



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A message from the Superintendent



Dawn Tarzian

It was shared with me early in my tenure as superintendent that the district had work to do to build trust with the community. Stories of input sought but not considered and resources repurposed from the original plan were frequently communicated. Though I am all too aware of the extenuating issues of funding fluctuations, the impact of inflation on published plans, and economic recessions that hit with little warning; I felt that we had work to do as a district. With the support of the school board, I made the commitment to engage the community in setting the direction of the district, implemented systems to open our decision-making process to the community, and held district staff accountable to implementing the recommendations and plan endorsed by the community. I am very proud of what has been accomplished and deeply appreciative of the many community members who have invested their time and talent to engage with a very capable staff to change the stories that are now commonly shared.

The district has worked to be faithful stewards of the state and local dollars. For every saved operational dollar, the resources have been turned back into our system to support students' educational needs and program goals. In 2012 the district paid off the long-term loan on the Kerr property where the District Office and George Schmid Memorial Park Fields are located. Paying this loan off early saved taxpayers money that would have had to cover the interest costs over the life of the loan. Also in 2012, the district refinanced existing capital bonds to save local taxpayers millions of dollars in interest. This was possible because of the very high financial rating the district received for its prudent fiscal management practices.

Successful energy efficiency grants have saved global resources and reduced district energy bills so that district resources can be used to directly support student learning.

Our dedicated maintenance crew has done an amazing job of keeping our facilities in excellent working order over the years. As a result, the 17 temporary portable structures that were built to last 20 years have now been in place for an average of 25 years, including one that still serves as a classroom at an age of 36 years.

With the resources saved through efficient operations several goals have been met by the district. Reducing class sizes has been a focus and **Washougal is proud to be among the lowest average class sizes of any district in Clark County this year.** The high school turf field was replaced in 2013 and each year \$50,000 is set aside to assure that the resources exist to replace it again at the end of its 10-year life span. A 50-year-old gym floor was replaced last year and for the first time since 2000, students at WHS and Gause Elementary can play on field space between the two schools due to the successful drainage work that was completed. With the passage of the 2014 Operations and Technology levies, all day, every day kindergarten has been implemented district-wide and iPads are supporting student learning in grades K-8.

This work would not have been possible without the support and guidance of the Washougal community. I am extremely impressed with the number of people who have given their thoughtful input, particularly those who brought knowledge around facilities, budgeting, and planning during this process. The School Board is committed to following through on the plan that has been created and will continue to communicate with patrons as this process moves forward. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, (360) 954-3000.

Sincerely,

Dawn Tarzian, Superintendent

Voters to consider Capital Facilities Bond

On February 10, 2015, Washougal residents will be asked to vote on Proposition #5, a general obligation capital bond to address student safety, building capacity and facility needs of our schools. The bond is a result of nearly a year of research, study and community input by the 18-member Washougal School District Long Range Facilities Planning Committee.

Learn more about the proposed bond in this informational video on our web site:
www.washougal.k12.wa.us/bond

REMEMBER TO VOTE
by February 10, 2015!

Join us for a school tour
Friday, January 23

You're invited for a free lunch and a tour of Washougal schools on Friday, January 23.

The tour begins at 11:00 a.m. at the District Office, 4855 Evergreen Way. Tour stops include Jemtegaard Middle School, Excelsior High School and the District's Bus Garage. Patrons will hear factual information about each of the sites, learn about the needs identified by the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee, and have an opportunity to ask questions about the sites. The tour will conclude at the District Office at approximately 12:30 p.m. where guests will be offered a box lunch that they may take with them or enjoy as they stay to share what they observed during the tour.

If you or someone you know would benefit from this tour, please call Cassi Marshall to reserve a spot at 954-3005. Space is limited.

TOP 5 FACTS ABOUT THE CAPITAL FACILITIES BOND ELECTION

- 1 »** The bond proposal is the result of a year's worth of research by a group of local experts in construction, architecture, engineering and facilities management who comprised the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee.
- 2 »** The proposed bond will provide adequate space to meet current enrollment needs and add capacity to address projected growth through 2025.
- 3 »** Safety will be addressed at all schools through the remodel of front entrances so that visitors first enter a school office. Security upgrades will allow classrooms to be locked from inside during a crisis situation and will provide additional cameras and replace outdated ones. Security fencing will support campus and parking lot safety as well.
- 4 »** The proposed bond will increase efficiency through roof repairs and updated heating and cooling systems at Gause and Hathaway. Replacing these outdated systems will save energy and dollars in the long run.
- 5 »** One-third of all students at Jemtegaard Middle School attend classes in portables every day. The bond would replace these "temporary" space solutions which have outlived their lifespan. Without bond resources, they will still need to be replaced in the near future.

