



RENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Report

Start of school 2005

Changes to policy mean more students can ride bus

The Renton School Board recently voted to revise the district's transportation policy, allowing more students to ride a district bus to school.

The change means that any student at any grade level who lives one mile or further from his/her assigned school can now ride a bus to school.

Before the change, most students in middle and high school could not ride a district bus if they lived within a 1.5- or 2-mile radius respectively from their school.

"Because our district is so compact, we have had

some busses operating at less than full at the secondary level," said Rich Moore, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

"In addition, we have a good number of middle and high school students who live outside of current ridership boundaries but who will be pleased to have a bus ride to school given the opportunity."

With an increase in fuel prices, making better use of the school bus fleet also makes economic sense.

"Allowing more students to ride the bus is a win-win situation," Moore said. "Our students get a ride to school and the district is using tax-payer dollars more wisely by filling up the busses."

The district's transportation department sent postcards to homes of those students eligible for district-provided transportation in August, explaining when and where to catch a bus to school.



For more information about eligibility and bus routes, contact the district's transportation department at 425.204.4455.

State audit finds district fiscally responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars

District recognized for five years of exemplary audits

The Renton School District has again received excellent results in an accountability audit conducted by the Washington State Auditor's Office. The annual audit found the district properly accounting for local, state and federal funds, as

well as complying with accountability guidelines in district-wide financial operations. The audit recognized the district as responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

In addition to acknowledgment of good financial management, the district also received recognition from State Auditor Brian Sonntag for superb audits for five

consecutive years. In a letter to the School Board, Sonntag congratulated the district on its history of strong oversight of operations, good internal controls and accurate financial reporting.

Of the more than 180 audits conducted by the state Auditor's Office each year, only five received this exemplary status.

The State Auditor's Office performs annual financial and legal compliance audits of school districts and other state agencies. Areas reviewed included finance, transportation and personnel. The district was found to be in compliance with state laws, is keeping track of all assets and employs sound, fiscally responsible business practices.

This year's sophomores face new graduation requirements

The class of 2008 (this year's 10th graders) will be the first required to meet rigorous new graduation requirements in order to earn a diploma; 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.

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.

These new requirements put a lot of additional responsibility on students and their teachers, requiring more curriculum materials to present and grade and additional planning time for teachers.

To help students with these more demanding requirements, teachers and staff at Hazen, Lindbergh and Renton high schools

will collaborate in a series of Wednesday morning training sessions to design models to help reduce the achievement gap and increase the number of students who feel connected to school and are motivated to learn. That means a 9:30 a.m. start on 18 Wednesdays throughout the school year for students attending those high

schools. The late starts are part of a plan to give teachers more opportunity to prepare students for the new, increased graduation requirements.

For more information on graduation requirements and other education efforts, visit the district's Web site at www.renton.wednet.edu.

Principal changes in the new school year

Several schools around the district will have new principals this school year. Here are the principal changes for the 2005-06 school year:

High Schools:

Sue Beeson will move from assistant principal to principal at Hazen High School. Sue will replace Rick Stubrud who retired.

Charles James, an assistant principal at Renton High School for the past two years, will become principal at Dimmitt Middle School. Charles will replace Kathleen Bailey at Dimmitt, who is now executive director of secondary education.

Mary Merritt, an assistant principal at Lindbergh High School for the past two years, will become principal at McKnight Middle School. Mary will replace Cathie Rondeau.

Damien Pattenaude, will become assistant principal at Hazen High School. Damien recently completed an administrative internship at Renton High School. He has taught in the Kent and Renton school districts.

Middle Schools:

Jesely Alvarez, will become assistant principal at Dimmitt Middle School. Jesely, who was an administrative intern in the Edmonds School District last year, replaced Angela Grutko who is now a principal in the Kent School District.

Greg Domingos will become assistant principal at Dimmitt Middle School. Greg worked in

that position on an interim basis and has taught at Dimmitt since 1999.

Elementary Schools:

Janet Fawcett will move from principal at Tiffany Park Elementary School to principal at Highlands Elementary School. Janet will replace Mona Boyer who retired. Janet has also taught at Tiffany Park.

Ginny Knox will be principal at Lakeridge Elementary School. She held that position as an interim assignment last year. Ginny has managed the HOME Program and has taught at Renton High School.

Irene Olson, an educational associate at Bryn Mawr Elementary School, will become principal at Tiffany Park Elementary School. Irene is replacing Janet Fawcett.

Jon Stadler will become principal at Campbell Hill Elementary School, on an interim basis. Jon was a principal in the Highline District last year and has taught there since 1998. He replaces Reginald Reid, who is returning to a position with the state's education office.

