IT’S TIME TO STUFF THE BUS!
Annual competition coming December 6

For the past five years, Washougal High School has joined Camas High School in a friendly rivalry to see which school can gather the most food for needy families in our area. It’s a friendly competition and the real winners are the families in need who live in Camas and Washougal. This year, Stuff the Bus will run through December 6. All goods received benefit local charities right here in Camas and Washougal. Please support Washougal School District students and staff as they try to beat Camas in a rematch of last year’s “Stuff the Bus” event. Bring a donation to any Washougal School, and leave it in the “Stuff the Bus” bins now through December 6.

You’ll love what you see when you “Like” us!

Follow breaking news and celebrate student, teacher and school achievements by “Liking” the Washougal School District Facebook page and be sure to “Share” any story you find interesting! You can also visit your school and district websites for important, up-to-date information.

Find us at: www.facebook.com/WashougalSD

Message from the Superintendent

With the opening of the school year the Washougal School District celebrated increased student learning in several areas targeted by our school staff. We had some outstanding improvements to celebrate, as you’ll see on page two of this newsletter. These outcomes highlight the very serious work going on in the district – work that is being done by students, staff, and parents to hold our system accountable to the outcomes children are capable of achieving.

I have responded to questions from the community about what the increased student success can be attributed to. I point to the engagement of our students in quality learning experiences that are not only relevant and challenging, but also based on the interests and aspirations of individual students. To accomplish this, the district has been working to implement goals articulated through our visioning process. Academics do not stand alone but have their roots planted in a rich foundation that includes the arts, technology, career and technical programs, photography, small engine repair, community services, and more. Please take a moment to view our video and see first hand the kinds or programs and learning experiences going on in the district: www.washougal.k12.wa.us

To continue and to build on the programs that support our students, the Washougal School Board has made the decision to place the renewal of the Maintenance and Operation (M & O) and Technology Levies on the ballot in February 2014. Levy dollars fund a variety of programs that include the arts, instructional technology, student support programs, student health, school safety, student transportation, and more. The renewal levy will include a funding request for additional programs including all-day kindergarten at Gause and Cape Horn-Skye elementary schools, enhancements to our school safety efforts, and programs for our highly capable and struggling students. The district will be making factual information available to our community to help voters understand the facts of the renewal levy.

A focus on basic skills is the starting place for a good education. A great education nurtures perseverance and a strong work ethic as motivated students prepare for their future. I appreciate that I am able to provide educational leadership in a community that believes the school is where a student’s talents are revealed, individual passions developed, and the commitment to make a difference in the world is forged.

Sincerely,

Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

Board approves levy amount that asks voters to support instructional programs

The Washougal School Board has set amounts for its upcoming three-year Maintenance and Operations (M & O) and Technology Levies.

Current levies, approved by voters in 2010, will expire at the end of 2014. The levies will go before district voters February 11, 2014 to replace the expiring levies.

The M & O Levy will be set at $6.3 million and will cost taxpayers an estimated $3.31 per $1,000 assessed property value. This is an increase from the current levy, which remained flat for four years. Since then, enrollment has increased and Washougal’s per student funding has dropped to one of the lowest in Clark County. Additional levy dollars are needed to maintain current programs with increasing enrollment and to fund expanded learning opportunities and programs, including districtwide kindergarten, summer school, instructional coaches and safety improvements.

The M & O Levy will fund early learning programs, individualized instruction, sports programs, extracurricular opportunities, curriculum and supplies, community education, facilities maintenance, student health and safety, staff development, and programs in the arts, languages, and career and college preparation.

The Technology Levy will be set at $700,000 and will cost taxpayers an estimated $.37 per $1,000 assessed property value in 2015, decreasing to $.35 in 2016 and $.34 in 2017. The Technology Levy will support our network infrastructure and learning tools such as the iPad pilot project that help prepare students for a digital world.
Washougal students show improvement on state tests

State test results were released earlier this fall and Washougal students have something to celebrate at nearly all levels.

At the elementary level, nearly 80% of students in third grade met the standard on the reading assessment. This was almost 7% higher than the state average! In fact, more than 50% of all 3rd graders scored at a Level 4 (the highest level) in reading.

Fourth grade math scores exceeded the state average by 17%. For the first time, fourth grade math scores were higher than the fourth grade reading scores, which may indicate that the district focus on math has paid off.

Other highlights from Washougal elementary schools:

» Fourth grade reading was 3.5% higher than the state average.
» Third grade math scores were 8% higher than the state average.
» Fourth grade writing scores were 11% higher than the state average.

At the middle school level, eighth grade science scores were nearly 8% higher than the state average.

In reading, 42% (about 110 students) of eighth graders scored at the highest level.

In math, 97% of eighth graders who took the End-of-Course assessment met that standard.

Those scores were 2.6% above state average.

Although sixth grade reading scores were just below the state average, they showed tremendous growth as a group. The percentage of sixth grade students meeting the standard grew 3.5% compared to a 1% growth rate for the state.

At the high school level, the percent meeting the standards on the End-of-Course 2 exam increased from 66 to 92 percent. In addition, they experienced a closing of the achievement gap in reading and the performance of students with disabilities increased from their eighth grade performances.

“We are thrilled to see that the hard work of students and staff is paying off,” said Curriculum Director David Tudor. “Test scores just tell part of the story. What is most inspiring is watching teachers use Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to collaborate and plan with the data and classroom work. Our teacher teams are turning the percents from the assessments into numbers and then names. They’re able to personalize learning and help us realize our district’s vision of being entrusted with and accountable for the success of each student.”

Staff continues to analyze the data and refine student learning with a focus on how individual students are learning and improving.

