

February 5 • School Board Meeting Recap

Refinancing of bonds to save thousands

Move expected to save taxpayers \$400,000

Board members last night took the first step to save taxpayers an estimated \$400,000 by refinancing existing district bonds.

Interim Business Manager **Pat Johnston** said low interest rates make the timing right to refinance. Seattle Northwest Securities is assisting the district throughout this two month process. Johnston said there are several steps the district must complete before the bonds get new, lower interest rates.

C.A.S.T program hinges on teamwork

Elementary teachers, specialists and principals now have a “running record” of each student thanks to the Collaborative Academic Support Team or C.A.S.T.

Last night Berney Elementary Principal **David Talley** and School Psychologist **Maria Garcia** updated the school board on the program designed to improve the information sharing process.

Talley praised the work of District Assessment Director **Ron Higgins** and District Math Director **Chris Gardea** for developing a dynamic database that groups the vast assessment data into one source. Talley said this tool is key to the successful program.

The database also has a “note” function so narrative information on each child’s needs can be documented and shared with teachers and support specialists.

Talley said all elementary schools are using the system and have dedicated time each month to use the program. The data helps schools develop programs to meet the needs of at risk students via group interventions.

Telephone notification system update

Communications Director **Mark Higgins** and Technology Director **Janis Barton** provided the school board a mid-year progress report on the district’s new telephone notification system.

The notification system was introduced to offer more school information to parents and staff. The district is also capable of sending out instant notifications in case of emergencies or during school closures.

Feedback on the district’s new telephone notification service for parents and staff has generally been very positive according to Higgins. He noted the system has not been perfect and there is room for improvement.

Long delays before a message is played or no message at all is the most significant issue, he said. The district has been working with US NetCom to troubleshoot technical problems and to develop information for parents and staff on how to better use the system.

Suggestions to improve service

- Look for US NetCom Caller ID Telephone Number: 417-782-1996 (some ID systems read - Missouri)
- Always say hello (This system is VOICE activated)
- Give the system a few seconds to play message
- If possible, set answering machine to pick up on the 5th ring (It won’t leave a message if set to 6th ring or more — also clear message box to ensure there is enough space)
- If you miss a message, call 417-782-1996 to retrieve
- Contact school secretary to report problems

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the board meetings of January 15, 2008, Personnel Report, Out of State travel, revision of Policies No. 2161 (Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students), and No. 5231 (Length of Workday), and the sale of the final Edison parcel.
- received for first reading New Policy No. 2163 (Special Education response to Intervention).
- approved Resolution #1-2008, Washington State School Bond Guarantee.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Classified) **Michelle Beito**, Para-Educator, Green Park

• Resignations/Retirements

(Certificated) **Rilke Klingsporn**, Math Teacher, Pioneer, 4 years

(Classified) **Kay McCauley**, Secretary, Music Dept. 25 years

• Out of State Travel

Elaine Bluhm to attend Creative Leadership in Las Vegas, NV (Funding: Staff Achievement and Professional Growth)

Gay Buissink to attend JEA/NSPA Spring National High School Convention in Anaheim, CA (Funding: Vocational)

Pat Griffith to attend SchoolDude University in Myrtle Beach, SC (Funding: Professional Growth)

Quote of the Week

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson

Voters receive ballots for Replacement Levy

Voters should have received their ballots in the mail last weekend for the four-year replacement levy. The district also sent out fact sheets to all community members with information on the measure. If you need more information, visit the district's website at www.wvps.org.

Replacement Levy Facts

- Replaces levy funding nearly 68 percent of voters approved in 2004
- Provides 14 percent of district's operating budget
- Helps maintain existing programs and activities
- Pays for 30 teachers and 50 support staff members
- Funds all extra-curricular activities
- Ballots must be postmarked by midnight February 19

School Board Committee Assignments -- 2008

Max Carrera	Safe Schools Career/Technical Education Classified Negotiations (w/Cindy Meyer)
Mary Jo Geidl	Head Start Policy Council Extracurricular Supervisors Negotiations Administrative Negotiations
Anne Golden	Curriculum Advisory and Instructional Materials Certificated Negotiations (w/Jim Lehmann) Legislative Representative Boundary (NEW) Facilities (NEW)
Jim Lehmann	WIAA Liaison Certificated Negotiations (w/Anne Golden) Technology/Telecommunications
Cindy Meyer	Explorer Advisory Committee PTA Council Classified Negotiations (w/Max Carrera)

Wa-Hi Principal Master of Ceremonies at 'Sweethearts for Kids' benefit luncheon

Walla Walla High School Principal Darcy Weisner will serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the Sweethearts for Kids benefit luncheon sponsored by the Children's Home Society of Washington. Weisner is in his second year as principal at Wa-Hi.

Weisner spent 20 years as a high school classroom teacher in four school districts throughout the state of Washington.

He has extensive educational training in clinical supervision, Understanding by Design, Mentor Matters, and developing small learning communities within large comprehensive high school settings.

He earned his Administrative Certification from Washington State University, Master of Arts in Education Degree from Lesley University, and completed his undergraduate studies at Western Washington University with a major in history and minor in Social Studies.

He also has been a successful high school basketball coach.

'Sweethearts for Kids' Event Fact Sheet

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 20 (11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Location: Marcus Whitman Conference Center (6 W. Rose St.)

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Doug Barram

Master of Ceremonies: Darcy Weisner

Information: 529-2130

Proceeds: All proceeds benefit Walla Walla Children's Home Society programs