



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Students Honored by Veterans of Foreign Wars

Bob Hitchcock of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the VFW Ladies Auxiliary recently presented awards to student winners of the annual patriotism essay contest. Washougal School District award winners are Eliana Saunder, grade 3, Gause Elementary, Griffin Agnello, grade 4, Gause Elementary, Ashley Gibbons grade 4, Cape Horn-Skye Elementary, Morgan Ratcliff, grade 6, Canyon Creek Middle, Riley Coffman, grade 7, Canyon Creek Middle, Joseph Snedeker, grade 7, Canyon Creek Middle, and Samuel Sharp, Washougal High School. Congratulations to these students for excellent performance on essays depicting patriotism and the voice of democracy.



Superintendent's Message

Dear Community Members:

This month marks my 40th year in public education in Washington, having started my teaching career in January 1971! That's probably enough information to make a quantum leap to the reason for announcing my retirement from Washougal School District, effective in July. The Board of Directors made the announcement official at the regular school board meeting on January 11, 2011.

The Board of Directors is working with the local Educational Service District (ESD 112) on the search for a new superintendent, and the Board is committed to involving staff and community members in the process. The position will be open to qualified local, state and national candidates. The Board intends to complete the process and hire the new superintendent in April. Information related to the search will be posted on the district website, www.washougal.k12.wa.us and in a future edition of this newsletter, the Community Connection.

The first step in the search for a new superintendent is the Superintendent Search Survey which is posted on the District website through February 22. For those who would like to complete the survey on paper, please contact Cassi Marshall, secretary, at 954-3005, for a mailed copy. All surveys must be completed online or received at the district office on or before February 22.

Washougal has been the most wonderful place for this phase of my career. Looking back to 2005 when I first came to the district as the assistant superintendent, I was so impressed with the accomplishments of the prior superintendent, Bob Donaldson. Mr. Donaldson's legacy was bringing staff and community together around the vision for bright, new school facilities through momentous community support for a bond measure. That priority and

other accomplishments laid the foundation for additional system-wide improvements over the last five years.

The conventional wisdom among superintendents is that the best time to leave a district is when the superintendent's leadership for improvement has produced results, and the system is stable and ready for new leadership and further organizational enhancement. In my view, Washougal School District is perfectly positioned for the next steps in organizational improvement under the leadership of a new superintendent.

There is still important work ahead of us in the coming months. I look forward to finishing strong and making Washougal the best educational system possible on my watch. I have been grateful for the support of our community, and I appreciate working with a dedicated staff, the certified, classified and administrative professionals who are equally committed to our mission of educating the children of Washougal. I feel fortunate to be superintendent for the remainder of the school year, and I will leave this position with warm feelings in my heart for the staff and community.

Many people have asked about my future plans. At this time, I don't have any particular plans except that my husband and I will live in Clark County while he continues working as a high school counselor for Evergreen School District.

Sincerely,

Teresa Baldwin, Superintendent

State Budgets Impact School District Budgets

Background information

On Monday, January 10, the 62nd Washington State Legislature convened its 2011 legislative session with large-scale fiscal concerns. During this 105-day session, legislators must adopt two budgets. Governor Gregoire has requested that 2011 Supplemental Budget, with a solution that brings the current budget into balance, be adopted by the Legislature and ready for her signature by February 4. The 2011-13 Operating Budget will be challenging for the legislature because the state currently has a projected \$4.6 billion shortfall, the gap between anticipated revenues and expected expenditures for the two fiscal years ahead. Experts predict that the legislature will not write the Operating Budget until after the next state revenue forecast on March 17, with concerns that the March forecast will push the projected shortfall as high as \$5.0 billion. Legislative action on these two state budgets will impact Washougal School District as noted below.

Projected impacts

As the legislature balances the current budget, most experts agree that there are specific educational funds that will be cut immediately. For example, districts have been provided "K-4 Enhancement" funds that are used to hire additional teachers and lower class

sizes in the early grades, a total of five teachers in Washougal. The short-term impact is that our contracts with the teachers must be paid, even if state funds are cut. The long-term impact is that the District will either need to reduce that number of teachers for next year (2011-12) or otherwise adjust available revenue to cover those costs next year.

The legislature is also considering eliminating or reducing "Levy Equalization Act" funds, which in Washougal is \$600,000 annually. Those funds are the equivalent of, as an example, 11 teaching positions or the entire secondary sports program plus 1.5 teachers. The short-term impact would be a reduction of \$200,000, and funds must be adjusted this year to accommodate the loss. Long-term elimination of the funds is potentially so devastating that superintendents, school boards and others around the state are rallying together and communicating to their legislators the importance of retaining these funds for educational programs and staff. As more information becomes available regarding the state budget and impacts on Washougal School District, that information will be posted on the District website and published in future editions of this newsletter.

2011 Communications Committee

The District has convened the 2011 Communications Committee for the purpose of gathering input on critical issues, including budget issues, currently under review and consideration by the Board of Directors. Members of the committee are Aireanna Baldwin, Mike Conway, Jim Gadberry, Diane Gamble, Celeste Gude, Amanda Klackner, Veronica Kneipp, Marla McGhee, Pat Suggs, Gail Wayper, Lisa Young and Mark Zack. Information regarding the work of the committee will be posted on the District website.

**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.**

Check out our blog

Be sure to visit the Washougal School District Blog, <http://washougalsd.blogspot.com/>. This new blog will showcase the great things that are happening in Washougal Schools, focusing on student successes in areas like fine arts, sports, and academics. The blog will be updated frequently, and you can subscribe to get updates.

Find More News at - www.washougal.k12.wa.us

The Washougal School District complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and will not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender identity, age, marital status, or 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. This holds true for all district employment and educational programs. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Title IX/RCW 28A.640 compliance officer, Doug Bright, Director of Human Resources, and/or Section 504/ADA coordinator, Allan Fleck, Director of Special Education.

SUPERINTENDENT
Teresa Baldwin

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