

Board holds work session and meeting at Edison *Parents and staff embrace school's family atmosphere*

School board members took their show on the road last night conducting a public work session and regularly scheduled meeting at Edison Elementary.

Board members have committed to visiting various sites in the coming months to get more input from staff, parents and community members on facilities and academic needs of specific schools.

Several Edison families and staff members attended the Tuesday night work session held in the school gym. One common theme heard over and over was the desire to maintain a small, neighborhood school which helped personalize learning.

Board members heard Edison has a unique charm that feels more often like a home than a school. Parents said staff not only know the names of their children, but their different personality traits and characteristics.

Despite the charm, most said they like the school's current location and stressed it desperately needs to be re-modeled to better support learning.

Edison serves approximately 264 students of which nearly 70 are open enrolled.

Superintendent **Rich Carter** showed various maps of the community illustrating where Edison families reside. The maps showed many of the families live outside the attendance area boundary.

Carter said enrollment numbers will be a factor school board members will have to consider upon making facilities decisions. Board members committed to coming back to Edison to get more information before making any facilities decisions.

Withycombe reviews Edison School Improvement Plan

Edison Principal **Nancy Withycombe** said the school's Improvement Plan will continue focusing efforts on improve reading, writing and math student achievement levels.

Withycombe said staff have committed to collaborating each Wednesday for one hour. Staff are also working to improve student reading levels by this spring and put more emphasis on math computation skills. She thanked staff for their hard work and professionalism.

November 16 • School Board Meeting Recap

District celebrates American Education Week

Nearly 100 community members will go back to school, **Thursday, November 18** from 10 a.m. to noon to Celebrate American Education Week. American Education Week is November 14-20.

Now in its third year, the Celebrate American Education Week event is an opportunity for community members to visit their local Walla Walla schools, listen to district success stories and challenges, ask questions, meet students and tour facilities.

"Community involvement is a key to the success of our public schools," Superintendent Rich Carter said. "We are excited to showcase our outstanding staff and students and provide an opportunity for our community members to feel connected to their local schools. We are committed to being partners in learning."

Community members have each selected a school to visit and have been instructed to arrive at the school of their choice by 10 a.m. for the event. The two-hour schedule will vary slightly from school to school. The event will conclude at approximately 12 noon at each school.

Celebrating the American Dream

*Thanks for making a positive
difference in our community*

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of regular board meeting November 2, 2004, Personnel and Out-of-State Travel Reports; Schedule of board meetings - January - June, 2005 (1/18, 2/1, 2/15, 3/1, 3/15, 4/20, 5/3, 5/17, 6/7, 6/21), Payment of November bills and payroll.
- approved Middle School Explorer Curriculum and Materials (detailed information available in the Curriculum Dept.). **Len Taruscio** and school board members thanked Explorers Teacher **Beth Clearman** for her leadership chairing the process.
- voted **Dr Rich Jacks** the new school board President and **Mary Jo Geidl** the new board Vice President. Board members thanked outgoing President **Tim Donaldson** for his leadership and dedication to service.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Classified) - **Kerri Bechtel**, Health Clinician, Sharpstein
MariJo Emerson, Para-Educator, Wa-Hi

• Out-of-State Travel

Linda Boggs to National Elementary Principals Conference in Baltimore, MD (*funding - Professional Growth/Personal*)
Alice MacDonald and **Barbara Rutzer** to National Renaissance Conference in San Antonio, TX (*funding - Professional Growth*)
Judy Peasley to National Staff Development Council in Vancouver, BC (*funding - Professional Growth*)

Quote of the Week

"In education the closeness of students to a good or great man or woman is the finest we can offer our children."

Seymour St. John

Pioneer students log on to explore Starry Nights

Thanks to technology being integrated into their classrooms, Pioneer and Garrison Middle School students can observe an eclipse without ever leaving their campus.

Pioneer Science Teacher **Den-nis Bennett** and Garrison Science/Explorers Teacher **Shannon Ahrens** demonstrated the new Starry Nights software program during a special program to board members.

This truly amazing software program is designed to help students improve astronomy skills through self-paced discovery and brilliantly detailed graphics.

Bennett and Ahrens said this program clearly demonstrates the district's positive efforts to integrate technology into district classrooms.

The Starry Nights project was

made possible thanks to technical support and funding from the district's Technology Department.

Technology Director **Janis Barton** said this project is linked to her department's technology plan which hinges on using current and future technology to improve student achievement. Barton praised Bennett and Ahrens for their vast computer skills and desire to integrate technology into their classrooms. She said they are team players who demonstrate how working together can enhance learning opportunities for students.

Board members were in awe of the details of the program. Students are able to scan the solar system, study moon phases and travel to other parts of the world to track the sun, moon and other aspects of astronomy.

Edison students report how 'Pennies for Power' program helped hurricane victims

Earlier this fall Edison Elementary students collected *Pennies for Power* to help with hurricane relief efforts in Florida.

Last night 5th grade students from the school's leadership council and 1st grade students from **Kit Chryst's** class reported to school board members on the project. They explained how they designed special collection buckets for the project.

They proudly reported they raised nearly \$400 and donated the money to the American Red Cross for hurricane victims.

The students said it made them feel good knowing they were helping others in need. Board members thanked the students for their hard work and kindness.

Former Wa-Hi teacher now helps area youth find Pathway Back to education

School Board President Tim Donaldson reported on a recent open house at the new *Pathways Back* program at the Juvenile Justice Center.

Pathways Back is a new program designed to help youth under court management resume an educational experience. Former Wa-Hi teacher **Rhonda Olson** serves as the program's classroom teacher.

The program utilizes a portable classroom near the Walla Walla County Juvenile Justice Center. The program is designed to support up to 20 students via a half-day instructional period.

Olson and other Juvenile Justice staff meet regularly with district officials to help identify the needs of the students with an ultimate goal of getting them back into the Walla Walla Public Schools system. Olson encourages people to stop by and learn more about the program.

GUYS and DOLLS production now playing

Wa-Hi's production of *GUYS and DOLLS* opened last week and has been a huge hit. The show continues Thursday through Saturday.

Curtain is 7:30 p.m. at the Wa-Hi Auditorium. Cost is \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for students and seniors. The box office is open from 4-6 p.m. daily and 6 p.m. on show nights.

Don't miss this chance to see our talented young people. They have worked incredibly hard to put together a fun-filled evening of entertainment. All they need now is an audience.

Hats off to **Brian Senter**, **Erich Dorzab**, **Darrell Miller**, **Norb Rossi**, **Idalee Hutson-Fish**, **Maribeth Bergstrom**, **Aaron Randall**, and **Ada Taylor** and all our patrons and sponsors for giving our kids a chance to experience drama.

Don't miss it!

The **10/10 Staff Newsletter** is published three times per month by the Walla Walla Public Schools Communications Department.

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'Keeping Our Team Informed'