

March 18 • School Board Meeting Recap

District to futher study health center

School board members approved accepting a \$20,000 grant to conduct a feasibility study and needs analysis to determine if a School Based Health Center is a good fit for Lincoln Alternative High School. The concept was presented by local physician **Alison Kirby MD**.

Kirby said statistics related to health care of youth living in our community are alarming. She said many students are underserved or not receiving any health care services.

Kirby says her proposal would be funded by community sources and not paid for by the school district. Students would be able to receive medical attention, mental health services and substance abuse counseling should her idea become a reality at Lincoln.

Lincoln staff in attendance during last night's public work session stressed the need for a School Based Health Center.

Intervention Specialist **Brooke Bouchey** shared statistics from a recent self-reported student survey. Although the statistics show the students believe the school staff care about their needs, high percentages of students revealed they are participating in risky behavior and have limited contact with health care services.

Kirby said the feasibility study could take several months and that she would provide updates to the school board.

School Retirees Appreciation Week

Last night school board and Walla Walla Columbia County Retired Educators Association member **Mary Jo Geidl** read a proclamation from Governor Gregoire in recognition of School Retirees Appreciation Week.

Retired educators **Joan Helm** and **Harriet Michael** were present to represent the association. Geidl said the Retired Educators Association also serves as an advocate for retiree benefits at the state level.

Homelink introduces Virtual Learning

Next fall students enrolled in the K-8 Homelink program at Berney Elementary will have the option of taking courses online as part of a new virtual learning program after school board members last night approved an agreement with K12 Inc. to serve as the vendor.

K12 Inc. operates in more than 16 states serving more than 25,000 students.



David Talley

"They are the leading provider of curriculum in virtual school programs," Berney/Homelink Principal **David Talley** said. "We also believe that K12 offers the quality curriculum that Walla Walla is known for providing its students and families."

Talley said K12 Inc. allows many flexible options for parents/students from serving the gifted and talented to those that struggle in the traditional school setting.

"Parents choosing this option will work with their Homelink advisory teacher to develop how many and what level of course(s) may be taken," Talley said. "There is no cost for parents or families that enroll in the Homelink program."

Homelink is a parent partnership program for families interested in using district classes and resources to supplement their home-based instruction. Talley said teachers **Valerie Gentzler** and **Pam Clayton** played key roles in researching this virtual program.

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the board meeting of March 4 and Special Board meeting March 12, 2008 and Personnel Report and Out of State travel, Resolution #6-2008 - WIAA Membership, Resolution #7-2008 - Cancellation of Outstanding Warrants, and approval of March bills and payroll.
- approved Resolution #8-2008, Confirmation of Bond Sale.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(*Certificated*) **A. Sofia Parsons**, Bilingual Teacher, Sharpstein
Claudia Salazar, Bilingual Teacher, Sharpstein

(*Classified*) - NONE TO REPORT

• Resignations/Retirements - NONE TO REPORT

• Leave of Absences

(*Certificated*) **Heather Babbitt**, 4th Grade, Prospect Point, 4 years
- This is for the 2008-2009 school year
Toni Lynn Steele, Title I Reading Specialist, Blue Ridge, 19 years
- Toni Lynn will continue as .5 FTE teacher and serve the other .5

• Out of State Travel

Nancy Anhorn to attend the Working Effectively with Difficult, Defiant and Noncompliant students seminar in Phoenix, AZ
(Funding: Staff Achievement Grant/Personal)
John Golden to attend Nike Basketball Coaching Clinic in Las Vegas, NV (Funding: Coaching professional growth)
David Talley to attend NAESP 87th 2008 Convention in Nashville, TN (Funding: Principal Travel)
Liz Campeau and **Bill Jordan** to attend Career Fairs in Boise and Pocatello, ID (Funding: Recruiting)

Quote of the Week

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

Mark Van Doren

Staff key to Energy Management program success

District Energy Manager **John Butenhoff** reported to school board members last night the district's program continues to have a positive impact on district finances and the environment.

Since the program began eight years ago Butenhoff reported the program has helped the district save \$2.3 million and trim usage more than 20 percent. He said the energy not used is the same as removing 4129 cars from the road and planting 8561 trees.

Butenhoff said utility costs continue to soar. In the past eight years natural gas has increased 133 percent, electricity is up 47 percent and water has jumped 36 percent.

Butenhoff said trimming usage helps offset the rising cost of utilities. He thanked staff for establishing an "energy ethic" and said they are the key to the program's successes.

Students say Camp Fire afterschool program is fun

Camp Fire USA Executive Director **Karen Wolf** updated school board members on the organization's afterschool program which currently serves 217 students at five district elementary schools.

Wolf said the program began in 1989 and has blossomed into the program we see today. She reported \$50,000 in scholarship assistance have been provided over the past three years.

The program offers enrichment programs like fitness, crafts, arts, cooking, finance and more.

Wolf said the program could not exist without the partnership with the school district. She said the daily attendance average is 106 students. Wolf showed a video highlighting the program and featured comments from participants, staff and community volunteers.

Refinancing of bonds saves taxpayers quarter of a million dollars

Walla Walla Public Schools board members signed paperwork last night as part of the process to refinance a portion of its outstanding bonds in order to take advantage of lower interest rates.

The move will save taxpayers more than one quarter of a million dollars over the next three years. Superintendent Rich Carter emphasized the approximately \$256,000 in savings will flow directly to taxpayers through reduced tax levies and are not available for district expenses.

"This is a direct savings to our community members in the form of taxes they expected, but will not have to pay," Carter said.

The district accomplished these savings by approving the issuance of \$7,510,000 in refunding bonds on March 12, 2008.

"The district has been monitoring bond market conditions over the past year and recent low interest rates allowed the district to exceed its savings target," Interim Business Manager **Pat Johnston** said. "Interest costs averaged 2.60% on the new bonds compared to 4.89% on the old debt."