



Your Battle Ground PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Since 1909 - Preparing our children to succeed in the next step of their lives

Report to Residents of the Battle Ground School District, June 2010



Q&A with Steve Pagel

Steve Pagel was elected by voters to the Battle Ground School District Board of Directors last November. He subsequently was elected by the Board itself as its president. Here are excerpts of an interview with him:

Q. You and the other new School Board members, Monty Anderson and John Idsinga, have been touring the schools with Superintendent Shonny Bria. Have you come away with a single or overriding impression?

A. I've found it amazing to see how much the teachers are doing to improve learning for the kids. One example is how they track the performance of students to determine who needs what kind of help. This might sound like a cliché, but it's true: I could see and feel just how hard the teachers are working for kids.

Q. Has there been one particular experience during the visits that has stuck in your memory?

A. One memory is of the girl at Glenwood Heights Primary School who has a life-threatening disease and how the other kids are reaching out to her and being supportive. It really tugs at you. There's a feeling of community there, and at all our schools. We are starting kids off right, showing them that life is about more than themselves and that there are needs in the community.

Q. Is there anything you've seen on the tours you didn't already know that has troubled you?

A. The number of kids we have in portables is an eye-opener. One example is the Maple Grove Primary School. Another is the Glenwood-Laurin campus, which is maxed out in terms of portables.

There are some very obvious physical problems at some of our buildings. Those problems are especially obvious when you compare them to the new schools (Tukes Valley, Daybreak and Amboy).

Q. What other physical problems?

A. You can't ignore the age of some of these buildings, with their old aluminum window casings, the deteriorating portables, the constant need to fix rain leaks at Yacolt and Laurin, for example. Maple Grove schools have major needs. And Pleasant Valley schools don't have a cafeteria.

Q. The levy passed, but that money is for teachers and other expenses of daily operations -- not repairs and upgrades to our schools. Is there likely to be a construction-bond issue on the ballot in the near future?

A. Not only do we have needs at many of our school buildings, we have technology needs that could be addressed by a bond issue. But, given the general economy and the fact growth still hasn't picked up much, this isn't the time to be looking at a bond issue.

Q. You three new Board members have to learn about the schools and governing the district as well as learn to interact with each other and the two holdover Board members -- Sam Kim and Karen Lehman. How would you describe the Board chemistry at this point?

"Q&A" CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



STEVE PAGEL

New look for district website



Here's the top of the home page on the new Battle Ground Public Schools website, which is expected to be up and running this month, perhaps this week, at www.battlegroundps.org and www.bgsd.k12.wa.us.

If all goes as planned, some time this month -- perhaps this week -- Battle Ground Public Schools will have a new "face" on the Internet. The district's website -- more than 10 years old -- is getting a complete makeover and promises to be more user-friendly, easier to update and more attractive.

The new site will be accessible at a new Web address for the school district: www.battlegroundps.org. The old address, www.bgsd.k12.wa.us, will continue to be operative for at least one year.

The site was constructed at no charge, as a public service and a class project, by WSU Vancouver students under the supervision of Prof. Dene Grigar.

Features of the new site's home page will include recent school-related news items, a list of major upcoming events, "Twitter" (for brief announcements, which also will be quickly accessible on hand-held devices with Web access), and the following tabs, each with a drop-down menu of choices linked to other pages: News ... Our Schools ... Parents & Community ... Teaching & Learning ...

About Us ... Staff Resources. Additional links on the home page will take users directly to employment opportunities, Community Education, BG Education Foundation, calendars and School Board.

The new site employs a Drupal Content Management

system and is easier for adding, deleting and editing items. However, the appearance and content of the various schools' websites remain with each school. There is a place on the new district home page for users to send corrections, suggestions or comments.

Finding a school easier on new site

Do you want to find the website for a particular school in the Battle Ground district? Using Maple Grove Middle School as an example, here's just one way the district's new website is more user-friendly than the outgoing site:

Old site: A parent seeking information about upcoming events at Maple Grove Middle School starts at the district's home page and clicks the "Our Schools" tab. That produces a second page with a list of all schools in the district and a map indicating the location of each. She finds Maple Grove Middle School on the list. It is No. 9. She finds No. 9 on the map and clicks it. That brings up a third page with some information

about the school, but it is not the school's site and it has no school news or calendar. She searches, and at the bottom of that page finds a link to the school's own website. She clicks that and gets the fourth page of her search -- the page she wanted from the start.

