

Every Student Future Ready

Vision statements help organizations chart where they want to go. They are optimistic by nature. In fact, they may not even be entirely, 100 percent reachable. But they can spur an organization to go farther, faster than anyone thought possible. As an organization, Lake Washington School District has not had a clearly understood vision statement for the last few years. Superintendent Chip Kimball wanted to create a focus and passion that staff, parents and students can commit themselves to, something that would help move this district to even greater accomplishments. In August, he shared with all staff a new vision statement. That vision statement is:

Every Student Future Ready

*Prepared for College,
Prepared for the Global Workplace,
Prepared for Personal Success*

Superintendent Kimball has described what he means by this mission: an excerpt from his superintendent's message, posted on the district Web site, follows.

"These words have been selected carefully and intentionally. 'Every student' is personal, individual and inclusive. It reinforces that every child is unique and important to this district. Every child has their own strengths and unique needs. It means we can't be satisfied with getting most students to succeed.



'Future ready' is forward looking, as a vision should be. It is also intentionally flexible. We know that what we think the future will be is constantly changing and that the future never turns out to be exactly what we anticipated. If we create a system that will only work to prepare students for what we think today about what the future will be, that system will be obsolete before we finish implementing it. The system must be consistently changing to meet the future needs of students.

'Prepared for College' speaks to the preparation required for post-secondary education. I am often asked if every student should go to college. My answer is no. However, when I'm asked if every student should be prepared to go to college, my answer is absolutely YES! When students are prepared for college they will be prepared for any host of experiences after high school, not just a four-year college experience. Being prepared for college gives students choices about their future and gives them the capabilities to be successful no matter what they choose. As students discover their interests, passion and resources, they will then be able to choose the path that best suits them.

It is also becoming clear that students will be required to participate in some form of post-secondary education to earn a livable wage. This experience may be a technical college, community college, four-year college, an apprenticeship or a certificate program. We are also finding that students will likely return to school during their career, which will require the learning skills that they learn from us.

Being prepared for college is more than courses and credits. Preparation includes hard work, understanding competition, organization, focus, problem solving and thinking ability. Dr. David Conley, director of the Center for Educational Policy Research at the University of Oregon, has identified key cognitive strategies that students need to be prepared for college. They include:

- Intellectual Openness
- Inquisitiveness
- Analysis
- Reasoning, Argumentation, Proof
- Interpretation
- Precision and Accuracy
- Problem Solving

Aren't these aptitudes we want for all students, whether they attend college or not? Being prepared for college will pay off whether a student steps foot on campus or not.

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AYP, NCLB What does it mean for my student?

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law has a very laudable goal – 100 percent of American students passing standardized tests in reading and math by the year 2014. Along the way to that goal, schools and districts must be making progress, marked as “Adequate Yearly Progress” or AYP. This seemingly simple concept is not quite so simple in the execution. It also sounds pretty straightforward: a school or district either makes it or it does not and not making progress sounds bad. The reality is much more complex.

Subgroups make a difference for schools

First, how does a school show that they have made AYP? Schools are expected to make gains in the percentage of students meeting the standard on the state reading and math tests – in our case, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The average of all students in a school is a factor plus each of eight subgroups of students must also meet the standard. Those subgroups are five major racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, English Language Learners and low-income students. If the percentage of students in any one subgroup performing at standard on the test does not meet the requirement, then the school does not make AYP even if the whole school on average is doing very well.

Many schools in the state of Washington did not make AYP this year. Most Lake Washington schools did – 28 of them. Of the other 21, 16 did not make AYP for the first time last year. AYP was more difficult to reach because the target levels of the percentage of students who must meet the WASL standards for schools or districts to meet AYP rose. (Washington state raises this target every three years.) Also, the minimum number of students required for a subgroup to be counted for AYP was reduced to 30 for all subgroups from 40 in the past. That meant that more subgroups were included in the review.

What does a school's AYP status mean? AYP designation is a label that divides all schools in the country into two groups. It cannot begin to provide a whole picture of our school or any other school. A school may not make AYP based on the results of a few students in a subgroup. AYP status should not be equated with other simple labels, like “good” or “bad.” Instead of focusing on AYP status, parents should look deeper into the school's results. Are they improving over time generally? Is there a particular subject where the school does better or worse than other similar schools? If they are doing worse, what are the school's plans to get better? If they are doing better, what are the school's plans to maintain or improve those results?

