Five schools win statewide recognition

Two junior high and three elementary schools have each been named a “School of Distinction” for being among the top 5 percent of schools statewide that demonstrated improvement the past five years in reading and math.

Ballou and Kallis junior high schools, and Fruitland, Shaw Road, and Wildwood elementary schools, are among 99 Washington schools recognized.

This is the third consecutive year that Kallis Junior High has received the statewide recognition, the fourth time in five years that Fruitland Elementary has won the award, and the second time that Wildwood has been recognized since the award program began in 2007.

Like last year, the Puyallup School District ranks second in the state this year for having the most schools from one district to receive the award.

The five local schools will be honored at the November 28 Puyallup School Board meeting.

The award is based on students scoring at or above the state average in grades three through eight on the 2011 Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), first-ever End-of-Course (EOC) math exams, and the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) for students with special needs.

Arnold told the school board in September that Puyallup has several noteworthy achievements this year. They include:

- The highest percentage ever of students in grades four through eight met or exceeded their state’s math standard.
- The highest percentage ever of grades five, eight, and 10 met the state’s science standard.
- The highest percentage ever of fourth graders met the writing standard.

Students outperform state in core subjects

Puyallup School District students outperformed the state average in nearly every grade level and, in some cases, set record highs in reading, writing, math, and science on the 2011 state assessments.

Students made especially strong gains in math and science, said Nancy Arnold, director of assessment and accountability.

“Our success this year is a huge testament to the hard work that students, staff, parents, school volunteers, and the community have been doing to help students succeed,” Arnold said. “We have a lot to celebrate, but we also have work to do to continue to improve.”

The scores reflect student performance on last spring’s Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), first-ever End-of-Course (EOC) math exams, and the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) for students with special needs.

In math and science, said Nancy Arnold, director of assessment and accountability.

- The highest percentage ever of sixth graders met the reading standard.
- Nearly 99 percent of twelfth graders met or exceeded state standards on reading and writing assessments.
- The highest percentage ever of fourth graders met the writing standard.
- Nearly 99 percent of sixth graders in 2011 met or exceeded state standards on reading and writing assessments.
- Nearly 99 percent of twelfth graders met or exceeded state standards on reading and writing assessments.

Additionally, Hunt, Pope, and Wildwood elementary schools are among only 35 schools across Washington that earned their way off a needs-improvement list for making progress in reading and math as required in the federal No Child Left Behind law.

While test scores are higher than ever in some grades and subjects, efforts continue this year to move all students at all schools to standard.

Math improvement

The district launched a comprehensive three-year math improvement plan last year that is already yielding positive results.

Stahl Junior High students (left) Kaira Miller and Tiana Peoples measure the density of water in a seventh-grade lab project.

Students made gains in science on the 2011 state assessments.

Search begins for new superintendent as Apostle to retire

The search for a new superintendent to replace Tony Apostle, who retires in June, will be led by the same consulting firm that helped the district find a new Puyallup School District leader in 2004.

The school board unanimously agreed last month to hire Northwest Leadership Associates based in Liberty Lake, a city in eastern Washington.

The firm’s owner and president, Dennis Ray, will again be the lead consultant working with Puyallup, the ninth largest school district in the state with 32 schools and more than 20,500 students.

The goal is to have a new superintendent selected no later than March 30, 2012, said Puyallup School Board Director Greg Heath.

Heath and Director Diana Seeley were appointed by the school board this fall to work with the district’s Human Resources department to coordinate the early stages of the search process.

Apostle informed the Puyallup School Board in August that he will retire at the end of this school year after eight years as its leader.

Seeley said Northwest Leadership Associates was selected from among four “outstanding candidates.”

In its written proposal to the board, Northwest Leadership Associates described itself as “a regional entity with a strong national network.” The firm has conducted six searches in Washington state.

Superintendent Tony Apostle greets Rogers High seniors (from left) Jasmine Turner and Oscar Campos Morales after last month’s board meeting.

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Superintendent’s Message
Working to improve student achievement

The Puyallup School Board continues its forward-thinking path of defining and addressing the challenges facing our students in our schools today and in the future. While the nation’s economic conditions and state funding for schools will likely not significantly improve within the next three to five years, improving student achievement and offering more educational training options to students are of greater importance than ever before. Why? Because our students must be expertly trained to compete for the best jobs that are emerging within a changing technological workplace. They will be facing intensely stiff competition for a limited number of jobs that offer attractive salaries and benefits at a time of increased global manufacturing competition within industries based in the United States.

What sample of evidence exists that clearly demonstrates that we are improving student achievement and offering greater educational options?

• Enrollment continues to increase in math and science courses among both female and male students. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program and the Robotics program, which are open to all district students, are the most recent new educational offerings in math and science. The district also has the most students ever taking high school Advanced Placement courses, junior high school honors programs, and elementary Highly Capable programs.

• The state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has recognized 20 of our schools as Schools of Distinction for sustained academic improvement between 2007 and 2011. Two of our elementary schools received the honor twice, one of our junior highs and an elementary school received the honor three times, and another elementary school earned the honor four times.

• Students continue to make gains on state assessments in writing, reading, math, and science.

• Based on the 2010-11 state achievement scores, the district achieved the highest performance rates in its history in six grade levels and in four academic areas. In writing, more than 90 percent of tenth graders met or exceeded the state standard. This continues to outpace state averages and the performance of students in many neighboring districts. Students also earned their highest-ever science scores in grades five, eight, and 10.

• The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program has expanded to serve students in all of our junior high and high schools, and enrollment in the classes continues to increase. Additionally, the “I’m Going To College” program has been created for students who are typically under-represented in college.

• Positive and hopeful discussions are under way for a future partnership with the Washington State University (WSU) Research Center in Puyallup. This partnership would possibly offer all interested students courses in Environmental Sciences and a WSU-STEM program at the WSU Research Center.

There are several other important strategic initiatives under way that will require further study through intense community and staff deliberations over the next 18 months. Committees studying these concerns include Counseling Services and Program Review; Grade Level Configuration; Assessment, Grading, and Reporting Practices; and Educational Opportunities. In addition, there is the important work of the Citizens Facilities Advisory Committee, which is tasked with examining school facility needs over the next 12 years. The committee’s work includes studying whether to build a fourth comprehensive high school or expand our three existing high schools to accommodate future growth. More immediately, in an effort to prepare for state funding reductions, an Educational Priorities Advisory Committee has been commissioned to study options and parameters to be considered during the 2012-13 district budget development process.

There are many other examples of solid planning for the future, as well as student achievement accomplishments that advance the notion that this district is on the right course for student success and a very bright future.

Board Member’s Message
School partnerships help students achieve

Today’s economic realities have strongly, if not powerfully, encouraged each of us to find ways to reenergize and partner thinking, simplify, and ultimately find ways to do more with less. This reality has certainly hit our schools, and the forecast ahead doesn’t look terribly promising. However, one of the unexpected but truly positive outcomes from this time of change and uncertainty has been the increased development of critical family and community partnerships throughout our schools. When we connect, collabo-rate, and engage, our partnerships lead to work that is lighter, more rewarding, and ultimately to meaningful and meaningful change and understandings both within our schools and on a global scale.