New site: The parent starts at the district's new home page and places the cursor on the "Our Schools" tab. A drop-down menu appears. It offers categories of schools. She places the cursor on "Middle Schools" and the names of all seven appear. She slides the cursor over to "Maple Grove Middle School" and clicks. Up comes the school's own site. It is just the second page of her search.

Aspire program attracts highly capable students

Battle Ground's "Aspire" program for highly capable students continues to increase its role in the school district's Teaching and Learning arena. In the fall of 2010, this rigorous academic program will expand from the present third-through-seventh grade options, adding eighth graders.

Registration for Aspire testing is in late fall every year, with exams in January or February. Aspire is available to qualifying students in either of two formats:

Clusters: This was the only option for the district's highly capable students when the program started in 1991. Under this arrangement, which is still an option, students remain at their home primary or middle school and are "clustered" for part of the day with other

Aspire students in rooms that also have non-Aspire students. This year, there were 132 Aspire students in the "cluster"

option. **Magnet:** Under this option, launched in the 2008-2009 school year, an entire Aspire



Teacher Kristie Alexander of Chief Umtuch Middle School huddles with fifth-grade "Aspire" students, from left, Jonah Ruffalo, Victor Burch and Owen Lantz.

class of highly capable students is together with a teacher who specializes in instruction of the gifted. The magnet program is at Captain Strong Primary School and at adjacent Chief Umtuch Middle School. Students are bused to the magnet schools. This option will expand to grade eight in 2010-2011.

"It's not, 'Which option is better,' " says Kristie Alexander, an Aspire magnet teacher at Chief Umtuch. "It's, 'Which is better for your child?'"

One of her goals, Alexander says, is to develop in students the lifetime skills of time-management and "backwards planning," in which students start with the due date for a major assignment and work backwards toward the present date, noting at what points

along the way various parts of the assignment should be completed.

Aspire coordinator April Dalrymple says, "When you go into an Aspire classroom, there is an intense hum. The discussions are very intense and the kids don't want to stop discussing. They are engaged and excited. Before they got into Aspire, some of these kids felt like they were always waiting for the rest of the class to catch up."

For parents trying to decide between the cluster and magnet approach, Aspire program assistant Amy Blankenship says, "You have to look at the options and see which would be a better fit for your student."

For more information, call April Dalrymple, 885-6447.

As the school year winds down, 'Moments in Time' are recalled

CAM Jr.-Sr.

By COLLEEN O'NEAL
Principal, CAM Jr.-Sr. High

Friday, Feb. 5, had been a busy day. It was nearly 6 p.m. as I was packing up to head home for the weekend and realized I still hadn't opened my mail. Honestly, I had forgotten about the National Merit Scholarship letter, but had promised senior Patrick Moynihan I would call him with the results when they arrived. He was in California doing university auditions.

Butterflies hit my stomach as I opened the letter. CAM had two finalists! I immediately phoned Patrick, but had to leave a message. Then I called Jenna Brown, the second CAM finalist, with the good news. As I walked out the door, arms full, my phone rang. It was Patrick, who obviously had not listened to my message. He sounded tired and downtrodden.

When I gave him the news his mood lifted; he shared with me how difficult his day had been, feeling pretty beat up by the comments he had received at the auditions.

"I'm really looking forward to getting back to CAM where people are much more positive," Patrick told me. The negativity of his day had been turned around by taking time for this one call.

Summit View

By PAUL BARDZIK
Principal, Summit View High

When Briana Fellman came to our school in September 2009, she was working six days a week, had a 3-month-old baby and did not have a high school diploma. She needed to attend a fully accredited high school while being a full-time mom and working full time. In addition, she had to be able to bring her baby to school while she attended class.

Briana decided that Summit View would be a better fit for her senior year than a traditional school because of the one-on-one time with teachers

I knew Briana had come to the right school. But did she have the stamina to add another full-time commitment?

