



News release
March 22, 2023

Communication boards create a sense of belonging for all students



EVERETT, WA—Everett Public Schools (EPS) is committed to inclusive practices and increasing equitable access to resources that support student learning for all.

The EPS special services department has partnered with the Special Education PTSA and district elementary schools to install communication boards at all elementary playgrounds. With two boards already installed at View Ridge Elementary and Mill Creek Elementary, students are using them to communicate with their nonverbal peers.

Communication boards support learners who use Alternative and Augmented Communication (AAC), or students who may need a little support finding their words. They help users express their wants and needs more effectively using illustrations and give students a voice and a way to participate in their school community. Each board

is made up of mostly core words, which are the building blocks of communication, with nouns selected to tailor the needs of students at each specific school. Schools that requested will receive boards in both English and Spanish. The remaining boards are currently in production and will be delivered to schools later this spring for installation.

Special Services Facilitator, Katy Ramón, thinks “Outdoor communication boards on all our elementary playgrounds are beneficial for every student! They are a tool for all students to be able to communicate with each other, honoring diverse abilities and languages. They support the social emotional learning of students to build and maintain positive peer relationships. And they support our multilingual learners by providing linguistic accessibility.”

In addition, Kelley Clevenger, executive director of special services said, “The communication boards provide an opportunity for students, who do not use their voices to communicate, to interact with their peers in an equitable manner. This is to encourage inclusion, build bridges and give a sense of belonging for all students.”

This project is aligned with the district’s Strategic Plan of equitable access to resources. The outdoor communication boards will provide opportunities for ALL students to share their ideas, preferences, and needs with peers and adults while outside at our schools.

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