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BobcatBULLETIN www.blackwellptsa.org

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Spring is definitely here! Flowers are in bloom, bookshelves have been cleaned out and then restocked from the Used Book Fair, and planning for the Fun Run is underway.

While we take stock of all that we have accomplished together this school year, please also take a minute to think about how individually you would like to volunteer your time at Blackwell next year. You could volunteer in the classroom, health room, on a certain PTSA Committee, as a PTSA Committee Chairperson, and maybe a combination of a few of these. For a complete listing of committees (including a description of each), please take a minute to visit our website at www.blackwellptsa.org and click under committees. There are so many positions with varying levels of time and responsibility. PTSA is not exclusive—it is inclusive, so there is definitely something for everyone. So before those familiar “Committee Signup Sheets” are posted, be thinking about how you would like to volunteer your time.

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Where has the time flown? The last General Membership Meeting of the year will be held on **April 21st at 7:00 p.m. in the Blackwell Library**. We will be discussing and voting on the Board of Directors for the 2005-06 school year, a proposal to increase membership fees for the 2005-06 year and a grant request from Blackwell educators for academic aids. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

Finally, thank you for your continued support. It has truly been a pleasure to represent you this year. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Happy Spring!



Juie Vanner *Jennifer Deuch*

Blackwell
PTSA Co-

Presidents

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to spring. Just like the beautiful blossoms on the trees and shrubs in the neighborhood, our students continue to bloom academically and socially here at Blackwell. Another way that we know it is spring in any school in the great state of Washington, of course, is the upcoming WASL. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning is indeed an opportunity for our students to provide important feedback to us on how we are doing in helping them achieve the standards we have set for them. While in the past years only the fourth graders have taken a WASL test at the elementary level, this year third, fifth and sixth graders will be taking WASL tests as well.

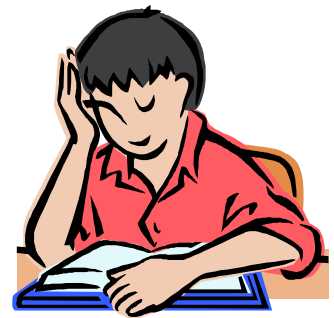
Third Grade	Math and Reading
Fourth Grade	Reading, Math, and Writing
Fifth Grade	Reading, Math, and Science
Sixth Grade	Reading and Math

All of these tests will be administered during the “testing window” of April 19th through May 6th. Each grade level will be communicating their testing schedule.

The WASL tests are significantly different from standardized tests such as the ITBS your child has taken in the past. In addition to multiple choice questions, the WASL tests require students to apply their knowledge and skills by writing descriptive and narrative essays, comparing information from different texts, using math skills to solve complex problems, and explaining the steps they took to arrive at an answer. Each test is individually scored by a trained expert—not by a computer, and each response is scored according to strict criteria. Yes, this process is time-consuming, but it provides a reliable and more complete picture of how well students are learning the curriculum of the LWSD and the State of Washington. These standards do expect more from our students than in the past, but we are confident that here at Blackwell our students will continue to achieve well given the strong parental support for education and the outstanding teachers who work all year with the boys and girls.

You can help insure that your student performs their best on the WASL by being sure they get good sleep during the testing window, come to school with a healthy breakfast, and by minimizing any absences for reasons other than illness. If you have any questions about the WASL please do not hesitate to contact your student's teacher or myself.

Sincerely,

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The last PTSA general membership meeting for the 2004-05 year is scheduled for **Thursday, April 21st from 7—9 p.m.** in the Blackwell library. We will be discussing and voting on: the Board of Directors for the 2005-06 school year, a proposal to increase membership fees for the 2005-06 year and a grant request from Blackwell educators for academic aids. Everyone is invited to attend so please come and join us and have a say in your PTSA! Questions? Contact Jennifer Lerch or Julie Varness.

