

NEWS FROM THE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

APRIL, 2004

PRINCIPAL'S INFORMATION

Thank you to all parents who participated in working on the school plan and self study by attending review meetings or completing the parent survey. Copies of the completed Self Study/School Plan are available at the school office. Copies of the survey results are included with this newsletter. The dress code is an issue that was mentioned on student and parent comment pages in the school survey. There are some students and parents who want stricter dress codes and those who do not want a dress code. If you are interested in joining a committee to study this subject, please call the school office at 2287.

Our visiting team included principals and teachers from LaConner, Lopez, Friday Harbor and Coupeville. Teachers had the opportunity to talk with team members about issues common to all schools and some specific to island locations. We all gathered some new ideas and gave some further thought to current practices. The members of the team were very complimentary about our students, staff and programs.

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) begins right after April break for students in both 7th and 10th grades. These are important tests for both grades and parents can help students do their best by encouraging them to do their best and take their time on the tests. Also ensuring that they get enough sleep and some food before they come to school on test days helps them to do well.

This is the time of year when we are encouraging sophomores and juniors to give some further thought to their post high school plans. Nancy Wrightsman and I took almost 40 sophomores and juniors to the Skagit Valley College Fair on Monday, March 29th. Whether or not your student was on that trip, parents need to follow up with school visits and conversations around future plans. The earlier students begin to think about what they are doing after high school, the more likely they will be happy with their final decision.

This year's seniors are ready to make those final or almost final decisions about schools or work or travel for next year. They are moving to that point when they feel comfortable with their choices having thought long and hard about their own skills, interests, and finances. Observing the process that seniors use to make these choices is good for the rest of our students.

All of our thoughts are turning to planning for next year as we begin the 4th and final quarter of this school year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHOTOS

Middle School group photos will be taken on April 9th. Students will be bringing home information about the photos and how to purchase a copy if parents are interested.

SPAGHETTI DINNER THANKS

Thank you to all who attended or helped with the Middle School Spaghetti Dinner on March 26th. A special thank you to Rita Harvey and the parents who helped to prepare a delicious dinner. And didn't those middle school students look nice serving and cleaning up at the dinner?

Thanks to Island Market who donated the food for the dinner. Their donation and the support of our community helped the middle school students to raise \$3450 at this year's dinner.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

In January, eight of our middle school students took the SAT test here at Orcas along with our high school students preparing for their college admissions. All of the students earned the "Distinction" mark which means that they scored as well as or above the average college-bound senior and qualified to participate in the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Program.

Those students who have qualified to participate in the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Program are Amelia Carver, Emma Gallo-Chasanoff, Forrest Gropp, Robin Hall, Barrett North, Anika Sanders, Chloe Scott and Samantha Taylor.

Five of the students, Amelia Carver, Forrest Gropp, Anika Sanders, Robin Hall, Barrett North and Samantha Taylor scored so highly that they will be recognized by Johns Hopkins University at the State Awards Ceremony.

Congratulations to the students and to their families. A special thanks to Martin Taylor who arranged pizza and practice sessions for some of the students to familiarize them with the structure and content of the test.

SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to all who completed and returned surveys last month. The parent and student survey results are included with this newsletter. You will see the parent results tallied as an average of answers for each question and as a percent of parents who responded to each answer for the question. The student survey is tallied for all grades 7-12 and is also presented as an average of answers for each question and as a percent of students who gave a particular answer to each question.

The student survey is also available by grade levels and by male/female for the entire 7-12 group. If you are interested in looking at the survey results by grade level or gender, please come by the school office to pick up a copy. Copies of the comments from parents and students are also available to pick up or to read here in the office.

Most of the student and parent comments and answers were very positive. There were some suggestions that we can act upon immediately; others will take more time and thought. For example, some parents requested more information about the Senior Project expectations so that they could help their student plan ahead. In this newsletter therefore, there is a section about the Senior Project requirements.

JUNIOR PARENT INFORMATION

If you are the parent of a junior, you should know that there are two items that we are suggesting all students have completed as they start their senior year. One is that each student develop a clear concept for a senior project including a good thesis statement for their paper. The other item is that they have a good idea of the schools to which they want to apply. Indecision in either one of their areas can lead to stress and unhappiness at the beginning of the senior year. Preparation in both areas does not relieve all stress but it does help make it manageable.

