

Ridgefield schools prepare budget cuts

Dear Ridgefield patrons:

AS YOU MAY know, the Washington state legislature has established a budget for the upcoming biennium that reflects deep cuts due to a \$8 billion shortfall in state revenue. A deficit of this size has resulted in dramatic cuts to school districts across the state.

The deepest cut to Ridgefield School District comes from the elimination of I-728 funding. The initiative provides additional money to help students reach new state learning standards. It also dedicates certain state revenues to a "Student Achievement Fund," increasing revenue to the fund over time.

Under I-728, school districts are authorized to use funds to reduce class size, provide extended learning opportunities and provide additional professional development for educators.

The district was receiving approximately \$893,295 from I-728, and is now projected to receive only \$257,415, a decrease of \$635,880.

The district is committed to sustaining staff positions by rearranging programs based on student needs, reducing the use of materials and supplies and exploring more efficient methods of operation.

Budget reductions are being made at the district level rather than building level. Reductions from the superintendent/board, maintenance and curriculum/instruction departments have accounted for these savings. Reductions being considered include:

- » Elimination of the School Resource Officer position
- » Reduction of travel and general supplies for the superintendent, board and staff
- » Reduction of participation in ESD programs, including threat assessment and legal services
- » Extending textbook adoption over 2 years
- » Reduction of instructional materials and supplies

- » Reduction of capital equipment and utilities in maintenance and facilities.
- » Reorganization of full-time positions
- » Elimination of summer school and extended day tutorials

The above reductions will help the Ridgefield School District offset the loss of state revenue.

I commend the Board of Directors for their efforts that have helped ease our current situation. Our board has performed one of their most important duties by being excellent stewards of our funding. Decisions made by the board in the past will help us weather this current financial storm without making deep cuts that could affect student learning.

Sincerely,

Art Edgerly
Superintendent

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RIDGEGRAM



High school students volunteer their lunches to guide young minds at Union Ridge

THIRTY-ONE RIDGEFIELD HIGH school students volunteer their lunch periods to go to Union Ridge Elementary to mentor 31 elementary students in Ridgefield School District's Lunch Mentor Program.

"The program is in its second year and we're seeing good results," said Tim Suenkel, an elementary counselor at Union Ridge. "The elementary students show improvements in attendance, they feel better about school in general, they have increased self-esteem, and they appreciate being able to talk to a caring person on a consistent basis."

The mentors meet with the same kids each time, developing a relationship that can help guide the kids.

"Students said they enjoyed having someone who was like an older sibling," said Suenkel. "Many commented that it was nice to have someone to talk to other than their family members."



Ridgefield sixth graders stem the tide of Lake River and the lower Columbia

IN COLLABORATION WITH the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Ridgefield sixth graders took a trip on Lake River to observe wildlife and learn how to perform several tests of water quality.

The trip started and ended at the Ridgefield Boat Ramp. After lessons in canoeing and water safety, students paddled up Lake River toward its confluence with Columbia River. Students performed a wide variety of different experiments including: testing for water clarity and dissolved oxygen, recording the temperature of the river and analyzing the pH of the water.

Students also observed the different birds and animals that live in the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. The Estuary Partnership's two canoes are modeled after historical Voyageur canoes, but are thoroughly modern 34-foot fiberglass boats capable of seating up to 18 people.

Four volunteer guides took the students up Lake River toward the Columbia, stopping several times to complete the different tests.



Sixth-grade students performed a wide variety of experiments on their recent canoe trip, including testing for water clarity and dissolved oxygen, recording the temperature of the river and analyzing the pH of the water.

RIDGEFIELD POSTAL PATRON

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YOU'RE INVITED!

The Board of Directors is holding a Special Meeting to honor the certificated and classified employees of the year. All staff and community members are invited to attend to enjoy the presentation.

When: Tuesday, June 9 at 6:30pm
Where: RHS library

SuccessMaker software breeds success in students

STRUGGLING STUDENTS ACROSS Ridgefield School District are getting an extra boost thanks to SuccessMaker software. Instead of pulling students out of a classroom to work on reading or math, the intervention happens in the classroom using the software, allowing students to continue being part of the teaching atmosphere.

Research shows that using the software for just 20 minutes a day can improve student performance. Chris Lines, Basic Skills Specialist, started using SuccessMaker in the fall of 2008 to help students at both South Ridge and Union Ridge.

"One student was motivated to improve his reading level after seeing his performance report," said Lines. "He's made a gain of over one grade level in reading. In addition, eight 4th-grade students gained over one grade level in math development."

SuccessMaker is an interactive multimedia course designed to meet the needs of learners in Kindergarten through fourth grade by providing supplemental instruction, practice and assessment. Students take a placement test in the program to determine the level of their knowledge using subtests and the student's chronological grade level. SuccessMaker maintains continuous records on each student's performance which it uses to determine the learner's path in the program.

A team of district staff reviewed the software options on the market and called other districts before choosing SuccessMaker as their intervention software. The main reasons SuccessMaker stood out included the multimedia features, its correlations with the EALRs/GLEs and its prescriptive scheduling report for the WASL.