Today’s world requires it. Our students have access to needed services and resources, classrooms become increasingly dynamic and innovative, and as relationships become strengthened, and school partnerships improve. I invite you to find your place in this partnership. Today’s world requires it. Our students deserve it.
Board approves new mission, vision, beliefs, and goals

Agreeing with the recommendations of a 60-plus member Strategic Visioning Committee, the Puyallup School Board has unanimously approved a new district mission and vision, as well as a new set of beliefs statements and goals.

The changes take effect this school year and will guide the district through the year 2020.

The Vision 2020 team met from January through May to review and update the school district’s long-range strategic plan. The plan serves as a roadmap that guides the district as it makes decisions about student learning.

The committee was made up of parents, educators, community members, and students from each of the district’s four high schools.

The following are the district’s new mission, vision, and beliefs:

**Mission**
The Puyallup School District, in partnership with our diverse communities, educates and inspires students to reach their full potential.

**Vision**

Puyallup School District students will be:

- Skilled in successfully applying knowledge in all required subjects.
- Competent as critical and innovative thinkers able to analyze and solve complex problems.
- Engaged as life-long learners pursuing their goals and dreams.
- Successful as communicators and collaborators.
- Proficient in demonstrating an understanding of and a respect for individual differences.
- Prepared to transition to post-high school opportunities and be able to compete locally and globally.
- Skilled in making life choices that are healthy and socially responsible.
- Motivated to strive for excellence.

**Beliefs**

In partnership with our communities, we:

- Treat each student as a unique learner.
- Ensure all students have equal opportunities for learning and are supported in achieving competency in required subject and performance areas.
- Regularly assess, evaluate, and communicate to students, families, and the community the results of student performance.
- Engage parents/guardians, family members, and students as active partners in the educational process.
- Incorporate concepts of diversity that benefit all and are integral in all district endeavors.
- Communicate effectively with parents/guardians, students, staff, and members of the community.
- Cultivate and maintain partnerships that support district goals.
- Provide students and staff a safe and supportive learning and working environment.
- Demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders.

The committee revised the wording of some existing district goals and added several new ones under each of the district’s four Strategic Directions.

New goals range from strengthening anti-bullying education and training throughout the district and community, to planning strategies to strongly support identified ethnic and cultural groups.

The goals are listed in full in the Strategic Plan document approved by the board. The plan is on the school district website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us.

New committee identifies education priorities

If sobering state budget projections hold true, the Puyallup School District could be faced with upwards of $12 million in budget reductions in the 2012-13 school year due to anticipated decreases in federal and state funding.

To prepare for anticipated financial challenges, a first-ever Educational Priorities Advisory Committee has been formed.

The 15-member committee, made up of parents, retired teachers, former legislators, and other community members, has been tasked with identifying priorities of how money should be spent in the Puyallup School District.

In his opening remarks to the committee, Superintendent Tony Apostle asked, “What can we do to be a forward-thinking school district when we are faced with such devastating cuts?”

The superintendent appointed the advisory committee in September and charged its members to have a report ready for the Puyallup School Board at its December 12 meeting. The board meeting begins at 6 p.m. at Balfour Junior High, 9916 136th St. E. in Puyallup.

“As we navigate the extremely challenging economic conditions in our future, we want to be sure we are serving our students in the best way possible,” Apostle said.

The advisory committee’s recommendations will be added to those by district employees, students, and other community members as the board wrestles with how to balance next year’s budget.

“Are you one group making recommendations?” said committee facilitator Tana Hasart, a local consultant and former president of Pierce College in Puyallup.

“The school board’s job is to look at all recommendations and work with district administration to come up with a budget.”

Since its first committee meeting in late September, the advisory group has heard numerous reports from district staff regarding topics such as the district’s instructional programs, budget history, enrollment, staffing levels, and operational costs.

“These are the most challenging times we have ever had,” Deputy Superintendent Debra Ausgust told the committee during a presentation about the history of the school district’s budget.

Ausgust described a “collision of demands” in education today. Students’ needs have never been greater, she said, while accountability has never been stiffer. Similarly, she said expectations have never been higher, while resources have never been scarcer.

“We must be purposeful about our priorities,” she said. “We can and will do this difficult work.”

The committee quickly learned there are restrictions on what can be considered for reductions in a budget, including employment-bargained agreements and federal and state mandates.

“We know the district won’t be able to do everything it has been doing, but we have learned an awful lot is untouchable based on state funding requirements,” said committee member Dan McReynolds. “It’s a pretty small dance floor we have to move around on.”

McReynolds is a parent of four children, all of whom attended Puyallup School District schools from kindergarten through grade 12. He also is a local business person and served last year on the school district’s Strategic Visioning Committee.

District offices closed December 23-30

Puyallup School District administrative offices and support buildings will be closed for the holidays from Friday, December 23 through Friday, December 30.

The Education Service Center and business office in downtown Puyallup are among the buildings closed for the holidays.

All schools are closed from December 19 through December 30 for winter break. Classes resume on January 2.

Science information night is January 10

Parents and students throughout the district are invited to attend a community night designed to help students be successful in creating science fair projects.

The free event begins at 6:30 p.m. on January 10 in the Exposition Hall at the Puyallup Fairgrounds.

Parent forum set on new elementary math curriculum

Parents of students in kindergarten through grade five can learn more about a new Bridges in Mathematics curriculum being used for the first time this year at elementary schools across the district.

The last three parent forums is scheduled from 6 to 7 p.m. on January 17 at the Education Service Center, 302 2nd St. SE in downtown Puyallup.

Information presented at the first two forums will be repeated at the January parent meeting.
Enrollment surges in third year of online learning program

Jared Simonsen wakes up early enough each morning to complete two or three hours of class work before he ever arrives at Puyallup High School.

Once on campus, the senior takes a seat in Symphonic Winds band class, where he spends nearly an hour doing something he has loved since elementary school — playing music.

Simonsen is among a growing number of students who have found success completing a majority of their high school classes from home in an online learning program. Like him, many also enroll in a class or two on campus, especially in those subjects that require group participation such as band, choir, and art, or that have special equipment as in certain career and technical education courses.

This is the third year the district has offered the Puyallup Online Academy for students in grades seven through 12.

Enrollment last month topped 170 students — more than three times the number of students who started the program last year.

“The growth from last year has been huge,” said Alicia Nosworthy, administrator of the program and assistant principal at Walker High School.

Puyallup Online Academy
Puyallup Online Academy students learn at their own pace, on their own schedule, and in their own environment, Nosworthy said.

Students and their parents sign an agreement at the time of enrollment that outlines recommendations and guidelines for a successful online learning experience.

To stay on schedule, a student typically must spend two to three hours per day per class working on class assignments to complete a course in the recommended 45 days.

Those who fall behind face interventions, ranging from parent/student conferences to required attendance at Walker High School.

Success also depends upon students having consistent access to a working computer with a dependable Internet connection and up-to-date antivirus and security software, she said.

Just like students in a traditional classroom, students in the online learning program who have difficulty with an assignment can connect for help.

Washington state certified teachers based in Yakima are available to communicate with students from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m., seven days a week. Face-to-face support is also available weekdays during school hours at Walker High School.

The program is designed so that students can take two classes at one time. Once a class is finished, another one is added.

More than 100 courses are offered, including core, elective, advanced placement, diagnostic, intervention, and credit retrieval. Curriculum is provided by Advanced Academics, an accredited Washington state program.