Numbers of students make a difference at the district level

With high average WASL scores, Lake Washington School District (LWSD) met the standard for Adequate Yearly Progress in 49 of 59 areas under the No Child Left Behind Act. In most of the 49 areas, which include subject areas (math and reading), three grade-spans (3-5, 6-8 and 10) and student subgroups such as race or income groups, students scored

significantly above the targets.

Because NCLB requires that all subgroups meet or exceed all of the targets, the district did not meet AYP this year. No school district in Washington with more than 10,000 students met AYP last year. However, Lake Washington has not entered “improvement” status. Statewide, 57 districts have entered “improvement” status. Of the ten largest school districts in the state, Puyallup and Lake Washington are the only two that have not entered “improvement status.”

The areas of concern for the district include special education, Hispanic students and low-income students. Special education students in elementary schools and junior high schools did not meet the target for WASL scores in both reading and math. This year, low-income students in the elementary schools did not meet the standard for math although they did meet it for reading. Low-income students in junior high did not meet the standard for both math and reading. In addition, this year, Hispanic students in junior high did not meet the standard in math and reading.

“We've been working for the last two years on improving our special education services,” noted Dr. Chip Kimball, superintendent. “These results draw our attention to additional work we need to do with low-income and Hispanic students at the junior high level. Most students at these schools singled out for improvement status are succeeding” noted Dr. Chip Kimball, Superintendent. “But we want every child to succeed and will work hard to make that happen.”

For more information on district and school AYP results, go to <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/AdequateYearlyProgress.aspx>.

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'Prepared for the global workplace' is a necessity these days. Just down the road from our district is Microsoft, a company that has locations around the world and that brings people from around the world to work here in Redmond. Working in an international environment requires the understanding of other cultures, competition, communication, creativity, technology, logistics and global economics. Working with a diverse population, which was once an issue of human dignity, is now an issue of economic survival. Our students must be prepared to enter this global workplace.

'Prepared for personal success' is a reminder that our responsibility is the development of the whole child. There are skills that we teach at home and in school that will contribute to a student's personal success. Our goal is to ensure that students learn to develop empathy, persistence, listening skills, resiliency, optimism, courage, humor, compassion and loyalty from their experiences as well as from examples adults they interact with model.

I hope you will join me in the wonderful challenge of shaping a school system that will make sure that 'Every Student' is 'Future Ready.'

Basic Education Task Force

On September 22, several hundred Lake Washington School District parents and staff got a sneak preview of one proposal to change the funding and potentially the future of education in the state of Washington. The Board of Directors held a work session to which they invited three local legislators who are members of the governor's Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance – Representatives Ross Hunter and Glenn Anderson plus Senator Rodney Tom. Hunter presented a draft proposal for changes in the state's funding model for K-12 education: the Task Force is expected to make a final report, including proposals, December 1. All three legislators answered questions from the school board, PTSA and audience members following the presentation.

Hunter noted that the proposal begins with the end in mind – high school graduation, and works backward to make that possible. The legislators outlined their philosophies, which include providing reasonably adequate resources; ensuring transparency from school districts about how the money is spent; and allowing districts flexibility to make decisions in the best interest of students.

Some of the highlights of their draft proposal, include:

- Seven-period school day in high school (five periods are now funded by the state) with a class size of 25 students for most courses and smaller classes for technical education, lab sciences, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate.
- More instructional time for students who start the school year behind their peers.
- More learning opportunities for gifted students.
- Higher allocations for non-instructional staff including teacher's aides, secretaries and custodians as well as non-staff costs like heating, electricity, and supplies.
- Higher allocations for school instructional and administrative staff, including principals, librarians, counselors and nurses.

Hunter believes that compensation for teachers must be competitive and it should increase as teachers demonstrate added competence. He acknowledged the need for cost-of-living adjustments based on where they are employed.

The proposal will cost more than the current state education funding so the next question becomes where the money will come from. The Task Force recognizes the need to phase in new resources over time, especially given the current economic situation. Instead, they are looking at funding a significant portion of the growth by taking a larger share of the natural growth of the state budget, slowly increasing the portion of the state budget that goes for education back to the 50 percent it once was. A higher levy lid, which would allow the district to raise more money for general operating funds through its education and operations levy, is a possibility as well.

Board President Jackie Pendergrass was very pleased by the session, both by the community turnout and the legislators' presentation. "It was exciting to see so much energy around school funding," noted Pendergrass. "Our PTSA members spread the word and made sure parents were well-represented so they can learn what is at stake for the education of their children. And it was clear the legislators have heard many of our concerns about school funding. Now we will have to wait to see the final proposal."

