

Board votes to keep Big Nine all 4A

When Big Nine principals and athletic directors gather to vote later this month or in early December on whether to make the conference a combined 3A/4A league, they'll get a clear message from the Walla Walla School board -- *thanks, but no thanks*.

School board members, per recommendation of Athletic Director **Don Wilkins** and Principal **Brian Pendleton**, voted unanimously last night to keep the Big Nine Conference an all 4A league.

The push to combine the league with both 3A and 4A schools came after the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association last April passed an amendment to change school classifications which are based on enrollment. The amendment attempts to create more equity by having schools with similar enrollment counts competing against each other.

Wilkins and Pendleton said a combined 3A/4A league would compromise the Big Nine conference and penalize the larger schools who would have to compete against lesser competition. Wilkins also said statements that a 3A/4A league would cut costs and travel time were inaccurate. The vote is expected in the coming weeks.

Staff prepare for next week's fall conferences

Assistant Superintendent **Linda Boggs** reported to school board members staff are working hard to prepare for next week's Parent/Teacher conferences. She said these are busy days for district teachers.

"Our teachers are anxious to share information with families," Boggs said. "These are high stress times for teachers. It takes a tremendous amount of work and energy to be prepared."

Fall Conference student schedule

- Early release (Elementary only) Friday, Nov. 4
- No school (All students) November 9, 10 & 11

November 1 • School Board Meeting Recap

American Education event planned

Communications Director **Mark Higgins** reported on the district's *American Education Week Celebration* event scheduled for later this month. Now in its fourth year, the event is closely aligned with Goal 2 of the district's Strategic Plan and expects to bring in 100 community members to gain a better understanding of the district's mission, successes, challenges, and needs.

Thursday, November 17

10 a.m. to 12 noon

- Visit the school of your choice
- Meet students, tour classrooms
- Eat school lunch with students

Please contact Communications Director Mark Higgins if you know of someone who might like to participate.

Facilities Study Community Forums

Higgins also reported on two community forums scheduled this month to discuss and get input on the district's proposed 25-Year Facilities Improvement Plan.

Thursday, November 17

- Edison Elementary School

Tuesday, November 29

- Walla Walla High School Commons

Both events: 6:15 to 8:00 p.m.

***Child care will be provided

***Translation services provided

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the regular board meeting October 18, 2005, Personnel Report, Out of Endorsement Teaching Assignments.
- scheduled a special work session **Tuesday, December 6** at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the district's 25-Year Facilities Improvement Plan and possible bond resolution.

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Certificated) - NONE TO REPORT

(Classified) - **Armida Contreras**, Bilingual Asst. Secretary, Wa-Hi

• Resignations/Retirements - NONE TO REPORT

• Leave of Absence

Mindy Meyer, English Teacher, Wa-Hi, 14 years

(Mindy is requesting a leave from her .6 FTE teaching position January 1 - June 30, 2006 to take advantage of the opportunity to be the Project Manager for CSTP's New Teacher Retention project.)

• Out of State Travel - NONE TO REPORT

Structure key to Prospect Point behavior program

Staff members from the Prospect Point Behavior Program reported to school board members on the positive impact they are having on students in the program.

The program for students with severe behavior issues features two self-contained classrooms for students kindergarten through fifth grade. Each classroom supports five to six students annually.

Teacher **Steve Droke** said the most important feature of this behavior modification program is structure.

"Behavior must be taught," Droke said.

The district began a behavior program 14 years ago to better serve students with these special needs.

The district's program is based heavily on incentives. Students are able to earn credits for good behavior which allow them to get rewards.

Many of these students struggle with transitions, so many of the activities are reinforced with routine.

Staff members said forgiveness is also a key to the program's success.

Blue Ridge Millennials Program provides extra support

Blue Ridge Principal **Connie Taylor Randall** and Millennials 21st Century Grant Coordinator **Erica Swingholm** reported last night the program designed to provide additional support to students is making a difference at their school.

Now in year three of a five year grant, the Millennials program offers tutoring before and afterschool to help students improve their academic and social

skills. Students participating in the program meet in the library, computer lab, cafeteria and gym. The Monday through Thursday program operates from 7 to 8 a.m. and 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Swingholm said they also started a lunch recess program featuring art activities and games to help students build relationships and have fun.

Students get up to 20 hours of extended school day per week. Transportation is also provided to help make the program stronger.

District Special Education WASL scores improve

Teaching and Learning Director **Oscar Graybill** reported last night on the significant improvement in district special education Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores.

Graybill praised Special Education Coordinator **Laura Droke** and district special education teachers and support staff for the improve-

ments. Graybill said the district's 795 special education students are making progress in all subject areas. He stressed the district takes them from their current academic level and helps them move forward.

He said Washington state changes coming this year to allow students to be tested according to their developmental level will spur further gains.

Quote of the Week

"Human systems grow toward what persistently ask questions about."

David Cooperrider

Superintendent Coffee Hour - Garrison

Join Superintendent **Rich Carter** for his monthly Coffee Hour. This month Rich will meet in the Garrison Middle School library, Friday, November 4 from 8:15 to 9:15 a.m.

This is an excellent opportunity to discuss school issues and talk about district goals and programs.

Wa-Hi Varsity Football - KTEL 1490 AM

(Wa-Hi vs. Southridge - Thursday night)

Tune to KTEL 1490 AM for Thursday's Big Nine varsity football match-up -- Wa-Hi vs. Southridge. Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m.

Superintendent to discuss facilities

Superintendent **Rich Carter** will be presenting at staff meetings this month to discuss the district's 25-Year Facilities Improvement plan and to get input from staff on these issues.

Carter begins his series today at Edison and Wa-Hi. Staff members will also be surveyed at the end of the month to weigh in on their opinions regarding facilities decisions.

School closure information online

Winter is on its way! Check the district website for up-to-the-minute school closure information. Delay or closure messages are posted by 6:15 a.m.

Remember to Vote!
Tuesday, November 8

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'Keeping Our Team Informed'