

October 2 • School Board Meeting Recap

Board supports Simple Majority issue

School board members passed Resolution #14-2007, EHJR, Simple Majority Tuesday night to officially go on the record in support of the November 6 ballot issue.

“BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Walla Walla School District No. 140 strongly supports EHJR 4204 to allow citizens throughout the state to support student learning and success through simple majority approval of school levies,” the resolution states. (see more -- district website.)

EHJR 4204 Facts

How does Washington’s current school levy system work? Currently, local school levies must receive both a 60% supermajority approval and meet the 40% validation requirement to pass.

What would EHJR 4204 do? EHJR 4204 would amend the Washington State Constitution and would provide that a simple majority of voters (50% + 1) could authorize local school district levies.

The amendment also removes the 40% election validation requirement for levy elections. It does NOT apply to school bond elections. EHJR 4204 will be on the November 6 ballot.

What do school levies pay for? Local levies support school needs. Our levy pays for approximately 14 percent of the District’s operating budget.

What happens if school levies don’t pass? Some school levies have failed because they do not meet the supermajority requirement. Levy failures can result in budget cuts, which require program cuts, staff and/or teacher layoffs, and other disruptions.

Board discusses 2008 M&O Levy

School board members conducted a public work session last night to begin looking at M&O Levy rates and amounts. Although a date has not been set, the district is expected to put a four-year, replacement M&O levy proposal on the ballot this winter.

The district’s four-year levy expires in December of 2008. Funds from the proposed 2008 levy would replace levy funds approved by voters in 2004.

“It’s important to remind voters this is a replacement levy,” School Board President **Anne Golden** said. “We are not asking the community for something new.”

More information will be coming out to staff and the community later this fall.

What do school levies pay for? Local levies support school needs. Our levy pays for approximately 14 percent of the District’s operating budget. In Walla Walla, the M&O levy helps to support education programs and school operations such as:

- approximately 30 additional teachers
- approximately 50 additional non-certified staff
- school safety staff
- elementary music specialists
- health clinicians
- library-media specialists
- elementary physical education specialists
- school supplies
- building maintenance
- technology
- athletics
- transportation for school activities

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the board meeting of September 18, 2007, Personnel Report, Out of State travel, and PSE Negotiated Agreement for 2007-08.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Classified) **Cynthia Briggs**, Para-Educator, Walla Walla High School
Eilin Conover, Bus Assistant/Para-Educator, Transportation/Lincoln
Rosa Coronado, Records Clerk/Home Visitor, Special Programs
Scott Harvey, Custodian, Walla Walla High School
Megan Wysong, Para-Educator, Walla Walla High School

• Resignations/Retirements

Muriel Duncan, Kindergarten, Sharpstein, 28 years

• Out of State Travel

Rob Ahrens to attend High School Visitation in St. Louis, MO (Funding: I-728)

Nancy Withycombe to attend Response to Intervention Site Visits in Knoxville, TN (Funding: Principal's Travel)

Quote of the Week

"Have the courage to live. Anyone can die."

Robert Cody

Head Start/ECEAP programs help kids catch up

District Head Start/ECEAP Director **Donna Painter** reported to school board members students entering the district's program are on average 20 months behind other children academically and developmentally.

"We have a tremendous job to do to get these kids caught up," Painter said. "Children enter our program with very limited skills in social, emotional, literacy, math, science, and oral communication."

The district's program serves 213 students, ages three to five years, at Blue Ridge and Green Park Elementary schools. Families must be living in poverty to receive these services for their children. Head Start is now 40 years old and is funded through federal dollars.

Painter said parent involvement is a key component of the program. She said parents make program decisions, serve on the policy council, attend monthly meetings and volunteer in the classrooms.

"I'm amazed at the growth I see in parents who are in the program," Painter said. "They provide leadership and even gain job readiness skills."

Students attend 3.25 hour sessions -- AM or PM -- Monday through Thursday. Staff work Fridays. They participate in professional development, review student progress, attend planning meetings and make home visits.

Painter thanked school board members for their support of the program and encouraged people to visit the program to learn more.

Wa-Hi teacher honored by WSU

Class of 2007 Walla Walla High School graduate **Kaori Lynn Graybeal**, a current Washington State University freshman, named **Gary Peasley** as the teacher who made the greatest difference in her life and education.

WSU students who were selected as Regents Scholars were asked by the WSU education program to nominate a former teacher for this special WSU recognition.

Peasley and his family were invited to attend a special dinner banquet at WSU. Peasley was given a special plaque in recognition of this honor and four WSU football tickets for the night game against the University of Idaho.

"Anytime a student or past student says something nice about you it fills you up," Peasley said. "It reminds you of the powerful influence teachers can have on kids and their lives and the awesome responsibility that comes with it."

Happy 70th Anniversary Edison!



Edison Principal **Nancy Withycombe** (R) looks through past school annuals with **Chris (Ferrel) Bishop** during last week's 70th Anniversary Celebration.

Bishop is a member of Edison's Class of 1969.

Alumni were recognized during a special program in the gym.

Guests went on school tours and were treated to cake and punch.

Cross Country Team Fun Run

Tuesday, October 9

4:00 p.m.

(3:00 to 3:45 p.m registration)

Murr Sports Park

(corner of Fern & Abbott Road)

• Running categories:

Grades K-2 (1/2 mile - 4:00 p.m. start)

Grades 3-5 (1 mile - 4:20 p.m. start)

Grade 6 (1 mile - 4:40 p.m start)

• Plaque presentation at 4:55 p.m.

• Participation fee - one can of food

• Transportation NOT provided