Most of the courses are Web-based with no textbooks required. There is no cost for taking the standard full year of classes (12 classes) within the allotted time, Nosworthy said.

They may also have their photos in the yearbook and participate in their high school graduation ceremonies, provided they meet all graduation requirements.

Senior Nicole Handy is a full-time Running Start student at Pierce College who enrolled in the online learning program for the first time this fall. She attended Emerald Ridge High in her sophomore year and Rogers High last year.

“I still go to all of the high school activities like football games with my friends,” she said. “I really like the online program, because I like to work when it’s convenient for me.”

Handy plans to graduate in June, attend a four-year college, and pursue a career as a nurse or pediatrician.

Benefits to learning
Students who enroll in the online school do so for a variety of reasons, Nosworthy said. Some take classes to accelerate their learning. Others enroll because they need to retrieve credits, because of medical reasons, or because they have jobs or care for young children during the traditional school day.

Simonsen said he started the program halfway through his junior year when he realized that being on campus was causing him to be physically ill each morning before school.

“There were lots of distractions, and I was stressed about completing my credits,” he said. “Now there is not as much pressure because I can do the classes at my own pace. I am learning better, and my goal is to graduate in June, if not earlier.”

Jared Simonsen

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Superintendent search begins continued from page 1

more than 160 superintendent searches in the Pacific Northwest in the past 11 years.

“Our past experience with Puyallup gives us a unique understanding of the district and community,” the proposal stated.

Extensive reference checks were done on each of the four firms that submitted proposals, Seeley said.

Research included examining the consultants’ track records in providing quality superintendent candidates in other searches, determining if there were any cost overruns or other billing concerns, reviewing the firm’s ability to work with the board and staff, and examining the level of public input into the process.

“We wanted to know, did they actually connect with the community and get the input that was necessary to determine what kinds of qualities are necessary for our next superintendent?” Seeley said.

Tony Apostle

Before becoming superintendent in 2004, Apostle served for 14 years as an administrator in the district as the director of administrative services, director of elementary education, and assistant to the superintendent.

Take a survey
The community is invited to take an online survey that will be used to develop a leadership profile to guide the school board in its search for a new superintendent.

The deadline for completing the survey is December 10. A link to the survey is on the Home page of the district website.

Meetings to address new secondary grading practices

New grading practices designed to help junior high and high school students become more successful learners are being phased into schools beginning this fall.

Parents and students can learn more about the new secondary grading and assessment practices and ask questions during the following information meetings:

• November 29, 6-7 p.m.
• January 12, 5-6 p.m.
• February 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
• March 15, 6-7 p.m.

The meetings are held at the school district’s Education Service Center at 302 2nd St. S.E. in downtown Puyallup.

By the end of March 2012, Superintendent Tony Apostle will recommend to the school board a date for full districtwide implementation.
Students outperform state on tests
continued from page 1
results, said Director of Instructional Leadership John Parker. More students are enrolled in high-level math courses in high school, he said, as well as in newly offered electives that align with students’ career interests. The district is also continuing to de- velop and train teachers on math “power standards” — a set of about a dozen skills students need to master at specific grade levels. Educators are still tasked with teach- ing all of the state-required learning standards at each grade level, but they are also devoting extra time as needed to assure that students meet the power standards. “These are fundamental skills that, once learned, can apply to other academic subjects and lead to success in school and in life,” said Deputy Superintendent Debra Aumont. “Even the most struggling of learners have to be able to master these standards.” Arnold said that the district’s intensive focus on math im- provement in the past several years is also evident in the number of students who passed their first-ever end-of-course math exams. Last spring, students in Algebra I and Geometry took state exams at the end of those specific courses in June instead of the traditional high school comprehen- sive math exam two months before the end of the school year. The first group of tenth graders who took these exams scored 69.2 percent in algebra and 70.2 percent in geometry. While the scores do not provide an apples-to-apples comparison to previous years’ math tests, Arnold said that they are encouraging and will be the baseline to compare against future achievement. At the elementary level, a new Bridges in Mathematics curriculum is under way this year in kindergarten through grade five. During a recent math lesson at Shaw Road Elementary, for example, fourth graders in Debbie Drugg’s classroom learned how to measure and record di- mensions in centimeters. Students worked with partners and in small groups to measure objects around the classroom, including the distance between the floor and the tops of their desks, the length of pencils, and the dimensions of pre-drawn objects on a worksheet. Fourth graders Meredith Udovich, Tyler Martin, and Ally Kindig teamed to figure out how they could measure the distance between their elbows and their fingertips. Collectively they decided to stack their rulers, one on top of the other, until they found the answer. Considerable time and effort has also gone into developing math interven- tions for students who are struggling, as well as enrichment for students who are achieving, Parker said. Some schools, especially at the elementary level, set aside a half-hour intervention block each day to give students intensive help, especially in math. “We isolate the skills that kids need help with, and we focus on that until they get it,” Druge said. “When you do something over and over again, you are bound to get better at it.” In junior high and high school, students of- ten forgo an elective to take an extra class period in a subject they need extra help in to be successful. Science gains New science standards this year in grades five and eight make it difficult to compare test scores from this year to the last, “but the results represent outstanding work by our schools,” Arnold said. In fifth grade, 63.8 percent of students across the district met the science standard, which outpaces the 55.7 percent state average this year. Students also had a strong showing in ju- nior high and high school, with 64 percent of eighth graders and nearly 57 percent of tenth graders meeting standard. As she looked at the chart showing across-the-board gains in sci- ence, Board President Cindy Poynick said, “It looks like the junior high science labs have paid off.” Poynick was refer- ring to improvements made in 2008 to junior high science class rooms. Lab facilities were upgraded with improvements such as additional sinks, new countertops, and improved ventilation to support hands-on sci- ence learning. Improvements were funded with state match money from the 2004 school bond. During a recent science lesson at Stahl Junior High, seventh graders in David Boyles’ class teamed at lab stations around the room to determine the density of water. Students moved between the countertop and sinks to fill water in beakers, transfer the liquid to graduated cylinders, measure the mass on triple beam balances, and record their results. Principal Troy Hodge said the lab spaces are critical to student success. “It’s an opportunity for kids to get out from behind their desks, be around the materials, and experience the hands-on learning,” he said. “Especially for students who are tactile learners, the labs drive home the science theories.” Literacy successes and challenges Reading scores were mixed across the district, with the percentage of students meeting standard up in grades six and 10, down at grades five, seven, and eight, and less than a 3 percent change from last year in grades three and four. The performance decline in grades five, seven, and eight mirrors a drop statewide in reading in the same grades. One factor, Arnold said, could be that the year was raised this year for the percentage of students who needed to meet the read- ing standard. Performance can also be affected, she said, when students simply don’t like or understand test questions. New local reading assessments have been developed and will be given for the first time this fall in grades seven, eight, and nine, Arnold said. Power standards like those developed for math are also being developed this year for reading, said Vince Pecchia, director of instructional leadership. Work is also under way to revise the district’s reading assessments to assure that questions match information students should know, specifically as they relate to the state’s learning targets, Pecchia said. Noteworthy achievements in literacy, Arnold said, include four elementary schools and two high schools where 90 percent or more of the students met the reading standard. Additionally, 80 percent or more stu- dents at one elementary, two junior high schools, and three high schools met the writing standard. District assessments In all grades, educators point to an in- creasing number of local district assess- ments given throughout the year, followed with quick and targeted interventions, to help students who need help or need extra challenges. “Our local assessments are a screener that helps us target students right away,” Arnold told the school board. “We are constantly improving on these, as well as our tracking, to make sure that kids move from one grade level and one school to the next.” Adequate Yearly Progress To make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a certain percentage of students in a school or district must pass the state’s reading and math tests each year. The results are broken down by ethnic group and poverty level. If one category of students fails to meet its goals, the whole school fails AYP. This year, the percentage of students who needed to pass reading was significantly higher than last year. The performance bar for math will rise in 2012, and by 2014, every student will be required to pass the reading and math tests. Schools and districts that do not meet AYP goals for two consecutive years move into “school improvement” status. If they re- ceive Title I federal funds, which are used to give students extra help in areas such as reading and math, they face an escalating series of consequences each year they do not make AYP. The Puyallup School District and two of its Title I schools — Waller Road and Firgrove elementary schools — did not meet AYP goals again on last spring’s state assessments. Puyallup joins a majority of school dis- tricts statewide that did not make AYP. Of 295 school districts in Washington, 223 failed to meet the standard. Arnold told the board it is important to remember that the Puyallup School Dis- trict, the ninth largest district in the state, still holds near the top in several grades and subjects when compared to districts similar in size and demographics. Puyallup ranks fourth, for example, when comparing the percentage of tenth grad- ers who met the writing standard this year with students from 19 other school districts similar in either size or demographics.