NEWS FROM THE BEST COMMITTEE

Incidents of bullying and aggressive behaviors among girls are sadly becoming more prevalent in our society, and the plateau is not immune. Recognizing this cultural trend, the BEST Committee is working to bring Rachel Simmons, author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*, to the Sammamish Plateau. Ms. Simmons speaks nationwide about female aggression and its implications for girls' and women's lives. It is our hope that Ms. Simmons will have the opportunity to address parents, students and the local general public so that we may work as a community to combat this problem and to empower girls and adolescents. Ms. Simmons's latest book, *Odd Girl Speaks Out: Girls Write About Bullies, Cliques, Popularity and Jealousy* is a collection of girls' personal writings, along with girls' advice on how to handle difficult situations with other girls. For more information regarding Rachel Simmons and her valuable work, please log onto www.rachelsimmons.com. The BEST Committee will keep the Blackwell community apprised of updates regarding Ms. Simmons and her visit.

GOLDEN PENCIL

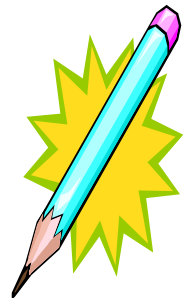
Three cheers for students who participated in the Golden Pencil sharing experience!

February 11, 2005

Connor Miles, Margo Press, Hunter Britten, Jacob Curtis, Dane Thorn, Anthony Maletta, Abby Gilham, Catalina Raggi, Amanda Setterquist, Hannah Finn, Caleb Jordan, Anna Kong, Ashley McCutcheon, Lauryn Rohde, Evan Green, Kristina Moutafov, Marlon Fussell, Jordan Jamison, Morgan Rowe, Claire Parsons, Tim Lundberg, Jacob Bolton, Noah Curtis, Michelle Hosogai, Hailey Morgan, Matti Thornton, Josh Colbert and Bryson Amaya

March 11, 2005

Katie Rolls, Leda Solaimani, Trevor Seliber, Andrew Lanfear-Radlo, Michael Vogeler, Stefan Frljanic, Thomas Dawson, Loucas Tsilas, Lucas Minet, Gaura Tulsyan, Brynn Bench, David Erickson, Haley Baker, Dylan Stranc, Gregory Cheng, Stas Kouzmine, Stasys Meclazcke, Courtney Huston, McKenna Hawksford, Ashley Fabian, Bryan Cassill and Becca Fabian



PTSA FAMILY FUN RUN

Elizabeth Blackwell Elementary PTSA Family Fun Run is scheduled for **Friday, May 6 at 12:30 p.m.** Participants will run or walk a 2.5-mile course around the school's neighborhood. Families can choose to complete the 1 mile course or the entire 2.5 mile course. Water, bagels and fruit will be available after the race. We had many entries for our Fun Run t-shirt competition and will announce the winner on April 6. T-shirts and Fun Run registration forms will be in Friday packets on April 8th. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION PTSA FUNDRAISER

Congratulations!!! The second drive is complete with the collection of 3565 Box Tops. This will result in General Mills paying Blackwell over \$350!!!! The winning classroom in the K-3 grade level was Mrs. Haynes 1st grade class with 486 Box Tops. The winning classroom in the 4-6 grade level was Ms. Amaya's 5th grade class with 259 Box Tops. Prizes were distributed to the classrooms. Keep collecting those Box Tops as we're in the midst of our third (and final) contest which will run until 22 April. For more information and to see the total breakout of Box Tops collected in each classroom visit <http://www.blackwellpta.org/boxtops.asp>. Thank you for making a difference for our school.

After each drive, the 2 classes (one from each division) collecting the most Box Tops will receive prizes. The 2 classes collecting the most Box Tops overall will also be rewarded with a special activity/party at the end of the year. Our class divisions will be Kindergarten through 3rd grade and 4th through 6th grade.

Keep collecting Box Tops and help your class win prizes and a party of their choice!! Box Tops are available on hundreds of participating General Mills products and are worth 10¢ each when we redeem them with General Mills. If everyone helps, we can earn more cash for our school than ever before. Sign up for the Box Tops for Education Booster Club and receive valuable grocery coupons every month; shop online at hundreds of merchants through the Box Tops Marketplace and earn cash for our school, or apply for your Box Tops Visa® card. Remember to tell your friends and family near and far to sign up, too, and help us reach our goal. For more information visit <http://www.blackwellpta.org/boxtops.asp>.

