

Board of Directors

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High School 263-1700
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www.lacenterschools.org

Three retire from the district.....

The end of the 2010/2011 school year brought the retirement of three of our friends and colleagues from the district. Mrs. Shirley Barnes brought her happy disposition to the district in 1979 and most recently taught 4th grade. Mr. Harvey Pust joined us in 1989 and served as the high school industrial arts teacher. Mrs. Linda Anderson came to our high school in 2000 and shared her talents with us in both the kitchen and the high school office. We send our best wishes for a happy retirement to each of you!

La Center Community Education

Please go to our district website to access the Community Education Classes

www.lacenterschools.org

La Center School District.....Weathering the Storm!

These are tough economic times. More than ever, our students' families are experiencing hardships (whether by loss of income or even loss of homes). Our district is experiencing unprecedented funding cuts to our budget by the State (some even coming in mid-year after part of the funding has been used!). And then, even MORE state funding cuts to our budget. Unfunded mandates from the Federal Government keep coming. We are in the midst of a fiscal storm that threatens to blow away any "house" not built of bricks.

Fortunately, in the La Center School District our "bricks" for building is our commitment to "think differently" about our situation; our "new normal". Make no mistake. We are not suggesting we put on "rose colored glasses" and pretend everything is OK. We are very aware of the collective sacrifices made by our employees. A reduction in pay for teachers and administrators. A loss of hours for support staff. Fix it instead of replace it. Wear it out, use it up, re-purpose; get what you need.....but be SURE you need what you get. This is all part of our "new normal".

There is also another part to the "new normal" for us. It is about keeping at the forefront of our thinking the responsibility to create learning environments that support our mission of creating life-long learners. It is remembering our purpose, our reason for being. We do not exist to provide employment. We do not exist to fill up trophy cases. Our purpose is not to do better than our neighbors on state mandated standardized tests. We exist to educate the children of our community in such a way that they leave us as prepared as possible to be productive members of society. People who can think creatively, solve problems and always be learning. Everything we do must have at its core this priority.

Part of our "thinking differently" is remembering we have many resources, not just dollars. We believe our people are our greatest resource and together we can get stronger every day. This year our people are working to integrate the *CORE COMPETENCIES OF A LIFE-LONG LEARNER into every classroom across the district. This requires more hard work than dollars. Our people already work hard every day. We do not have a shortfall in this area!

In addition, creative problem solving has led to expanded programs for students. For instance, kindergarten has gone from half-time (the equivalent of 2-1/2 days per week) to four full days per week. Studies show the benefits to this added time with these youngest students pays the biggest dividends in the long run but this is often viewed as "too expensive" to implement due to increased staffing/space needs. Our staff worked collaboratively with each other and administrators; finding a way to do this with existing staff and space. No teachers have been laid off resulting in the maintenance of smaller class sizes. No days have been cut from the 180 day school year. Extra-curricular and co-curricular programs remain strong. Professional development opportunities have been designed to take advantage of in-district talent and expertise at little or no cost instead of paying for "outside" trainings. Learning academies for substitute teachers and parent volunteers have been formed to increase the abilities of everyone working with our students.

We continue to keep our levy promises to our voters. We know our stakeholders join us in the collective sacrifice to do what's best for our students. We are grateful for their continued support and work hard to see the dollars entrusted to us are used to get the most "bang for the buck" as evidenced by the recent traffic revision being completed at the K-8 campus. This is a promised response to safety concerns and overall congestion issues.

Yes, the storm is definitely raging all around us. By thinking differently, aligning our priorities and working together we believe we have built a "house" that will stand.

*To read or obtain a copy of the draft document CORE COMPETENCIES OF A LIFE-LONG LEARNER please go to our website at www.lacenterschools.org or call 263-2131 ext. 201.

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Exploring the Unknown: Young Astronauts Engineer Ways to Look on the Wet Side.....

La Center Middle School science teachers Kristy Schneider and Laurie Cripe have been awarded a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) grant in the amount of \$10,560 to lead some 40-45 students (60% of whom are girls) in the SeaPerch Program. This program will be offered through the Young Astronauts Club currently in place at the middle school and is “an innovative underwater robotics program that trains teachers to teach their students how to build an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) in an in-school or out-of-school setting. Students build the ROV from a kit comprised of low-cost, easily accessible parts, following a curriculum that teaches basic engineering and science concepts with a marine engineering theme.”

