



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

JOIN OUR FACILITIES COMMITTEE

A committee is being formed to review the future facility needs of the district, and community members and staff members are invited to serve on the committee. The committee will meet for the first time on October 18, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the student center at Jemtegaard Middle School followed by six additional meetings at the same time on October 25, November 1, November 8, November 15, December 6 and December 13, 2007. A preliminary study has been conducted and results of that study will become the basis for more indepth analysis by the committee. Please call Cassi Marshall, administrative assistant, at 954-3005 to have your name and phone number added to the committee list.

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Parents and Community Members:

Washougal staff welcomed nearly 3,000 students back to school this fall. For educators, there is great delight in seeing youngsters converge upon their schoolhouse at the end of a long summer. Watching the first few days and weeks of school unfold, I was reminded how fortunate our children are to attend schools where teachers are committed to making a difference and where the community supports schools and staff.

One of our greatest strengths in Washougal is that our schools are small. Research supports the obvious—students are more successful in school when they are well known by their teachers. As the school year begins, we have renewed our commitment to creating safe environments where students have positive interactions with their teachers and peers. An Anti-bullying Task Force will focus this year on activities at each school for bully prevention and intervention. The expectation is that within the small community of each school, students will build strong social skills that will be transferable to good citizenship in a democratic society.

As a result of community and staff input last spring, a new Strategic Plan has been written to guide the District over the next four years. Three major areas of focus in the Strategic Plan for 2008-09 will be improving communication, raising student achievement, and conducting long-range facilities planning.

One significant improvement in communication will be activated in the event of extreme winter weather. The new technology will deliver an electronic phone message to parents announcing school closure within minutes of the decision. I have great hopes that this technology will work flawlessly! This same technology tracks student attendance in grades six through 12 and will notify parents by phone message in the evening if a student has an unexcused absence or has missed a class at the high school.

To raise student achievement, time has been scheduled this year for teachers to work in teams using an educational research strategy called Professional Learning Communities. An article on the next page explains the educational research behind Professional Learning Communities. On behalf of teachers, we express our thanks to parents and daycare providers for adapting to the new calendar of early release times.

For those who have an interest in long-range facilities planning, a committee is being formed to review the future facility needs of the district. The Facilities Committee is open to community members and staff who have the interest and time to participate. Please see the invitation "Join our Facilities Committee" in the left column for more information.

All of us share the same vision for the children of Washougal. We know that friendly relationships between students and with staff when combined with engaging learning in a safe environment will produce the desired outcome of high levels of achievement for all students. Washougal has a great tradition of parent and community involvement in schools which is expressed in the district's vision statement—"Washougal schools and community, working together to develop successful, educated and responsible citizens."

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for joining us in providing the highest quality education possible for the children of Washougal. This is truly a shared venture, and I welcome input and participation from all stakeholders. I invite parents, community members and staff to connect with me and share insights, concerns and stories related to this ongoing vision for educational excellence.

Sincerely,

Teresa Baldwin
Superintendent

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Note: The new Strategic Plan will be posted on the Washougal School District Web site on October 10, 2007 (www.washougal.k12.wa.us), and a mailed copy can be requested by calling the district office at 954-3000.

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY?

By Richard Dufour

The term “professional learning community” is used to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education. In fact, the term has been used so universally that it is in danger of losing all meaning. Initial enthusiasm can give way to confusion, followed by implementation problems, abandonment, and the search for a new initiative. Educators can avoid this cycle only if they understand the “Big Ideas” that represent core PLC principles and how they can sustain the PLC model until it becomes the school’s culture.

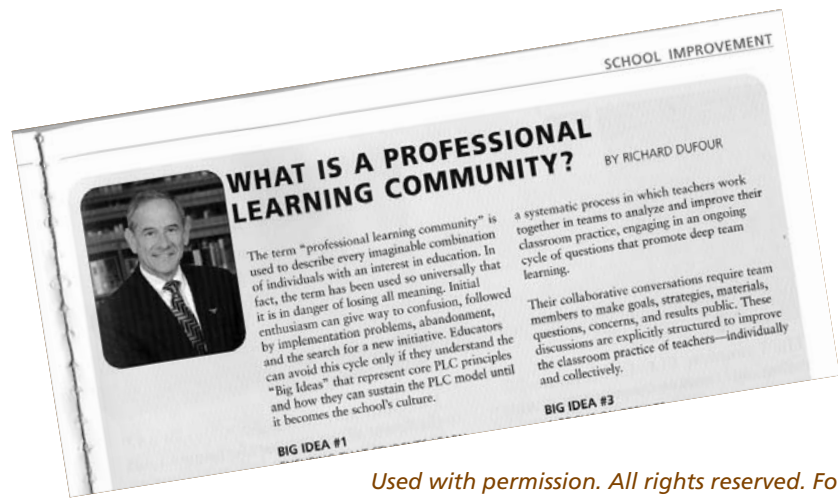
BIG IDEA #1

ENSURING THAT STUDENTS LEARN

The PLC model assumes that the core mission of formal education is to ensure that students learn. When schools take the mission statement “learning for all” as a pledge to ensure the success of each student, profound changes occur. The school established a solid foundation of shared knowledge and a common ground that will allow them to move the improvement initiative forward. As the school progresses, every professional in the building must engage in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that will drive the work of the PLC:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experienced difficulty in learning?