Shaw Road Elementary students (from left) Meredith Udovich, Tyler Martin, and Ally Kindig learn how to measure in centimeters. The school made gains in math at all grades tested.

Emerald Ridge High tenth grader Bethany Budzinski works on a writing assignment.
Puyallup Giftmakers celebrates 25 years of giving

Giftmakers is accepting donations of new toys, books, games, stockings, and stocking stuffers for infants through age 14 in specially marked donation boxes on display through December 24 at the South Hill Mall and Top Food & Drug in Puyallup.

The program has grown to become a student-led community event, bringing together hundreds of parents, business people, service organizations, senior citizens, members of the faith community, and other volunteers.

School district families in need are invited to attend the local Giftmakers “store,” which is set up for two days in early December. Families can leave their children in an on-site supervised play area while they shop.

The gift giveaway program serves more than 600 children annually. Last year, the program handed out gifts to a record high of 935 children from 347 families.

Grace Magin knows the value of the program after being involved first as a student leader more than 20 years ago and now as an adult volunteer. She also works as a paraprofessional, or teacher’s assistant, in a program for students with special needs at Edgerton Elementary.

In her junior year of high school, Magin enrolled in a class that helped teenagers learn job skills and transition between school and work. As part of that class, she became one of the student leaders in the Giftmakers program.

Twenty-two years later, the mother of two twin girls still supports Giftmakers by coordinating toy drives, setting up the store with her daughters, and helping where needed.

Student-led program

A record-high number of students from all four of the district’s high schools and several junior high schools are serving this year on the Giftmakers Board of Directors. The board meets throughout the year to plan the December event.

Students spend countless hours coordinating toy drives in schools and the community—the source for a majority of the gifts each year.

They learn leadership skills by writing letters and personally contacting store managers for permission to place toy donation boxes in local businesses. Several students stood for hours outside of a local store recently to pass out flyers and collect donations of infant clothing and toys.

The student leaders also write and send fundraising letters, volunteer as interpreters, speak about the program to area clubs and organizations, and plan activities for children when they first arrive at the event.

Their year of hard work culminates with hours of volunteer time at the event itself, setting up, working in the rooms, helping as personal shoppers, walking people to their cars, cleaning up, and inventorying the items for the next year. Last year, 207 students volunteered at the event.

Girl Scouts have also been integral to the program’s success by babysitting children while parents shop and by coordinating many of the rooms in the Giftmakers store.

In the past several years, Rogers High students enrolled in the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) program have participated by manufacturing wooden doll cradles, tool boxes, and other gifts.

The ACE students also constructed a wooden toy donation box two years ago in the shape of a gingerbread house that is displayed in the South Hill Mall from mid-November until the end of December. A large red wooden donation box made previously by Rogers High students is displayed during the same time at Top Food & Drug in Puyallup.

The Rogers High IROTC also helps by parking cars at the event each year. Students arrive early, often in uniform, to greet families.

Longtime supporters

Even after Giftmakers student helpers graduate, many return year after year to volunteer or donate gifts.

Puyallup High 2005 graduate Amber Rhodes, for example, was an active Giftmakers volunteer during her junior high and high school years. While she helped in many capacities, her passion was collecting books and coordinating the book room operations.

Rhodes moved to Portland after high school to attend college and is back living in Puyallup this year as she works toward her master’s degree. When she learned this fall that Borders Books was closing, she purchased 20 young adult books for this year’s Giftmakers recipients.

“It’s such a great opportunity to reach out to the community and make sure everyone is getting what they need during the holidays,” she said.

Numerous community members, including some retired district employees, make up the list of longtime Giftmakers volunteers.

Fruitland Elementary second-grade teacher Shirley Baker, for example, has been involved for more than a decade. She began by helping junior high students in special education classes learn how to refurbish bicycles for the program.

In more recent years, Baker shops for new toys with money donated by individuals, businesses, and service organizations. Funds are managed by the Puyallup Schools Foundation. Baker also greets...
Brittney Henry will walk into the national spotlight in January when she represents Washington at the 2012 Miss America pageant in Las Vegas.

Since being crowned Miss Washington in July, the 2005 Puyallup High School graduate has spent time reflecting on her life growing up in Edgewood and the people who have helped her develop into the person she is today.

People like her fourth-grade orchestra teacher, Cynthia Iverson.

Henry hasn’t spoken with Iverson in years, but she thinks of her often because of the “huge impact” she had on developing her love of music.

“I wanted to play in the orchestra in fourth grade, only my mom couldn’t afford to buy me a violin,” Henry said. “I went to orchestra class anyway, and Mrs. Iverson gave me one of the extra violins in her closet. I used that same violin all the way until ninth grade.”

Iverson, who teaches elementary and junior high orchestra at Edgemont Junior High, was moved to hear about the influence she had on a student’s life so many years ago.

“I can remember her sweet little face in fourth grade,” Iverson said. “She was the only one who came to class without an instrument. I said ‘honey, can you get an instrument?’ She said, ‘I don’t think so.’ That’s when I gave her one of the extra violins.”

After a long pause, Iverson added, “You just never know if that might be the one person where the instrument really makes a difference in their life.”

Henry continued to study violin after moving from Northwood Elementary to Edgemont Junior High, where orchestra teacher Catherine Johnson, who retired last June, formed an Edgemon Fiddlers group and taught Henry and other students how to fiddle.

“Mrs. Johnson is also special to me,” Henry said. “Because she recognized me in a way no one else did during a difficult time in my life. She helped me to feel validated and special.”

Growing up in Edgewood

Henry grew up in a low-income family. Her mother raised her and her two sisters as a single parent from the time Henry was six years old.

Her father suffered from alcohol and drug addiction, was incarcerated six times during her childhood, and died two years ago of a drug overdose after his release from jail.

