

State funding woes may force district to reduce number of days

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about a project the children in two of her classes have recently completed. Each student designed a toy or gift. First, each student made a collage using pictures from magazines to illustrate their invention. Students had to give their toy an original name and determine a price for the item. Each student dictated a short paragraph describing the toy or gift to a teacher or aide who typed the paragraph. The descriptions and illustrations were combined, laminated and bound in a "Wish Book" that includes the work of all members of the class. All of Peterson's students have difficulties in a regular classroom. All are significantly below grade level in reading and/or writing, many lack fine motor skills, and a few have behavior problems. This project is an example of the kind of individualized instruction Peterson's program provides.

Peterson explained to the board that students are generally referred to the Special Education Department by classroom teachers, though any student who might be served by the district can be referred by a parent or from a private school. After the initial referral and after meeting with parents, students are tested and all available information is gathered in order to design an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student.

Funding may force loss of school days

Banks School District will now have to look at the loss of some school days, McGlasson told the board, as a result of the December revenue projections, which showed a continuing decline in expected revenue. Until December, McGlasson said, the district could have absorbed previous revenue losses, as well as losses created if Ballot Measure 28 fails, because of a larger than expected cash carry-over created by conservative spending. She also announced that the board would enter expedited bargaining with teachers and staff in early February to negotiate the reduction in school days.

According to McGlasson, the few districts that are not cutting school days have large cash reserves which, almost without exception, they will use up this year. Most districts in Washington County have, or will, cut five days from their schedule this year. Banks can cut as many as five days and still meet state standards. Districts (like Hillsboro, which may cut up to 18 days) can receive a one-year waiver for providing fewer hours than required, however, waivers can be granted for only one year. A second year with fewer hours than required could result in the loss of state school funds.

McGlasson said that two things ease her fears for the upcoming budget cycle: Banks' experience with a similar situation five years ago, when they were alone while trying to solve a seemingly impossible budget crisis, and the community's response to the needs of the district five years ago.

Next year's budget does not look encouraging

Superintendents are currently being advised to begin planning next year's budget based on the actual revenue projected to be received this year, a significant reduction from the amount originally budgeted for the 2002-2003 school year. "What's frightening," McGlasson said, "is that now we don't have the stones and rocks to turn over" that were used to balance the budget this year. The district will be in "survival mode," she added, but she is pleased to be in a giving community and to have the administrative team that she does. She praised the ability of all members of the team to work together and think "outside of the box" to find solutions.

Administrators' Reports

BES principal Mary Voge reported that two teachers are vigorously working towards the national Board Certification for Teachers. This is a rigorous, national standard for professional excellence. Voge also told the board that students would be participating in a school-wide effort to improve the recess program. Each class

will have a meeting that focuses on respect, responsibility and cooperation. Discussions with other classrooms, the counselor and playground supervisors will result in findings that will be discussed at an upcoming teacher in-service day.

Superintendent McGlasson praised all of the school administrators for their continuing effort to analyze data and find ways to make improvements. McGlasson said that it is unusual for staff to be enthusiastic about utilizing test data to make improvements to better meet student needs, particularly in the face of larger class sizes and increasingly limited supplies. McGlasson said that Voge, junior high principal Mark Everett and high school principal Jim Foster were all exemplary in their continued dedication to using available data, rather than simply filing it away.

Insurance Report

Amy Hanson, for Waltz, Sheridan, Crawford Inc., presented the board with the annual report from the district's insurance provider. Hanson said that the district was to be commended for their "proactive approach in regard to loss control, particularly in response to recommendations". Business Manager Nancy Hall, in particular, was exceptionally diligent, according to Hanson. Hanson said her company would be marketing the district's policies to carriers again this year, in an effort to keep the cost within the budgeted amount. Hanson said that the industry is predicting

another increase of 25-30 percent.

Board member Doug Nordholm asked Hanson how the district's \$3 million combined liability coverage compared to other districts and if she was comfortable with that amount of coverage. Hanson responded that she "...would be more comfortable with a \$5 million total umbrella" but that the \$3 million figure made sense for a district the size of Banks.

District website updated

McGlasson told the board that Nordholm's comments about the website, at last month's meeting, had been taken into consideration. Some maintenance tasks were distributed and teacher e-mail links for the junior high and high school were completed. School secretaries now post the daily newsletter directly to the website for each school, which reduces the time needed to distribute the newsletter, and teachers can access it in their classrooms for daily announcements. Having the newsletter on the website makes all of the information available, including menus, game information and other announcements. McGlasson urged anyone interested in school information to consult the website.

In other business the board:

- Passed a resolution to join with other districts to authorize the Oregon School Board Association to appeal, at OSBA expense, the district's PERS rate increase.

- Updated a policy on board elections with the addition that the policy be automatically updated after future elections.

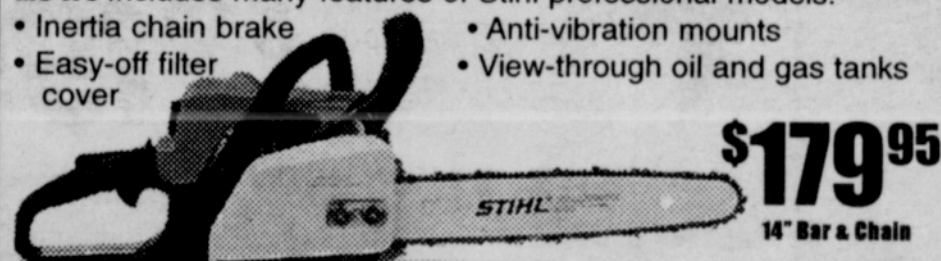
- Announced that terms of board members Gene Kelly and Ann Statton would expire in July 2003. Statton said she would not be seeking re-election.

- Adopted the Northwest Regional Education Service District Resolution Plan, which distributes services to all 20 districts in the ESD.

Banks School Calendar

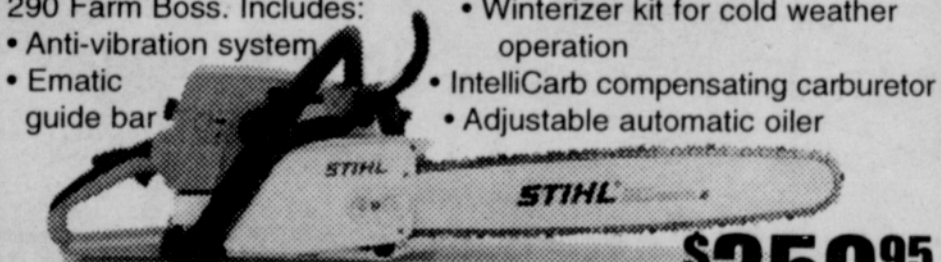
January 20 - Martin Luther King Day, no school.
January 23-24 - End of Semester, no school.
February 4 - Elementary Mad Science Assembly, morning.

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