When a school functions as a PLC, teachers become aware of the incongruity between their commitment to ensure learning for all and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when some students do not learn. The



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staff addresses this discrepancy by designing timely, intervention-based strategies to ensure that struggling students receive the time and support they need to succeed.

BIG IDEA #2

A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

Educators building a PLC recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Therefore, they create structures to promote the powerful, collaborative culture that characterizes a PLC: a systematic process in which teachers work together in teams to analyze and improve their classroom practice, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning.

Their collaborative conversations require team members to make goals, strategies, materials, questions, concerns, and results public. These discussions are explicitly structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers—individually and collectively.

BIG IDEA #3

A FOCUS ON RESULTS

PLCs judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Every teacher participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of

student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress. The results-oriented PLC then turns this data into useful and relevant information for staff.

Educators who focus on results must also shift their attention to goals that focus on student learning. They must stop assessing their own effectiveness based on how busy they are and instead ask, “Have we made progress on the goals that are most important to us?”

HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT

Initiating and sustaining the PLC model concept requires hard work. A school staff must focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold its members accountable for the kind of results that fuel continual improvement. When educators work hard to implement these principles, their collective ability to help all students learn will improve. The success of the PLC concept depends not on the merits of the concept itself, but on the most important element in the improvement of any school—the commitment and persistence of the educators within it.

TRAILBAND HOLIDAY CONCERT

Tickets are on sale for the annual Trail Band Concert to be held November 24, 2007, 6:30 p.m. at the Washburn Performing Arts Center.

The three talented Young Sisters, daughters of longtime Washougal residents, Lisa and Tim Young will open the show at 6:30. These young women are accomplished vocalists, pianists and dancers. Jessica Young graduated from Washougal High School in 2006 and her two sisters, Caroline and Kelley, are still

in high school. Their performance will be a wonderful addition to the Trailband Concert. The Trailband performance showcases holiday folk music that reaches across generations and cultures. Contact Roger Daniels to purchase tickets (\$15, \$20 and \$30) at 852-5151 or email Roger at: rdan159@aol.com. Funds from this concert benefit students and teachers in Washougal schools through grants and scholarships.

Are You A Preschool Parent?

More and more parents are seeing the value of preschool education for their children. Washougal School District, through East County Community Education & Recreation, offers five preschool programs to students age three to five years old. Children can attend two or four days a week in either AM or PM sessions. Bussing is available. Preschools are located on the Hathaway, Gause and Cape Horn-Skye school campuses. Contact Lisa Young at Community Education 954-3895 or lisa.young@washouga.k12.wa.us for more information.

Celebrating Washougal Staff

2008 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Heather Santos

Heather Santos

Washougal High School English teacher Heather Santos has taught at WHS since 2000. Heather also serves as coach for women's softball and wrestling.

According to Superintendent Teresa

Baldwin, Heather is the epitome of a teacher who loves to teach. "The hallmark of her work is her ability to motivate students to reach ever higher levels of performance in the classroom and as athletes," said Baldwin.

"I am always looking for better ways to reach my students," said Heather. "And better ways to make the classroom experience more meaningful. It gives me great pleasure to see a student succeed through something I did in the classroom for that moment."



Philicia Weaver

Philicia Weaver

Hathaway teacher Philicia Weaver was hired in 1986 and taught at Cape Horn-Skye for two years before moving to Hathaway.

According to co-worker Pam Sollars, Philicia Weaver deserves Teacher

of the Year recognition every year. "She's demonstrated it for 20 years," said Pam.

Sollars describes Weaver as a positive team player who is willing to go above and beyond, often giving up her own time to help solve problems for other teachers. "Even when it's tough, she doesn't let it get her down," said Sollars. "She uses her sense of humor to bring out the best in kids."

"I am honored and appreciative of the acknowledgement," said Philicia. "It is always a pleasure to be recognized for any job well done, but I am only as successful as the team I have surrounding me. For over 20 years I have been supported by the most outstanding, professional, and caring co-workers in the area. I am privileged to be working with a staff that puts kids first."

WSD emphasizes healthy habits for kids

Health and Fitness Task Force

In 2006, Washougal School District convened a health and fitness task force to develop a physical education curriculum for Kindergarten through grade 12. During that time, the district was fortunate to receive a grant to support this effort.

