

District board members team up to select new superintendent

EMILY REED

It's the end of an era; after 17 years as the superintendent in the district and 43 years as an educator, Dr. Roger Woehl announced his retirement effective July 1 of this year. Although the position does not officially become vacant until summer, deciding to retire now gives a new superintendent time to relocate, should they live in another state. By March 4, a new superintendent will be named and on July 1, he/she will start employment in the West Linn-Wilsonville School District.

The search for a new superintendent started in early November, when the school board posted a survey on the district website to identify the public's opinion on qualifications that the applicants must have to be considered. The survey ran through the month of November. Once it was closed, the board then approved the qualifications.

"In a superintendent search the public can be involved at several stages of

the process." Greg McKenzie, search coordinator, said. "In the case of WLWV two community summits were held in October where the questions about expectations and qualifications were posed to the audience."

Diane Gauthier, art teacher, attended the focus group held at WLHS. "It was quite evident in the meeting that Greg McKenzie wanted to get as much input as he could," Gauthier said.

Qualifications proposed and approved by the board included leadership qualities, such as a drive for excellence in education and an ability to create a collaborative environment in the district. The qualifications included that a candidate be a good listener, approachable, inspiring and an innovative thinker, among others. "It is important to me that the new superintendent has a background in education. As a teacher in this unique district I have the opportunity to continue my own learning, and hone my craft of teaching," Gauthier said. "I never lose sight of what it feels like to be

a learner. I appreciate that our district's goals are guided by a philosophical perspective, one that honors teachers and students as human beings who are living and learning as a community."

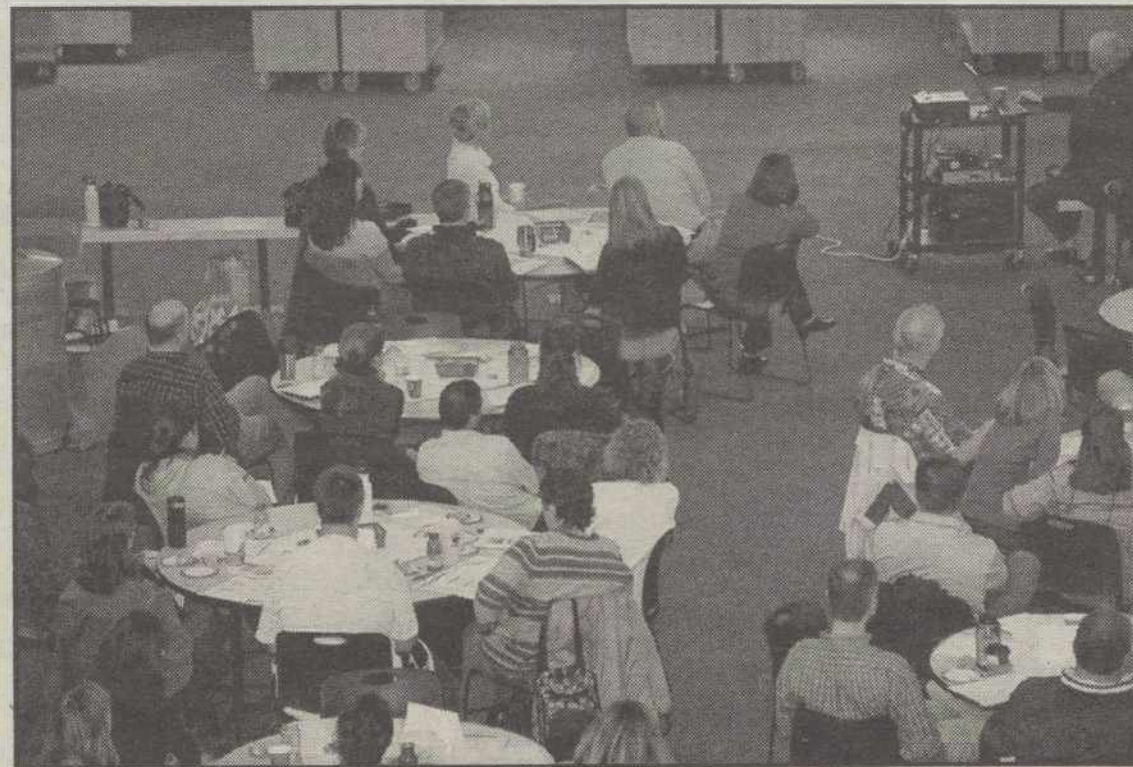


Photo courtesy of Tara Dubois
The School Board holds a public summit about what qualifications are important in looking for a new superintendent. This was the first step in a multi-step hiring process to replace Dr. Roger Woehl when he retires in June.

