



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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Are you interested in keeping up with things going on in the district on a more frequent basis than this newsletter? *Superintendent Baldwin's Newsline* will provide frequent updates from Teresa's office. You may subscribe for automatic email distribution, by going to the Washougal School District website, [www.washougal.k12.wa.us](http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us), and looking for the *Newsline* logo.

This will not be a discussion forum, just an informational email to subscribers. Each email message will include directions to unsubscribe and email addresses will remain confidential.

## Message from the Superintendent

**A**s we begin a new school year, there is excitement and adventure in the air. Teachers returned in August to a variety of professional development activities designed to better prepare them to set high expectations for their students and work in teams to improve the achievement of all children. When the buses rolled in on the first day of school, our staff was ready to welcome every student.

A summary of research identifies four key practices that positively impact student learning, as well as the learning of teachers individually and collectively:

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Assessment            | Lesson Design         |
| Effective Instruction | Professional Learning |

Washougal School District is moving step-by-step to incorporate these four best practices in teaching and learning as cited in reputable research studies.

Our district has selected two practices as a district-wide focus for increasing the capacity of every school to raise student achievement; professional learning and assessment. Professional Learning is the underlying rationale for early release Wednesdays, providing time for teachers to develop classroom assessments and review student results. In a culture that provides time for collaboration and high levels of learning among teachers, teachers can achieve greater satisfaction in their work, and students can become more motivated and willing to tackle complex, rigorous learning challenges. We know that the systematic use of professional learning community processes for the purpose of frequently checking student progress will yield the desired results—better student engagement, ownership and productivity in learning.

As superintendent, I admire the great resources that support our school district. Washougal's small town atmosphere is clearly felt in schools where people turn out in large numbers to support students at various extra-curricular activities and events. The business community has provided support for years, particularly at Washougal High School where senior projects, career activities and advisory committees rely on adults to make the process effective. I have observed talented professionals working with students in Washougal schools. Our Board of Directors is thoughtful and deeply committed to excellence in our school



system. And, in these difficult economic times, the district's budget is one of the most sound in the region with a large emergency reserve.

Washougal is a special place to live and work, and I continue to take great pride and care in my work as superintendent. My commitment to the students, staff and community of Washougal is to continue and improve upon a strong tradition of excellence. I welcome your thoughts and ideas. You can reach me by email ([teresa.baldwin@washougal.k12.wa.us](mailto:teresa.baldwin@washougal.k12.wa.us)) or phone (360.954.3001).

Teresa Baldwin  
Superintendent



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## District budget reflects local, state and national economy

**D**eveloping the annual budget for this year presented several challenges, some of which reflect economic conditions in the local, state and national economy. To accommodate increased costs in some areas, reductions were necessary in others.

The highest priority in making these difficult funding decisions was to avoid laying off staff and to continue providing the best educational experience possible. Here is some information on the difficult choices we had to make.

*continued on page 2*

## Budget, *continued from front*

### Increased expenditures for educational support

Increases in this year's budget include improving the educational system. Additional staff were hired - a counselor at Jemtegaard Middle, an associate principal at Hathaway Elementary, and a classified position to support career guidance, attendance and discipline at Washougal High. Additional support was provided for middle school athletics and elementary school bus supervision.

The district also joined the Clark County Threat Assessment Team for staff training and crisis assessment at a lower cost than per-incident consultation.

### Increased operating costs

Issues wreaking havoc on family budgets such as higher fuel, food and utility costs are the same issues facing school districts across the state. We had to allocate additional funds in all of these budget areas for this year. While costs in transportation, food services and utilities increase, state funds for education have not increased proportionally.

### Increases in salary and benefits

Last spring, the Washington state legislature approved the largest Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in recent history for school employees—5.1% for teaching staff and 4.4% for administrators and support staff. Local school districts rarely have the revenue to increase staff salaries, and therefore state increases are designed to keep staff salaries on par with cost of living measures. This was a well-deserved salary boost for our hardworking, dedicated professionals.

The obvious positive impact of the COLA legislation was offset by the grim reality that not enough funds were allocated by the

state to cover the raise for all staff. It was up to each school district to decide whether or not to fully fund the COLA for all employees. The Washougal School Board decided to provide all employees with the COLA. Along with the COLA came an increase in pension benefits, and like the COLA, pension benefits are not fully funded by the state.

Finally, the district had negotiated an additional two days of salary for full time (prorated for part-time) teachers starting this year, and an additional \$125 per teacher for professional development costs. The impact of the COLA and increases in salary and benefits accounted for about a third of the budget increase this year.

### Reduced state revenue for student enrollment

Basic education funds from the state provide 53% of the revenue collected by the district to operate the school system. These funds are allocated based on student enrollment. At the end of the last school year, enrollment data showed a slight dip of twelve fewer students over the previous year. Rebecca Miner, assistant superintendent, noted that this is a "unique trend" considering that enrollment has grown for five straight years with an overall addition of 400 students. Superintendent Teresa Baldwin said, "Enrollment data in Washougal indicates that increases in student counts have followed trends in the housing market. The slowdown in student enrollment growth may be a byproduct of the down turn in the housing market coupled with higher unemployment rates in Clark County." This year's budget is based on a projection of fewer students than last year and therefore less revenue from the state.