Thank you for making a difference for our school. Please contact Kathy Haase if you have any questions at haases@cablespeed.com.



2005 PTSA USED BOOK FAIR—BE AMAZED, “BUY” BOOKS

Many thanks for an Amazing 2005 PTSA Used Book Fair Success! The Amazing volunteers sorted over 8000 items! Congratulations to Mrs. Harrington's and Mrs. Gordon's classes who combined donated over 1500 books! These 2 Amazing classrooms have won an Amazingly fun time (TBA) with Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. DeGallier! To date, we have an Amazing total of over \$1600! The remaining books will be donated to various children's charities thanks to Lisa Parkinson!

This Amazing PTSA event would not be possible without the generous donations from all the Blackwell Families and staff! We are so Amazingly grateful to the following volunteers for all their time and effort:

Custodians Candee Bell and Peter Michael, Julie and Taige Thornton, Stacy Wells, Lisa Rohde, Mary Kennedy, Shelia Escarda, Patricia Dunbar, Sue Wood, Kathleen Minet, Laurie Urh, Lisa Sharp, Sue Finn, Beth Olde, Lisa Nelson, Kimberly and Isla Hornsby, Abbie and Karen Bien, Kris Kelleran, Deb Schnell, Kelly Morgan, Mike Pierzchalski, Sue Hawksford, Lauriann Garland, Dhana McConnell, Karen Green, Tina Cooper, Carol Radlo, Jhansi Reddy, Elaine Sawyer, Adriene Horchover, Elisa Huston, Linda Johnson, Kris Zigman and Mom, Cara Smith, Becky Poblete, Kalpana Dewan, Kristi Bennett, Christie Porter, Julie Varness, Mary Masterson, Martha Mendillo!

Thank you Sammamish Safeway for the collection boxes and as always the Amazing Becky Poblete and Kathy Gustafson for their Amazing Support! Also, a special thanks to PTSA Presidents, Julie Varness and Jennifer Lerch, for all of their patience and Amazing guidance!
Chairs: Cyndy Morgan and Karey Pierzchalski



HELP WANTED:

SUPPORT NEEDY FAMILIES THROUGH PRE-SUMMER DRIVES

When school ends for the year, needy families face extra challenges:

- A drop in food bank and other donations, as people leave town
- Lack of 200,000+ free and reduced cost lunches and breakfasts schools provided September through June
- In some cases, a choice between buying food / necessities and paying rent or mortgage.

To help families address these challenges and show our children how to make a difference in others' lives, the PTSA's Sharing is Caring Committee invites the Blackwell community to support three drives.

1. Spring Cleanup Drive For the Baby Corner Books and Toys Drive April 25-27, please donate

- Any baby items less than four years old, including non-broken toys and unripped books, car seats, high chairs, playpens and clothing
- For kids up to age 12, new or gently-used bikes, good-condition books or toys, and clothing

All items will be donated to Eastside Baby Corner and should be in very good condition. Collection boxes will be located in front of the Main Office.

Contact Stacy Wells (the.wells@comcast.net; 836-2912) if you have questions, or if you have large items to donate.

2. Sock Drive **Join in the Sock Drive** May 5-6, which benefits the Issaquah Valley Food and Clothing Bank.

Please bring **NEW, summer-lightweight kids' and teens socks to school. Collection** boxes will be outside the Main Office, or you can bring socks to Running Club May 5th or to the Fun Run Friday May 6th. Guess the total number of socks donated and win a prize!

Call Julie Wage (868-0853) if you have questions.

3. Kids Helping Kids Canned Food Drive During the Kids Helping Kids Summer Canned Food Drive June 1-3, place canned items in the boxes outside the Main Office. All donations will go to Hopelink Redmond, which manages the Redmond Food Bank.

Volunteers? **If you'd like to volunteer with Sharing Is Caring** activities, please contact Matt Huston (mhustonwa@yahoo.com; 836-5480).

Ideas? **We're looking for ideas for next year.** If you have some ideas for the Sharing is Caring Committee, please contact Elisa Huston (mhustonwa@yahoo.com; 836-5480).