We will be asking juniors in their US History classes to select a senior project idea, do some reading and develop a thesis statement during the 4th quarter. We want them all to leave here in June with a good plan though students may change their mind about the project's focus over summer.

SENIOR PROJECTS

Senior projects have two basic parts and then a presentation. The first part is a research paper and the other is a project which is something built or learned or created or developed or something. The two are related in that the general topic is often the same. For example, if a student wants to study cars, he/she

might rebuild an engine as a project and research and write a paper on why and how car engines are changing in this century. The paper is due during the 1st semester and the project must be completed prior to the student's class presentation date.

The student creates a portfolio as he/she works on the project. This contains the student's paper and notes of meetings with his/her advisor along with other information about the process. At the Senior Presentation, the senior presents his/her project and information from the research paper to a committee. The committee grades the final presentation and project. Parents may also attend this presentation along with younger high school students.

The research paper is a persuasive or argumentative piece of writing. It is not a report in which the student gives the facts only. It contains a strong thesis statement which outlines the basis for the student's position on the subject. We find that if we can get the student to create a good thesis statement, he/she can usually write the research paper to back up the thesis.

Parents can help their student by helping them to define a topic that interests him or her. The question we often ask is "What would you study or learn about if you could choose any subject you like.?" Once they have a topic that is of interest, the student should do some reading about it. As they gather some more information, ideas for a research paper or a project usually surface.

Some students begin with the project idea and then need help defining a paper topic and a thesis. Others begin with a topic that they want to research and then need help planning and organizing a project to go along with their research.

The first step is to find a topic and then do some reading on the topic. Then students can create a concept for a project and paper around the topic. Our public library website provides access to research information as do other websites. In addition to the information and assistance that teachers can provide to students, there are many Internet sites devoted to teaching how to write a thesis statement or a good research paper.

PREPARING FOR NEXT YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

We are expecting to give out the High School Course Guide for 2004-05 the week after students return from April break. To help with student class selection, we are mailing home a computer printout and student transcript that shows what required classes have been taken and which still need to be taken as of this point in time.

Students need to complete the class selection form and return it to the office by the end of April. The information on that form about what classes students want to take will be used to create a class time schedule. On the last day of school, June 17th, next year's high school students in grades 10-12 will register for their classes by signing up with individual teachers during class registration. Next year's 9th graders will also complete a class selection form which will be used to create a class schedule for them. They will not participate in class registration on June 17th.

INDEPENDENT STUDY FRENCH CLASS POSSIBLE

If you are interested in taking French next year, please let us know. We need at least ten students to offer the class. French will be offered in the same way Latin has been offered. It will count as a foreign language credit and will be offered to students in grades 8-12. Eighth graders must be approved to take the course. There will be a cost for the course, and **partial and full scholarships will be available. Please call 376-5339 if you may be interested in taking French.**

WORLD TRAVEL CLUB

The World Travel Club is planning a trip in April of 2005. The tentative plan is a trip to London for a week. If you are interested for yourself or for your student, please contact Kathi Anderson or have your student attend a World Travel Club meeting.

GEOGRAPHY BEE WINNER MOVES ON TO STATE COMPETITION

Congratulations and good luck to 8th grader Robin Hall. Robin won the middle school geography bee and scored very well on the follow up test. Robin will compete at the Washington State Geography Bee on Friday, April 2nd in Olympia.

WASL TESTING

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) tests will be given to 7th graders, 8th graders and to 10th graders beginning the week that we return from April break. These tests are important to all groups of students. Students should feel prepared for this test because of the work that they have been doing in their classes. However, test taking can be stressful and even the best prepared students make errors. While we are encouraging all students to do their best, we also recognize that not all students will pass all sections of the test. That is the why the state is allowing 10th graders to retake any sections that they do not pass.

7th graders will have to pass the 10th grade WASL in order to graduate so their performance on the 7th grade test tells them and us where they are strong and where they need to improve before they take the 10th grade test. Lori Oakes and Lyn Perry will set up a schedule for testing and will send this information home with students. Tests are not timed and students may take as long as the entire day to complete a section if they wish.