### Budget reductions in 2008-2009

Cost-saving measures were taken to balance the budget and accommodate increases in

expenditures this year. Examples include staff attrition and reductions in nursing services (by one hour per week), public relations, printing costs, technology support and administrative costs.

### Fiscal accountability and ending fund balance

Washougal School District is committed to fiscal responsibility and the good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Through intentional allocation of state, federal and local taxpayer funds, the district provides a high quality educational system while maintaining a substantial 6% fund balance held in reserve for emergency and cash flow purposes. In addition, the Board of Directors has set aside \$436,000 to go toward opening a new school in the future. Since the opening of a new school has been delayed, and because of the sharp increase in costs this year, \$148,253 has been reallocated from the new school reserve fund to this year's budget. Funds borrowed from the new school reserve fund will be reinstated in next year's budget.

You can view more information about Washougal School District's 2008-09 budget on the district web site ([www.washougal.k12.wa.us](http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us)) or you may receive a copy of it by calling Cassie Marshall in the superintendent's office at 360.954.3005.



Rotarians Cindy Forslund, Michelle Craig, Rebecca Miner and Teresa Baldwin look over some of the backpacks to be distributed.

## Backpacking through Washougal Schools

About two dozen Washougal kids are better prepared for school thanks to the Camas-Washougal Rotary Club.

The club purchased 50 backpacks and filled them with school supplies for children lacking them. The bags were evenly divided between the Washougal and Camas districts.

Rite Aid Pharmacy joined the Rotarians in the sixth annual event. Rotary members, including Supt. Teresa Baldwin and Asst. Supt. Rebecca Miner, delivered the backpacks to Gause and Hathaway Elementaries. Many were given out right away; a few are being held in reserve for students entering school over the course of

the year. "It's a nice welcome and 'we care about you' gesture," said Rex Larson, Gause principal.

Rotarians Scott Bieber and Jim Curry organize the project. "Self esteem plays a huge part in how successful children are in school," Scott said. "I can only imagine the blow to a child's self esteem if they show up at school without the necessary supplies because their parents can't afford them."

The program costs Rotarians \$1,000 and they raise that amount through a car raffle in the spring. If you'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution to next year's program, please call Scott at 772-0082.

**Online payment for school lunches**

It is now possible for parents to go to the district website, sign-up for a school lunch (or breakfast) account and make payments online from home or work with a credit or debit card.

Student meals will be charged to the account, and parents can monitor the account balance from home or work. Since the district is assessed a transaction fee by the card companies, a 2.99% fee will be added to parent charges.

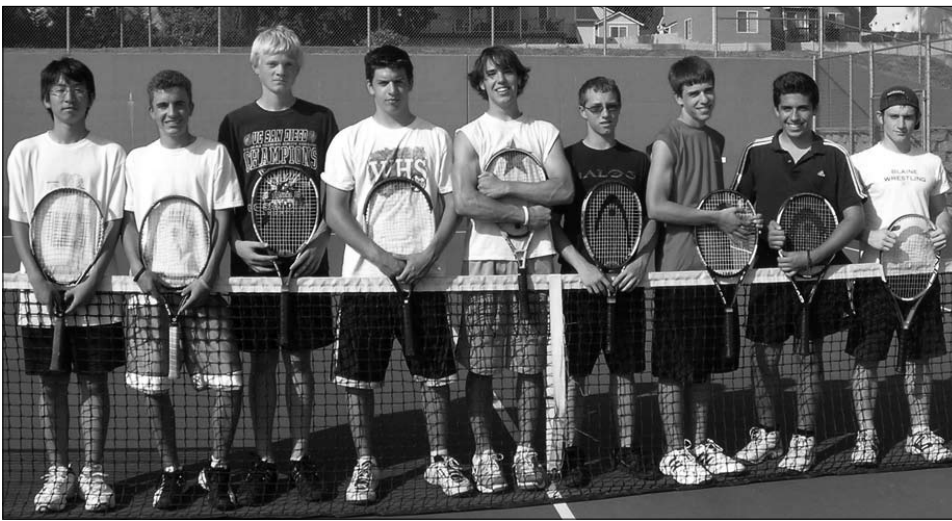
To get started, parents need a WESPaC Family Access code. Parents/guardians may contact their child's school secretary to get a family access code that works for all children in the family. The step-by-step instructions for making school lunch payments are listed on the family access site at <http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us/family>. The yearly cost for all lunches from October 6 through the last day of school is \$352 for an elementary student, \$384 for a middle school student, or \$416 for a high school student. Balances will carry over to the next year, can be transferred to a sibling or refunded.

