



September 29, 2005

District News

Superintendent's State of the District— Superintendent Raj Manhas delivered a "State of the District" address on September 14. In his remarks, the Superintendent reviewed accomplishments of the past year and set out plans for the 2005-2006 school year and beyond. He also described the five key areas the district will focus on to accelerate academic achievement: 1) curriculum, assessment and instruction, 2) professional learning communities, 3) personalized learning for students, 4) cultural competency and, 5) family and community involvement. To see the address in its entirety, check the schedule on the [SPS TV Channel 26 website](#).

Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences gives generous grant for inquiry-based science to Seattle Public Schools—Seattle Public Schools received a \$643,000 two-year grant from the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences to expand the district's inquiry-based science program, with the option of increasing the grant to more than \$1 million over four years. In giving the grant, Dr. Simonyi continues his practice of investing in programs that have exhibited a high level of excellence. The grant will be used for K-12 inquiry-based science teacher training, as well as science materials and resources for high school students. By providing the resources for expansion, the grant will provide the vital high school component to create a robust K-12 inquiry-based science program for all students.

School Board reviewing public testimony procedure—In an effort to further two-way communication and community dialogue, the School Board proposed a change to its public testimony procedures to address the limitations of the existing process ([Policy F02.01](#)). Due to time constraints, generally only 20 individuals can speak for a maximum of three minutes. The board is not able to ask further questions, seek clarification or explanation from staff, or respond to the public's concerns. In addition, many times when a community member would

like to provide testimony regarding an action item on the agenda, they are unable to participate due to the limited number of speaking slots.

The current proposal would preserve the 60 minutes set aside for public testimony at board meetings for individuals who wish to speak on a specific item on the agenda, giving community members an opportunity to provide testimony on an action item prior to a board vote. To provide a more viable forum and dialogue on other district issues, the board would schedule an additional monthly open public meeting called "Community Conversations". The Board will reconsider the proposal at its October 5 meeting.

Water quality update—In December 2004, the School Board approved a Water Quality Policy that establishes action limits for lead and other substances in drinking water. Following extensive testing, Seattle Public Schools is in the process of implementing a comprehensive remediation plan to ensure water quality meets standards in all of our schools.

Over the past several months remediation work, and retesting, has been done at many schools. An overview of progress, updated reports for ten schools, and additional information is available on the [Water Quality website](#). The ten schools for which updated information is available include Beacon Hill, B F Day, Graham Hill, High Point, M L King, Leschi, McClure, Northbeach, Olympic View and West Woodland.

Around the Community

Comcast Executive Vice President David Cohen to present large gift to Chief Sealth High School and Denny Middle School at Comcast Cares Day—Comcast Executive Vice President David Cohen will be flying in from the company's Philadelphia headquarters to present a large gift to the principals of Chief Sealth High School and Denny Middle School at Comcast Cares Day on October 1. In addition to the mid-day presentation, 200 Comcast employees are expected for an all-day campus clean-up at both schools as part of their annual day of service program. Volunteers from the schools and from City Year will also participate. KUBE 93 FM radio will be broadcasting live from Chief Sealth and the Denny Middle School band will be performing for the volunteers.

Washington Middle School begins full-year anti-bullying program—Every other Monday until June, students at Washington Middle School will participate in the school's anti-bullying program. More than 1,000 students in grades six through eight will meet in their homerooms during a morning class period to engage in a series of lessons that address bullying prevention. The first-year curriculum was developed by the schools' anti-bullying team, which includes school administrators, staff and parents, and utilizes a class meeting format to promote active discussion and resolve pressing issues on bullying.

Superintendent joins Ballard High School Foundation to dedicate new \$254,000 greenhouse—Superintendent Raj Manhas will join members of the Ballard High School Foundation to dedicate the new greenhouse at Ballard High School on October 1. After raising the initial funds to build the greenhouse floor in 1997, the foundation kicked-off a \$254,000 fundraising drive in October 2004 to complete the project. More than 800 alumni, parents and community members contributed to the campaign and the foundation reached its fundraising goal in less than one year on June 2005. Plans for the greenhouse were originally included in the school's renovation, but they were deferred because of budget constraints. The new greenhouse will serve all the students at Ballard, including students taking botany, horticulture, biology, maritime science, biotechnology, food science, special education science and bilingual classes.

