



RENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Report

Fall 2004

More than 100 new highly-qualified teachers hired

Over the summer, the district has hired more than 100 new teachers for the coming school year. Some are fresh out of college; others enter the teaching profession after years in other industries.

There are 43 new teachers at the elementary level, 26 at the middle school level and 28 at the high school level. The district continues to seek qualified teachers in special education.

Interesting facts about some of our newly-hired teachers:

Several new teachers attended elementary, middle and high school in the Renton School District.

A new Physics/Chemistry teacher recently completed a NASA internship at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

A new elementary school Reading Specialist has taught in Hong Kong for the past nine years.

A new high school French/Spanish teacher has studied abroad in both France and Spain.

A new Family & Consumer Science teacher is the daughter of a recently retired district teacher.

A new high school Construction/Manufacturing teacher is making a career change: his previous profession was as a custom cabinet maker.

A new high school Language Arts and Journalism teacher recently moved to this area after living and teaching in Des Moines, Iowa and Beloit, Wisconsin.

A new fifth-grade teacher has worked for the past eight years as a television news anchor and reporter in Portland, Oregon and Seattle.

District's success attributed to parent, community support

Dear Fellow Resident:

Our schools are successful and dynamic places with high expectations for every student. A major reason for our students' continued success is your involvement. When children know you as parents and community members value education and that you believe their school success is critical to their success in life, they are, themselves, more committed to making their best effort every day. Your help in the education process is now more important than ever; children's lives are ever more complex in our fast-paced society, and staying on course is not an easy challenge.

We also seek your help in setting goals and developing plans in order to continuously improve the job we are doing. Effective schools happen as the result of goals jointly identified by educators, parents, and community members plus a lot of hard work. Providing our students with clear learning targets and high academic standards is an important step in accomplishing all that we hope for our children. You can become familiar with Renton's curriculum by taking a look at our Web site: www.renton.wednet.edu or by contacting your child's school. We would like to encourage you to actively participate in PTA as well as both building and district committees aimed at improving teaching and learning.

Our staff members are highly qualified professionals who are well trained to meet the individual needs of our students. We continue to offer high quality professional development throughout the school year to enhance these skills. Recent classes have focused on technology skills for every teacher, made possible by the voter-approved technology and construction bond measure. Such training will assist teachers in helping students better prepare to access and use technology as they will need to do in years to come.

Looking ahead, students who graduate in the year 2008 (this year's ninth-graders) will have to meet new graduation requirements.

Now, in addition to earning a minimum of 22 credits, graduates must:

- Earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement by passing the 10th-grade WASL in reading, writing and math by the end of high school. (Science will be added starting with the class of 2010.) Some students may earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement by passing an alternative test.
- Complete a culminating project that integrates their experiences and knowledge.
- Craft an education plan for high school and beyond.
- Complete senior academic core classes.

A high school diploma means more now than ever. It should signify to everyone – colleges, employers and students – that the student worked hard, challenged him/herself, gained a solid foundation of skills and knowledge and is prepared for next steps in life.

The ultimate measure of our success is a learning community that helps all students achieve high standards of scholarship and citizenship. With your continued support, the Renton School District will continue to meet the challenge.



Renton School District
Superintendent Dolores Gibbons

Sincerely,

Dolores Gibbons

Local population increase causing strain for some schools

District will review options to balance enrollments

Recently released county population estimates for 2004 show a double-digit increase in the number of Renton residents over the past four years, a fact that underscores the district's need to review current school boundaries to balance enrollments at schools.

Statistics show Renton's population has grown by more than 10 percent since 2000. The change ranks Renton third in population growth when compared to 10 major King County suburban cities. In comparison, the overall growth countywide was only 2.9 percent.

The population increase poses problems for schools in these growth areas.

To ensure balanced enrollments, the School Board has directed the

district to review current school boundaries and offer recommendations to better balance the size of schools within their individual capacities, while maximizing facility usage and ensuring the best educational opportunities for all students.

The Comprehensive Boundary Review Task Force is being assembled and will include parents, principals and staff. The group will look for ways to balance school populations, relieve overcrowding and allow for future growth while ensuring all facilities are used efficiently. The

committee will begin work in the fall. Meetings are planned for November to gather ideas and responses from staff and community.



