

# From the Superintendent

## Dear Ridgefield Patrons,

AS WE PLAN for reductions in the K-12 state budget projected to be as high \$800 million, we recognize the challenging financial situation in our state. Governor Gregoire released her budget in December and now that the legislative session has convened, the House and Senate have begun crafting their own versions of the state's budget.

While Ridgefield School District will experience cuts — along with all the other school districts in Washington — I want to reassure you that we have outstanding fiscal expertise and experience to assist us through this process. But first and foremost, it is important you know that we will continue to do everything possible to provide the same quality of education to our students that we always have.

As a district, we are exploring options to help reduce expenses in order to protect student-centered programs and services. Fortunately, we have always enjoyed support from the community and a reputation for quality and distinction in teaching and learning.

Dealing with the budget crisis is difficult, but I am confident our staff will keep their eye on our primary focus — making certain students are successful in reaching their full potential.

Planning collaboratively, open communication and fiscal responsibility are the best ways to navigate these challenging times. I believe we will find creative ways to come together and engage in important dialogue with our legislators and other districts wherever possible to help sustain the important educational programs in our region.

In other news, our 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan is evolving, and we are receiving helpful feedback from interviews conducted with several community stakeholders. We are confident that partnerships developed between the school district and community members will continue to result in proactive solutions as we go through this important strategic planning process.

To keep informed on these and many other topics, I hope you will visit our website often. The website is a valuable resource. In addition to minutes from board meetings and

annual notifications that are posted on the website, parents are now able to pay online for meal plans using credit cards through the online Skyward system. Visit the site at [www.ridge.k12.wa.us](http://www.ridge.k12.wa.us).

Ridgefield School District will be able to provide the level of service that our citizens have come to expect while still looking forward to keep our eye on the goals for the future.

Sincerely,

Art Edgerly  
Superintendent

*[ Did you know? ]*  
Ridgefield High School was built in 1970 with a capacity of 475 students, and currently holds 625 through design changes and efficiency improvements.

RIDGEFIELD POSTAL PATRON

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# RIDGEGRAM



## A slam dunk in the food drive dunks the principal

STUDENTS LINED UP around the View Ridge Middle School to get the chance to dunk their principal.

Seventh-grade students at View Ridge Middle School reveled in repeatedly dunking their principal during lunchtime as a reward for bringing in the most donations during the canned food drive organized by the Junior National Honor Society. View Ridge students collected canned and boxed food and toiletries for area families in need. Principal Chris Griffith came up with the idea as a reward to get students excited about participating.

"The students did a great job and were really excited about the reward," Griffith said. "I lost count of how many times I was dumped into the water but I know that it was a LOT!"

In the middle of November, Griffith donned a wet-suit and sat in a dunk tank filled with warm water as steam rose into the chilly midday air. "Some of the students felt that it was unfair that the water was warm," said Griffith. "I might be crazy for getting in a dunk tank in the middle of November, but cold water would have been completely insane."

Each student was given the opportunity to throw a ball in an effort to dunk Griffith. Some students even pleaded with their teachers to let them go to the lunch period early. "Some students lined up over and over again to try and dunk me, but, don't worry, I know their names," joked Griffith.

Right: Chris Griffith, principal of View Ridge Middle School, prepares to be dunked.



Below: View Ridge students warm up their pitching hands.



## Throwing paper airplanes and raw eggs nets awards at the Science Olympiad

TEACHERS DON'T REGULARLY encourage their students to throw airplanes or raw eggs during science class, but that's not the case for Anja Felton, a 2nd-grade teacher and the Science Olympiad coach at Union Ridge Elementary School. The Union Ridge Science Olympiad team brought home first place in two of five categories: Aerodynamics and the Straw Egg Drop.

About 180 students gathered at Clark College to participate in this year's Science Olympiad Invitational Tournament. Events included Aerodynamics, where students make two paper airplanes to be flown a distance of at least five meters, landing on a specific target; Gunk, where students design and test a ball made up of Elmer's glue, liquid starch and salt in an effort to bounce it to a certain height; Metric Mastery, where students estimate and measure mass, volume, distance, time and temperature using the metric system; Mystery Architecture, students build a freestanding tower as high as possible from a bag of mystery materials that must support a tennis ball at its top; and the straw Egg Drop, where students create a cover made from drinking straws and masking tape to protect a raw egg dropped from a specific height to hit a target.

"Taking the concepts you learn in the classroom into the real world can be tricky," says Felton. "The Science Olympiad offers students the opportunity to really test their skills with a true feeling of accomplishment." Union Ridge's Science Olympiad team includes Tamarick Mendoza, Hannah McDonald, Marissa Walsh, Jenessa Higgs, Aliasha Ball and Devin Rice.



*[ Did you know? ]* Union Ridge Elementary recently received a \$500 grant from Dollar Tree® for new Staff Development books and student textbooks.

## View Ridge students stamp out smoking with Ciggy Butt

STUDENTS AT VIEW RIDGE Middle School joined mascot Ciggy Butt to help inspire and encourage smokers to quit. Ciggy Butt was just one part of the 33rd Great American Smokeout; a national event held by the American Cancer Society to provide free resources to help smokers quit.

