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presents an invitation to apply  
for the position of

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Rochester School District  
Rochester, Washington  
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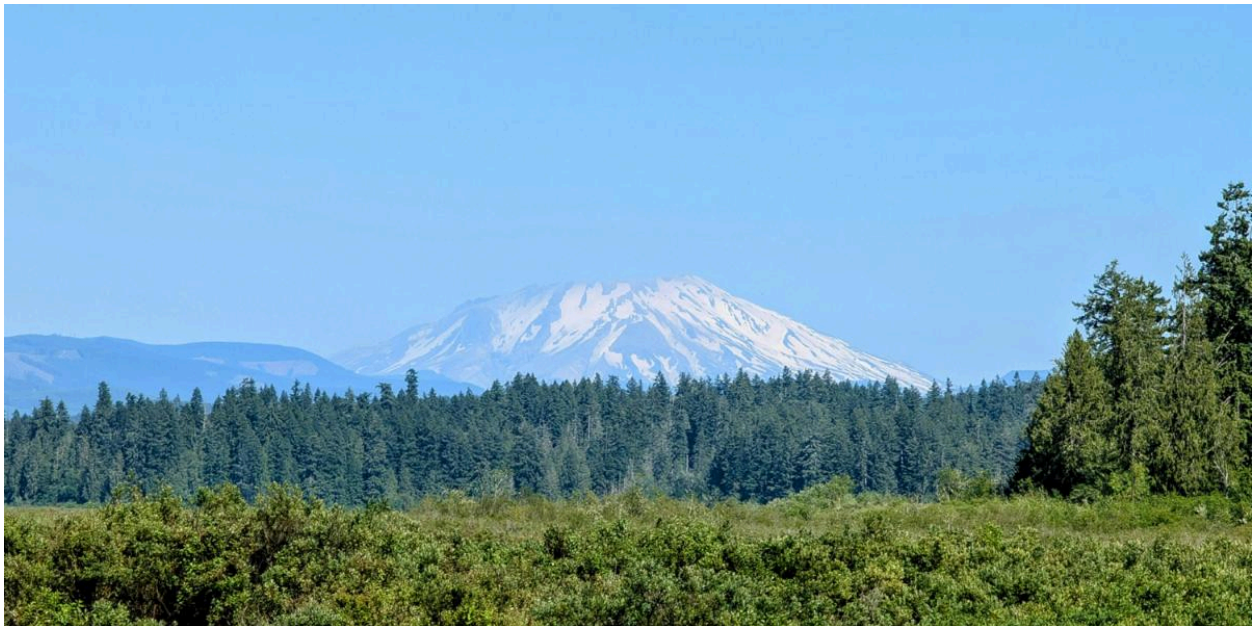


*We promise to.....*

**Know, Value, and Support Every Student,**

*Ensuring they graduate with.....*

**Confidence and Skills for a Successful Future.**



## The Rochester Community...

Rochester is a growing, unincorporated community located in Western Washington, approximately 20 miles south of Olympia, just off of I-5. Residents of Rochester enjoy life in a beautiful, rural setting with tremendous recreational, cultural, and social activities readily available. The district is located 90 miles from the White Pass ski area, 85 miles from Seattle, 90 miles from Portland, and only 60 miles from the wonderful beaches of the Pacific Ocean.

Rochester is culturally and politically diverse, and is the proud home to many members of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, a growing Latino population, descendants of Rochester's Swedish founders, and those who value rural living within close proximity to the full-service hospitals and extensive retail shopping and support services of the neighboring communities of Olympia and Centralia. Many residents also commute to nearby communities for work.

Without a city government, the Rochester School District provides an important voice for issues that impact our community, and school activities serve as a valued gathering place for residents. Rochester School District prides itself on being the heart of the community.

For more information about the community visit:  
<https://www.experienceolympia.com/our-communities/rochester/>



## The Rochester School District...

The Rochester School District is privileged to educate 2,135 preschool-twelfth-grade students in our five schools: Rochester High School, HEART Alternative High School, Rochester Middle School, Grand Mound Elementary, and Rochester Primary. Our students are supported by 138 certificated educators, 123 classified staff, and 12 administrators. Meal and transportation services are contracted.

