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Wrapping up the school year

By Dr. Brenda S. Dietrich, Superintendent of Schools

Summer vacation is almost here and I know you are all working diligently to finish the numerous tasks associated with the last days of school. This has been a wonderful school year and I want to thank you for all you have done to make Auburn-Washburn such a great place to work and educate our children! It's hard to believe how quickly 177 days of school can pass by us in what seems like the blink of an eye!



When you depart this week, I want to remind you that the intersection of Clarion Lane and 38th and Wanamaker will be totally closed until June 16th, when the roundabout at 37th and Wanamaker should be open for traffic. As soon as the roundabout is open, the intersection at 41st and Wanamaker will close. It will be closed when school starts in August and probably will not open until November. That closure will present some challenges for us, but in the end (2012?) the construction improvements on Wanamaker will be worth it.

If you should need something we can help you with, the Shuler Education Center is open all summer and staff will be here from 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. each day.

I have received some questions about school funding for next year. All I can tell you is that we do not know anything definitive about school funding yet, other than the fact that the Supreme Court will hear arguments in late June. This means we cannot make any decisions about our budget and potential increases for the next school year until we know how much funding we will receive. As in the past, we plan on doing some preliminary work on our budget now, but I imagine the scenario will be similar to last year when we did not have any firm numbers until July. Unfortunately, this means that we then have to scramble to finish our budget preparations and have public hearings just when you all are returning in August. It makes for a very busy July, but we survived it last year!

I truly do hope that you find time to enjoy your family and friends this summer, and on behalf of the Board of Education and all of the staff at SEC, we look forward to your return on August 10th for another rousing Convocation experience!

Enjoy your summer!

Smith wins Glenn Award

Washburn Rural Middle School Band Teacher and district Music Dean Dr. Jack Smith has been selected to receive the \$1,000 Andrea Glenn Teacher of Excellence Scholarship. Smith received the award at a surprise presentation on May 22. The award honors Andrea Glenn who was Editor of Kansas Magazine and an Auburn-Washburn Board of Education member until her death. Nominations for the award were solicited from the community. Any patron, parent, student, or staff could nominate a teacher. The selection committee, made up of teachers and parents, considered the following criteria in determining the recipient: Community, Innovation, Leadership, and Impact. The award is administered annually by the Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation.



Staff honored at Retirement & Awards Reception

The following staff members were recently recognized at the district Retirement and Awards Reception.

2005-2006 RETIREES

Sandra McKinley - PC Paraeducator
Loretta Peter - PC Teacher
Elizabeth Hendry - JS Food Service Manager
Vicki Hay - Support Services Secretary
Judy Elrichs - AE Food Service
Sarah Anderson - WRHS Paraeducator
Mike Talley - District Maintenance
Laurie Dennis - PAT Parent Educator
Jan Norris - WRMS Teacher
Steve Young - WE Teacher
Penny Robinson - PS Teacher
Linda Klem - WE Teacher
Karen Chrisco - WRMS Teacher
Deb Bals - JS Teacher
Laura "Susie" Lewis - WRHS Accompanist
Judy Hackler - IH/PC Teacher
Nancy Rueter - PS Counselor
Mary Lou Beardslee - JS Teacher

DISTINGUISHED STAFF AWARD WINNERS

Jessica Weil - Certified Support Staff - WE Physical Education Teacher
Bob Stremel - Classified Support Staff - Computer Technician

Andrea Clifton - Classroom Classified Support Staff - WRMS Paraeducator
Maureen Smith - Elementary Teacher of the Year - WE 6th Grade
Michael Steinert - Secondary Teacher of the Year - WRHS Biology
Robin Dixon - Master Teacher - JS 6th Grade

HORIZON AWARD WINNER

Jolie Darby - WRMS Teacher

25 YEAR STAFF

Donna Dodge - WRHS Teacher
Shirley Jost - IH Teacher
Sherry Craig - WRHS Teacher
Monica Autrey - WRMS Librarian
Betsy Wiens - WRMS Teacher

To view the event program go to: <http://www.usd437.net/staff/Elements/Program>

Technology Calendar

The Technology Support Office has released a calendar for summer upgrades and other work. It shows when they will have staff in each building and what they will be doing. To see the calendar go to:

<http://www.usd437.net/staff/Elements/Summer2006Technology.pdf>

Computer training offered over the summer

The district has arranged to offer some computer courses for staff this summer. We recently surveyed certified staff to find the best combination of classes, dates, and times.

We are able to offer six different morning sessions in July. These free, stand-alone 3-hour sessions will be open on a first-come, first-served basis. Any staff member may participate. Teachers may count the time spent in class on their 2006-2007 preparation log. There will be no other monetary compensation for attending the classes but they can be used for staff development points. The classes are not part of the Skill Sets covered under the Negotiated Agreement. There will be no tests and you will not have to demonstrate that you learned anything. These classes are just an opportunity for staff members to brush-up on, learn about, or explore different software.

