



“MORE ACCEPTED, MORE EMPOWERED, AND MORE VALUED”

AVONWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT CREATES CLASSROOMS FOR ALL

In any other district, she might have been forgotten. Neither ahead of her peers nor behind them, neither extra-outspoken nor ultra-withdrawn, she might have floated through school unnoticed, her strengths unrecognized and her needs unmet. But not in the Avonworth School District, and not in Katie Libbon’s fourth-grade classroom.

It was there that the student first took the RIASEC, a science-backed assessment of her talents and interests. Designed to point her toward possible career paths, the survey told her something valuable — namely, that she was artistic, creative, and had plenty to offer the world.

And one day, during a group project in Libbon’s classroom, the student decided to share it.

“She made a suggestion to her group. Just one little suggestion about how the project should look,” Libbon recalls. “And all of a sudden, she became the go-to girl for her peers. They started coming to her for all things artistic, asking, ‘What do you think about this? What do you think about that?’ And my jaw dropped, because it was just so lovely to see.”

It’s the kind of classroom every student deserves, says Superintendent Jeff Hadley: a place to discover, develop, and assert one’s unique self. The fourth-grader in Libbon’s classroom “now feels more accepted, more empowered, and more valued than she did before,” he says. “And that’s a great example of how we create safer, more equitable environments” in the Avonworth School District.

The drive to build those environments led Hadley and his colleagues to join the Western

Pennsylvania Learning 2025 Alliance, a regional cohort of school districts working together — and with peers around the country — to create student-centered, equity-focused, future-driven schools that prepare every learner for tomorrow.

“Right now, technology is moving faster than ever before,” says Hadley. “And it’s moving slower today than it will for the rest of our lives. We need to think about what that means for our kids. How can we, as educators, better equip them for the future?”

In Avonworth, one answer is World of Work, a framework that builds on the district’s renowned career-exploration program. Using the RIASEC survey, World of Work helps kids discover their unique personalities and skill sets: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Equipped with newfound self-knowledge, students explore careers that match their strengths through classroom projects, hands-on experiences, and visits from real-world professionals.

First developed by the Cajon Valley School District near San Diego, Avonworth and a coalition of other districts from the Western Pennsylvania Learning 2025 Alliance

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