8th graders will take only the science section of the WASL. This is only the second time that we have given the WASL science section and we are very interested in seeing how well the students do on it. The students in 8th grade will also have to pass the WASL in the 10th grade in order to graduate from high school so this practice will be helpful for them.

The results of the 10th grade test will go on the student's transcript which is the permanent record of their grades. 10th grade students who fail a section(s) of the test will have the opportunity to retake that section(s) next year. The state has set a definite schedule for 10th grade testing around the entire state this year. All tests are to begin at the beginning of the class day and all are untimed. Students may have the entire day to complete a section if they wish. The 10th graders will test on the following schedule:

Tuesday, April 20 Math with tools – bring calculators, protractors, rulers to help

Wednesday, April 21 Math without tools

Thursday, April 22 Writing session 1– dictionaries, thesaurus are allowed

Friday, April 23 Writing session 1 – dictionaries, thesaurus are allowed

Tuesday, April 27th Writing session 2 – dictionaries, thesaurus are allowed

Wednesday, April 28th Writing session 2 – dictionaries, thesaurus are allowed

Thursday, April 29th Science session 1

Friday, April 30th Science session 2

Students may bring their own tools to the testing session on days when these are allowed. We will also provide math and writing tools for students at the testing sessions.

EARTH DAY PARADE

Get ready for this year's Earth Day Parade on, April 22nd, 12:30 -1:00. The parade will be coordinated by

high school students in the Environmental Science and Ecology Clubs under the direction of Greg Books.

The Earth Ball is coming, the Odd Fellows will be drumming, and lots of students will be marching. It should be a very fine parade!

AAUW 8TH GRADE STUDY DAY

On Friday, April 30th, the members of AAUW (American Association of University Women) are sponsoring another Math/Science Day for 8th grade girls. This year the topic will be Marine Science and the location tentatively is in Doe Bay. The members of AAUW have sponsored 8th grade girls study days for a number of years with a different subject studied each year. Our students benefit from the support of such dedicated volunteers and we appreciate their time and effort on behalf of our students.

COME ENJOY A STEAK DINNER!

"EVERYONE WELCOME! Come to the Steak Dinner Saturday, May 1 from 5:00-8:00 P.M. at the American Legion Hall. This annual event is open to the public, and supports the scholarships given to Orcas High School Seniors by the American Legion Auxillary. Students, parents, staff, community -- come and enjoy a complete steak dinner, dessert included, for \$15, and show your support for Orcas High School Seniors! See you there!"

CARNIVAL TIME

It's back by popular demand!!! The Orcas Island Athletic Booster Club Carnival!
Sat. May 8 from 5PM-8PM in the old gym. We're planning an evening of fun, games and food. Come one come all and support the booster club and ASB.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE

The middle school dance is scheduled for Friday, June 4th. That is still quite a way away but we know that students have already been thinking about it. The Middle School Dance at the end of the year is the only evening dance that we sponsor in middle school, and it is often a big event for the students. It does not require a new dress or other outfit and is not equivalent to the high school prom.

When listening to your child request a new dress or other outfit for this event, remember that this is just one evening event and that these are middle school students. We recommend that the girls wear a nice dress and the boys a nice shirt and pants. To us, this means an outfit that could be worn to a special dinner with relatives or a dress up church event. The dress or other outfit that they select should reflect the age of our middle school students. While they might not agree, middle school students are still quite young.

The selection of an outfit for the dance is usually not a problem for the boys, but for girls and their parents, this dance can create quite a discussion. It often helps parents and daughters to keep this dance in perspective if both can remember that middle school students have four years of high school proms and other dances ahead of them yet. Then after high school, they have years of dress up occasions as young adults. Whatever is chosen should be appropriate to a middle school girl or boy which translates as not too expensive, modest, suitable for a school dance and acceptable to parents.

MIDDLE SCHOOL Dance/Movement Workshops at Orcas Center

Beginning on April 26th Orcas Center is hosting a two-week dance residency for middle schoolers with Seattle dancer/choreographer Gary Reed. Seventh and eighth graders can sign up for the free after-school classes at either 3:30 or 5:00. Included in the series is a four-hour workshop on Sunday afternoon, May 2nd, and a concluding presentation of dancers' work on the

CenterStage on Friday evening, May 7th.