On April 6, 2010, it was clear the answer was "Yes." That day, she earned her Graduate Transcript! In a few days, she will "walk" with other Summit View graduates to receive her diploma.

The driving force that kept Briana in school, despite the challenges, was her intention to be an example for her son. Briana's accomplishment, recognized on April 6, was a Summit View "Moment in Time."

River HomeLink

By MARK W. CLEMENTS
Principal, River HomeLink

"Hey, look Mr. Principal. I'm an astronaut!"

I turned and saw a basketball-sized white helmet tilted around the door frame. From inside the visor area I could see a beaming grin and sparkling eyes that confirmed the excitement that I could feel. With one hop, the rest of the astronaut

appeared around the corner. A white "space suit" covered him from neck to toes. White, flexible clothes-dryer hose for arms, white garden gloves, a white box strapped to the back with hoses emerging from the top connecting it to the helmet completed the uniform.

"He hardly wouldn't take



HomeLink River kids were enthusiastic astronauts during "Outer Space Adventures" in May.

it off last night when he got it done," shared his proud Mom.

"Well, I gotta go join the rest of the astronauts," said the student. "We're going to the space station! See you later, Mr. Principal!" and off he bounded joining the rest of his crew as they walked down the hall.

This "moment in time" was brought to you courtesy of Kathy Marty's "Outer Space Adventures" class.

Amboy Middle

By SHAYLA EBNER
Principal, Amboy Middle

My best-kept secret lies in the woods of Amboy, off the beaten track, surrounded by a tall cedar grove and the smell of sweet lupine in the spring.

Our new, but modest building holds 61 outstanding and dedicated staff members who enrich the lives of 624 country-living students. Our campus is wide, bordered by the Lewisville hill and the Yale Bridge with addresses as far away as La Center. Most of them arrive by bus. Each morning this river of students flows into the main hallway of our well-kept and sunny building, which is the pride of the community."

Parents are very supportive of this oasis of learning and these kids work hard to keep it shiny and clean (no gum on this campus!) The walls are adorned with beautiful paintings reflecting the essence of the area's logging history and of its natural amenities of hills, forests and clear water.

In Amboy, the memorable "Moment in Time" is the arrival of students every day amid the glorious evidence of nature. Together, the eager arriving students and this setting signal Eagle Pride at its finest.

Chief Umtuch

By LINDA ALLEN
Principal, Chief Umtuch Middle

What does a 'Moment in Time' look like at Chief Umtuch Middle School in the spring? Here are three:

One is the marching band practicing its songs and march-

phone" rule – for one day only – and said they may use their cell phones to share the good news with their families. All at once, 24 devices appeared in students' hands. Many of the students thrust their phones at me to explain to anxious parents what these placement results meant.

I learned later that Mrs. Wilson experienced the same responses from her students and that she reacted the same way. We hope next year brings the same enthusiasm and excitement.

Laurin Middle

By JUDY JONES
Peer Helper Advisor

One day in mid-April I was circulating through classrooms at Glenwood Heights Primary School, where students from Laurin Middle School next door work as part of the elective "peer helper" program.

After three weeks of training and passing an exam, the seventh and eighth graders in this program, which is about 15 years old, work with students at the primary. On this day, I went into Karen Burgess-Cassler's second grade classroom to check on peer helper Aly Furguson.

Glenwood Assistant Principal Mike Maloney, who happened to be visiting in the room, said he was pleased with Aly's work as a peer helper. With Mrs. Cassler occupied with a small group of students, Aly spotted a few other youngsters struggling

with an assignment and immediately went over to help.

That kind of response is one of the behaviors taught to the peer mentors before they begin serving at Glenwood. The two schools have a true "partnership" in this successful program, which benefits students in both buildings.

Tukes Valley Middle

By DIANA HARRIS
Principal, Tukes Valley Middle

The moments in time that define Tukes Valley Middle School are linked to the traditions we're building, the culture we're establishing, and the climate we're creating that make our building unique.

