Associates | gunderaune@gmail.com gunderaune@superintendentsearch.com | Richland, WA
99352 US

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