Preliminary recommendations will be presented to board members in the winter. Implementation of a board-approved boundary modification plan is anticipated in the fall of 2005.

Tax Fact:

Two similar homes in southeast area of unincorporated King County recently sold for around \$300,000. Both homes were about 2,050 square feet, built in 1986/87, well maintained and updated, two story-style, located in nice neighborhoods. Both were assessed at \$249,000. One home is in the Renton School District boundary; the other is in the Kent School District.

- The tax assessment in 2004 for the home in the Kent School District is \$3,712.

- The tax assessment in 2004 for the home in the Renton School District is \$3,300.

This produces a real life annual savings of \$412 for the new homeowner in the Renton School District.

Building a Better Future

In May, 2003, voters in the Renton School District approved a technology and construction bond measure to continue the 20-year plan to renew, restore or rebuild school buildings throughout the district. This wonderful gift is enhancing the education of all our students.

Throughout the summer months, district maintenance and construction staff have been busy planning, supervising and implementing improvements at many schools.

These projects are professionally managed--they are finished on time and within budget.

Hazelwood Elementary

Construction of the new Hazelwood Elementary School has begun on undeveloped land south of the existing school. Students will continue to attend the current school during construction. The school will open in the fall of 2005.



Renton Park Elementary

Scheduled to be rebuilt in 2005-06 on the current site. Students will attend Honey Dew Elementary School during construction.

Kennydale Elementary

Scheduled to be rebuilt in 2005-06 on the current site. Students will attend the old Hazelwood school during construction.

Dimmitt Middle School

Replacing interior lighting.

Nelsen Middle School

Replacing student lockers and interior lighting and making improvements in the cafeteria, courtyard and parking lot.

Hazen High School

Additional classrooms are being added, windows and ventilator are being replaced and the climate control system is being upgraded.

District receives outstanding audit

Good business practices in the Renton School District were recently acknowledged when state auditors, after an annually-scheduled financial accountability review, reported that no discrepancies in the district's practices were found.

Members of the state auditor's office, who review such practices in every school district in the state, examined more than twenty critical areas of financial activity including accountability for public resources, legal compliance, federal programs, cash and investment management, long-term debt and more.

"We've discovered that Renton does it right," said assistant audit manager Ruth Riddle.

Audit manager James Griggs agreed adding,

"...Renton is really doing a good job."

Superintendent Dolores Gibbons praised the work of staff members in the district's business office and the many other departments involved in the audit. Pointing to the countless number of federal, state and local regulations that govern a school district's business practices, she was pleased that such skilled and committed people work in those departments so others in the district can focus on the district's most important responsibility: education.

"We want to do this part of running a district well, so our teachers can concentrate on teaching our children," Superintendent Gibbons said.

Successful Graduates

Renton School District is known for cultivating bright students with promising futures. Many have gone on to pursue successful careers in medicine, government, the arts and other distinguished fields.

Spotlight on...

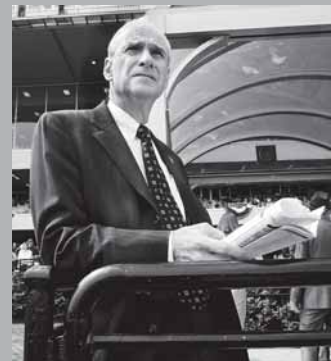
Renton High School graduate Ron Crockett



Photo courtesy of Renton Historical Museum

THEN...

Student Body President; Youth of the Month; Lettermen's Club; Budget Review Committee; Standards Committee; Spanish Club; Lettered in Basketball, Football and Track



NOW...

President & CEO of Emerald Downs; President of the Northwest Racing Associates Limited Partnership; Successful Businessman

"Renton's always been a place that cares about its kids and its schools. When I grew up there it was just a small town; however, the values and sense of community is still present today. I have nothing but fond memories of my four years at Renton High School." -Ron Crockett

Benson Hill Elementary

Currently rebuilding school on-site. School will be complete and open for students in the 2005-06 school year. Students are attending Honey Dew Elementary School during construction.