These moments in time bring to mind a collage of student faces that our staff members greet each morning, the laughter that is heard at a teachers-students basketball game or the flicker of understanding that comes when our students realize their potential. Our moments in time include students learning, achieving, succeeding, and celebrating successes in class.

Our moments also involve community service and acts of kindness, such as: donating toys during the holidays for children in need, collecting more than \$1,000 for earthquake victims in Haiti, and participating in our

"Moments" CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

ing skills in weather that is sunny one moment and cloudy the next, followed by hail. Band director Danielle Armstrong's voice is drowned out by the pounding of hail on metal instruments coupled with the beat of the drums. Then, as if by magic, the clouds part and we have blue sky and sunshine. The erratic weather does not dampen the spirits of these talented young musicians as they practice for the St. John's and Hazel Dell Parades.

A second "Moment" is the Math Club competing at Hockinson Middle School May 1. Chief's mathematicians scored among the highest at all levels.

A third is student-led conferences. It was great to see so many students and parents engaged in meaningful conversation about school. Teachers were proud of how the youngsters took charge of their respective conferences and discussed with their parents their strengths, areas for improvement and their goals.

Daybreak Middle

By KRISHNA SMITH
Math Teacher, Daybreak Middle

We were expecting the typical reactions -- big smiles, sighs of relief, and well-deserved "Yahs". Those reactions were there, as were high fives, fist bumps, yelps, dancing and tears of joy. It was April 7th, the day for High School Math Placement test results.

Working for five long months on a goal that seemed an eternity away led to the most spectacular student display of enthusiasm that my teaching partner, Sherri Wilson, and I have ever seen.

Their excitement was contagious. I broke the "no cell



Firefighters collect boxes of toys for needy children in a drive spearheaded by Carli Mudd's sixth-grade class at Tukes Valley Middle School.

2008-2009 Battle Ground Public Schools' Report Card: This report is required by the federal No Child Left Behind law. It covers activities, test scores and staff and student information from the 2008-2009 academic year. It is accessible in full detail at the Web site of the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at www.k12.wa.us Then, click on Battle Ground. Or, you can go directly to the information for a specific school by typing the school name in the search window at top right, below the "Tools" window.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY NOTICE: The Battle Ground School District provides equal opportunity in programs and employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin/language, creed/religion, sex, sexual orientation-including gender identity, disability, or the use of a service animal by a person with a disability, age, marital status, honorably discharged veteran or military status and HIV/Hepatitis C status. Marcia Christian, Pam Judd and Jane Mercier have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination. They can be reached as follows: Marcia Christian, Title IX Sexual Harassment Coordinator, 360.885.5415, christian.marcia@bgsd.k12.wa.us; Pam Judd, Title IX Equity Coordinator 360.885.5395, judd.pam@bgsd.k12.wa.us; Jane Mercier, Section 504/ADA Coordinator 360.885.5334, mercier.jane@bgsd.k12.wa.us; or a letter may be submitted to the designated coordinator at the Battle Ground School District, PO Box 200, Battle Ground, WA 98604

"Moments"

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own Kristi Thiessen Relay for Life to raise money for cancer research while honoring a beautiful teacher who served Battle Ground Public Schools for more than 30 years.

All of our students personify our unique and special moments in time. Without them, we would have no moments in time to cherish and tuck away in our memories.

Maple Grove Middle

By BILL PENROSE

Principal, Maple Grove Middle

Choosing from many noteworthy moments is difficult, such as the ASB penny drive that raised more than \$1,100 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in just a week. But here's one moment that made a big impression.

ASB President Paul Love, an eighth grader, was a little more excitable than normal as he helped with the morning announcements. While encouraging students to participate in an upcoming event, Paul said the event was going to be "fricking awesome."

When I told him later that I preferred he not use the word "fricking" in morning announcements, Paul was immediately apologetic. He told me he realized as soon as he said it that it was the wrong thing to say.

Apology accepted. As far as I was concerned, the matter was settled. The next morning, Paul brought me a letter he had written to the MGM staff. He requested that I read it at our next meeting. I honored Paul's request. As I read his apology, I could see that the staff was visibly moved by the responsibility,

maturity and character demonstrated by this young man.