District office:

Kathleen Bailey is moving from principal at Dimmitt Middle School to executive director of secondary education, replacing Louis Papas who retired.

Teachers take start of school to students

Maplewood Elementary School teachers use vacant apartment to get neighborhood children ready for school.

Teachers throughout the Renton School District know the importance of students coming to school ready to learn. Each year some students return from summer break having lost some of the academic skills they had gained during the previous school year. Re-entry into school for these children is difficult because they have spent the summer outside of the school routine, and have had limited opportunities for reading and writing.

Many schools plan activities, conduct home visits or offer other opportunities to help students start the school year with confidence, sharpened skills and adequate supplies.

Teachers at Maplewood Heights Elementary School wanted to do more to help students begin the new school year motivated and ready to begin where they left off, so they created the "Get Ready for School" program.

The teachers contacted management at local Maplewood Park Apartments and set up a classroom in a vacant apartment to



Three Maplewood Heights Elementary School students stand in front of the apartment used by teachers to help neighborhood students be better prepared to re-enter school.

offer refresher lessons. Teachers, along with volunteers, provided academic programs for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. They brought books, teaching materials, and school supplies for the more than 40 families who live in the complex. They also brought an interpreter to translate for family members who speak only Spanish.

Students were involved in reading, writing and math activities. They created posters with math facts; used math vocabulary, phonics and writing tips; used paper geometric pattern blocks to make designs and more.

The added attention helped. Students who participated had more confidence in their skills and were better prepared to start school.

Keeping promises to taxpayers

Construction projects remain on time, on budget

In May 2003, Renton School District voters approved a \$150 million school construction and technology bond to continue a 20-year plan to renovate or rebuild school buildings throughout the district. Projects funded by the bond measure have been well managed, remaining on time and on budget.

Benson Hill Elementary School

Address: 18665 - 116th Ave S, Renton; Architect: Bassetti; Projected completion: Start of school, Sept. 2005

The new Benson Hill School will feature 20 general classrooms, three kindergarten classrooms and four special needs classrooms. Each classroom will have three computer stations networked through a server. Other building elements include a music room, library/media center, computer lab with 32 workstations and a gymnasium. The school's cafeteria will double as a performance space, complete with its own stage that can also be used as instructional space.



Hazelwood Elementary School

Address: 6928 116th Ave SE, Newcastle; Architect: McGranhan; Projected completion: Start of school, Sept. 2005

The new Hazelwood School will feature 21 general classrooms, three kindergarten classrooms and three special needs classrooms. Each classroom will have three computer stations available for student use networked through a server. Other building elements include a music room, library/media center, computer lab with 32 workstations and a gymnasium. The school's cafeteria will double as a performance space, complete with its own stage that can also be used as instructional space.



Construction projects at schools continue

Other construction work being conducted as part of the voter-approved bond measure include preparing to rebuild Renton Park and Kennydale elementary schools during the upcoming school year; adding classrooms and bathrooms and improving the bus drop off and driveway at Nelsen Middle School; placing portable classrooms at McKnight Middle School and Hazen High School to accommodate

increased enrollment; adding a student commons area and replacing water pipes at Lindbergh High School; replacing lockers at Dimmitt Middle School; strengthening walls and making mechanical and electrical improvements at Honey Dew Elementary School; and upgrading science labs, replacing lighting, improving heating, cooling and irrigation controls at other schools.

Schools receive technology improvements

A good portion of the 2003 voter-approved bond measure was designated for technology improvements at schools throughout the district. In addition to replacement of old computers in classrooms and computer labs, the district has also provided hardware and software training for teachers and staff to make better use of new and existing technology. Additional technology improvements include:

- improved access to the Internet for student research;
- reading-management software to provide teachers with effective methods to present and track student reading practices;
- reading and mathematics tutoring software;
- student attendance software to track absences and improve attendance; and
- on-going training for teachers to further integrate technology into classroom instruction.