Hathaway Elementary offers full-day kindergarten

This fall, kindergarten students at Hathaway Elementary are reaping the benefits of additional instruction time in the district’s first all-day kindergarten program. The extended school day was made possible thanks to state funding to support kindergarten programs at schools with higher percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals.

“This is an exciting opportunity for students to get a jump start on learning,” said Principal Laura Bolt.

Hathaway Kindergarten teacher Emma Slabbert says she has already noticed a difference in student learning with the extra instructional time. “Extra time in the classroom means additional exposure to the curriculum,” said Slabbert. “They are catching on faster and retaining what they’ve learned. There is less re-teaching of forgotten lessons and we are no longer trying to fit five days of curriculum into two and a half days. We can slow down and incorporate play and free choice, which are so important for learning at this stage.”

The funding is a step toward compliance with the Supreme Court McCleary decision, which mandates lawmakers to fully fund basic education, including full-day kindergarten, by 2018. Cape Horn-Skye Elementary and Gause Elementary will continue their part-time kindergarten schedule at this time.
SUCCESSFUL TECHNOLOGY PILOT EXPANDED ACROSS DISTRICT

“The possibilities for students to enrich and deepen their learning is infinite.”

—Marie Klemmer, fifth grade teacher, Gause Elementary

After last year’s tremendously successful pilot project with iPads in fifth grade classrooms, the Washougal School Board approved the program’s expansion to provide iPads for all students in grades 5 and 6. Last year, three classrooms (one at each elementary school) piloted the iPads, integrating the technology into subjects including Science, Social Science and Language Arts.

Through the expansion, every fifth and sixth grader in the district will have an iPad to use at school in a variety of classes. “The iPads have been a great learning tool for the classrooms that had them last year,” said Curriculum Director David Tudor. “We saw great gains on the state outcome assessment - the students in the iPad classroom scored 14.7% better in Math, 11.4% better in Science, and 8.7% better in Reading.”

Teachers reported that the iPads changed the type of learning that was possible; increasing opportunities for spontaneous research, discussions, and collaboration; and speeding up student learning.

“The possibilities for students to enrich and deepen their learning is infinite,” said Marie Klemmer, fifth grade teacher at Gause Elementary. “All the students are so motivated to take their leaning to a whole new level beyond what a text book can provide. Students who have struggled in the past become so excited to learn which can only have a positive impact on their learning.”

“Seeing students who have struggled to keep up be excited and motivated to learn is just one incredible outcome of the iPad project,” said Les Brown, Director of Technology.

Classroom use varies by class and subject, and can include research, presentations, and interactive learning. Students use iPad features, such as text-to-speech and built-in word definitions and dictionaries to enhance their learning. These tools have been particularly helpful for struggling learners and also help bridge the achievement gap between student groups. Students have used the iPads to film themselves presenting to their peers and then immediately review their work to see if they spoke clearly or gave good directions.

Teachers use professional development time to improve instruction

Professional development time for teachers is essential to academic growth in the classroom. The time spent collaborating with peers, examining student data and exploring new techniques to improve instruction helps boost student learning. This fall, the Washougal School District made changes to its early release schedule to allow teachers to meet weekly so that they could more effectively examine test data and address gaps in their instruction.

“Each week our PLC Team analyzes student work to gain a deeper understanding of exactly what we need to do to provide our students with the help they need to master their learning progression,” said first grade teacher Wendy Morrill. “In the process, we have increased the number of students making the progress needed to successfully reach their grade level standards.”

In addition to the early release time, teachers also used non-attendance days for professional development. For example, on October 11, about 90 WSD teachers participated in a four-hour technology symposium at Washougal High School, organized by teachers Jay Bennett and Heather Kassel. Jay and Heather recruited a dozen teachers to develop and teach classes on a variety of topics, covering online tools and technologies to help teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. In addition to the Tech Symposium, another group of WSD teachers attended the Northwest Mathematics Conference on that day. This was not a paid work day for teachers but many took advantage of the professional development opportunities to help improve their classroom instruction.

District music teachers collaborate using state-of-the-art software.
Suicide expert shares tips with educators and parents

Dr. James Mazza, a University of Washington expert on adolescent depression and suicide, spoke to educators and parents in the community November 6. Dr. Mazza shared the latest research on youth depression and suicide, how to recognize warning signs, and help students who may be at risk. The free event was sponsored by a generous grant from the Camas-Washougal Community Chest.

Summer maintenance projects come in on-time and under budget

While families were taking vacations and students were sleeping in, district maintenance staff was busy completing a list of facilities projects to get ready for fall. In addition to the usual summer punch list of jobs, staff took on a couple of major projects, including installation oversight of a new turf field at Fishback Stadium and a new gym floor at the high school. In addition, improvements were made to the field drainage at Gause Elementary, gutters were repaired or replaced at Jemtegaard Middle School, and energy upgrades were made across the district. All projects completed on time and under budget!

Join our Partners for Schools (PS) group to keep up on school news!

The Washougal School District has assembled a group of key community members called Partners for Schools in an effort to foster two-way communication and increase community understanding of school achievements and issues. To join, e-mail to Partners@washougalsd.org to receive a Google Group invitation.

Once they join, participants will:
• Receive periodic messages on news topics relevant to schools and community
• Receive e-mail communications directly from the superintendent
• Be invited to attend periodic, short gatherings to discuss issues that concern our schools and our community.

Find More News at www.washougalsd.org

Washougal School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employee has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX/RCW 28A.640 compliance officer and Section 504/ADA coordinator, Allan Fleck, Director of Special Education.

You're invited to the Washougal School Board meeting!

Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. in the District Board Room, 4855 Evergreen Way, unless otherwise noted.

Nov. 5, District Board Room
Nov. 19, Gause Elementary School