Roosevelt High School students host hoedown for hurricane relief—Roosevelt High School students organized a Friday Night Hoedown on September 21 with ticket proceeds and donations going to Hurricane Katrina relief. Students raised nearly \$3,000 at the dance and were able to donate more than \$6,000 to the American Red Cross after an anonymous donor matched the total gross ticket sales.

Celebrations

John Stanford International School receives \$10,000 School of Distinction honor from Intel and Scholastic, Inc.—John Stanford International School (JSIS) received the 2005 School of Distinction award for demonstrating exceptional commitment to achievement and innovation in education. JSIS will receive a \$10,000 cash grant from the Intel Foundation as well as curriculum materials, professional development resources, software and hardware. School representatives will also receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in the awards gala on October 6. At the gala, two schools will be named "Best of the Best" and will receive an additional \$15,000 grant. JSIS was selected from more than 3,000 participating schools across the country. The awards program, established by Scholastic, established by Scholastic, the global children's publishing education and media company, and Intel, the world's largest chip maker, rewards initiatives that promote student achievement and educational innovation.

Kimball Elementary School librarian receives 2005 Washington Library Media Association's Outstanding Library Media Specialist Award—The Washington Library Media Association (WMLA) announced that it has chosen Laura Grosvenor, teacher-librarian at Kimball Elementary, the 2005 WMLA Outstanding Library Media Specialist of the Year award. Grosvenor was chosen for the honor based upon her involvement in unique and authentic programs and services to students and faculty, her outstanding connection with her school community and her dedication to student achievement and success. WMLA will

recognize Grosvenor at its annual conference in Yakima on October 13. In addition to the honor, she will receive \$500 from Follett Resources.

Office of Refugee and Resettlement honors district bilingual communications specialist for 30 years of service—At this year's Refugee Community Building Conference on September 16, the Office of Refugee and Resettlement honored Hung Pham, a bilingual communications specialist, for giving 30 years of service to schools, bilingual families and the immigrant community in Seattle. With more than 100 languages spoken districtwide, Seattle Public Schools was also recognized as having one of the best bilingual programs for students and families in Washington State.

Garfield High School teacher receives World Educator Award—The World Affairs Council has honored Garfield High School teacher Betty Lau with the 2005 World Educator award. For more than 30 years, Lau has worked tirelessly on increasing international understanding both inside and outside the classroom. She has studied abroad on two Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad to East Africa and Morocco, and has accompanied a Fulbright-Hays group to China as an interpreter and advisor. Her passion for preparing students for global citizenship extended to seven years of creating and supervising a world language summer camp featuring Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian (and eventually Spanish, German and Swahili) under a U.S. Department of Education grant. The World Educator Award represents an important part of the World Affairs Council's concerted effort to bring world issues into area classrooms and to give local community members and business leaders the opportunity to acknowledge the critical role teachers play in educating children about the world.

Ballard High School teacher honored for work with migrant students—Nohra Giraldo, a bilingual teacher at Ballard High School, was recently honored with the Portable Assisted Study Sequence Contact Person of the Year for Migrant Services.

Coming Up

School Board Members Schedule District-Based Community Meetings—Several School Board members schedule meetings in their communities. Parents, guardians, students, staff and community members are encouraged to attend. This is an opportunity to share thoughts and concerns, and to raise questions.

Meetings scheduled for October include:

* Friday, October 14, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., District I, Director Sally Soriano, at Meadowbrook Community Center, 10517 35th Avenue Northeast. District I includes schools located in North, Northeast and Northwest Seattle.

* Tuesday, October 18, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., District III, Director Brita Butler-Wall, at Eckstein Middle School library, 3003 Northeast 75th Street. District III includes a portion of the schools located in Northeast and Central Seattle.

In addition, School Board President Brita Butler-Wall invites constituents to drop-in during weekly office hours: At the Stanford Center, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. each Tuesday that school is in session; and on Mondays, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at Honey Bear Bakery at Third Place Books Ravenna, at NE 65th and 20th Avenue NE.

In the News—For a sampling of this week’s local newspaper stories on Seattle Public Schools, please click [here](#).

We Need Your Ideas

The Communications office is looking for stories on interesting classroom projects, inspirational people or events in our schools to share with the greater Seattle community. We would like to hear from you. If you have a unique story to share please send your ideas directly to goodnews@seattleschools.org.

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.