Daybreak Primary

By JILL DUTCHESS

Principal, Daybreak Primary

To see her face you would never know it is 7:45 a.m. and she has arrived at school for extra reading practice. To see her face you would think that reading has always been this easy. Not true. When she began coming to Dawn at Daybreak last fall, she was a third grader reading at a first grade level.

So what changed? She continued to receive excellent classroom instruction and additional help through the federal Title I program. However, this year she came to school, literally at dawn, for additional practice.

Daybreak's School Improvement Planning Team developed Dawn at Daybreak to provide time for students to practice reading skills beyond their regular school day.

Can something as simple as extra time to practice make a difference for struggling readers? For some, yes. You just need to



Daybreak Primary School's reading specialist Betsy Caughie works with a student in the "Dawn at Daybreak" program.

see her face light up as she reads Horrible Harry – a chapter book – to know it can.

Glenwood Hts.

By ERIC HOGLUND

Principal, Glenwood Hts. Primary

While walking through the halls of Glenwood Heights Primary one day this spring, I was struck by the enthusiasm of the students.

For example, there were

kindergartners doing their best to step on the correctly colored floor tiles and fourth graders working diligently on stories they were writing in class.

Watching these students enjoy the fruits of a quality education made me proud to be an educator.

I read though fourth-grader Tess Gould's story, "Carly Coho," which won the Watershed Reflections contest sponsored by the Clark Public Utilities' 'Stream Team'. She was honored at the Earth Day celebration in April for her life-cycle story of Carly the coho salmon. Not only is her first-person story informative and funny, but her illustrations are wonderful.

This is just one example of the joy of learning experienced every day at Glenwood Heights.

Maple Grove Primary

By BARBARA BAIRD

Principal, Maple Grove Primary

Student-parent partnerships for learning provide wonderful "moments in time" at Maple Grove Primary.

Research consistently confirms the link between parent involvement and student achievement. Here at Maple Grove Primary, we have Title I Parent Involvement nights. Parents come with children, eat pizza and participate in various activities. April 29, for example, was Family Involvement Math Night.

From the moment students walked in the doors, the smiles on their faces showed how excited they were to be there with their parents. Seven classrooms were set up with different math games and activities. As I walked through the building, parents and children told me how much fun they were having.

Seeing children and their parents work together was a moving experience. One parent who was excited about learning to play Sudoku said, "It's not as hard as it looks." Some families were having fun with different "shape games."

Moments in time -- meaningful memories, if you will -- were made at Maple Grove Primary that evening. Parents are vital to the success of their child's education. Providing activities that lead to "moments" that nurture that involvement is truly a privilege.

Yacolt Primary

By KEN EVANS,

Principal, Yacolt Primary

While visiting classrooms on April 20, I went into Chris Halvorson's second grade room. Her students were working on

science and as soon as I walked in the door several students came up to ask me if they could share their work involving the FOSS science kit.

It was just a special moment and I was really inspired by their enthusiasm for learning. These students began telling me about milkweed bugs and meal worms that they were studying. I was impressed with their knowledge of the characteristics and habitats of insects.

As part of their study, the students were writing in their science journals about the changes and life cycles of milkweed bugs and meal worms. They also had diagrams of the insects. The handwriting of these students was excellent. The content of the journals showed that these children are learning a lot of science in this classroom!

Pleasant Valley Primary

By MISSY MITCHELL

Principal, Pleasant Valley Primary

Pleasant Valley Primary students, kindergarten through fourth grade, made musical memories April 23 at Prairie High School. Each grade sang songs and played instruments that they had learned during music classes with Mr. Jim Scheurman. The concert was well attended by parents, friends and family.

One "moment" that stood out, was a break-dancing solo performed by Alonzo Faulke, a second grader who loves to move!

He showcased his moves during a special tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. while his classmates sang and cheered him on. Alonzo's talent had been discovered by the art teacher during a Jump-A-Thon.

At the end of the grade-level performances, ALL the grades returned to the stage to sing some well known songs together. This event was a result of the combined efforts of the PVP PTA and Mr. Scheurman.