The application process began on Dec. 13 and closed on Jan. 28. Applicants could go online to the district website and fill out an electronic application. The questions ranged from basic employment and education

history, to the applicant's past work in education as well as a separate application where the candidate discussed the influence of mentors on their leadership style. The application itself seemed to be

superintendent. This process will start in early February and continue for a week.

On Feb. 17, the board will begin to conduct interviews with the candidates that passed the screening interview. Finalists will be chosen on Feb. 19.

At the end of February and beginning of March, a second round of interviews will occur to further determine who will become the superintendent.

The school board will visit the district where the candidate currently works and talk with people who have worked closely with him/her. They hope these visits will provide a different perspective of the candidate and to learn more about them.

"I think the process is very thorough and thoughtful. We are just part way along in the process so it might be good to answer this closer to March," Kathe Monroe, Director of Human Resources, said. "I am very impressed with our consultant, Greg McKenzie. He is someone who knows a bit about our district, is very thoughtful in his process and very thorough. He has a great deal of integrity and that is important when engaging in an endeavor as important as selecting a new leader for this great school district."

Theater takes on companion pieces "Almost, Maine" and "Our Town" for spring production

ETA SANTORO

One night Melissa Cozzi, sophomore, stands on the stage in the romantic comedy "Almost, Maine" as the heartbroken Glory. The next night she's Emily Webb—the brightest student in her school, and the lead in "Our Town."

"It's like going to a different class and switching from one subject to another," Cozzi said. Cozzi is one of the many actors who will be performing in both casts of the plays which will run alternately.

Most of the cast is in both shows. According to Ashley Welp, junior, both plays are considered to be some of the greatest pieces in the theater world and compliment each other with their similar themes and plot lines.

"It's a different take on a theatrical process of a show," Jessica Murray, theater arts program director, said. "It's a good experience for the actors."

"Almost, Maine," the newer of the two plays, follows the lives of several couples in a fictional town in Maine. The play consists of a compilation of duo scenes and explores the lives and connections people make during one single moment in time. Several of the cast members are paired to work on their scene. This has been nicknamed "couples counseling" by several of the performers in the show.

"'Almost, Maine' is a beautiful show that is becoming more and more popular with high school and college," Welp said.

"Our Town" by Thornton Wilder is more well-known and often read in high school English classes. The play

"The reason this play is so fantastic is because Wilder uses these everyday mundane things to make a point about life in general. The point of it is recognizing the bigger picture and the smaller moments that make life so wonderful," Welp said.