Renton School District Successes

- Lindbergh High school senior Janette Siu and Hazen High School senior Yang Yang are National Merit Scholarship winners. The program recognizes the nation's top students. These students were selected from 15,000 finalists and 1.3 million high school students who entered the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test as juniors.
- Twenty-eight high school students were selected as Outstanding Juniors by the Renton Masonic Education Council. Six of those students were recognized as top performers and received special recognition and a savings bond. The organization also selected Karen Jones of Hazen High School as this year's outstanding educator.
- Maira Esther Puga Dominguez, of Renton High School, took third place in a statewide Spanish language literary contest. Maira's work, entitled "Important Discoveries" was written to reflect her life as a Hispanic high school student. Other Renton High School students receiving honorable mention in the contest were Mavelin Batres and Gyaltsen Go.
- Lindbergh High School social studies teacher Michael Antley was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for study in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The Group Projects Abroad Program is run through the Asian Pacific Studies Program at Central Washington University and is designed to integrate area studies into state middle and high school curricula.
- Hazen High School junior Emily Gibbs was awarded a Certificate of Excellence from Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for her outstanding community service activities. Emily also received the Volunteer Service Award from President George Bush's Council on Service and Civic Participation, which recognizes Americans who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their community and country.
- Renton High School's Jessica Chan and Alicia Cloer, and Hazen High School's Christine Peck were named South County Top Graduates by the King County Journal. The three seniors were selected

based on their excellent grades, volunteer work, and helping others succeed.

- Lindbergh High School students swept the Regional High School Robotics Competition, placing first, second, third, seventh, ninth, and 13th places in a 95 team double elimination contest.
- Students in Kristen Brennehan's third-grade classroom at Sierra Heights Elementary School participated in a Random Acts of Kindness campaign by participating in a "Read for the Need" read-a-thon to raise money to help the children living in unhealthy and hazardous conditions in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Five Renton teachers were selected to participate in the scoring of the recently completed Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Renton district staff will have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the state assessment as these teachers' experiences are shared during the upcoming school year.
- James Ohashi, a senior at Sartori Education Center has made greeting cards for the Wounded Hero Project. This project provides necessary items for the more than 96 recovering military service members at Madigan Hospital who recently came home wounded from Iraq.
- The PTAs for Hazelwood and Kenndale elementary schools recently received "Best of Washington" awards at the 2005 Washington State PTA Convention. Hazelwood PTA won the 100 percent Membership Award for having a PTSA enrollment equal to or exceeding the school's student enrollment. Kenndale PTA won in the best newsletter and communication category for their newsletter.
- Highlands elementary school fifth-graders, Brittney Williamson and Brenda Valdovinos were selected as finalists in Northwest Asian Weekly's "Read To Be Free" essay contest. The students recently were awarded certificates of their achievement at the Rainbow Bookfest in Seattle.

2005-2006 School Year Calendar

September 6	First Day of School
September 28	Half-day for Elem/Middle schools* (AM & Full-day K attend in AM; No PM K)
October 26	Half-day for Elem/Middle schools* (PM & Full-day K attend in AM; No AM K)
November 10	No School — Teacher Training Day
November 11	No School — Veterans Day
November 24-25	No School — Thanksgiving Break
December 21-Jan. 2	No School — Winter Break
January 16	No School — MLK Jr. Day
January 27	No School — Teacher Training Day
February 20-24	President's Day/Mid-Winter Break
March 10	Half-day for Elem. only (AM & Full-day K attend in AM; No PM K)
March 22	Half-day for Elem/Middle schools* (PM & Full-day K attend in AM; No AM K)
April 7	Half day-Middle schools & Black River/Sartori only
April 10-14	Spring Break
May 8	No School — Teacher Training Day
May 17	Half-day for Elem/Middle schools* (AM & Full-day K attend in AM; No PM K)
May 26	Snow Make Up Day (if needed)
May 29	No School — Memorial Day
June 22	Last day/Half-day All grades

*These half-days also include Black River and Sartori.

PARENT CONFERENCES*

Elementary Schools:	November 17-23, 2005
Middle Schools:	November 21-23, 2005
	Dimmitt M.S. also on March 21, 2006
High Schools: Hazen, Lindbergh and Black River	November 17, 2005
	Renton Oct. 20 2005 & March 23, 2006

*There is early dismissal during conferences. No half-day AM/PM kindergarten classes during conference week.

LATE STARTS (Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.) for Hazen, Lindbergh and Renton high schools:

Sept. 21, 28; Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26; Nov. 30; Dec. 7, 14; Jan. 11, 18; Feb. 8, 15; March 1, 8, 15, 29; May 17

Meal prices for 2005-06 school year

Breakfast		Lunch	
Elementary	\$1.00	Elementary	\$1.50
Middle	\$1.25	Middle	\$1.75
High	\$1.25	High	\$2.00

To read more about the great things happening in the Renton School District, visit our Web site: www.renton.wednet.edu



Community Report is published by the Community Relations Office for Renton School District residents and families.

Comments about this publication may be directed to:

Community Relations Office Renton School District 300 SW 7th Street Renton, WA 98055, 425.204.2345, www.renton.wednet.edu

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