

# Astoria schools look at multilingual classrooms

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Astoria School District's students often perform better than the state average, said Superintendent Craig Hoppes. But like with other districts nationwide, there remains an achievement gap, in Astoria with Hispanics and low-income students.

"It's more of an opportunity gap than it is an achievement gap," said Hoppes, updating the Astoria School Board on the issue Wednesday. "We have some kids who don't have the opportunities of other kids."

Both the district and the school board have made creating an equitable environment for all students a long-term goal.

Curriculum director Melissa Linder brought forth a study on the achievement gap in Astoria, with the help of the Oregon Department of Education's second-annual Kindergarten Assessment, made public Wednesday.

"We're trying to level the playing field so everyone starts at the same point," said Linder.

Hispanic and lower-income students have similar and sometimes better rates of attendance to their peers, said Linder, but they still start school with fewer language and mathematics skills than their peers. Hispanic-speaking kindergarten students in the kindergarten assessment knew a small fraction of the letters in their native language that their

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— Craig Hoppes

Astoria School District superintendent

English-speaking peers did. "We know that the quicker they have literacy in their language, the better they are at acquiring English," said Linder.

## Bilingualism

As English as a Second Language (ESL) students struggle to learn English, staff often lack the Spanish skills to best help them.

The district, which currently removes ESL students to a separate class to work on English, is forming a plan to

embed bilingual ESL staff in several targeted multilingual classrooms including students learning English. Linder said the effort wouldn't take any additional staffing and has good buy-in from existing employees, who would train over the summer for the arrangement.

"This could have the biggest impact on us as a district," said Hoppes, pointing toward bilingualism as an increasing priority in hiring.

There's a broad spectrum of literacy at home regardless

of the language, she said, and there are students in Hispanic-speaking families doing fine. The district needs to figure out why. The district hopes to provide training in English for parents and in Spanish for teachers.

quick fix to the problem, said Hoppes, but the more realistic time line is six to 10 years to address systemic problems that often leave some many Hispanic and low-income students behind.

According to the Oregon Education Investment Board's report "Equity Lens," students of color comprise 30 percent of enrollment in Oregon K-12. Putting the issue into a larger context, Hoppes referenced a statement from the report on the economic impacts of the issue: "The persistent educational disparities have cost Oregon billions of dollars in lost economic output and these losses are compounded every year we choose not to properly address these inequalities."

## Next steps

The district first needs to create a strategic plan, one of the school board's goals from last year, focusing on equitable — as opposed to identical — educational approaches for students facing different challenges. Hoppes said the district hopes to finish the strategic plan, which will frame its other efforts, by April.

After the strategic plan is complete, the district will focus more on the achievement compact. The district wants a

## Learn to volunteer at The Harbor

Volunteers are needed at The Harbor (formerly the Clatsop County Women's Resource Center), and volunteer training begins from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 20. Participants will be taught the basics in compassionate communication, crisis intervention, active listening, the impact of oppression on individuals and communities,

domestic violence and the law and more. The training includes educators from The Harbor as well as experienced guest speakers from the community.

There are volunteer opportunities at the shelter and during community events and special projects. Some volunteers work in the client service office, Déjà Vu's donation

center, and as ongoing advocates for individuals accessing services.

All volunteers need to attend the first training Jan. 20. Training requirements vary, depending on the type of volunteer position.

Call Chris Wright at 503-325-3426, or stop by the office at 1361 Duane St. to receive a volunteer packet.

## Public safety coordinating council seeks applicants

Clatsop County is seeking applicants for a citizen member on the Public Safety Coordinating Council.

The PSCC is a regional advisory body to the county Board of Commissioners. It develops and recommends plans for providing effective,

comprehensive corrections programs for both adults and juveniles, and works to make sure there is a continuum of programs and services that promote healthy behavior, ensure the ability to protect the community and hold offenders accountable.

The vacant position is for a three-year term. Application forms are available online at [www.co.clatsop.or.us](http://www.co.clatsop.or.us) under "Committee Vacancies," from the office at 800 Exchange St., Suite 410, or by calling 503-325-1000.

## Garbage Gang to hit the beach

LONG BEACH, Wash. — The Grass Roots Garbage Gang is holding a beach cleanup Saturday on the Long Beach Peninsula. Volunteers wishing to help out should come out to any major beach

approach at 9:30 a.m. to sign in and pick up supplies or to join an adopt-a-beach group.

The day ends for volunteers with a free bowl of hot soup at the Moose Lodge, 25915 U St. in Ocean Park,

from noon until the pots run dry, around 1:30 or 2 p.m. For information, or to find out about other ways to help or donate, email Shelly Pollack at [Shelly@OurBeach.org](mailto:Shelly@OurBeach.org) or go to <http://ourbeach.org>

## Young entrepreneurs get taste of Sunday Market

The Astoria Sunday Market Young Entrepreneur program is hosting its annual Open House at 6 p.m. Jan. 26 at the Astoria Event Center, 255 Ninth St. Pizza and beverages will be served, and kids are encouraged to bring their ideas and enthusiasm to share as they learn how to become a Young Entrepreneur.

The event kicks off a series

of free workshops to help youth prepare a product for sale at Astoria Sunday Market. Workshop topics include developing a product, salesmanship, designing a display and planning a budget. The program remains free thanks to underwriting from Recology Western Oregon, Wauna Federal Credit Union and Clatsop Community Bank.

"Whether or not a kid

decides to participate in the Astoria Sunday Market, the workshops are a fun and interesting way to explore what it takes to turn a dream into reality," noted Market Director Cyndi Mudge. "We strive to keep the workshops free, interesting and fun."

For a brochure email [AstoriaSundayMarket@charter.net](mailto:AstoriaSundayMarket@charter.net) or call 503-325-1010.

## Assistance League seeks donations for fundraiser

The Assistance League of the Columbia Pacific presents the third annual Accessorize with Assistance League Sales Event from noon to 4 p.m. Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 1, at the Holiday Inn Express, 204 Marine Drive.

Before the game starts, take a break and shop for that special handbag, scarf, jewelry and much more at bargain prices. This year's event will also include small home and garden décor. There is no admission charge, and cash or checks are accepted.

Donations of new or gently used accessories for the sale are needed, and now being collected at all Clatsop County Columbia Bank locations.

Funds from this event go to Operation School Bell (OSB), a signature program of the Assistance League, which provides clothes for Clatsop County schoolchildren in need. Last year the league helped clothe 594 children.

For information about this event, contact Leslie Long at

503-717-3671 or go to [www.assistanceleaguecp.org](http://www.assistanceleaguecp.org)

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## Sparring elk

Kim Fields sent The Daily Astorian pictures of a herd of elk of Ridge Road in Warrenton. She said "It was really neat to watch the bull elk sparring with each other with their antlers."

Courtesy of Kim Fields

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