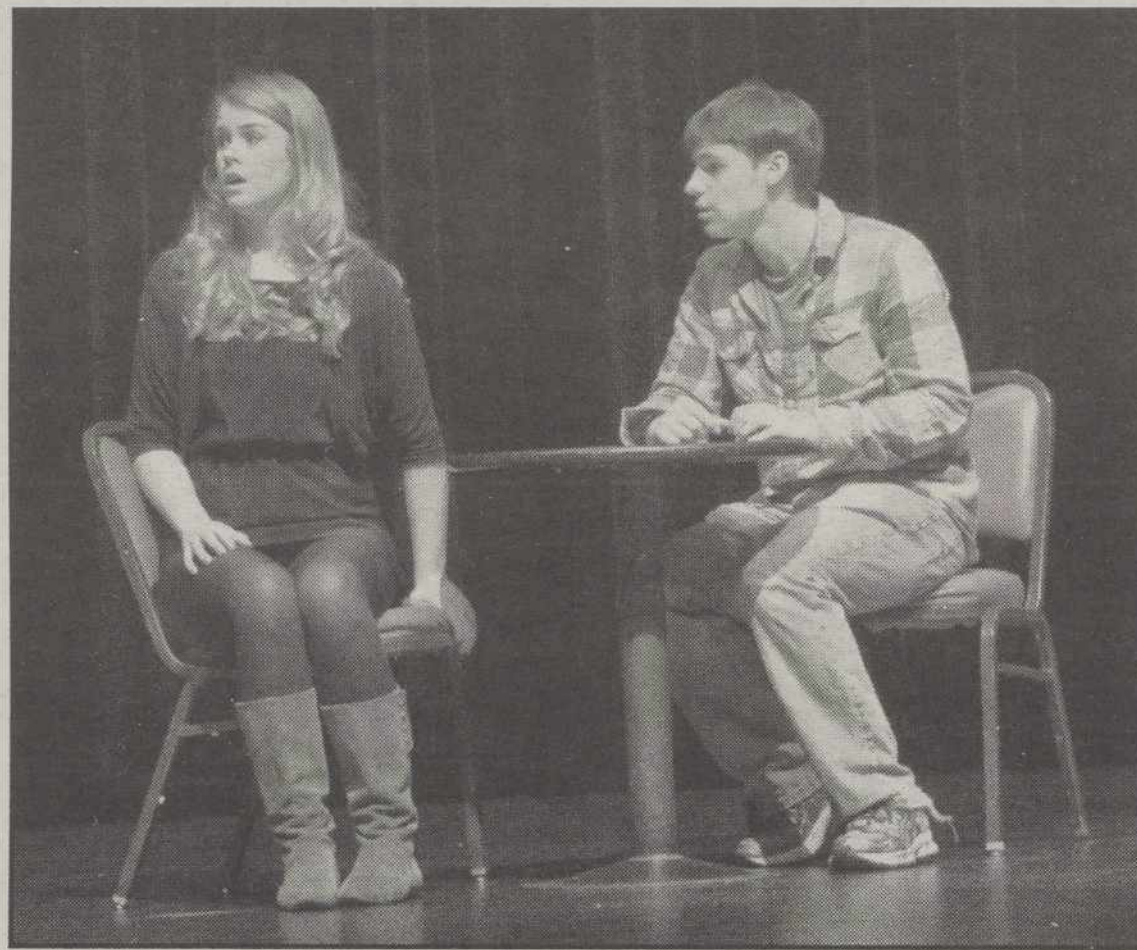


Photo by Alex Houston

Caroline Hitesman, junior, and Louie Hogan, senior, practice their couples scene during a dress rehearsal for the play "Almost, Maine." The play consists of a series of mostly two-person scenes and will be run alternately with a second play, "Our Town."

takes place in a small town in New Hampshire and consists of several scenes of the everyday lives in two different families. The play centers around George Gibbs, played by Michael Johnson, senior, and Emily Webb, played by Cozzi. Louie Hogan, senior, who plays the stage manager, narrates the piece and remains on stage for the entire play.

"It's considered an American masterpiece. It's all about imagination," Murray said. "Our Town" doesn't require extravagant sets, costumes or props.

Opening nights are Feb. 18 for "Almost, Maine" and Feb. 19 for "Our Town." The plays will be performed on alternate days up until March. Tickets cost \$5 for students and \$8 for adults.

the first clue that the school board was committed to finding not only an educated person, but one who was well-rounded and experienced as well.

The next step is to screen the applicants. The school board gathered a "screening committee" to help separate the possible applicants from those that didn't fit with what the district needed in a

Speech and Debate Team welcomes new head coach, seeks members

CLARA ALTEMUS & MADISON LEEK

With a new coach, Brian Gutowski, and many new members, the team has big plans for the coming season, including sending many students to the state competition. The team's participation has increased but the biggest change is the addition of Gutowski and the loss of three year coach Annie Kaiser, Performing Arts Building Coordinator.

"I am only serving as an adviser," Kaiser said. "If he (Gutowski) needs questions answered regarding district procedures or about tournaments."

Over the past couple of years, the Speech and Debate Team has been important to the students who have lead the team into the many competitions.

"Our Speech and Debate Team is comprised of highly intelligent and dedicated students," Kaiser said. Among them, three stand out for their dedication to the team: Alexander Koehler, Sierra Bangs and Justin Altemus, seniors. This year though, they have decided not to compete with the team after many people have left.

"In middle school, I liked Mock Trial so I thought this would be fun," Bangs said. After attending Tigard High

School for two years and participating in their speech and debate team, she has enjoyed her transition to West Linn's. "I liked the family feeling from being part of a team."

"(The team) is an opportunity for students to develop their intellects and speaking abilities through competitive debate and speaking events," Kaiser said of the all day competitions. "Usually leaving at 6:40 a.m. on a Saturday morning and getting back to the high school around 9 p.m., some tournaments are two days long." In each competition, each student has the ability to choose what they would like to participate in. Some of the categories include student congress, radio commentary, public debate, impromptu and prepared pros. Last year, West Linn sent three students to the state finals for speech and debate and hope to have more compete this year.

"The goal of the team is to gain experience through the season and have members of the team make it to the state finals," Gutowski said. Their first competition was on Jan. 15. Even with the new arrivals and changes to the team, only one participant attended. Elise Brown, sophomore took third place in Radio Commentary.