The district recently adopted a new Strategic Plan at the start of the 2025 school year, which will guide our work over the next several years. Built with input from staff, students, families, and community members, the plan reflects our shared commitment to student success at every level. At the center of the plan is our Core Values as a district:

- Accountability
- Community Minded
- Respect
- Health and Well-being of Students and Staff

As a district, *We promise to know, value, and support every student, ensuring they graduate with confidence and skills for a successful future.* The Strategic Plan outlines four district goals that will focus our efforts:

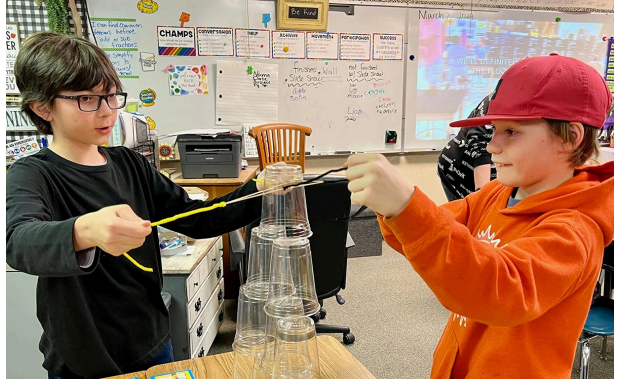
- Students build Success in Foundational Skills
- Students feel Safe, Supported, Connected, and Engaged
- Students demonstrate Achievement of Core Academics
- Students are prepared for Graduation and Beyond

In addition, the plan includes the Portrait of a Graduate, providing a clear vision of the characteristics we want every Rochester graduate to develop, including a healthy mind and body, critical thinking, responsibility, community & socially minded, a good communicator, and resilience.

The Rochester School District is known for its relentless pursuit of system improvements that enhance outcomes for all students. The district focuses on engaging and supporting students, families, and staff through effective instructional practices, a wide range of opportunities that foster a strong sense of belonging, and offering powerful professional development. The district and community are proud of their students, educational programs, and the highly skilled educators who lead them.

High school students can participate in Running Start, College in the High School, Advanced Placement, dual-credit courses, and an extensive Career and Technical Education program that offers ten pathways students can participate in on campus, including welding, robotics, sports medicine, business, and more.

For more information about the Rochester School District visit:  
[www.rochester.wednet.edu](http://www.rochester.wednet.edu)



## District Strengths

- **Staff are committed and willing**  
Rochester benefits from teachers and staff who care deeply about students, and are willing to go above and beyond to support kids and families.
- **Strong student programs**  
Programs such as CTE Student Leadership Organizations, athletics, music, Dual Language 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 Rochester prepared for work, further education, and life beyond high school.
- **Family connections**  
Active parent boosters at all buildings. A family connections center (RISE) supports families for student success.
- **District Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate**  
Strategic plan was developed by many stakeholders over the past year and adopted by the board.

## Challenges & Opportunities

- **Enrollment and future planning**  
Enrollment remains a challenge as Kindergarten cohorts have been smaller the past three years. This leads to difficult conversations.
- **Funding Pressures and Capital Improvements**  
Ongoing financial pressures require careful planning and steady leadership. Capital improvement projects and funding will be needed as buildings age.
- **State policies and local concern**  
Policies coming from Olympia are a source of concern for many families, particularly when they conflict with community values.
- **Community Communication**  
Engagement with more stakeholder groups that is transparent and focused on developing relationships and partnerships.
- **Implementation of new Strategic Plan and new Portrait of a Graduate**  
Develop actionable steps for implementing the newly adopted Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate.



## 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.
- **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.



## 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.
- **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 Rochester before pushing major change and who leads change thoughtfully and carefully.
- **Share Collaborative Leadership**  
The superintendent guides the vision and accountability while empowering others to lead, contribute, and innovate in ways that improve outcomes for the district.



## Board of Directors

**Grant Rodeheaver** President, *District 2*

**Neil Turner** Vice President, *District 4*

**Susie Hawes** *District 3*

**Francisco Villanueva** *District 1*

**Heather Harris** *District 5*

## Compensation

Rochester 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 Rochester application form (available from any of the addresses below)
- A current resume
- Three to five letters of recommendation from current position and recent positions
- A written statement explaining how you plan to address each of the challenges and opportunities noted in this vacancy announcement

Send an electronic copy of all application materials to:  
**Jada Rupley, Consultant: [jadarupley@gmail.com](mailto:jadarupley@gmail.com)**  
**Laurel Browning, Consultant: [lwbrowning7@gmail.com](mailto:lwbrowning7@gmail.com)**

Joe Aune, Owner/Chief Operating Officer: [gunderaune@gmail.com](mailto:gunderaune@gmail.com)  
Tom Rockefeller, Owner/Chief Operating Officer: [rockefeller34@gmail.com](mailto:rockefeller34@gmail.com)

**Applications received by March 16, 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](mailto:gunderaune@gmail.com)

Northwest Leadership Associates | [gunderaune@gmail.com](mailto:gunderaune@gmail.com) [gunderaune@superintendentsearch.com](mailto:gunderaune@superintendentsearch.com) | Richland, WA  
99352 US

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