Tukes Valley Primary

By LAURIE SUNDBY

Principal, Tukes Valley Primary

"It's the Tukes way of doing things." This has been a frequent thought and comment when people refer to the incredible involvement of Tukes Valley families at our school.

When we have events, entire families come to celebrate student learning. Our open house in April was a perfect example of families carving time out of their busy schedules to spend an hour or so immersing themselves in the life of Tukes Valley Primary.

Smiles and animated conversations were evident as hundreds of students, parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters representing roughly 250 families meandered throughout the school to see classroom projects and an incredible art show, swap books at the book exchange, purchase books at the book fair and participate in fun activities in the media center.

Active parent involvement makes a positive difference in how well students do at school. Tukes Valley Primary parents have proven again and again just how willing they are to make school a priority.

School facilities serve entire community

By AMY THIELEN

WSUV Student Intern

Classrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums and athletic fields at our schools are usually filled with students during week days. But evenings and weekends the same facilities are a resource for the entire community.

Organizations such as Parent-Teacher Associations, band and athletic booster clubs, the district's Community Education program, Little Leagues, non-profit groups and churches use them, with the non-school users paying a rental fee.

Janina Rosenkranz of the facilities-use office in the Business Services Department says users of district facilities

also include scouts, adult sports leagues, athletic camps, 4-H groups, community clubs and neighborhood and homeowners associations.

Churches sometimes rent space in a school for services when they do not have permanent places of worship. Another example cited by Rosenkranz was a local ballet group that rented the Prairie High School auditorium for a performance last December.

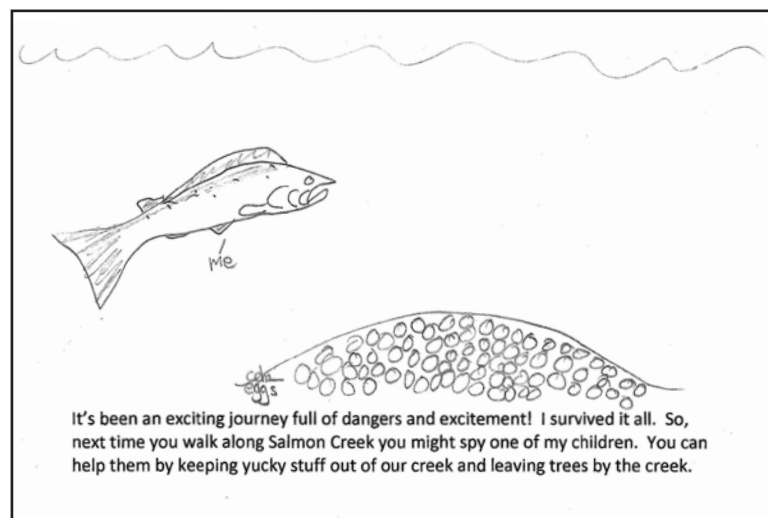
School groups, such as PTAs and Battle Ground Community Education, must reserve the space through the Facilities use office but do not pay a rental fee. Non-school groups pay nominal fees.

Local groups get a price break compared to non-local groups. For example, a youth basketball team with 80 percent or more of its players residing in the school district would pay \$50 to use one court in a middle school gym 90 minutes per night, one night a week for three months. A team with players mostly from outside of the Battle Ground District would pay twice as much.

A group renting a school commons or media center on a week night is typically charged \$20 per hour, but there may be additional charges depending for personnel or custodial services depending on the event and its day and time.

Rosenkranz stresses that school district facilities are tobacco-, alcohol-, and drug-free zones. There are some events for which the facilities are not rented, including birthday and anniversary parties, family reunions, wedding receptions, bar mitzvahs and rummage sales. Proof of insurance is required for most events.

MORE INFORMATION: Janina Rosenkranz, (360) 885-5390. The information will also be available on the district's new Web site, expected to go into operation this month at www.battlegroundps.org or www.bgsd.k12.wa.us. Click on the "Parents & Community" tab and scroll down to "School Facilities Rental."



It's been an exciting journey full of dangers and excitement! I survived it all. So, next time you walk along Salmon Creek you might spy one of my children. You can help them by keeping yucky stuff out of our creek and leaving trees by the creek.

