



SCHOOL BEAT

An e-news update for school district staff

February 2, 2007

District News

Voters to decide on bond, levy proposals in Feb. 6 special election

Voters go to the polls Feb. 6 to decide on two Seattle School District ballot measures – Proposition 1, a \$490 million Capital Program Bond; and Proposition 2, a \$397 million Educational Programs and Operations Levy.

The Capital Program Bond replaces an expiring capital levy and provides funds for the design, construction, and renovation of school facilities, infrastructure and technology improvements throughout the district. The measure includes a program to renovate or replace four high schools, two middle schools, and one K-8 school.

The Educational Programs and Operations Levy, which replaces the expiring 2004 levy, represents 24 percent of the district's annual general fund budget and supports basic educational services not fully funded by the state. The levy will help pay for instructional programs, technology support, student activities, staff salaries, bilingual and special-education services, continuation of full-day kindergarten, student transportation, and security and maintenance for school buildings and grounds.

For more information on the bond and levy propositions, visit the [Seattle Public Schools Web site](#). For information on the ballot measures, validation requirements, polling places, absentee ballots, and results schedule, visit the [King County Elections Web site](#).

Student make-up days scheduled for Feb. 2, March 16, June 21-22

Seattle Public Schools students will make up four of the five school days missed because of inclement weather on Feb. 2, March 16, June 21, and June 22. The District will apply to the state to waive the requirement for a fifth student day due to the state of emergency declared for Dec. 15.

While the last day for students will be Friday, June 22, staff will work during the week of Monday, June 25 to make up the missed professional development days and the December waiver day. Individual buildings may make this time up on other days as per the negotiated agreement.

The revised [calendar](#), renegotiated between the District and the Seattle Education

Association, aligns with feedback received from parents/guardians and teachers. For more information, visit the District's [News & Calendar](#) page.

Board approves profile, requirements for next Superintendent

National search begins next week; deadline to turn in application is March 13

The School Board at a Jan. 31 meeting unanimously adopted the profile that will guide recruitment of candidates for the next Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools. The profile identifies desired qualities and qualifications based on input from parents, district employees, community members, city leaders and representatives of community organizations.

Superintendent Raj Manhas announced in October that he will be leaving the district at the end of the 2006-07 school year.

More information about the profile and qualifications can be found in the District's [news release](#) or at the District's [News & Calendar Web site](#).

School Board approves Metro buses for nearly all high schools

Total changeover expected in three years

The Seattle School Board approved a proposal that will – within three years – allow nearly all Seattle high school students who take the traditional bus to school to ride King County Metro buses. It is estimated the change will save the School District nearly \$1 million a year.

Under the plan, Chief Sealth, Rainier Beach and Roosevelt high school students will travel to school on Metro buses in 2007-08, followed by Garfield, West Seattle, and Ingraham high schools in 2008-09 and Cleveland High School in 2009-10. Students attending the Bilingual Orientation Center and special-needs students will continue to receive regular school bus service.

High school students at Nathan Hale, Ballard, Franklin, John Marshall, The Center School, Nova, Middle College, South Lake, Summit, and Interagency, are now using Metro bus services.

Bilingual Office to offer foreign language assistance

The Bilingual Office is developing Chinese partial immersion courses at Beacon Hill, Graham Hill and John Muir elementary schools. The courses will be offered at Beacon Hill beginning Feb. 6 where kindergartners and 1st-grade students will attend classes every day for 30 minutes. Similar courses will start after the mid-winter break at Graham Hill and John Muir.

In addition, the Bilingual Office – with help from several partnerships, grants and programs – is developing several summer camps for teachers so they can qualify for a conditional teaching certificate. Languages to be offered include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Russian, Farsi and Turkish.

Staff members Betty Lau and Beth Roodhouse are coordinating the camps. For information, contact Lau at belau@seattleschools.org; or Roodhouse at vbroodhouse@seattleschools.org or 252-0162.

Around the Community

\$150,000 grant helps students become powerful readers, writers

The Alliance for Education, a non-profit organization supporting academic achievement in Seattle Public Schools, announced on Jan. 23 that it granted \$150,000 to support an innovative teaching method that helps students become powerful and independent readers and writers.

The Readers and Writers Workshop, which has gained national recognition for its effectiveness at other schools, will be introduced in seven Seattle schools – Hamilton, Madison, Meany, Mercer, and Whitman middle schools, Madrona K-8, and Salmon Bay K-8.

During the summer of 2006, staff from Columbia Teachers College in New York City trained 90 Seattle Public Schools teachers in the workshop. In fall 2007, the School District will incorporate the reading portion of the workshop, in which students practice reading with books specific to their independent reading level.

Designated classrooms — two at each school — will serve as models for other classrooms and schools as the workshop expands to middle schools across the District in subsequent years.

A major element of the workshop approach is that students and teachers focus intensively on writing for long blocks of time throughout the school week. Students are encouraged to use their own personal stories to drive their writing, and are given ample on-the-spot opportunities for sharing with teachers and other students. This method is designed to help teachers act as mentors and coaches for students as they learn to become powerful and independent readers and writers.