All sessions will be held between 9:00-Noon at the Shuler Education Center:

- Excel Basic - July 6
- PowerPoint Basic - July 11
- Mail Merge - July 13

- Excel Advanced - July 18
- PowerPoint Advanced - July 20
- Word Advanced - July 25

To sign up for a session, contact Melissa Clopton at Shuler Education Center, 339-4000, cloptmel@usd437.net

Classroom Grant applications available

Application forms for Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation 2006-2007 Classroom Grants are now available. The grants are for educators who are seeking funds to implement an activity or project during the next school year. The deadline for submission of the grant application is September 7. Applications should be received by the Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation, (Shuler Education Center) 5928 SW 53rd St., Topeka KS 66610 by 4:00 p.m. The Foundation plans to fund several Classroom Grants with budget requests up to \$1,000. The Foundation may also fund one grant request up to \$5,000.

Complete information sheets and application forms are available at the Shuler Education Center.

Survey results shared

The Auburn-Washburn School District recently conducted a survey of district patrons. The summary of the survey responses is included below. To see the complete survey go to: <http://www.usd437.net/staff/Elements/06SurveyRpt.pdf>

Because staff members were excluded from the telephone survey we set up an opportunity for staff to respond to the same questions. To see the staff responses go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=189048931486>

2006 Auburn-Washburn Patron Survey Report

Major findings are summarized below:

1. Thirty-six percent of all respondents had school age children. Of this group, 80% were attending an Auburn-Washburn school.
2. Of those children not attending an Auburn-Washburn school, most attended a private school (39%). Thirty-two percent attended a religious school, 18% were home schooled, and 4% attended another public school.

3. Quality of education was the most important factor in the selection of a school for parents (92% and up from 88% in 2002). This was followed by safety concerns (49%), school location (32%), school size (23%), and religious reasons (14%).
4. Overall, the district received high marks for “quality of education”. Sixty-eight percent said quality was “very high” or “somewhat higher than average”. This was an increase from 56% in 2002. Those with children rated it the highest with 82% saying quality was “very high” or “somewhat higher than average”. There was a noticeable level of unfamiliarity with the district among those without children although these levels have declined in a number of areas since 2002.
5. Seventy-six percent said the district set high standards or expectations for its students; up from 69% in 2002. Of those with school-age children, 89% felt high standards were set.
6. School safety was the second most important factor to parents in choosing a school for their child and 95% of those with children felt that Auburn-Washburn schools were “very” or “fairly” safe.
7. Overall, the district was seen as doing an average job at alcohol and drug abuse prevention. Forty-seven percent rated this job as “great” or “fairly good”. For those with children, the rating increased to 63%. Many were not sure how good of a job the district was doing.
8. For district-wide information, the vast majority felt they were receiving about the right amount of information; 76% for all respondents and 84% for parents. The district newsletter was the primary source, used by 61% of all respondents and 66% of all parents.
9. For information on individual schools, 56% felt they were receiving enough information. This increased to 73% for parents. For individual school information, numerous sources were used: the district newsletter, newspapers, individual school newsletters, and others. For parents, 50% were using either district or individual school newsletters for information.
10. Slightly over one-half of all respondents supported the idea of admitting students living outside of the district.
11. Some 92% of all surveyed saw a positive relationship between the quality of schools and their property values.
12. Only 45% said they would be “very” or “somewhat” supportive of a twelve-month school year.
13. Eight-percent of respondents said they would “need more information” to make a decision regarding a potential bond election that might involve building a new school.

14. Eighty-five percent of all patrons have internet access at home. This level increased to 93% for those with children in the home.

Overall, the district appears to be doing a good job of informing its patrons. In fact, progress has been made in a number of areas since 2002. Most respondents are positive on key issues and see the importance of having high quality public schools. An estimated 20% of potential enrollees are not attending an Auburn-Washburn school, primarily for religious reasons.

In spite of the progress over the last four years, there still appears to be a need for increasing the familiarity level with the district and its schools, particularly among those without school-age children and among newer residents.

AW Foundation Donations

Honorariums

Donations to the Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation have been made in honor of the following individuals.

Jean Stuewe
Dana Stout
Bill & Sue Kennedy

Memorials

Donations to the Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation have been made in memory of the following individuals.

Dr. Bryce Stallard - Former WRHS Coach
Riley Byrd - Teresa Summerville's Brother
Roger Hendrix - Jan Hendrix's husband
Bonnie DeShazer - Neva Knuckey's sister
William Joseph Caby - Grandparent of students
Amos L. Lingard - Uncle of former WRHS Counselor Robert Lingard
David Henderson - Husband of former Central Office Receptionist Doris Henderson
Beverly Farmer - Mother-in-law of Jack Smith