

Thousands of elementary students to meet authors

Walla Walla Kids Read events Thursday and Friday

Walla Walla Kids Read will host nationally known authors David Shannon and N.E. Bode March 19 and 20 as all district elementary students will trek to Cordiner Hall to meet and hear from these successful authors.

Last night Green Park Library-Media Specialist **Michelle Shaul** and local author and Walla Walla Kids Read originator **Patrick Carman** briefed school board members on the activities. This year's line up is expected to entertain and educate thousands of local students. Shaul said this is a rare opportunity.

"It's not often you get to hear your heroes speak," Shaul said. "Hearing an author speak is magic. You get to meet the person that created something you love. You get to hear the story behind the story."

Walla Walla Kids Read is designed to inspire every K-5 child in the Walla Walla valley by bringing students to a world class facility to hear a well known author. All costs, including busing of students to and from the event, are paid for by Walla Walla Kids Read. Shaul says local author Patrick Carman is the engine behind Walla Walla Kids Read.

"Patrick Carman is the magical person behind all of this. He pays for the busing, author fees and tours. He organized the umbrella for the entire Walla Walla Kids Read program."

Summary of Walla Walla Kids Read events:

Thursday and Friday: Elementary students visit Cordiner Hall to meet nationally known authors David Shannon and N.E. Bode

Free Public Event - Friday, March 20

- "Meet The Authors" -- David Shannon and N.E. Bode
- Location: Walla Walla Public Library
- Time: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Jordan details principal hiring process

Deputy Superintendent **Dr. Bill Jordan** reported to school board members last night on the process being used to hire new principals at Berney and Blue Ridge Elementary Schools.

Jordan said only in-district candidates are being considered at this time. The Berney position has closed and the Blue Ridge position closes Thursday.

He said candidates for both positions will participate in a day long selection process Monday, March 23. Hiring teams will include staff and parent representatives from each school.

The selection process will include five areas:

1. Present a presentation
2. Observe a video-taped classroom lesson
3. Meet one-on-one with Superintendent Carter
4. Complete a written exercise
5. Work with other candidates on an issue

No hiring announcement date has been set.

School Retirees' Appreciation Week

School board members honored retired employees last night as part of School Retirees' Appreciation Week - March 9-13.

Retired employees' president **Harriet Michaels** was in attendance to represent the retired employees. Michaels said retired employees remain committed to advancing public education and she thanked the school board for their continued support.

In other School Board meeting business...

Board members:

- approved minutes of the March 3, 2009 board meeting and Personnel Report, Out-of-State travel, March Bills and Payroll, February Financial Report, and the school board meeting schedule: July-December, 2009 (see back).
- approved a revision of Policy 3130/District Attendance Areas, Open Enrollment and Employees' Student Placement.
- received an update from Superintendent Carter on the district's budget process. Staff will receive information today during staff meetings on the budget process. Carter stressed no budget decisions have been made and no cuts to programs or staff have been decided. Budget information will also be posted on the district website. www.wwps.org.

Personnel Report

• **New Hires** - Sandra Yates, Food Service Assistant, Lincoln Alternative HS

• Resignations/retirements

(Administrative)

Laura Droke, Director of Special Education, Special Programs - 18 years

(Certificated)

Beverly Allen, Business Education, Lincoln, 9 years

Heather Babbitt, Fourth Grade, Prospect Point Elementary, 5 years

- Heather was on a leave of absence for the 2008-09 school year

Gail Callahan, Title I Reading Specialist, Blue Ridge, 40 years

Karen Sinclair-Okerlund, Language Arts/Reading, Garrison, 19 years

Kris Takemura, Kindergarten, Prospect Point, 19 years

(Classified)

Mariela Lopez, Assistant Secretary, Prospect Point, 8 years

- Mariela was on a leave of absence for the 2008-09 school year

Veronica Rosales, Intervention Specialist, Blue Ridge Elementary, 6 months

• Out of State Travel

Barbara Buttice to receive the ProStart Educator Excellence Award in Chicago, IL (Funding: Vocational)

Pam Amo to attend Developmental Skills Training in Tiburon, CA (Funding: Professional Growth)

Quote of the Week

"The real leader has no need to lead - he is content to point the way."

Henry Miller

District brings parents together to enhance networking opportunities

Last night school board member **Cindy Meyer** reported to her fellow board members on the district's efforts to enhance parent networking opportunities. Last week Meyer, who serves at the PTA liaison for the school board, and Communications Director **Mark Higgins** held parent networking meetings with elementary and secondary PTA officers and parent leaders.

Meyer said the meetings were an attempt to help PTA leaders and parents network with their peers from other schools. PTA leaders talked about sharing materials, collaborating on parent education events, and working more closely with their school and district administration.

She said parents stressed the need for improved communication, recruitment of parent volunteers and better coordination of school activities and parent involvement opportunities. Parents are encouraged to contact their PTA leaders, school principal or Mark Higgins for more information on how to get involved.

Food Service update

Food Services Director **Pam Milleson** provided school board members with an overview of her department during last night's meeting.

Her department has prepared more than 200,000 breakfast meals so far this year and more than a half a million lunches to date.

Milleson said her staff works hard to prepare healthy, delicious, low cost meals. Approximately 52% of district students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Homelink - Connecting with Families, Students and Schools

Homelink teachers **Valerie Gentzler** and **Pam Clayton** reported to school board members on the Homelink Program located at Berney Elementary. Several Homelink students presented why they love Homelink. Students said the program pushes them academically and is fun.

This year the school features a new online program through K12 Inc. which has boosted enrollment to 120 students, up 40 from this time last year. Online learning options through the K12 Curriculum for grades K-8, include: language arts, literature, history, math, music

Homelink also offers classes on campus two days a week: Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday. Campus courses include science, art, writing, primary reading/writing, and physical education.

Community based enrichment opportunities in Spanish, geography, drama, sign language, art, and dancing.

For more information on Homelink, visit the district website at: www.wwps.org.

School Board Meetings July - December 2009

- Tuesday, July 21
- Tuesday, August 18
- Tuesday, September 1
- Tuesday, September 15
- Tuesday, October 6
- Tuesday, October 20
- Tuesday, November 3
- Tuesday, November 17
- Tuesday, December 15

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., unless rescheduled by the school board. Additional meetings may be scheduled as necessary.