For more information about the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force, go to www.leg.wa.gov/Joint/Committees/BEF/.

Awards and Achievements

Four Lake Washington schools were among the 98 winners of the second annual Schools of Distinction award. **Alcott** and **Mann Elementary Schools** won the honor for the second year in a row while **Audubon** and **Thoreau Elementary Schools** made the list for the first time. The award recognizes and celebrates schools statewide that demonstrate outstanding improvement in reading and mathematics.

Mike Town, an environmental science teacher at **Redmond High School**, has been named as this year's winner of the Stanley O. McNaughton Golden Apple Award. Golden Apple Award winners will be honored in ceremonies held January 2009 in Seattle, which are recorded for later broadcast on public television stations statewide. Each winner will receive a "Golden Apple" statuette; individual honorees will also receive \$250. PEMCO Insurance also will award each Golden Apple recipient a \$1,500 grant to support their classroom, school or educational program.

Kirkland Junior High School students **Connor Bergren**, **Matt Mihara** and **Jake Nathlich** were selected out of thousands of applicants to represent Washington state in the American Choral Directors Association's Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir in Oklahoma City, Okla., this March. **Only five students from the state of Washington were chosen** for this chorus of just over 300 students.

The National Association of Biology Teachers, in conjunction with Prentice Hall and Leica Microsystems, Inc, awarded **William Monahan** with the 2008 Washington Outstanding Biology Teacher Award. Monahan is a biology/life science teacher at **Eastlake High School**. Criteria for the award include teaching ability, experience, inventiveness, initiative, inherent teaching strengths, and cooperativeness in the school and community.

The U.S. Department of Education announced that **Anisha Gulabani**, a senior at **Eastlake High School** in Sammamish, is one of 141 Presidential Scholars for 2008. Presidential Scholars are chosen for demonstrating outstanding academic achievements, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship, service, and contributions to school and community. Presidential Scholars were honored in Washington, D.C., from June 23-27.

Modernization

Thanks to our voters, the Lake Washington School District's modernization program has opened one new school this fall and is in various stages of planning or building four modernized schools. The voter-approved modernization bond passed in February 2006, approving \$436 million in bonds to modernize 11 schools and add one new school.

Rachel Carson Elementary School

Carson Elementary is the one brand new school authorized by the modernization bonds and it opened this fall. You would expect an elementary school named after environmentalist Rachel Carson to be sustainably designed. In this case, the school's name was serendipitous: the students of the new Rachel Carson Elementary School made the choice after the school was already designed, from nominees in many different fields. A green roof covers two sections of the school, reducing rain run-off from the building. These green roofs are the first on a school building in a K-12 school district in this state. These rooftops are covered in soil and hold succulent plants that can survive the dry summers. It also insulates the spaces below. Other sustainable aspects of the school



Rachel Carson Elementary School in Sammamish opened this fall.

include rain gardens, a geothermal heat pump, radiant floor heating, ceiling fans and operable windows.

Frost Elementary

Construction began on June 15 for the new Robert Frost Elementary School. A new building is being constructed behind the old school building on the same site. Students will continue to attend school in the old building while the new one is completed. This summer, the site was prepared for construction of the new building. The next major milestone is completing the major structure and putting on the roof, which is expected to be done by January. By the end of this school year (June 16), the new building will be finished. During the summer of 2009, the old building will be demolished and the new building will open to students in September 2009. Taking full advantage of its tree-covered site, the new school will be oriented to capture the forest-like surroundings.

Lake Washington High School

Work began on the new Lake Washington High School during the summer. Site preparation and utility work on the site of the replacement school building continues through December. In March, construction of the new building will begin. The new school is scheduled to open in fall 2011. The staff at this school has done its own work, researching and evaluating best practices in secondary education. The result is a change in how students will be organized, creating four houses within this comprehensive high school. See the Lake Washington High School section on the district Web site under News for more information.

Two other schools are in the planning stages. Planning for **Muir Elementary** has just begun. The new Muir is scheduled to be completed in time for school in fall 2011. Planning is also underway for **Finn Hill Junior High/Environmental and Adventure School**.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Non-Discrimination Statement

Lake Washington School District complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or disability. This holds true for all district employment and for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Affirmative Action Officer, Title IX Officer, ADA District Coordinator, or Section 504 Coordinator. *Affirmative Action Officer, ADA and Title IX officer:* Pat Fowler-Fung, (425) 702-3266. *Section 504 Coordinator:* Paul Vine, (425) 702-3302 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 97039, Redmond, WA 98073.

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