

Boggs earns doctorate degree



Assistant Superintendent **Linda Boggs** earned her Doctorate of Education degree from Washington State University and will participate in graduation ceremonies Saturday, December 13 at 10 a.m. at the Beasley Coliseum in Pullman, WA. Boggs' doctorate program research was on gendered leadership. Boggs also holds a superintendent's certificate.

"I've had friendship, guidance, influence and encouragement from people I work with, parents and community members throughout this journey," Dr. Boggs said. "It was especially meaningful for me that former Walla Walla Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Dennis Ray and former Garrison Middle School Principal Dr. Jim Howard served on my dissertation committee. They've been mentors throughout my professional career."

Dr. Boggs says she has no definite plans for the near future, but states serving as a superintendent remains a goal.

Board approves boundary revisions

School board members approved boundary revisions per recommendations from the district's Boundary Review Committee culminating more than one year of study.

The changes take effect next school year. The new boundaries will increase Edison Elementary enrollment for the new school, maintain neighborhood schools, and balance enrollment in district elementary schools. The plan also offers a grandfather option for 2009 for 4th and 5th grade students.

The district continues to study the possibility of revising the middle school boundaries to incorporate a "feeder school" model:

- Pioneer Middle School = Edison, Berney, Green Park
- Garrison Middle School = Blue Ridge, Prospect Pt, Sharpstein

No action was taken on the middle school feeder model. Special thanks to the Boundary Review Committee and its chairs **Chris Gardea** and **Dana Jones**.

District plans Holiday Food Drive

Who: Food donations support the Blue Mountain Action Council Food Bank (cash donations also accepted - make checks payable to BMAC Food Bank)

What: Holiday Food Drive — Project Goal: 40,000 lbs.

When: December 1st - 19th

Where: Collection sites at Walla Walla Public Schools (Types of food: Non-perishable items)

Why: In these tough economic times, more than half of the students attending Walla Walla Public Schools live in poverty. Join us in helping make a difference for families in our community, so nobody goes hungry during this holiday season.

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the Nov. 4, 2008 board meeting, Personnel Report, Nov. Bills and Payroll, and AVID Grant Application.
- heard a report from Edison Elementary on this fall's student goal setting sessions and follow-up parent conferences.
- elected Mary Jo Geidl school board president and Cindy Meyer school board vice president, effective Dec. 16.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Classified) **J. Carlos Martinez**, Para-Educator, Blue Ridge
Margaret Fazzari, Para-Educator, Prospect Point
Kristin Richard, Para-Educator, Prospect Point and Blue Ridge

• Resignations/retirements

(Classified) **Ginny Schneider**, Para-Educator, Sharpstein (21 years) -- (effective December 31, 2008)

• Out of State Travel

Lucy Gregoire to attend 2009 International Conference on Education (Funding: Staff Achievement Grant, Professional Growth, Personal)

Quote of the Week

“Creative intelligence in its various forms and activities is what makes man.”

James Harvey Robinson

Elementary report cards to look different this fall

District to begin using standards-based model

When elementary report cards come out later this month, parents may be surprised to see a new look. Instead of the bulky forms used in the past, the new 21st Century report cards will be easier to understand and more efficient for teachers to complete.

The new elementary report cards will be graded on a standards-based model using a four-point rubric: above standard = 4, meets standard = 3, below standard = 2, at risk = 1. Report cards will also feature daily attendance and tardies.

“In the past, there was a lot of information and different rating scales used that were very confusing to families,” said Sharpstein Elementary Instructional Coach Kerri Coffman, who is serving as the Electronic Report Card (Easy Grade Pro) Committee Co-Chair. “Our ultimate goal is to have a standards-based reporting system that is tightly aligned with state requirements.”

All elementary classroom teachers attended two training sessions in August or September, led by Green Park Second Grade Teacher Martin Telstad, who is also recognized as a master technology teacher. He manipulated the Easy Grade Pro software to meet Walla Walla Public Schools individual needs and is scheduling additional training throughout the school year as needed for elementary staff.

“He’s done an amazing job,” Coffman said. “For many people, learning new things on the computer can be terrifying and he’s been very patient and so thorough in his training. He’s available for whatever we need.”

Middle and high school teachers have been using electronic gradebooks and online grades for the past few years and parent feedback pushed for this option at the elementary grade levels, according to Coffman.

“Teachers want to do what’s best for our kids and their families and are working hard on this new process,” Coffman said. “Change is never easy, but with the support we have in place we will do what it takes to be successful. We’ve listened to parents and they want more access to their child’s academic progress. We live in an age of instant information and schools need to keep up with this demand. We’re raising 21st Century kids and they deserve the tools that are available.”

The district’s goal is to offer Online Grades for all elementary classrooms beginning in the fall of 2009. Parents will receive access information and training as part of the unveiling of this new program.

“There is still work to do this spring in developing the standards-based reporting system,” Coffman said. “We know teachers will need more professional development and we want to make sure it’s done right once we bring it online.”

Prevention key to safe schools

Preventing, managing and recovering from a crisis continues to be the charge of the district’s Safe and Civil Schools Committee.

Last night Assistant Superintendent **Dr. Linda Boggs** and Safe Schools Committee Prevention Specialist **Mark Thompson** reported to school board members on progress in schools promoting civility and respectful schools.

All schools have established core values emphasizing the need for civility in schools and the link between feeling safe and learning.

Administrators have pledged to support this effort and are working with teachers to develop strategies for intervening when students demonstrate poor behavior.

Students are being empowered and trained through this process to be leaders and peer mentors to help curb abusive behavior and bullying.

The Safe and Civil Schools Committee is also working to ensure all required emergency drills are completed, emergency plans are updated, staff and student training occurs and grief counselors are in place to lend support should a crisis strike.

Garrison does “whatever it takes”

Garrison Middle School Principal **Gina Yonts** and Assistant Principal **Josh Wolcott** reported to school board members last night students will be taking more ownership in their education through student led conferences.

Students have developed portfolios to use as a tool during their discussions with parents and teachers. Students are challenged to express their strengths and weaknesses and set goals.

The goal setting model requires students, parents and teachers to find common ground on targets and then chart progress throughout the school year.

Yonts and Wolcott thanked teachers for embracing the change and said they are excited about next week’s conferences.