"The program is still in its early stages, but already teachers enjoy being able to track students' progress while the students are enjoying the game-like format and engaging lessons," said Lines. "It helps students work at their own pace to hone and develop their skills."

"We're incredibly proud that so many of our students have a drive for math."

~Principal Vernon Yoshioka



Math is Cool in Ridgefield schools

A MATH TEAM made up of 17 South Ridge students won first place in fifth- and sixth-grade individual categories as well as the team trophy for the sixth-grade competition at the Math is Cool competition on April 18. Four of the sixth graders qualified to compete in the state Masters competition that will be held in Moses Lake on May 16.

"Students practiced during lunch to hone their skills," said Ken Bisbee, the teacher who assembled the team. "This is the first time that Math is Cool has had a competition in Vancouver, so the students were excited to get a team together to compete."

Math is Cool competitions are held around Washington state. Students compete in a variety of events for both individuals and teams using open-ended and multiple-choice problem sets. Competition events include: relays, pressure rounds, mental math, and college bowl rounds.

"Our team was one of the largest ones

at the competition," said Principal Vernon Yoshioka. "We're incredibly proud that so many of our students have a drive for math."

The Math is Cool competition began in spring 1996 when Gregg Sampson, a mathematics teacher at Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane, WA organized a mathematics competition for sixth grade students in the Spokane area. The competition was expanded to include grades 4-12 over the subsequent years, growing to other parts of the state.



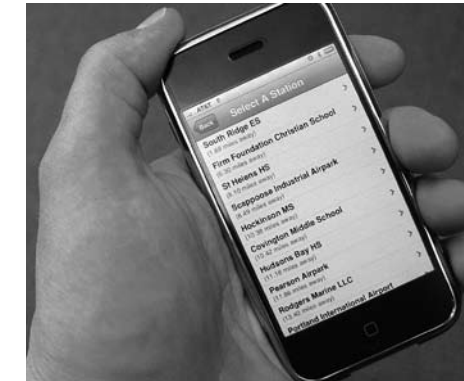
Get your weather here! South Ridge is a live Weatherbug!

SOUTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY became a "Weatherbug School" in early May, allowing residents in Ridgefield and around the world to select the school as their weather station of choice. Hardware installed on the roof of the school tracks weather conditions such as temperature, wind speed and direction, wind chill, and humidity.

Teachers will be able to use the Weatherbug equipment to develop curriculum that helps students predict weather patterns and solve real-world problems using science and math.

Weatherbug is affiliated with KOIN-TV and, soon, photos from South Ridge will be used during daily meteorological forecasting. In addition, the National Weather Service, the Department of Homeland Security and other key emergency management agencies may rely on South Ridge to help serve and protect communities in times of crisis.

South Ridge's PTA elected to make the



school part of the Weatherbug network by providing funding to enable students to have access to the technology and learning programs provided by Weatherbug. You can see South Ridge's data right now on your computer by going to www.weatherbug.com and entering in "Ridgefield, WA," or by using the mobile version of Weatherbug software on a Smartphone like a BlackBerry or iPhone.

Local firm lauded for supporting Ridgefield Schools



The Washington Association of School Administrators presented Maul, Foster & Alongi, Inc. with the Honorary Award in a ceremony on May 15. The firm received the recognition for providing expert facilitation and leadership helping to plan and develop the updated 20-year vision for the district. From left: Superintendent Art Edgerly, Tyler Vick, James Maul and Executive Director of Instructional Services, Dr. Patricia Boles.

Ridgefield seniors prepare to graduate

SINCE 1992, SENIORS AT RIDGEFIELD High School have been required to complete rigorous projects in order to graduate. Students have to select a topic, manage their time as necessary to complete all the requirements, work independently from teacher supervision, write research papers, and present their finished materials before a review board.

Topics can vary from automobiles to sports and everything in-between. "Almost any topic is allowed, but they have to have their topic approved," said Martha Hancock, Career Information Specialist and Senior Project Advisor at RHS. "Popular topics include: art, music, homelessness, mental illness, environmental concerns, and drug/alcohol abuse."

Students write a ten-page paper on their chosen subject, and complete fifteen hours of service with a logical connection to their topic. The remaining fifteen hours can be service-related or it may be used to enhance the student's experience.

They compile a portfolio of photographs and reflective writing to present a fifteen-minute overview of their project to a board of judges. Every element is required and must be passed before they can graduate.

Senior Awards Ceremony and Tea

SENIORS, THEIR FAMILIES, and staff attended the Senior Awards Ceremony and Tea on Monday, June 1. This year was the first time that the Senior Tea and Senior Awards Ceremony were combined into a single event.

The Senior Tea featured a slide show of student photos. The Award Ceremony acknowledged students who were offered scholarships and other merit-based financial assistance from universities, technical colleges, vocational schools and military academies. Organizations that have offered scholarships presented them as part of the ceremony.