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Eastside Families Face Growing Back-to-School Needs — Community Raises \$15K to Help Thousands of Students

Lake Washington School District and Lake Washington Schools Foundation partner to provide supplies and hope to families in need

Redmond, WA – [Aug 28, 2025], Thousands of Lake Washington School District (LWSD) students are starting the 2025–2026 school year prepared, confident, and ready to learn, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the community during this year’s **Back-to-School Supply Drive**.

Led by LWSD in partnership with the Lake Washington Schools Foundation (LWSF), the annual drive ensures that every student has the supplies they need to thrive in the classroom. This year, community members, businesses, and organizations came together to contribute in multiple ways — **donating \$15,589 in funds**, purchasing supplies through an Amazon Wishlist, and dropping off new items at the LWSD Resource Center.

For many families, the rising cost of living on the Eastside makes back-to-school shopping a real challenge. With so many competing expenses — from childcare to rent and rising grocery costs — purchasing school supplies can feel out of reach.

“Before this supply drive, families often had to make difficult choices,” said Na’eemah Webb, LWSD’s Family Engagement and Community Outreach Coordinator. “If it came down to buying food or school supplies, they chose food. If it was between paying rent or purchasing supplies, rent had to come first. This support helps ease that burden for so many families.”

The collected supplies were distributed at the annual **Back-to-School Jam** on August 23 at Juanita High School's Fieldhouse. The event welcomed hundreds of LWSD families, offering free backpacks and school supplies alongside an afternoon of celebration, complete with free food, music, bounce houses, and community resources.

Last year, the Back-to-School Supply Drive supported 550 students, and this year the demand has grown exponentially, **with 2,280 students pre-registered** and many more arriving the day of the event.

"Just like when our community stepped up in June to clear lunch debt for graduating seniors, they've shown up again," said Katy Philips, LWSF Executive Director. "It's inspiring to see so many people come together to make sure no student in our district starts the school year at a disadvantage."

Families have expressed heartfelt gratitude for the program and the relief it brings during an already stressful time of year. For many, these supplies take one worry off their plate, allowing them to focus on other essentials their children need.

The success of the Back-to-School Supply Drive highlights the importance of community partnerships and the generosity of donors who believe in supporting every student's success.

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The Lake Washington Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all students in the Lake Washington School District have access to high-quality educational opportunities. Through fundraising and community support, the foundation aims to remove barriers, build connections, enhance learning, and build connections to enable all students to succeed academically and personally.

LWSF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax identification number 55-0891792.