

January 16 • School Board Meeting Recap

Common collaboration schedule proposed

District recommends early release for all students

Last night Assistant Superintendent **Linda Boggs** made a case for a K-12 Common Collaboration schedule, citing improved professional development for staff, more opportunities for transitional grade level planning, and a less hectic schedule for students and families.

Currently the district offers a split schedule -- early release for elementary and late start for secondary students -- for teacher collaboration and training.

Walla Walla Public Schools is one of only a handful in the state offering a split collaboration schedule, according to Boggs' report which follows months of study on the issue.

The split schedule has led to vocal frustration from some parents and staff -- especially those with children in both elementary and secondary schools who find the schedule difficult to manage.

Boggs reminded school board members the district began looking at a Common Collaboration schedule in 2002. She said although the district could not build consensus at the time for a common schedule, it has always been the goal. She said the district needed time to allow teacher collaboration to earn the trust of staff and parents.

Nearly five years later, Boggs said there is a high level of confidence that teacher collaboration time is valuable. She said now it's time to improve the schedule to maximize its effectiveness.

Earlier this month district administrators reaffirmed their commitment to a common collaboration schedule with more than 90 percent preferring a districtwide early release.

Boggs said a common K-12 early release collaboration schedule offers staff a more consistent block of time to improve instruction and said the district is collectively committed to implementing this schedule next school year.

No action was taken last night.

Edison ballots mail Friday

Walla Walla voters will receive their mail ballots Friday to determine whether a new Edison Elementary School is built.

The February 6 bond measure would replace existing 70-year-old Edison Elementary on an expanded current site with a two-story, 63,000 square foot school.

The new Edison would serve approximately 450 students to meet current district elementary capacity issues and long-range community growth projections.

The cost of the project is \$19.5 million. The Edison project would increase the local bond rate 20 cents per thousand of assessed valuation — an average of \$2.50 per month on a \$150,000 house.

The goal of the bond is to provide Edison Elementary students the best education possible.

January is School Board Recognition Month

Superintendent **Rich Carter** thanked the school board and presented them with plaques for a job well done.

Schools made posters and other keepsakes to show their appreciation to the school board.

- Anne Golden, President
- Toni Rudnick, Vice President
- Tim Donaldson
- Mary Jo Geidl
- Cindy Meyer

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the board meeting of December 12, 2006, Personnel Report and Out of State Travel, Revision of Policy No. 3130, District Attendance Areas, Open Enrollment, and Employees' Student Placement, and Payment of December Bills and Payroll.
- announced ongoing committee assignments for 2007. (see Friday's Week in Review for positions)
- changed the April 17 school board meeting to Wednesday, April 18 due to scheduling conflicts.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Classified) **Kathryn Austin**, Health Clinician, Blue Ridge

John Edson, Bus Driver, Transportation

Jerry Failing, Bus Driver, Transportation

Nathan Ferraro, Para-Educator, Garrison

• Resignations/Retirements

(Certificated) **Karen Smeed**, Kindergarten teacher, Blue Ridge, 24 years

Michal Walters, Special Ed. Preschool teacher, Blue Ridge, 6 years

(Classified) **Daniella Orozco**, Assistant Secretary, Blue Ridge, 5 months

(*Daniella is resigning a portion of her assignment and will continue as a 3-hour a day employee.)

• Out of State Travel

Matt Bona, Kristina Duncan, Kirk Jameson, and Jeanne Ruecker to visit Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, IL (Funding: I-728, Principal's Travel)

Scott Ford to attend AAHPERD Convention in Reno, NV (Funding: Professional Growth)

Chris Gardea and Rick Nebeker to attend NCTM Annual Conference in Atlanta, GA (Funding: Principal's travel, I-728, personal)

Pat Hanford to attend PNACAC Coordinators Meeting in Eugene, OR (Funding: Vocational)

Ron Higgins to attend OSPI - 10th Grade Math Range Finding in Lansing, MI (Funding: OSPI)

Genie Huntemann to attend Soccer Coaches Clinic in Orlando, FL (Professional Growth)

Chris Neese-Blackman to attend Love and Logic School-wide Discipline Conference in Las Vegas, NV (Funding: Professional Growth and PBS Grant.)

Quote of the Week

"There is a wonderful sense of community and comradery at Edison - even my children, who tend towards the shy side, feel empowered and comfortable there. But the facilities do not fully meet the needs of this wonderful community of teachers and learners."

Vanessa Prull
Edison Parent and
Citizens for Schools Chair

Computer program helps students learn English

Regional networking among Columbia Basin League (CBL) high school principals helped bring a new program to Walla Walla High School designed to help monolingual students acquire English skills while learning subject content.

Wa-Hi Principal **Darcy Weisner** earlier this school year was at a CBL principals meeting when he asked what interventions other schools were offering to students with limited English language skills.

Weisner learned Davis High School was using CONEVyT -- a low cost computer-driven language program -- to help these under-represented students. This program is endorsed by OSPI and Governor Christine Gregoire and requires no special software or hardware.

Currently Wa-Hi has approximately 45 students who could greatly benefit from this program according to Assistant Principal **Brett Cox** who has been assigned to research and bring the program to Wa-Hi.

Next semester Wa-Hi plans to implement the program beginning with 20 students selected by the Math Dept.

Board recognizes Walla Walla educators for earning national teaching certificates

School board members last night congratulated district teachers **Rob Ahrens** (Walla Walla High School), **Bill Calhoun** (Walla Walla High School), **Arthur Curry** (Walla Walla High School), **Michelle Carpenter** (Green Park), **Diane Mires** (Green Park), **Robin Peterson** (Green Park), **Martin Telstad** (Green Park), and **Jean Tobin** (Green Park) for recently receiving certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

There are now 19 teachers in Walla Walla who have earned their National Teaching Certificate.

Requirements included authoring a detailed professional portfolio, video taping classroom instruction and passing a challenging assessment to test subject knowledge. These teachers earned a 10-year certificate and will receive a \$3,500 annual stipend.

GLAD program uses sights and sounds to teach

Armed with catchy rhythms and visuals designed to spur interest, many district elementary teachers are now using the GLAD program to help second language learners acquire English and subject content knowledge.

Last night Bilingual Coordinator **Diana Erickson** and teachers **Kim Doepker, Terri Gilbert** and **Janifer Sams** reviewed the program and even did a rhythm "chant" many hip hop artists would have been proud of to demonstrate a GLAD learning strategy.

Edison Bond Tidbit

Edison's current entrance is on one of Walla Walla's busiest streets — Alder. To improve safety and traffic flow, plans call for moving Edison's entrance to Hobson Street.

This will also improve parent drop-off and pick-up efforts.