Estimated 2015 Tax Bills for Proposed Bond

Property Value	Estimated Yearly Tax for 2015 Bond (\$0.48/\$1,000)	Estimated Monthly Tax for 2015 Bond (\$0.48/\$1,000)
\$150,000	\$72.00	\$6.00
\$200,000	\$96.00	\$8.00
\$250,000	\$120.00	\$10.00
\$267,000*	\$128.16	\$10.68
\$300,000	\$144.00	\$12.00
\$350,000	\$168.00	\$14.00
\$400,000	\$192.00	\$16.00

How much will the bond cost?

The \$57,685,000 bond will cost taxpayers \$.48 per \$1,000 assessed value. The average homeowner of a \$267,000 home would pay approximately \$10.68 per month. To calculate the estimated taxes on your home, use the tax calculator on our website, www.washougal.k12.wa.us/bond.

Learn Here program celebrates local heroes

Several Washougal community members and school district staff were recently recognized through the "Land Here, Live Here" program, an economic development initiative that promotes the region to employers seeking to relocate.

A new "Learn Here" component was added to celebrate the alumni, staff and volunteers who make the area's educational systems so great and to recognize the connection between strong schools and strong communities. Public displays will feature photos and quotes from two Washougal alumni, Ron Wysaske, president of Riverview Community Bank, and Ashley Johnson, Canyon Creek Middle School teacher.

In addition, across Southwest Washington, 20 staff and volunteers were honored through the program as "Real Heroes of Education." Kam Lawrence, beloved Cape Horn-Skye Elementary teacher, was recognized for educational excellence and inspiring three decades of



From left: Superintendent Dawn Tarzian; Julie Rawls, Port of Vancouver; Cape Horn-Skye teacher Kam Lawrence; and Chad Sessions, Real Living, The Real Estate Group.

students. Washougal families, Dr. David and Adina Stinchfield and Dr. Tom and Tracey Stinchfield, were honored for their commitment to and support of education and health of Washougal students.

The "Land Here, Live Here, Learn Here" campaign is led by Real Living, The Real Estate Group, Northwest Capital Mortgage and Port of Vancouver.

Partnering through the spirit of giving



WHS senior McKenzie Kitchen shows off one of the bowls collected for the Soup Dinner. Kitchen has been collecting needed clothing for HUGS as a part of her senior project.

WSD students and staff have a tradition of supporting those in need in the community through Stuff the Bus, coat drives and other acts of generosity. This month, the Friends of Excelsior High School, staff and students will host a fundraiser that is especially appropriate during this chilly time of year. The Soup Dinner fundraiser will be held at Excelsior High School, 1401 39th Street, Washougal, on January 15, 2015 from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

A \$15 donation provides patrons with a bowl to keep and samples of the more than 10 varieties of soup to be served. Fresh bread and homemade desserts will complete the meal. Various members of the school district and community will contribute the soup and students from EHS and WHS will help set up and serve.

Proceeds will support the HUGS (hats, underwear, gloves, socks/scarves) and Re-Fuel Friday programs to help people in need in the Washougal community. Re-Fuel Fridays is a program offered by local churches that provides dinners each Friday night from 4:00-5:00 p.m. in the Washougal Senior Center for anyone in need of a hot meal. The program runs January through the end of March. HUGS items are available at each dinner to anyone who needs new clothing items to stay warm.

"It's important for these students to be involved in something like this so that they understand their responsibility in our community," said Carol Boyden, EHS Principal and Washougal School District Homeless Liaison. "And beyond meeting certain physical needs, it is nice to also offer the emotional support to these folks by showing people care."

WHS senior, McKenzie Kitchen is working to collect needed clothing for HUGS as a part of her senior project. Boxes for donated items will be set out in stores and at churches over the next several months. "It is nice for people to get a little something when they don't have much," she said. "And it feels good to give to the community."

"Together we make up Washougal and we should step up to help those people who need a helping hand when we are able to do so," Boyden said. "We would like to invite everyone to come and enjoy a hot soup dinner while supporting this very worthwhile endeavor."

Tutoring partnership a win-win for middle and elementary students

Jemtegaard Middle School seventh and eighth graders are gaining leadership skills and acting as role models through a weekly tutoring program with Hathaway Elementary students. The new program was developed by principals Laura Bolt and David Cooke with the goal of boosting reading assistance for elementary students while giving middle school students an opportunity to mentor younger students.

JMS students meet with teacher Amy Lundberg each Wednesday to reflect on their work. Students write a weekly reflection log and then discuss their successes and struggles with their peers. Students work together to develop strategies to improve their tutoring skills.