As a teen, Henry said she helped her mother make ends meet by acting as “a second mom” when her mother was away at work and her younger sister needed care.

Henry herself worked as a janitor at a mobile home park — a job she said she was too embarrassed to tell her friends about. She later worked in the snack bar at Tiffany’s Skating Rink and at a local clothing store.

The idea of competing in a beauty pageant some day, she said, never entered her mind.

Henry moved 17 times between kindergarten and her senior year, but her mother always kept her enrolled in the Puyallup School District “because she knew the strong family values here.”

Mentors along the way

The young musician continued to play violin in the Puyallup High orchestra and practice her fiddling, which she will use during the talent portion of the Miss America contest on January 14. Henry plans to perform a Celtic-style musical selection that combines fiddling and dance.

In the audience will be her mother and sisters, her high school sweetheart who is now her fiancé, as well as another one of her mentors, Puyallup resident and close family friend, Lisa Ballard.

Ballard has spent years as a parent volunteer at Puyallup High School. Over the years she has helped coach the baton twirlers and dance and cheer teams, as well as helped with band and an English study skills class.

She has also volunteered for years with the school’s Daffodil program and in recent years has served as its coordinator. Each

Tips to help drivers know when to stop for school buses

When traveling either direction on a two-lane road

Both of these cars must stop

Winning Washington state bus laws protect nearly 10,000 students who ride Puyallup School District buses daily to and from school. Knowing when to stop and when not to stop for a school bus is critical to student and motorist safety, said Transportation Director Cathy McDaniel.

As a general rule, a driver should not get any closer than 20 feet to a school bus that has stopped with red lights flashing. It is safe to proceed once the lights stop flashing.

Two-lane road

If a school bus comes to a stop on a two-lane road where there is one lane of traffic moving in each direction, traffic behind the bus and motorists traveling in the opposite direction must both stop.

Three-lane road

On three-lane roads, where there is one lane of traffic moving in each direction and a center turn lane, the vehicles behind the bus and those in the turn lane traveling the same direction as the bus must stop.

Vehicles traveling in the opposite direction can continue without stopping, including a vehicle in the center turn lane that is turning in front of the bus.

When traveling the same direction as the bus on a road of more than two lanes

Both of these cars must stop

Four-lane road

When a roadway has four or more lanes with at least two of the lanes going in the opposite direction, only the vehicles in lanes traveling the same direction as the school bus need to stop for the red flashing school bus lights.

Two areas of the school district where people often get confused about this rule are along Sunrise Parkway and traveling...
Free kindergarten readiness classes offered

Like most parents of preschool children, Kim Schenk and Steve Mudge want the best start possible for their son when he enters kindergarten next fall at Mt. View Elementary School.

The couple is among more than a dozen parents who participated last month in the first of a series of “Ready for Kindergarten” classes.

The classes are designed for parents and guardians of children ages 4 and 5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

More Ready for Kindergarten classes are scheduled this winter and spring, and sign-ups are under way for the next series of classes that begins in January.

Parents listened as class instructors, who are preschool teachers in the school district, shared ideas and demonstrated how to help children with skills such as learning letters, matching shapes and colors, identifying sounds, and counting to 20.

“This is so helpful,” Schenk said. “I knew a lot of their success in school is based on what you do in the early years.”

The fall parent sessions focused on reading and writing skills and included video clips by the program founders.

Ready for Kindergarten was developed by the Kennecwick School District in Washington and is administered by the National Children’s Reading Foundation.

The key is success is to make learning fun, said instructors Katy Sheehan, a preschool teacher at Sunrise Elementary, and Karen Duggan, a preschool teacher at Maplewood Elementary.

They handed each parent a bag full of free learning tools to take home to “play” with their child. Parents pulled the items out of the bag as the teachers demonstrated or discussed several of the items in class.

Parents learned creative ways to use colorful magnetic letters, an alphabet train and game pieces that stick on a magnetic letters, an alphabet train and puzzle, and game pieces that stick on a magnetic board.

They worked with common items around the home, such as chairs and tables, to help children recognize letters and words.

After attending a Ready for Kindergarten class this fall, Schenk says she feels well prepared to start working with her son at home on reading and writing skills that will be helpful for him to know before he starts school next fall.

Winter class sign-ups

Parents and guardians of children starting kindergarten in September 2012 are invited to attend one of four winter classes.

Facilitators will share ideas and hand out free learning materials to help parents teach children about math and reasoning.

Winter classes are scheduled from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on January 12 and 26 at Sunrise Elementary, and on January 19 and February 2 at Maplewood Elementary. Interested parents are invited to sign up for one of the four classes. The information is repeated at all four sessions.

Free childcare is provided for children age 3 and up.

To register for one of the winter classes, contact Vince Pecchi, director of instructional leadership, or Peg Huard, Title I and Learning Assistance Program specialist, at (253) 841-1301.

Spring classes will address how to prepare children socially and emotionally for kindergarten. Dates will be announced on the district website.

Students in need start school in new shoes

Some arrive at school with wet feet from rain water that soaked through the holes in their shoes.

Others walk into class wearing shoes that are too small for their feet. These same students, counselors say, often avoid running in P.E. or at recess because their feet hurt.

Thanks to a partnership to the Sunrise Kiwanis Club, Payalup Salvation Army, local Payless Shoe Source stores, and the Payalup School District, 75 elementary students in need received new shoes this fall at no cost.

The shoes were delivered, along with several pairs of socks for each child, to Hunt, Ridgecrest, Sunrise, Wildwood, and Woodland elementary schools.

The schools were selected for having students who could benefit from the new shoes and for being among those located in the Payalup Salvation Army’s service area, said Kim Koch, director of social services with the Salvation Army Payalup office.

“I really like the style of mine,” one Sunrise Elementary student said with a big smile as her school counselor, Bev Showacy, checked to make sure the shoes fit correctly. “They are really cute and will go with almost anything I wear.”

Woodland Elementary counselor Claudia Knauss said a 9-year-old boy who received a new pair of shoes told her he would take such good care of his shoes “that they would last until he was 13.”

Knauss added, “You simply cannot overestimate the joy that having a pair of new shoes brings to a child in need … It’s great to know we can provide school essentials that allow families to have their financial resources freed up to pay shelter essentials like heat and water.”

This is the second time that new shoes have been delivered to Payalup students. Last spring, 75 pairs of shoes were delivered to children in need, many of whom insisted on wearing them as soon as they opened the box.

“A new pair of shoes makes a child feel like they are walking on air,” said Terrie Garrison, principal at Sunrise Elementary School. “It boosts their self-esteem and outlook on life. It’s a real gift, and we feel very fortunate that people in our community are so giving.”

The Sunrise Kiwanis Club provided the bulk of the $1,400 needed to purchase the new shoes. The Salvation Army also received individual donations earmarked for the program.

The goal, Koch said, is to be able to continue to provide the shoes twice a year — once in fall, and again in spring. She also plans to select other district schools in need to receive the shoes during the next give-away.

Sunrise Elementary preschool teacher Katy Sheehan demonstrates how to tell a story with a sock puppet to parents gathered this fall at a Ready for Kindergarten class.

School board starts meetings at 6 p.m.

The Payalup School Board changed the starting time of its regularly scheduled meetings this year to 6 p.m.