Fourth grader Tess Gould at Glenwood drew Carly Coho, the salmon, to accompany her story.

Contact us

The Battle Ground Public Schools' administrative offices are at 11104 N.E. 149th Street in Brush Prairie, a half mile west of state Highway 503 at 149th St.

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Memories are made of this



High school photo students in the district were invited to submit pictures reflecting life and sights at and around our schools. One of Emmy Pellico's photography classes at Battle Ground High accepted the challenge and submitted several photos. Here are five of them.

Clearing the Bar (left)
Under an ominous sky, David Reinhardt of BGHS goes 5 feet 10 inches to win the high jump in a track and field meet at Mountain View High School.
Photo by Autumn Larson, grade 10.



Reflections on a Cloudy Day (above)
Towering trees are not really growing in the old Central School building. It just looks that way.
Photo by Myra Mattila, grade 9.



New Growth (above)
Springtime is when every baseball team is in the running for the World Series, the frogs croak at night, the rabbits are running amok... and evergreen trees sprout new growth.
Photo by Andrew Batson, grade 9.



Not Just a Coat (left)
Four years of memories are wrapped up in jackets like this - memories that will last a lifetime.
Photo by Kathleen Zietz, grade 12.



Connections
Students in Brett Hope's Art Explorations class, first semester of 2009-10, created this "We Are Connected" mural, with each student providing one-quarter of a face. The mural "is a symbol of the inner-connection among us all," says the photographer.
Photo by Chelsie Aguigui, grade 10.

"Q&A"

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A. Excellent. The meetings have been good. There have been discussions and some disagreements but we've come to numerous compromises on different issues. Before the new board members took office, it seemed like there was tension all the time. You could feel it in the room at board meetings. This board can disagree on things but still come out with a productive consensus. I was on the losing end of a 4-1 vote. I have no problem with that, I respect what the other board members had to say.

Q. What is the greatest single need right now, beyond the cost of daily operations?

A. New curriculum and textbooks. A major percentage

of our textbooks are going to be out of print or in final edition next year.

Q. The School district has no emergency fund balance but has a plan to put away \$500,000 a year starting in 2010-11 until it has at least 3 percent of its annual operations expenses in reserve. How tough will it be to meet that goal?

A. Will it be challenging? Absolutely. Is it attainable? Absolutely. But I worry about what we might have to give up in order to build that fund balance. We don't want to sell the farm in order to have money in the bank.

Q. Let's say a family from Kansas with two or three young children is planning a move to Clark County. They are doing homework to figure out where to buy a house so

that their children will get good schooling. They call you. What do you tell them?

A. I'd tell them I sincerely feel Battle Ground is a great place to live and that the school district offers just as many opportunities as any district in the county. It is important to get kids off on the right foot in primary school, and the amount of attention and effort given to kids in our primary schools is incredible. I would put them up against any district in the county. In the high schools, our children got everything they needed. Our son took all his classes at Prairie and passed five Advanced Placement tests and earned a year's worth of college credits. The opportunity is here. The parents and the children have to take advantage of it.

Q. What about the non-college-bound student?

A. Some districts ignore students who are not going to go to college. We have a very strong Career and Technical Education program - auto tech, welding, horticulture, fire cadet, health occupations, Air Force ROTC and lots of others. Those take in a big group of kids. We do a good job of serving students across the academic spectrum.

Q. Is there anything we didn't cover that you'd like to say?

A. The relationship the school district has with the employee unions is incredible. I honestly feel like we are working with the teachers. It's not adversarial here, and I think it is in numerous districts. There is more trust in Battle

Ground among various labor groups. We are all working together. That's easy to say and difficult to practice. But Battle Ground is as close as it comes to that actually being the case.

Q. Anything else?

A. For the sake of the students, we are thankful that voters approved the operations levy in February. The kids had really suffered as a result of the double levy failure in 2006. That put the district in 'existence mode,' but the new levy will go a long way to getting us back to where we need to be. We have an incredible opportunity ahead of us. Yes, there is less state money and budget cuts are still looming. But there is not panic in the Battle Ground School district. We run lean and we are seasoned at dealing with financial adversity.