Lindbergh High School

Replacing carpet and tile flooring, renovating concrete and quarry tile floors and adding auditorium seating. New student commons (currently in planning stages).

Other District Sites

- Health/Safety/Security
- Earthquake upgrades
- Security alarm and lighting upgrades
- Separate car and bus drop off points
- Fire/health code compliance updates
- Emergency generators
- Improved access for students with disabilities
- Roof replacements/improved drainage

- Window replacements
- Restroom and locker room upgrades
- Exterior wall upgrades
- Play field improvements

Technology

- Instructional computer labs
- Computer hardware and software
- Training for teachers and other staff
- Telecommunications improvements
- Server improvements
- Classroom wiring/cable improvements

Renton School District 2003-04 Successes

District high school students were semifinalists in National Merit Scholarship competition • Dimmitt M.S. was awarded a grant from the Diversity in Technology group • Hazen H.S. senior was selected as a candidate for the US Presidential Scholars Program by the US Department of Education • Renton H.S. senior received highest rating at the 2004 Washington Journalism Education Association competition • Talbot Hill E.S. received an award and grant as the 21st Century Schools of Distinction • Business office was awarded the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting • Nelsen M.S. swept the Mt. Rainier Chapter of the MathCounts competition again this year • Two Hazen H.S. students awarded Washington State University Regent's Scholarships • Renton H.S. inducted over 130 students into National Honor Society • Communities In Schools of Renton arranged 60 community members for Day of Caring to help teachers and other staff • Renton PTSA Council awarded \$1,000 scholarships to four district students • Bryn Mawr E.S. staff visited the homes of more than 125 new students to welcome them to the new school year • Hazen H.S. hosted a New Parent Orientation night • Nelsen M.S. inducted more than 100 students into the National Junior Honor Society • District was among others to receive \$1 million worth of English as a Second Language books and material donated by McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. • Hazen H.S. senior named semifinalist in National Achievement Scholarship Program • Renton Rotary recognized over 30 teachers as Teachers of the Month • Lindbergh H.S. students and volunteers collected more than 4,500 pounds of food for Renton Food Bank • Highlands E.S. students assisted bus driver to aid a child who was choking • Thomson Early Childhood Center hosted 175 children at annual math family night • Wizards of the Coast donated holiday food and gifts to 70 Hillcrest families • Fifteen Renton H.S. sophomores participated in Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center's "Hutch High" • Kennydale E.S. participated in partnering program with schools in Uganda • Hazen H.S. physical education teacher received the state Outstanding Secondary P.E. Teacher award • Benson Hill E.S. PTA hosted annual Family Reading Night • American Red Cross honored district for participating in disaster preparedness training • Administrator for school safety and attendance honored at truancy workshop • Tiffany Park E.S. kindergarten class won honorable mention at City of Renton fall festival • Fourteen of the 16 Hazen H.S. fall season sports teams were awarded the WIAA Team Scholastic Award • Hazen H.S. junior participated in the National Youth Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. • Two Renton H.S. teachers were selected to receive Crimson Regents Scholarship award from Washington State University • Four Hazen H.S. graduates recognized by the College Board as Advanced Placement Scholars • 189 Talbot Hill E.S. students ran for office in student body elections • Nelsen M.S. librarian and the music specialist at Kennydale E.S., earned prestigious national certification • Campbell Hill E.S. third-grader was presented a BrailleNote computer and printer by local Lions Clubs • Dimmitt M.S. students raised over 4,720 items of food for the local food bank • Sartori Education Center graduated 27 students • Hazen H.S. was first to implement the mapping system for emergency response personnel • McKnight M.S. students participated in leadership classes • 230 people participated in annual Renton Head Start Family Feast event • Lindbergh H.S. technology education staff donated new bicycles to "Toys for Tots" • McKnight M.S. Student Diversity Committee presented a comprehensive history of all Americans • District maintenance manager worked tirelessly to bring up power after heavy winds blew down electrical lines • Cascade E.S. worked fast after loss of power to ensure students were fed at lunchtime • Benson Hill E.S. parents immediately donated their time to the school when they learned of a power outage • Renton Rotary Club recognized more than 30 students as Students of the Month • Maplewood Heights E.S. hosted their annual Book In A Bag night • Highlands E.S. P.E. teacher won the King County Physical Activity Coalition award • Dimmitt M.S. hosted the 5th annual Spelling Bee • Teachers from Hazen H.S. and McKnight M.S. participated on the state health and fitness assessment leadership writing team at the state level • Lindbergh H.S. sophomore won 1st place in the regional Skills USA competition in Computer Maintenance Technology • Teachers and staff at Hillcrest Special Service Preschool program offered parents of their 65 children a chance for a free night out • Dimmitt M.S. staff along with 20 students, participated in the 5th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the University of Washington • Talbot Hill E.S. MicroSociety program began new sub-group known as Community Helpers • GEAR UP program received funding for another year • The Renton Retired School Employees Association awarded 14 mini-grants to area teachers • Twenty Renton H.S., 40 Hazen H.S. and 20 Lindbergh H.S. students competed in the local level of the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) competition • Three Hazen H.S. seniors and a Lindbergh H.S. student were named finalists for the National Merit Scholarship Program • Divina Voce, an 11-member ensemble of talented Hazen H.S. students were selected for "New Works, New Hope" concert • Kennydale E.S. and Nelsen M.S. students, staff and parents completed First Aid and CPR training through the School Safety Initiative pilot program • Dimmitt M.S. held their first Family Reading Night • Lakeridge E.S. hosted a family reading night where fifth- and third-graders shared the stage with Ted Hutchinson, an African folktale storyteller and singer • Tiffany Park E.S. staff welcomed a fourth-grade teacher from Uzbekistan • Talbot Hill E.S. students learn anti-smoking lessons through a program called Tar Wars • Cascade E.S. students held a "Spread the Love" food drive • Lakeridge E.S. teachers were awarded the VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher award • Highlands E.S. first-grade teacher won a \$500 grant from the Kiwanis Club • Benson Hill E.S. librarian received a \$500 grant from the School, Home, and Office Products Association • Renton H.S. basketball players were honored by the Seamount League • Renton H.S. boys' team won the state's Class 3A tournament • A Hazen High School gymnast received the Sportsmanship Award • Cascade E.S. teacher was recognized for using innovative methods to teach various lessons in reading, writing, math and other subjects • A Hazen High School graduate received the Merit Award, Winter Quarter, 2004 by the Office of Minority Affairs at the University of Washington • Renton H.S. Physics II students placed second in the American Society of Civil Engineers' Bridge Building Competition • Campbell Hill E.S. third-grader won the Mark of Distinction award at the 17th annual Paul Robeson Scholar-Athlete Awards ceremony • A Dimmitt M.S. student represented Renton in the Regional Spelling Bee for King and Snohomish Counties • Renton H.S. boy's basketball coach Rick Comer was named Coach of the Year by The Seattle Times • 30 Hazen H.S. students worked on Earth Service Corp. project, a YMCA-based service-learning program for teens • Nelsen M.S. hosted annual Nifty Nelsen Night • Hazen H.S. "It's Your Choice, Leadership Development Training Institute" celebrated their accomplishments at an Achievement Award dinner • Art students in Renton High School's Creative and Visual Arts class have been awarded a grant to host an Artist in Residence • Dimmitt M.S. Buddy Read program helps students become more responsible while teaching Thomson School preschool students to read • Retired Renton schools superintendent Gary Kohlwes was nominated for the Jefferson Award • Language Arts/Social Studies classes at McKnight M.S. celebrated Random Acts of Kindness Week • Hazen H.S. senior won first place for his jewelry in the State High School Jewelry Competition • McKnight M.S. physical education teacher won the Great Northwest District Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year award • Twenty-one high school students have qualified to compete at the DECA International Career Development Conference • Six high school students were awarded the 2004 Outstanding Junior award • Dimmitt M.S. students raised \$625 for Pennies for Patients • Renton H.S. Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) students successfully competed at the regional competition • Children throughout the district recently received free dental work offered by the Vendeland Dental Professionals • Hazen H.S. students and music teacher organized a benefit concert for a fellow student who died after a long and heroic battle with cancer • Renton H.S. teachers registered more than 95 students as new voters • Renton H.S. student advanced to the semi-finals of the American Mathematics competition • Maplewood E.S. students raised almost \$1,800 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society • Hazen H.S. senior placed 3rd in state SkillsUSA Computer Maintenance Technology competition • Local businessman Greg Taylor donated \$1,000 to the McKnight M.S. Diversity Committee • Hazen H.S. was awarded a \$2,500 grant from American Alliance for Health, Physical Education Recreation and Dance • Renton School Board member Marcie Maxwell sponsored a job shadow for a Sartori senior • Renton Park E.S. students participated in Math for Cash program • Superintendent Dolores Gibbons sat on a CNN program "Homeland Security from the Citizens' Perspective" • Highlands E.S. hosted building dedication ceremony • Hazen H.S. senior was awarded a corporate-sponsored 2004 Merit Scholarship award from Boeing • McKnight M.S. nurse and school staff saved the life of coworker using defibrillator; also, custodian aided a student who was choking during lunch period • Highlands E.S. community, along with teachers and the student council, held a very successful food drive for Highland's families • Lindbergh H.S. students nominated teachers to be honored at a Teacher Appreciation Evening • Six Lindbergh H.S. seniors received scholarships totaling over \$4,500 from the Lindbergh Memorial Scholarship Committee • Two Renton H.S. and one Hazen H.S. student won scholarships from the Washington State Workforce Training Board • Nelsen M.S. students, under the direction of a math teacher, placed first in the eighth-grade portion of the Washington Mathematics League contest • A language teacher at Lindbergh H.S. was selected to participate in a summer program sponsored by the Japanese Foundation • A Hazen senior placed second in the clarinet category of the W.I.A.A. State Solo contest • A Lindbergh H.S. senior was awarded a \$2,000 Best Buy Children's Foundation scholarship • Tiffany Park E.S. students donated 3,600 used books for the school's summer reading program • Lindbergh H.S. students sponsored Wellness Week for the student body • Seven district bus drivers performed well at the regional School Bus Safety Competition where Renton received the second-place team award • A Dimmitt Middle School seventh-grader received an award from the University Book Store's Annual Bookmark Art Contest • 30 Dimmitt M.S. drama students performed Friday Night Fever • Members of the Renton Education Support Personnel (RESP) union named scholarship recipients • Lindbergh H.S. senior won a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship from Seattle Pacific University • Lindbergh H.S. senior was named one of the top 20 local high school graduates by the King County Journal • Third-grade students at Sierra Heights E.S. voiced Pledge of Allegiance on CD destined to entertain troops serving in Iraq • Dimmitt M.S. presented the second annual Art Gallery Show at Artist's Gallery of Seattle • Nelsen M.S. chapter of the Nation Junior Honor Society raised \$1,500 in a fundraiser • Bryn Mawr and Cascade E.S. received thousands of dollars worth of new books for students to take home • Fifth-graders at Campbell Hill E.S. participated in a graduation ceremony in the Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center • The Greater Renton Chamber of Commerce recognized Renton School Board member Al Talley as Volunteer of the Year • Renton School District was nominated for the Greater Renton Chamber of Commerce Beautify Renton award • Eight teachers from Dimmitt M.S. and Renton H.S. were selected to participate in the University of Washington GEAR UP Summer Institute for Educators • High school seniors throughout the district were awarded scholarships totaling over \$1.5 million • The Renton PTA Council awarded \$1,200 in scholarships to graduating students • Lindbergh H.S. students renovated two large courtyard areas at the school led by two students earning their Boy and Girl Scout Eagle Merits badges • Third-grade students at Sierra Heights E.S. capped months of science-related learning activities as they studied the amazing world of insects • Campbell Hill E.S. principal recently received an award of recognition from Snohomish County Police Department Athletic League • Black River High School teacher released his 10th mystery novel, "Red Tide" • Lindbergh H.S. senior earned the Eagle Scout rank in Boy Scouts • 1993 Renton H.S. graduate qualified for her second Olympic Games in the women's discus • McKnight M.S. received a \$1,000 donation from local businesses • District high schools benefit from Small Learning Communities grant totaling nearly \$150,000 •



Community Report is published by the Community Relations Office for Renton School District 403 residents and parents. Comments about this publication are encouraged and may be sent to:

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