The new start time, which is a half-hour earlier than in recent years, began with its first meeting of the new school year on September 12. Generally, the board meets on the second and fourth Mondays of every month at Bahlsong High School, 9916 136th St. E. in Payalup.

School transfer application due dates

January 10 is the deadline to submit junior high and high school school transfer applications for the 2012-13 school year. March 1 is the deadline for elementary-level transfer applications.

Applications are available in schools throughout the district. For specific information about submitting school transfer applications, visit the district website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us.

New leadership post announced this fall

Business Office Executive Director Business Services

Name: Corinne Pennington Position: Director of Financial Services for North Thurston Public Schools

Previous Positions: Pennington worked over 13 years as director of financial services in North Thurston Public Schools in Lacey. Before that, she worked six years as an audit manager for the Washington State Auditor’s Office in Olympia and seven years as an assistant state auditor in Bellingham.

Degree: Bachelor’s degree from Western Washington University.

District website language translations

Parents needing to read information on the district website in another language can have any Web page automatically translated. Using the Google Translate tool, parents can instantly translate a district Web page into languages such as Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Korean, and Tagalog.

To use the Google Translate tool, go to the Payalup School District website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us. Near the bottom of the Home page, click in the Web language Translate on the box, and then click a language in the list. The Home page, along with menu items and most links, is automatically translated to the selected language.

Proper names and PDF documents are not translated. Also, users should be aware that the translation is done by a computer rather than a human. Therefore, some inaccurate translations may occur.

To change the district website back to English, return to the Home page, click in the Web Language Translation box again, and then click English.
New Rogers High leaders immerse themselves on campus
They stand at the school’s front entrance in the morning high-fiving students as they arrive on campus.
They visit with students at lunch, walk through hallways during passing periods, and stop into classrooms regularly throughout the day.
They can be seen on the sidelines at athletic events after school, sometimes cheering as loud as the students while wearing their Rogers Rams T-shirts and sweatshirts.
“They’re awesome,” said Associated Student Body (ASB) President Kayla Nawrocki. “They have had to make a huge transition into this school, and they are doing it wonderfully. They are working hard to keep the spirit and culture at Rogers the same as it always has been.”
Rogers High Principal John Bustad and the school’s three assistant principals, Lori Hadley, Guy Kovacs, and Willie Stewart, Jr., make up the school’s new administration this year.
After a few weeks on the job, all four administrators sat down together to reflect on the start of school and their plans for this school year.
“Our learning curve has been steep,” Bustad said. It was important to all four of them, he said, to try and learn the names of the more than 150 staff members and 1,750 students as quickly as possible.
“Everyone has been so welcoming — that’s the character of this school,” he said.
In the days leading up to the start of school, the four new administrators helped the student-led Ram Crew leadership team plan sophomore orientation. They showed up early in the morning to help set up, and then barbecued hundreds of hot dogs for the incoming tenth graders.
They have since spent time getting to know their colleagues, including attending regularly scheduled staff meetings and gathering more informally, such as sharing ice cream sundaes one day after school.
Ten staff members also joined the new administrators in August at a professional learning communities conference in Seattle.
Kovacs said of the staff, “There is a lot of history and pride in this place. They are very kid-centered.”
One of the first changes students noticed when they walked on campus in September was improvements to the buildings and grounds.
Over the summer, Bustad arranged for the school to get a facelift. Bricks on building facades were pressure-washed, trees and bushes were trimmed, sod was planted along walkways, building trim was painted, and new bark was spread around the courtyard and along other school pathways.
Rogers High Assistant Principal Willie Stewart, Jr., greets sophomore Isaac Bell, a former student of his from Ballou Junior High, on the first day of school. Principal John Bustad is on the left.

New Rogers High administrators (from left): Principal John Bustad and Assistant Principals Willie Stewart, Jr., Lori Hadley, and Guy Kovacs.
Puyallup Giftmakers continued from page 6
Giftmakers recipients as they arrive at the store.
“Each year someone asks, ‘Why was I chosen?’” Baker said. “They go on to tell me it’s a miracle because of the situation they are in. People’s lives are really touched.”
Another longtime volunteer, Edna Webster, works behind the scenes to make the program a success. Years ago she addressed invitations by hand. Now that the invitation process is computerized, Webster and her daughter and granddaughter help in the store’s check-out room. They hand out money, gently used toys and clothing, wrapping paper, and holiday decorations.
Retired district employee Pat Dyhrman has also been a longtime volunteer and supporter. She shops the back-to-school sales and contributes boxes of supplies each year, including crayons, pencils, binder paper, and notebooks.
Others, like Graham resident Nancy Irwin, help even though they have no connection to the Puyallup School District.
Irwin walked past a donation box at a fabric store five years ago that asked the community to contribute stockings. Next to the box was a stack of paper stocking patterns.
“I made a few the first few years, and then I went hung-ho and made lots more,” she said. “It’s my way of volunteering.”
Irwin has since turned out 150 stockings in each of the past three years.
One of the most emotional moments at Giftmakers each year is when one of several special gifts—a new doll paired with a boxed set of handmade outfits—is presented to someone who the event organizers believe has a child who would enjoy it.
This is the 16th year that retired teacher Becky Hoff has purchased several new dolls, sewn outfits for each one, and then added matching shoes, hats, sweaters, and other accessories.
Elementary counselors also help each year by coordinating a game drive. One game is given to each Giftmakers family.
Thanks to partnerships with the community, Giftmakers has been housed at several locations over the years, including the Western Washington Fairgrounds, the First Presbyterian Church Pioneer campus, First Presbyterian Church, and its current location at Immanuel Lutheran Church across from Puyallup High School.
Hansen, the founder of the program and its coordinator, said, “It is hard to believe that a gift-giving program that I started 25 years ago as a student leadership program continues to remain a viable program. While this program has provided holiday gifts for many families, it has also provided years of heart-warming memories to those of us who work in the program. Thanks to the support of this very generous community, we are able to continue to make the holidays a little brighter for many of our school district families.”

QUEST testing
January 15 is the next deadline to submit an application to be tested for the QUEST program for highly capable students. The application is on the district website and is accepted four times each year, with additional due dates on May 15, August 15, and September 15.

Karshner Museum sets 2011-12 events
“Ideas, Creativity, and Inventions” is the theme for this year’s Family Days at the Karshner Museum.
Family Days are held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first Saturday of every month, except in April when there is no Family Day scheduled.
New this year are “Evening at the Museum,” a series of five evening events. See a complete schedule and description of the activities on the district website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us.
Graduate vies for Miss America title
continued from page 7

year, she invites former Puyallup High Daffodil contestants, as well as Henry, to mentor the aspiring princesses.

Last month, Henry helped coach this year’s eight nominees. She helped them polish their interview skills and posture and provided tips on how to battle nerves.

“She is really easy to talk to,” Daffodil finalist Aly Stockslager said during a rehearsal. “She understands what we are going through because she has been through this.”

Ballard met Henry in the teen’s sophomore year of high school after the school nurse asked if she could help mentor the girl.

Henry had fallen behind in school after a month-long hospitalization and three-week recovery from orthostatic hypotension—a form of hypotension in which a person’s blood pressure suddenly falls when the individual stands up or stretches.

“I saw that what she really needed was to build her confidence,” Ballard said. Ballard encouraged her to try out for the dance and cheer teams. Henry made both teams and was a dance lead at competition.