The John Stanford Endowment Fund, established by the Alliance following the death of Seattle Public Schools' Superintendent John Stanford in 1998, supports the grant. For a complete news release on the Reading and Writing Workshop grant, visit the [Alliance for Education Web site](#).

PTA members to advocate top issues during Focus Day in Olympia

On Focus Day, Feb. 15, Washington state PTA members from across the state will congregate in Olympia to advocate for changes that will positively impact children. In October 2006, a PTA delegation selected several top issues to pursue with legislators during the 2006-07 school year. Delegates said their top goals included focusing on redefining and fully funding K-12 education; and strengthening math and science instruction.

Members from Washington state PTA Region 6 will charter a bus for the day. The Seattle Council is underwriting the cost for Seattle PTSA bus-riders on a space-available basis, with first priority to one PTA representative from each school.

Additional information, bus departure times and locations, and the bus registration form are on the [Seattle Council PTSA Web site](#).

WSPTA Focus Day in Olympia

All day, Thursday, Feb. 15
General Administration Building Auditorium
210 11th Ave. S.W., Olympia

D'Amelio takes over as new president of Alliance for Education

Patrick D'Amelio, former president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of King & Pierce Counties, began his job as the new president of the Alliance for Education on Jan. 15.

"Patrick's commitment to helping children in this region and his outstanding non-profit leadership skills make him the right person to be the next leader of Alliance for Education," said Judith Runstad, member of the Alliance's board of directors and chair of its CEO search committee. "We are very pleased that Patrick has decided to bring his talent, experience, and passion for service to the Alliance."

Alliance Board Chair, Chase Morgan, added, "Patrick impressed us with his grasp of the situation we face as a community struggling to put kids first. He is an energetic leader with a wonderful ability to convene key stakeholders and build a common agenda for change. As an organization that advocates for policies and resources that help children in Seattle Public Schools, the Alliance sought a leader with just those qualities."

Robin Pasquarella, former Alliance president and CEO, retired at the end of 2006 after serving 11 years in the position. For more information, visit the [Alliance for Education Web site](#).

Mayor's Scholars Program seeks middle school students

All exceptional middle school students are invited to compete for the Mayor's Scholars program. Students must be in good standing, have overcome obstacles or met challenges in their lives, and demonstrated commitment to the community through their school, neighborhood, religious organizations, or other activities.

Mayor's Scholars will receive a Mayor's Scholars letterman's jacket and \$500 to contribute to the charity or cause of their choice, or to further their education.

Each year, about 20 awards are given to middle school students who are responsible and generous community members, give to society, and lead by their examples. The program is open to any student living in and attending middle school in Seattle. The application deadline is 4 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 27.

For more information, contact the City's Office for Education at 233-5118. Applications are also available at the City's [Neighborhood Service Centers](#), [community centers](#) and [branch libraries](#). The application can be downloaded from: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education/MayorsScholars.htm>

Celebrations

Golden Apple Award winners to be featured in Feb. 22 broadcast *KCTS honors Cuauhtemoc Escobedo, Meg Mahoney for work in education*

Two Seattle Public School teachers, who received the prestigious Golden Apple Award, will be recognized during a broadcast at 8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 22 on KCTS-TV Channel 9.

Cuauhtemoc Escobedo, a band/jazz instructor at Eckstein Middle School, and Meg Mahoney, a dance instructor at Wing Luke Elementary School, were formally honored Jan. 19 at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle.

The teachers were recognized for making a positive difference in Washington state education. They received \$250 and a "Golden Apple" statuette. PEMCO Insurance, which helps fund the program, also gave each winner a \$1,500 grant to support their classrooms, schools, or educational programs.

For more information on the award-winners, visit the [KCTS Web site](#).

Seattle Public Schools to expand successful Healthy Eating Initiative

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded Seattle Public Schools a \$50,000 grant to expand a Healthy Eating Initiative piloted at T.T. Minor Elementary School. Over the past 18 months, T.T. Minor staff noticed positive changes in student health, behavior and readiness to learn as a result of a innovative nutrition program.

The success of this program lies in creating an environment that supports healthy eating, which includes:

- a 20-hour-a-week on-site nutritionist;
- policy changes that support good nutrition;
- access to healthy foods through a free fruit and vegetable snack program;

- nutrition education that is integrated into the core curriculum; and
- the development of community partnerships that support a healthy school environment.

Evaluation of this project shows that students are eating healthier, have greater nutrition knowledge and ask for healthier food in the home setting. A survey shows overwhelming staff support for the program.

This spring, District Nutrition staff will seek five to 10 schools to participate in a similar program. Schools that choose to participate will begin implementation in the 2007-08 school year. To qualify, 50 percent or more of the student population must qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

For more information about the program, contact Nutrition Education Coordinator Kirsten Frandsen, at 252-0686.

New project help students EXCEL with increased instruction time

About 900 students in extended-day classes are participating in a new program that will help them become better readers and mathematicians – while increasing their test-taking skills.