"They're gaining skills they'll use later in life," said teacher Amy Lundberg of her JMS students. "The program is really good for them. They're forming bonds with the younger students and acting as positive role models."

As part of their leadership class, the JMS students visit Hathaway for one hour per day four days per week to work on reading and literacy with students in kindergarten and second grade. Hathaway teachers report that students are showing progress from this effort and Jemtegaard students are pleased that they've played a role in this success.

"The greatest way that students can show mastery is to teach another person the skill," said JMS Principal David Cooke. "Many of our student tutors have been successful at school so when they are working with kids who do not get it, it becomes a great challenge to them. They must adjust their own thinking and develop new ways to meet the needs of their students. This requires creativity, patience and reflection which are essential skills required in future careers."



Top photo: JMS student Emily Johnson and Hathaway student Justin Curtis. Middle photo: Allison Warta with Tate Albright. Bottom photo: Rachel Lyall with Ian Cotton.

Thank you School Board!

January is School Board Appreciation Month in the State of Washington. Please join us in sharing appreciation for the great work that Board Members Ron Dinius, Teresa Lees, Elaine Pfeifer, Karen Rubino, and Bruce Westfall perform in promoting student learning and guiding our school district.

School Board members are elected volunteers, serving the community through their work governing our education system. The school board works with the superintendent to create a vision for high performing schools with a supportive, welcoming environment for student success. The school board also sets accountability standards and monitors student progress toward district goals, as well as establishing policies and budgets to implement the broader mission of the district.

SUPERINTENDENT
Dawn Tarzian

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SCHOOL DISTRICT



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When the weather outside is frightful...

As local temperatures start to drop near freezing, we are reminded that winter weather has begun and careful attention must be given to safe travel to and from school. Two or three hour late starts are needed when hazardous road conditions exist. These conditions can be experienced district-wide or just in the higher elevations in the eastern part of the district.

Each year patrons ask why the district does not conduct late start at some schools while leaving others open. There are a number of reasons why this is not feasible. Our high school students come from all corners of the district, preventing safe travel for some students who need to be attending the same classes with students from lower elevation neighborhoods. In addition, many parents have transferred their students from a "neighborhood" school to a different district school, requiring that their child be transported to or from an area affected by frosty weather. Our bus transportation system is also involved as our capacity to run routes at the regular start time and at late start time on the same day is very limited. For these reasons, the solution is to conduct a late start district-wide, which allows county vehicles time to plow roads and time for temperatures to rise before putting school buses on the roads. We combine snow

routes with a two or three hour late start to allow safe bus travel on mornings where snow and ice create hazardous road conditions.

Please keep your phone charged and close during the coming months so that our automated phone system can keep you updated regarding changes to the school day due to weather conditions. The district will also provide late opening or closure decisions to both local radio and TV stations.

Please visit the district website for specific details regarding late starts and early closures, <http://www.washougal.k12.wa.us/index.htm>

When school is canceled:

- No Skills Center bus
- No preschool or SPACE program
- No before or after school activities or athletics
- No Community Education classes
- Southwest Washington Childcare Consortium at Hathaway will run as usual.

Snow Make Up Days

School is in session March 13 and May 1 to make up two days that school was closed last fall due to inclement weather. In the event of another school closure due to weather, possible snow make up days are June 16 and 17.

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

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.

January 27, Jemtegaard Middle School
February 10, District Board Room
February 24, Excelsior High School

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



Local educator Bruce Westfall joins Washougal Board

Washougal School District welcomed its newest school board member, Bruce Westfall, at the December 9 school board meeting. A teacher in the Camas School District, Westfall will represent the patrons in Director District 3.



Bruce Westfall

Westfall and his wife, Anita, who is also an educator, have lived in Washougal since 2005 and in Clark County since 1985. After a career as a newspaper reporter, Westfall made the change to education and taught fifth and sixth grades for the past 14 years. He has three grown children who attended Evergreen School District.

"Teaching has been fun, energizing and challenging to be around kids, but more importantly, we've seen how education can elevate the lives of young people and improve the lives of those around them," Westfall said in his letter of interest to the Washougal School Board. "I also believe that a good, strong school system can elevate a community, as well."

The Westfalls interests in children and education reach beyond the local area. They have traveled and worked with kids in places including Romania, Kenya, Uganda and Honduras and support scholarships for students in Central America and Africa.

"People might wonder why a teacher should be on a school board," Westfall said. "But I think it might be useful to have someone on the board who has worked in a classroom and seen a school system from the inside out rather than from the outside in. Different perspectives should make a school board stronger."