The SeaPerch curriculum was developed by the MIT Sea Grant College Program in 2003. Some of the concepts the students learn during the building include: ship and submarine design, buoyancy/displacement, propulsion, soldering tool safety & usage, vectors, electricity/circuits and switches, ergonomics, waterproofing, depth measurement, biological sampling, attenuation of light, moment arm, basic physics of motion and career possibilities.

Testing of the ROV’s once they are built will be in classroom first and then in a local dive shop and/or local lake. Once working, deployment of ROV’s on missions and challenges will include collection of copepods and other water quality tests in the wetlands adjacent to the school.

ANNUAL PARENT NOTIFICATION

State and Federal Law mandates that certain information be made available to parents, students and/or community members on an annual basis. It is the intent of the La Center School District to comply with all such laws in a way that is both easily accessible and cost effective for our stakeholders. Therefore, all required notifications and information may be accessed by either going to our website at: www.lacenterschools.org or, if you would prefer a printed copy, please call our district office at 263-2131 to request one. Below is the list of mandated notifications:

- Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- Sexual Harassment
- Use of Tobacco on School Property
- Asbestos Notification
- Nondiscrimination and Equal Rights
- Photograph Authorization
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Directory Information*
- Weapons on School Premises
- District Policies & Administrative Regulations
- Pesticide Notification, Posting and Record Keeping Requirements
- Right of Parents to Request Information Related to Qualifications of Their Child’s Teacher
- HPV Vaccination Information
- Child Identification Procedures
- Public Participation
- Homeless Liaison

***Directory Information reads as follows:** *Parents, and students 18 years or older, have the right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the categories of personally identifiable information with respect to that student as directory information. This includes addresses, birth date, birthplace, telephone number, dates of attendance, activities and sports participation, weight and height (if members of a sports team), awards received, and major fields of study. Notify the district in writing within ten (10) days of the publication of this notice. Such written notice shall be addressed to the school in which the named student is registered. This is what gives the right to various organizations (college recruiters, military recruiters, etc.) to receive contact information on a student.*

OPPORTUNITIES.....

These are economically challenging times for many of us. The good news is times like these allow people to help each other. Below are some of the options available to our community members:

JUMPSTART BACKPACK PROGRAM - This program provides backpacks and school supplies for children who have a need. Many backpacks were handed out on JUMPSTART DAY (August 20th) but some are still available. If you would like more information on this please contact Sherri Birgensmith at La Center Elementary School (263-2134 ext. 318)

HOLIDAY FOOD BASKETS – Every year the district is contacted by various groups/individuals who want to help families in need have a happy and festive season by providing food baskets. If you would like to be a recipient please call the district office (263-2131) and ask for Laurie. All calls are kept confidential.

ONE DAY OF FREE MEDICAL AND DENTAL CARE - Compassion Ridgefield is a one-day event designed to serve Woodland, La Center and Ridgefield Washington with FREE medical and dental care. Guests are provided with basic health care and social service networking at absolutely no cost to them. On September 10, 2011, Compassion Ridgefield will be serving the community at:

View Ridge Middle School, 510 Pioneer Street, Ridgefield, WA 98642 from 9am-3pm (DO NOT CONTACT SCHOOL – LOCATION/INFORMATION ONLY – NO AFFILIATION)

Only uninsured members of the community and those with a real need for care are encouraged to attend as the clinic is limited in the services it can provide, especially in the area of dental care. Guests are required to sign a waiver about their income level and their commitment to give back to their community through volunteering, all of which is based on the honor system.

Compassion Ridgefield brings together a large group of volunteers including medical and dental professionals, social service groups, churches, faith-based organizations, and hundreds of good Samaritans to help make a difference in the lives of many individuals as well as impact the local community in a positive way. The lasting effects are both seen and unseen. These collaborative efforts strengthen the community and build ongoing relationships while the value and dignity of guests being served are continually encouraged through the invitation to reinvest in the neighborhood through their own acts of service.

CONTACT: Director: Frieda Goode
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