Initiated by Chief Academic Officer Carla Santorno, Project EXCEL (Extended Classes for Extended Learning) will assist fourth- and seventh-grade students who scored just below standard on last spring's WASL. Thirty-five schools have volunteered to provide the extended-day instruction, which will run Jan. 16 through April 20.

"Instruction is focused upon reading comprehension, math content and process skills, and test-taking 'dexterity.' Students will become improved critical readers, mathematicians, and test takers – skills that will serve them well in life and on the WASL," said Joanne Testacross, project director.

For information on this program, visit the [School District's News Web site](#).

Coming Up

National African American Parent Involvement Day

Seattle Public Schools joins the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) and its local affiliate, Seattle Alliance of Black School Educators (SABSE), in support of National African American Parent Involvement Day on Feb. 12.

The day is an annual call to action for African American parents to become more involved in the education of their children by taking them to school or visiting their school. It is expected that this national observance will open up dialogue among

teachers, parents and students, which will lead to a more conducive learning environment for African American students.

For additional information, contact your child's school. Parents may also contact SABSE President Dr. Betty Howell Gray, at (425) 643-7696 or by e-mailing bettyhg@msn.com; or Pat Tolliver at 772-4916.

Sanity Circus/Positive Discipline classes

The Adams Elementary PTA and the Puget Sound Adlerian Society invites parents and teachers to attend free seven-week classes that will teach them how to have more cooperative, respectful, and joyful relationships with children and youth.

The Sanity Circus/Positive Discipline classes will be held at Adams Elementary School on Mondays, Feb. 12 - April 2. Two classes will be taught concurrently, one in Spanish and one in English.

Child care is available for potty-trained children. Parents are asked to register with PSAS, psas@att.net, noting ages of children coming for child care. For more information, call PSAS at 527-2566. Please register early so handout materials can be prepared on time. The classes are funded in part by the Horizons Foundation.

Sanity Circus/ Positive Discipline classes

7-9 p.m., Mondays, Feb. 12 – April 12 (No class Feb. 19)
Adams Elementary School
6110 28th Ave. N.W.

Closing the gap: New Strategies for a changing 21st century classroom

Join the University of Washington College of Education, the UW Alumni Association and Alliance for Education for a discussion about the changing demographics in Washington schools; issues of equity; and the growing achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their more affluent peers.

The discussion will engage the community on how to reshape learning, level playing fields, and help students and teachers adapt to changing classrooms. A panel of five college researchers will present their findings, then continue the conversation with the audience.

The event is free, but advance registration is requested by using the form at the [UW Alumni Web site](#).

The event will be held at Town Hall, a community culture center at 8th Avenue and Seneca Street in the historic First Hill neighborhood. For more information, call 543-0540 or 1-800-AUW-ALUM (1-800-289-2586).

Closing the gap: New Strategies for a changing 21st century classroom

6-9 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 15

Town Hall Seattle

1119 8th Ave.

Service Learning Symposium

Seattle Public Schools is inviting teachers, administrators, support staff, community partners and coordinators to register by Feb. 9 for the Service Learning Symposium scheduled for Feb. 23.

There will be opportunities to network, as well as exciting and informative service-learning sessions. Registration is \$10 before Feb. 9 and includes lunch. Registration is \$20 after Feb. 9 or can be paid at the door.

Mail payments to: Service Learning Symposium, L. Brewer, 1242 18th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112.

Service Learning Symposium

8 a.m., Friday, Feb. 23

John Stanford Center

2445 3rd Ave. S.

Motheread/Fatheread: West Seattle

Parent and guardians are invited to attend several evening meetings beginning March 8 that will help enhance their child's reading skills through the art of storytelling and other literacy activities.

Parents will join in small groups with specially trained discussion leaders to read children's books and then talk about the images, feelings, and ideas that are conveyed in these stories. After the classes, parents can take the books home, read the stories to their children, and talk with them about the themes of the books.

Through the Motheread/Fatheread instructional approach, parents learn skills using children's books as texts and their own personal experiences as a basis for learning. The approach is an excellent way for families to strengthen both academic skills and family bonds.

For more information on Motheread/Fatheread, contact: Elizabeth McCullough at 252-8198 or by e-mailing eamuccullough@seattleschools.org

Motheread/Fatheread: West Seattle

5:30-7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 12, 19, 26

Cooper Elementary School

1901 S.W. Genesee St.

School and District Events Calendar

If you would like to know about current special school events, fund-raisers or other district events, go online to the [District Events Calendar](#) where you can see what's going on monthly at Seattle Public Schools or search for specific events by date, school and event type.

We Need Your Ideas

The Communications Office is always looking for stories on interesting classroom projects, inspirational people, or events in our schools to share with the greater Seattle community. We often highlight stories submitted by school staff for potential media coverage as well as district and community publications. For examples of stories we have published in the past, please visit this [link](#). We would like to hear from you. If you have a unique story to share, please send your ideas directly to goodnews@seattleschools.org.

In the News

For a sampling of this week's local newspaper stories on Seattle Public Schools, please go to <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/news/index.dxml>

SCHOOL BEAT is an electronic newsletter covering district and school-based news and is published twice a month for the employees of Seattle Public Schools.