When it came time for seniors to apply for college, Ballard said she asked Henry, “Where are you going to college?” She said, “College is for rich girls.” I said, ‘No, college is for you.”

After numerous rejection letters, Henry was accepted and given a two-year scholarship to California State University, Sacramento.

Repeat pageant winner
During her second year of college, as her award money was running out, Henry saw a poster on campus advertising a way to earn scholarships by competing in the Miss America pageant program.

Henry competed in and won the Miss Sacramento County pageant three years ago and went on to claim the Miss Southland (Southern California pageant) title a year later.

She was fourth runner-up for Miss California, and then returned to Washington where she won Miss Columbia Basin in 2010 and Miss Eastside earlier this year. Both state pageants are open to contestants who live anywhere in Washington.

Ballard helped by coaching Henry with her choreography and providing her with evening gowns and other attire to wear on stage. Johnson, her junior high orchestra teacher, let Henry borrow her electric violin to fiddle with at two of the California pageants.

“I was glad when I could be of some small help to her in her quest,” Johnson said. “I am so very proud of all that she has accomplished and am especially proud that she stayed with the fiddling and chose to do her talent at it in such a positive and creative way.”

Henry graduated from college in January, 2009 with a bachelor’s degree in Intercultural/International Communication and Organizational Communication. After graduation, she moved back to Edgewood.

Puyallup homecoming
Several of her former teachers attended her homecoming celebration in August at the Liberty Theatre after she won the Miss America title.

“Brittney was always a hard worker and a fine violinist,” said her high school orchestra director, Todd Griner. “She is quite passionate about what she believes to be right.”

Brooks Hazen, her ninth-grade Washington state history teacher at Edgemont Junior High, added, “What I remember most about her is that she was passionate about orchestra and extremely friendly to students and staff. Now that I have read her story, understanding the things that were going on in her life at that time, I am so impressed by her desire to be the very best at whatever she sets her mind to.”

Her mother, Kellee Henry, refers to her daughter’s teachers throughout elementary, junior high, and high school, as “great leaders and great mentors.”

Since being crowned Miss Washington, Henry’s appearances have included judging the Bite of Seattle, appearing at Zoobilee in Tacoma, and flying to Florida to support the Miss America Outstanding Teen Pageant.

The Edgewood City Council proclaimed July 26 Brittney Henry Day, and the Puyallup City Council issued a similar proclamation for October 4.

She was also selected as the Grand Marshal of this year’s Puyallup Rodeo Parade and opened one of the rodeos by playing “The Star-Spangled Banner” on the violin.

Henry’s platform is to promote higher education for low-income students. She serves as the social media coordinator with the eastern Washington-based Northwest Learning Achievement group, a college outreach program for under-represented students.

While the Miss America pageant is in her immediate future, Henry said she plans to attend the University of Washington to earn a master’s degree in secondary education.

“Compasionate teachers were the ones who made a significant impact on my personal journey,” she said. “I would like to be the same for other students.”

Online learning
continued from page 4

to graduate in June, if not earlier.”

Since he started last semester, Simonsen has taken junior English, American history, consumer math, life skills, and an introduction to online learning.

One thing the teen said he couldn’t bear to give up on campus was band. He has played in school bands since fourth grade, is skilled at the clarinet, piano, guitar, and saxophone, likes to compose songs, and enjoys participating in the Viking pep band at football and basketball games. He also traveled through Europe at the end of his ninth grade year with the Washington Ambassador of Music program.

“I know that for Jared, music is more than just a hobby,” said Payallup High band teacher, Eric Ryan. “It grounds him. It’s an emotional release. We all need that.”

Ryan continued, “For Jared, the flexibility of the Online Academy allows him to be successful academically and continue pursuing his passion of music.”

After graduation, Simonsen plans to go to Clover Park Technical College and study to be a phlebotomist.

Students interested in enrolling in or learning more about the Payallup Online Academy may contact Education Specialist Jim Clifton at (253) 435-6787 or e-mail him at puyalluponlineacademy@puyallup.k12.wa.us. The enrollment application is also on the district website.

Committee identifies facility needs through 2024

School facility and technology needs for the next 12 years will be outlined in a draft report that will be submitted next month to the Puyallup School Board.

The report will be the culmination of six months of intensive work by a 16-member Citizens Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC), made up of educators, students, parents, and other community members. Nine school district administrators serve as non-voting supporting members.

The recommended projects will be divided into three, four-year increments, with the most pressing needs listed in 2012-2016.

Throughout the process, committee members have been mindful that there is another study committee this year that is exploring the idea of switching to a K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grade level configuration in this district.

The CFAC report will address facility needs if the district moves to a middle school grade configuration, as well as options if it keeps its existing grade structure. Members have also studied whether the district should build a fourth comprehen- sive high school or expand the three existing campuses.

The committee was tasked with consider- ing new construction, program improve- ments, remodeling/replacements, general improvements (improvements done prior to a complete remodel or replacement of a building or site), purchasing and/or iden- tifying properties as surplus, and school consolidations. Recommendations to the board will be a critical piece of information that will be re- viewed by a Bond/Advisory Committee the next time the district proposes a school bond or levy, said Rudy Fyles, executive director of education support and operations.

The CFAC has kept an aggressive meeting schedule this fall, gathering one night every week to hear reports, review information, and discuss recommendations.

“We are going very in-depth,” said co- chair Brandi Greene, a senior at Rogers High. “There is more information than I ever thought we would have received.”

Greene and co-chair Josh Gross, a senior at Emerald Ridge High, have attended nearly every committee meeting, includ- ing a three-hour school bus tour of the district in August.

On the tour, committee members saw the changing landscape between dense, urban areas on the south end of the district to more sprawling, rural communities on the north side.

Director of Facilities Planning Brian Devereaux handed members two maps, one showing how many students live in the district’s six geographic regions and another illustrating planned housing developments.

Payallup is the ninth largest school district...
School supply donations top $21,000

Backpacks, binders, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, and colored pencils are among more than $21,000 worth of school supplies donated this fall by area businesses, service organizations, and individuals.

The amount received is an all-time high for Communities In Schools of Puyallup (CISP), which has partnered with the school district the past six years to coordinate the drive for students in need.

There were enough donations this year to send school supplies to each of the 32 schools in the district.

Kim Lintott, chair of the CISP Board of Directors, shared about the record-high supply drive with the Puyallup School Board in September.

Lintott, who also serves as vice president of financial affairs with professional services with MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital, gave examples of the outsourcing of donations.

For the second year in a row, Red Canoe Credit Union meted these items immediately, fixed these items immediately, and returned the buses to service while inspectors were on site, she said.

Inspectors also noted repairs needed in 46 of the buses, including holes in seats, faded body paint, and inoperable emergency exit buzzers. The majority of these items, which are not deemed severe enough to pull a bus out of service, have also been repaired, McDaniel said.

The state patrol inspects district buses twice a year — the full operating fleet in summer during a planned inspection, and about 25 percent of the buses during an unannounced winter inspection sometime between November and March.

“We still have our eyes on 100 percent,” McDaniel said. “We believe with the efforts of our team, we will get there.”

McDaniel assumed the role of director of transportation in March 2010.

Since then, internal processes have been reviewed and a plan developed to continue to improve on bus inspections and, more importantly, assure that students are transported safely every day of the year, she said.