Thanks! **Thanks to everyone in the community for** your participation in each of the PTSA's Sharing is Caring Committee activities this year—Support the Troops and Kids for Cans.

MATH NIGHT AT BLACKWELL A SUCCESS!

Thank you to all students, parents and teachers who attended Math Night at Blackwell. We had great turnout with 168 in attendance. The evening was facilitated by Jane Hitchcock who started the evening with various math puzzles and games around the gym. Families were then led through various games they could play together to enhance logic and reasoning skills. The Blackwell PTSA is proud to sponsor curriculum and learning nights for our families.



LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Thanks to you—dedicated PTSA members—both proposed State budgets reflect a strong commitment to K-12 education, as well as children’s health and human services. Your voices have made an incredible impact this year.

Governor Gregoire unveiled her 2005-07 biennial budget proposal this week, and WSPTA joins other organizations in applauding her efforts to focus on student success. The proposal makes targeted funding level changes that will drive dollars directly to the students and the classroom. This is done by fully funding the voter initiative (I-728) and changing the formula to fund the learning assistance program. Additionally, strong improvements are made to children's health care by delaying premiums, adding immigrant children to the state health plan, and eliminating several administrative barriers.

The proposed budget presented by the Senate includes a revenue increase of \$480 million dollars. This amount roughly doubles the amount of new revenue in the Governor’s budget proposal. The Senate proposal uses primarily the same sources—partial reinstatement of the estate tax and an increase in the cigarette tax—along with several smaller increases, efficiencies, and \$515 million in budget cuts.

Below are some recent highlights for the priority areas identified by WA PTSA:

Support for Education Reform/Student Achievement (i.e. WASL): Several bills relating to alternative assessments are alive and well. WSPTA still has significant concerns regarding the inadequate level of legislative support for student achievement. WSPTA efforts are underway to publicly call attention to the critical issue of high standards, high stakes, and low resources. The Governor’s proposal provides \$3.5 million for Assessment System Changes, which provides re-takes, alternative assessments, and an appeals process for the WASL.

Education Finance Study: Both comprehensive early learning, K-12, and higher education study bills, HB 1380 and SB 5441, are moving through the system well, and likely will merge into one study bill. WSPTA remains firm in the conviction that K-12 must be addressed sooner rather than later and advocates for immediate attention to the significant structural problems in the K-12 funding model. The recent proposal includes an Education Finance Study budget of \$1.7 million for comprehensive early learning, K-12 and higher education finance study.

K-12 School Facilities: There is a great deal of support for K-12 facilities funding increases in the Capital budget, as well as several policy bills that will improve K-12 school facilities. The Capital budget will be released soon, at which time we will see specifically what level of funding improvements we can expect. WSPTA is lobbying for increases in both the area cost allowance and square foot allocation that the state provides to districts through the state-match program. All indications are that K-12 facilities will see another incremental increase in state match funds. Additionally, HB 1272, providing for high-performing school facilities is alive and will be heard in the senate soon.

Highly Capable Programs: The funding for these programs will be negotiated in the budget. In the meantime, there is work being done with teacher pre- and in-service training to assist teachers in identifying and instruction of highly capable learners. The recent budget release will afford us an opportunity to see if any cuts are scheduled for these programs as well as the current funding level of 2% of enrollment.

Another \$5.1 million is included in the Governors budget for K-12 Enhancements. These include the following:

- Core student records system;
- Incentive grants for vocational technical education;
- Expansion of mentor opportunities at 16 high schools (WA. Achievers Scholars program);
- Pilot program for dyslexia instruction programs;
- Support for instruction around conservation and natural resources;
- Curriculum regarding women’s role in World War II;
- Internet Safety Education program to fund SB 5803;
- One-time grants for fuel costs;
- Skills Center Incentive Grants.

(Continued on page 7.)

(Continued from page 6.)

Bills Passed House/Senate: Following is an overview of bills that have passed either the House, Senate, or both. The bills listed here are only those related to WSPTA’s platform. This is not a complete list—you can find more information on the state website: www.leg.wa.gov.