District receives P.E. grant

Washougal School District, in partnership with the Evergreen School District, is the recipient of a three-year \$1.3 million Carol M. White Physical Education grant through the U.S. Department of Education to provide physical education services to students.

The grant funds the "Learning to Move, Moving to Learn" project, which will systematically change the way the new Washington Health and Fitness Standards are taught in Washougal and Evergreen schools, making it more responsive to student needs and interests.

Through the grant, P.E. teachers will receive additional training in health and fitness. The funds will also bring new technology and fitness equipment into each school to help encourage lifelong healthy habits.

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in Washington state. The Learning to Move, Moving to Learn project is designed to help students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to adopt and maintain healthy, physically active lifestyles.

The project includes fitness education and



From left: P.E. teachers Jared Wiley, Kim Daniels, Mark Bauer with grant coordinator Missy Cole.

assessments, instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities, instruction in cognitive concepts about motor skill and physical fitness, opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills, instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition, policies and practices that support a culture of wellness and opportunities for professional development for teachers.

New P.E. teachers hired

Three new P.E. teachers were hired: Kim Daniels, Cape Horn-Skye Elementary; Mark Bauer, Gause Elementary; and Jared Wiley, Hathaway Elementary. Washougal High School teacher Missy Cole will serve as grant administrator.

Camas-Washougal Rotary Club delivers school backpacks

On September 6, Rotarians in Camas and Washougal delivered several dozen backpacks stocked with school supplies to local elementary schools. The backpacks will be distributed by school administrators to students in need.

The backpacks are an annual project of the Camas-Washougal Rotary Club. According to Scott Bieber of the Rotary Club, sponsors are needed for next year's backpack project. Interested parties may contact Bieber through the Rotary Club's Web site at <http://www.cwrotary.com/>.



Washougal Rotarians deliver backpacks at Gause Elementary School. From left: Molly Coston of the Rotary Club, fifth grader Matthew Pine, Principal Rex Larson, second grader Kirk Brown, and Rotarian Michael Wade.

NEW ATTENDANCE CALLER SYSTEM TO NOTIFY PARENTS OF STUDENT ABSENCES

Consistent attendance is important to a student's educational success. This fall, Washougal School District will implement an automated telephone system to notify parents and guardians when a student in grades six through 12 is absent for part or all of a school day.

Each day, after teachers take attendance, any unexcused absences will be noted in the system and an automated call to a student's parent or guardian will be generated in the evening.

If your student is absent, please call the school attendance office before 10:00 a.m. to notify the school of the excused absence. If a parent does not call the school, the attendance caller will assume this is an unexcused absence and automatically call the parent or guardian.

BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2007-08

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Washougal School District office, 4855 Evergreen Way.

October 9, 2007	March 11, 2008
October 23, 2007	March 25, 2008
November 13, 2007	April 8, 2008
November 27, 2007	April 22, 2008
December 11, 2007	May 13, 2008
January 8, 2008	May 27, 2008
January 22, 2008	June 10, 2008
February 12, 2008	June 24, 2008
February 26, 2008	July 22, 2008

Log-on for annual notifications

Washougal School District is required by law to provide parent annual notification of the following topics: Child Abuse Prevention, Teacher Qualifications, drug free schools, pesticides, asbestos plan, release of information, legislation regarding military recruiters, child identification procedures, sexual harassment and bullying, Title IX, Confidentiality (FERPA). Please visit <http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us/districtinfo/parentnotification.htm> for complete information.



Teacher Philicia Weaver engages students during a math lesson as Mathematics Coordinator Ruth Chamberlain observes.

Hathaway Elementary receives math grant

Mathematics curriculum at Hathaway Elementary will get a boost, thanks to a Mathematics Helping Corps grant from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Through the grant, mathematics specialist Ruth Chamberlain, Mathematics Helping Corps Regional Coordinator for OSPI and Educational Service District 112, will work with teachers two days a week for the next two years to raise mathematics achievement.

Hathaway was invited to apply for this grant because the school's 2005-2006 WASL scores showed a discrepancy between math and reading. When a discrepancy occurs between subject areas, the school always wants to take a more intense look at the reasons behind the discrepancy and work to make improvements, according to Hathaway Principal Laura Bolt.

Bolt wrote the grant in cooperation with primary and intermediate teachers, as well as former Assistant Superintendent Mark Ross.

"This is a windfall for Hathaway staff and students," said Bolt. "Teaching mathematics in a way that all students understand and love it is an art. We have an opportunity now to work with a specialist who can give us great insights into mathematics teaching and learning."

This newsletter is a publication of Washougal School District No. 112-6. Washougal School District complies with all state and federal rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or disability.

SUPERINTENDENT
Teresa Baldwin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Ron Dinius
Orlan Gessford
Thomas Huffman
Blaine Peterson
Elaine Pfeifer

EDITOR
Jodi Yann Thomas, 360.954.3000

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www.washougal.k12.wa.us

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Washougal, WA 98671

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