

Press Release



Battle Ground Public Schools

Director of Communications: Gregg Herrington, (360) 885-5337

PO Box 200 • Battle Ground, WA 98604-0200 • Office Location: 11104 NE 149th Street • Brush Prairie, WA
District Switchboard: (360) 885-5300

Nov. 7, 2011

Good writing and bullying are author's topics for students

Author Doug Wilhelm visited Chief Umtuch Middle School in Battle Ground Monday, Nov. 7, to talk in classes during the day and in a public evening appearance about writing -- and bullying.

Wilhelm wrote the anti-bullying novel "The Revealers," which all students and faculty members at Chief Umtuch read last month.

As a writing coach, one of his themes was the importance of vividly describing action and feelings and letting readers become engaged in the story and decide for themselves how it makes them feel. During a session with all sixth graders Wilhelm displayed a tape recorder he used as a tool in doing research for "The Revealers."

In one passage Wilhelm describes a bully pouring a container of cold, sticky soda pop over the head of a fully dressed, smaller youngster.

"As a writer," Wilhelm told his young audience, "I can't tell you how to feel." But "I want to put you, the reader, in the middle of the scene. I want you to feel *something*."

Wilhelm said that before writing the soda pop passage he purchased a large soft drink, brought it home and stepped into his bathtub fully clothed. He turned on his recorder, placed it on the ledge with the shampoo, and then slowly poured the drink over his head.

As he was doing it, he described aloud how it made him feel. He played the recording to himself before and during the writing of that passage. He told his rapt audience, "I want you (the reader) to feel sticky and gross."

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