**District seeks community feedback**

Superintendent Teresa Baldwin invites parent and community feedback relative to the district's strategic objectives. The Strategic Plan report is available on the district website or patrons may call 954-3005 to request a copy by mail. Teresa is available to meet with school or community groups that can spend about 30 minutes reviewing the strategic objectives and rating the district's performance in these areas. She also welcomes email or phone messages regarding the District's progress on strategic objectives.

**Washougal Schools Foundation sells Trail Band Concert tickets**

The Washougal Schools Foundation has been supporting schools and teachers since 2000. Last year, \$10,000 was distributed to teachers who wrote classroom grants and \$4,500 was awarded in scholarships. A traditional holiday event in Washougal, the Foundation is hosting the highly acclaimed Trail Band Concert on Saturday evening, November 29. Please contact Roger Daniels for information about the Trail Band or to purchase tickets, at 835-7038 or [rdan159@aol.com](mailto:rdan159@aol.com).



Left to right: Junpai Iwai, Eric Ackerman, Patrick McCarthy, Sean McCarty, Brian Balholm, Caylem Nunes, Steven Goolsby, Julian Mennen and Colton King.

*Tennis team is on the run*

The Washougal Boys Tennis team is on the run, and this year has two foreign exchange students. Junpai Iwai is from Japan. "He is a very likeable kid, just a little shy, but definitely learning about American humor hanging around our boys!" says Coach Eric Balholm. "He is a very good player who has moved up the challenge ladder quickly, and also is a good soccer player."

Julian Mennen is from Germany. "He is very outgoing and likes art," Eric says. "He competes in "hip hop" dancing in Germany and has won many events. He, too, is a good tennis player and has moved up the challenge ladder quickly."

*District thanks Washougal citizens for levy funds*

Many thanks to the citizens of Washougal and Skamania County for approving levies that sustain quality education in our district. The chart below shows information on the levies passed in February 2006 that will continue to be collected this year.

	Maintenance & Operations	Technology	Transportation Vehicle
2008-09 District Levy Amount	\$4,582,809	\$251,809	\$115,000
2008 Levy Rate Per \$1,000 of Assessed Value	\$ 1.28	\$0.10	\$0.10

**Summary of maintenance and operations levy expenditures**

Maintenance and operations levy funds are spent for the same purposes each of the years: transportation, middle and high school athletics, community education, highly capable program, English as Second Language program, Washburn Performing Arts Center, facility maintenance, grounds maintenance, staff salaries and benefits and utilities.

**Summary of technology levy expenditures**

Last year, technology funds were used to purchase student computers and labs,

sound amplification in third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms, classroom projectors and document cameras, administrative computers and hardware related to network infrastructure and servers. This year, funds will be used to enhance technology for student use, to improve classroom technology and maintain the district's technology infrastructure.

**Summary of transportation vehicle expenditures**

Last year, two regular school buses and two smaller special education buses were purchased. One regular school bus will be purchased this year.



Above: Nathan Russell, Shane Phillips, Chism King, Yuki Tasake, Ryan Quackenbush, Mike Huck, Dylan Croeni and Travis Quackenbush.

Below: Arin Vandiver, Erika Chestnutis, Kim Jones, Taneal Tanner and Colleen Wright.



## Cross Country teams hit the beach

The Camas-Washougal Post-Record captured the Washougal Boys and Girls Cross Country teams at a recent meet at Cottonwood Beach. "Our boys team ran their last home meet of the year and the guys from start to finish were fighting. They went out against a tough team and took it to them," says Coach Jim Reed.

"The panther girls are coming around," he says. "Last year's district champions have some competition. Our girls responded well at the meet against Mark Morris High, winning 27- 31."

**FIND MORE NEWS AT**  
[www.washougal.k12.wa.us](http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us)



## Karen Wysaske awarded 2008 Clark County Teacher of the Year

Alan Webb Autogroup and IQ Credit Union hosted a gala at the Heathman Lodge on September 20 to honor teachers in Clark County. Of four finalists, Karen Wysaske, math teacher at Washougal High School, was named 2008 Teacher of the Year.

Karen says her favorite part of teaching is when her students "get it," realizing how education - and math in particular - will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Karen places a high priority on preparing her students for life, and teamwork with her colleagues. In the classroom, her calm, friendly presence creates an

atmosphere where students thrive and become proficient in math.

Washougal School District is honored that Karen was recognized among teachers across the county. Superintendent Teresa Baldwin expressed her appreciation to Alan Webb, president of Alan Webb Autogroup and Danette LaChapelle, IQ Credit Union vice president of marketing, for this public recognition of excellence in the educational community.

Other community sponsors for this event include KXL Talk Radio, The Game, Vata Salon, The Heathman Lodge, Smiling Willow Photography and ABC Co.

*You're invited...  
 ...to the Washougal School Board meetings!*

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the district board room, 4855 Evergreen Way.

October 14 & 28 • November 10 & 25 • December 9  
 January 13 & 27 • February 10 & 24 • March 10 & 24 • April 14 & 28  
 May 12 & 26 • June 9 & 23 • July 28

**SUPERINTENDENT**  
 Teresa Baldwin

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