Bills Passed Senate			
Bill	Title	Vote	
ES SB 5349	Dyslexia Pilot Program	48-0-0-1	
S SB 5360	Running Start Eligibility	41-8-0-0	
E2S SB 5441	Education Finance Study	31-18-0-0	
S SB 5828	Digital or Online Learning	48-0-0-1	
SB 5171	School Safety Info Sharing	47-1-0-1	
S SB 5288	Juveniles In Custody	45-0-0-4	
ES SB 5426	Truancy and Dropouts	47-0-1-1	
ES SB 5732	Education Boards	30-19-0-0	
SB 5803	Internet Safety	49-0-0-0	
2S SB 5638	Student Assessments	39-10-0-0	
S SB 6001	Use of Force in Schools	45-2-0-2	
ES SB 5509	High Performing Schools	32-16-0-1	
Bills Passed House			
HB 2101	Offenders Who are Students	97-0-01	
S HB 1366	Video Game Rating System	95-3-0-0	
ES HB 1633	Digital Learning Programs	98-0-0-0	
ES HB 1272	High Performance Buildings	78-18-0-2	
ES HB 1282	Sexual Health Education	61-36-0-1	
S HB 1058	Mental Health for Minors	96-0-0-2	
E HB 1069	Audits of Tax Preferences	63-32-0-3	
S HJR 4205	School Levies	73-25-0-0	
E HB 1187	Youthful Offenders	96-0-0-2	
S HB 1987	Alternative Assessments	95-0-0-3	
HB 1771	School Breakfast Programs	96-0-0-2	
HB 2058	School Employees/Sex Offenders	94-0-0-4	
ES HB 1252	Family & Consumer Science Ed	88-4-0-6	
E2S HB 1605	Soil Contamination	95-0-0-5	
S HB 1951	Vision Exams for Children	93-0-0-5	
E HB 1998	Student Achievement	93-0-0-5	
Bill Signed into Law by Governor			
Bill	Title	House Vote	Senate Vote
S HB 1154	Mental Health Parity	67-25-0-6	40-9-0-0

(Information/excerpts are taken from the WSPTA Legislation Website and the Grassroots Connection WSPTA Government Relations Coordinator)

2004—2005 PTSA & SCHOOL CALENDAR

April	1	Half Day for students—PDD for staff
	6	PTSA Board Meeting
	7	PTSA LWSO Council Meeting
	11—15	No School—Spring Break
	21	PTSA General Membership Meeting, 7pm
May	26	Skate King, 6:30pm—8:30pm
	5	PTSA LWSO Council Meeting
	6	Half Day for students—AED for staff
	6	Fun Run, 12:30pm
	11	PTSA Board Meeting—old/new board attends
June	27	No School for students—PDD & AED for staff
	30	No School—Memorial Day
	2	PTSA LWSO Council Meeting
	3	PTSA Volunteer Recognition "Thanks a Latte"
	8	PTSA Board Meeting
	8	June "Bobcat Bulletin" news due
	21	Half Day for students—Last day of school



2004—2005 PTSA Board

Co-Presidents	Julie Varness	868-8752	jvarness@verizon.net
	Jennifer Lerch	836-3551	lerchs@blarg.net
Co-Executive Vice Presidents	Sonja Michalik	868-3101	sonja.asm@verizon.net
	Marilyn Dusche	836-4757	mddusche@hotmail.com
Co-VPs Curriculum	Dana Thorn	868-8828	danavr4@hotmail.com
	Tami Vogeler	868-2833	invoge@msn.com
Co-VP Ways and Means	Eric Nelson	836-3825	emn@verizonmail.com
	Heather Nelson	836-3825	heather.m.nelson@us.pwc.com
VP Communications	Melody Rowe	868-4780	melody_rowe@verizon.net
Secretary	Iris Grasst	868-7741	icgrasst@comcast.net
Treasurer	Kris Kelleran	836-8747	kriskelleran@msn.com
Community Liaison	Jayne Cadrez	836-1114	jayneecadrez@hotmail.com
Legislation	Lee Otis	836-9176	leeaotis@hotmail.com