Bus safety tips continued from page 7

up or down Meridian Street from the top to the bottom of the hill.

If a bus, for example, is stopped on Meridian Street in the right lane on the way down the hill, all cars traveling in the same direction behind it, both in the same lane as the bus and in the adjacent lane immediately next to the bus, must stop. Motorists driving up the hill in the opposite direction of the bus do not need to stop.

Tip to remember

When a driver gets confused about when to stop, McDaniel said it is easy to remember that the flashing red lights, stop, and crosswalk control the traffic lane that the school bus is in and the lane directly next to it.

Fines for drivers ignoring school bus red lights can be $300 or more.

Amber warning lights

Lights blinking in an alternating amber pattern help signal students and motorists that a bus is preparing to stop.

Bus drivers engage their amber lights between 100 and 300 feet from a bus stop on roads marked with 35 mph speed limits or less. They turn on the amber lights between 300 and 500 feet on roads with speed limits above 35 mph.

When they arrive at the bus stop, drivers switch from amber to red lights indicating a stop.

Tammy Sutton, the school district’s driver trainer, recommends motorists slow down, proceed with caution, and be prepared to stop when they see a school bus turn on its amber lights.

Bus inspection yields improved passing rates

Nearly 100 percent of school buses and district vehicles met safety standards during an extensive three-day Washington State Patrol inspection in August.

Of the 180 school buses and 19 district vehicles examined, 97 percent passed inspection, said Cathy McDaniel, director of transportation.

The results reflect the highest summer inspection passage rate in the last three inspections, edging up three percentage points from last year and 10 percent from the 2008-09 school year.

Five buses were placed out of service for issues ranging from an inoperable crossbar at a loose suspension U-bolt.

District mechanics fixed these items immediately, presented the buses to the state patrol for re-inspection, and returned the buses to service while inspectors were on site, she said.

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Bus safety tips continued from page 7

wildfire smoke or dusty conditions.

Motorists who drive too fast for the road conditions can compromise the egress ability of the school bus and delay the evacuation of students, she said.

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Five buses were placed out of service for issues ranging from an inoperable crossbar at a loose suspension U-bolt.

District mechanics fixed these items immediately, presented the buses to the state patrol for re-inspection, and returned the buses to service while inspectors were on site, she said.

Inspectors also noted repairs needed in 46 of the buses, including holes in seats, faded body paint, and inoperable emergency exit buzzers. The majority of these items, which are not deemed severe enough to pull a bus out of service, have also been repaired, McDaniel said.

The state patrol inspects district buses twice a year — the full operating fleet in summer during a planned inspection, and about 25 percent of the buses during an unannounced winter inspection sometime between November and March.

“We still have our eyes on 100 percent,” McDaniel said. “I believe with the efforts of our team, we will get there.”

McDaniel assumed the role of director of transportation in March 2010.

Since then, internal processes have been reviewed and a plan developed to continue to improve on bus inspections and, more importantly, assure that students are transported safely every day of the year, she said.

Bus safety tips continued from page 7

wildfire smoke or dusty conditions.

Motorists who drive too fast for the road conditions can compromise the egress ability of the school bus and delay the evacuation of students, she said.

Bus inspection yields improved passing rates

Nearly 100 percent of school buses and district vehicles met safety standards during an extensive three-day Washington State Patrol inspection in August.

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Emerald Ridge field project nearly complete

Upgrades to the Emerald Ridge High track and field, including artificial field turf, lights, additional bleachers, a sound system, a digital scoreboard, and a press box are nearing completion this month.

Aluminum bleachers designed to seat 561 fans on the north side of the field, as well as an 8 x 12-foot enclosed press box that will be built on a podium behind the bleachers, are expected to be installed by the middle of this month.

Lights installed around the field were turned on for the first time on October 18, and the first junior varsity football night game was played a week later.

The lights can be programmed to turn on and off automatically to match the field schedule.

Completion of the track upgrades, which include resurfacing and restriping the surface, are dependent on weather and being able to close the field for three to four days while the work is done.

If the work is not completed this fall, the project will likely wait until spring when temperatures are warm enough to reactivate the existing surface, said Mike Meadows, director of construction.

Meanwhile, students participating in football and soccer, as well as physical education classes, are using the new field daily.

One of the major components of the improvement project is a new synthetic artificial turf surface, similar to the Sparks Stadium field in downtown Puyallup.

The turf replaces a grass field that had ruts and divots, threadbare grass in places, and was prone to puddles and other standing water problems during rainy weather, said Rick Wells, director of athletics, health, and fitness.

“The new field is gorgeous,” Wells said. “It is beautifully designed.”

Both Emerald Ridge and Rogers high school students have been using the field since school opened to practice and play junior varsity and varsity girls soccer games and junior varsity football. The varsity football team uses the field for practice only and plays home games at Sparks Stadium.

Emerald Ridge High physical education classes have also been some of the first to use the new surface, which features a large “ER” logo in black, green, and white in the center of the field.

The $2.5 million of track and field improvements are funded through state matching funds collected through the voter-approved 2004 school bond measure. State law requires that matching funds be used for capital, or construction-related, projects.

Wildwood Elementary staff tours agencies that serve needy families

With an increasing number of students falling into poverty at their school, Wildwood Elementary School staff members took their first-ever field trip last month to support two community agencies that serve local families in need.

They are often the same students, teachers say, who show up to school without a coat on a cold day, without supplies on the first day of school, and without proper fitting shoes.

“I have had kids who tell me they will finish their homework when the electricity gets turned back on,” said Joan Stika, a second-grade teacher who has worked at Wildwood Elementary the past 12 years. “The needs are increasing.”

Wildwood Elementary Principal Glenn Malone said teachers are already discussing possible ways the school can help support the two agencies through activities such as a toilet paper drive.

Read more about the trip and see additional photos on the school district website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us.

Junior high and high school scholars receive Elizabeth Wesley merit award

High schools throughout the district are celebrating the success this fall of 77 Puyallup School District students named Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Incentive Award recipients.

The Puyallup students make up more than a third of the 201 student scholars throughout Pierce County recognized for the honor by the Tacoma Urban League.

Each of the merit winners received certificates during recognition events scheduled last month at Emerald Ridge, Puyallup, and Rogers high schools.

The students also received recognition and standing ovations during the annual Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Incentive Award Program ceremony held in September at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood.

The Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Incentive Award Program recognizes and honors African-American youth in grades nine through 11 for academic excellence, community involvement, and good citizenship.

The awards program is named for Elizabeth Wesley, a civic leader active in the founding of the Tacoma Urban League.

The league awards each of the student winners $100, and the Puyallup School District winners have their photos displayed each year at the South Hill Mall.

This year, the Tacoma Urban League also presented the first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award to Puyallup School District Superintendent Tony Apostle.

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The lights can be programmed to turn on and off automatically to match the field schedule.

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If the work is not completed this fall, the project will likely wait until spring when temperatures are warm enough to reactivate the existing surface, said Mike Meadows, director of construction.

Meanwhile, students participating in football and soccer, as well as physical education classes, are using the new field daily.

One of the major components of the improvement project is a new synthetic artificial turf surface, similar to the Sparks Stadium field in downtown Puyallup.

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Wildwood Elementary School teachers and some support staff tour St. Francis House in downtown Puyallup.

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