Students signed a poster if they had someone in their lives whose health had been affected by tobacco, regardless of whether that person was a smoker. They received anti-tobacco bracelets and pamphlets on the dangers of tobacco use. "Students love the bracelets and really enjoyed the activities," said View Ridge Counselor Cathy den Boer. "The Great American Smokeout is always great for bringing anti-tobacco activities front-and-center."

Long Vu, a representative of the Clark County Health Department, was also on-hand to help with the school activities. The American Cancer Society provides free assistance to smokers like the Quitline, where callers are able to speak with a trained counselor to receive free, confidential counseling. The number for the Quitline is 1-800-227-2345 and more information is available at the American Cancer Society's website: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).



## Special Education earns special attention at South Ridge Elementary

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS may sometimes fall through the cracks in school systems, but this is not the case in Ridgefield. South Ridge Elementary shines as an example of how proactive program development can lead to more effective teaching practices.

Principal Vernon Yoshioka began the development of a new plan for Student Learning that seeks to incorporate special education with overall class goals to provide total ownership for the entire school. Previously, there was no succinct plan connecting a classroom teacher with a special education teacher outside of similar classroom curriculum.

"Each grade needs to refine their practices for student achievement," said Yoshioka. "Though the state has a recommendation and expectation for improvement, we are working to exceed those expectations."

Teachers from each grade are organized into teams. These teams will be holding regular meetings to develop and refine goals.

These results were compiled in December, and then assembled into a new plan to be implemented in early 2009. The new plan in development will directly incorporate special education into the classroom, aligning requirements with expectations.

Yoshioka refers to these goals as Smart Goals. "Previously, the Smart Goals were too broad," said Yoshioka. "We're working to break them down in order to make them more specific and laser-focused."

Special Education students need more practice and repetition to learn material. In order to accommodate this approach, homework practice packets will be sent home, and parents will supervise their students to ensure that the work is done.

"We want to have ownership and accountability for every student in every class," said Yoshioka. "We're excited about the potential of our new plans and look forward to realistic performance achievement."



## South Ridge students create "Change for a Cure" fundraiser

AFTER A 5TH-GRADER'S mom died of brain cancer, three of her friends rallied with her to start a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society at South Ridge Elementary School. With the help of their teacher, they were able to organize the event school-wide.

"I presented three different charities to my class, each with a distinctly different mission," said Lori Anderson, the South Ridge teacher who helped the kids organize. "I was impressed with how quickly they understood the different approaches and chose the American Cancer Society because they wanted an organization looking for a cure of all kinds of cancer."

South Ridge students Mary Broten, Megan Gilbert, Lars Pietz and Hollen Martin spearheaded the fundraiser. The students visited each classroom in the

school, educating their classmates on the importance of finding a cure and requesting donations in any form: coins, dollars, whatever they can spare. A large jar was placed in the lobby of the school so everyone – students, teachers and parents – could participate.

In addition, two poster boards were placed on either side of the jar where students could write the names of friends and family members who they had lost due to cancer. "The students learned about how hard it is to lose someone, but they also learned the importance of remembering," said Anderson. The fundraiser was held from December 10th to December 18th and raised over \$550. A representative from the American Cancer Society thanked the students and picked up the check personally.

*"It's events like this that really make Ridgefield a strong community."*

~ Steve Wall, Public Works Director for Ridgefield

## Ridgefield High's Basketball team help cemetery residents rest in peace

PLAYERS, PARENTS AND coaches joined together on Saturday, December 6 to clean the Ridgefield Cemetery. The cemetery is about 2.5 acres that needed to be raked and cleaned.

"We were very pleased with such a great turnout of over 30 volunteers," said Kent Landerholm, assistant coach to the Ridgefield Boys Basketball Team. "They braved the December cold to make a positive difference for their community."

The coaches and players' parents came up with the idea in an effort to help the students learn about the importance of community service. They approached members of the City staff to determine what ways the students would be able to help their community.

"It's events like this that really make

Ridgefield a strong community," said Steve Wall, the Public Works Director for Ridgefield who coordinated the event. "We greatly appreciate the efforts made by the coaches, team members and their parents on behalf of the City of Ridgefield."

*[ Did you know? ]*

South Ridge Elementary students exceed the state average on all four WASL tests: Reading, Writing, Math and Science.

## Girls Varsity Soccer Team excels on and off the field

THE WASHINGTON INTERSCHOLASTIC Activities Association awarded Ridgefield High's Girls' Varsity Soccer Team the 2A Academic State Champion award for their 3.903 grade-point-average (GPA). The Team Varsity award is based on the team's previous semester GPA – a Distinguished Award is for GPAs between 3.0 and 3.49 and the Outstanding Award is given to those with a 3.5 and higher.

Schools nominate their qualified teams who are divided into the different competitive classes. The team with the highest average wins the designation as Academic State Champion. The award was presented to the team during half-time at the championship game.



*[ Did you know? ]* Ridgefield High students exceed the state average on all four WASL tests: Reading, Writing, Math and Science.