Gary Reed performed with Co Motion Dance Company for 19 years throughout Washington, the United States, and in Chongqing, China. He has been a WSAC artist in residence for 17 years and has taught dance since 1977.

Sign up sheets will be available in school classrooms and at Orcas Center beginning in early April.

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES AT ORCAS ISLAND RECREATION PROGRAM

The **Orcas Island Recreation Program** will offer **summer sports clinics (*basketball, soccer, tennis, and volleyball*)**, **camping, theater opportunities, and more.** Is there a computer class you would like to take over the summer, such as Web Page Design, "Virtual Worlds," Computer 3D Graphics? Do you want to learn French over the summer? How about a summer jogging club? Give us a call and let us know what you're interested so we can start planning classes and activities according to your interests. (376-5339)

OIEF NEWS

OIEF would like to welcome new Board Members: Marny Gaylord, Terri Triplett and Cathy Ferran. Officers for 2004: President: Alison Monico, Vice-President: Mandy Bartrum-Randolph, Treasurer: Tony Ghazel, Correspondence Secretary: Martin Taylor, and Recording Secretary: Marty Zier.

Volunteer Database Update: Finally, the OIEF database is up and running. Teachers, school event organizers, etc now have access to the list of parent volunteers. Again, thank you for your patience. NEXT year, thanks to the highly efficient database, the entire process will be much QUICKER AND SMOOTHER !!

Key Club Members March Madness: Service, Election, Convention

Members elected their new officers for the 2004-2005 school year: **Leah Schmidt**, president; **Jenole Peacock**, vice president; **Jenny Boucher**, secretary; **Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff**, treasurer; and **Hailee Douglass**, editor. New officers will begin transitioning in April. Class Representatives to the Board are elected in the fall.

Here are some of the service contributions that Key Club members made in March:

- *Read Around the World - **Colin Gaylord, Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff**
- *D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything & Read) – **Leah Schmidt, Mike Rupp, Woody Ciscowski, Colin Gaylord, Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff, Hannah Halliday**
- *Women's History Month Banner – **Madeleine Tuson-Turner, Teddy Coleman, Leah Schmidt**
- *OIEF Quilt Ticket Raffle – **Nate Averno, McLane Stone, Tork Rosenvinge, Zach Smith, Jenole Peacock, Colin Gaylord, Marriah Vinson**
- *Parent Class Meeting Babysitting – **Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff, Hannah Halliday, Rachel Duke**
- *Infant Parent Class Cooking & Babysitting – **Angie Boucher, Jenole Peacock, Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff, Hannah Halliday, Leah Schmidt, Afton Jones, Hailee Douglass, Zach Smith, Amanda Callahan**

*Toga Dance Fundraiser Committees – **Madeleine Tuson-Turner, Minnie Bredouw, Hailee Douglass, Muriel Gallo-Chasanoff, Kellan Bernhardt** – This event raised \$395 for Key Club projects.

*Teen Tutors – this yearlong commitment will be reported on in a future newsletter.

Off to the **55th Annual Pacific Northwest Key Club Convention** in Seattle later this week are **Kellan Bernhardt, Hannah Halliday, Tork Rosenvinge, and Leah Schmidt**. Many thanks to our **Orcas Kiwanis Club** for helping fund their participation, and to **Rita King, Anacortes Key Club Advisor**, for coordinating transportation and chaperoning. We really are a Kiwanis/Key Club family.

“**Skip A Meal**” Day – This annual event to raise money for the **Kiwanis International Children’s Fund**, will be observed by Key Club & Kiwanis Club on Wednesday, April 26, at 12:30. Eat a “third world lunch” of rice and beans in exchange for what you would spend for lunch. Members of the student body and staff are invited to participate.

COUNSELING NEWS

April 2nd marks the end of the third quarter, and it is time for all students to start thinking about next year. To date I have spoken to about a quarter of the junior class about their plans for their senior year and beyond. I hope many will make appointments to review how to access the PETERSON and WOIS programs on the computers in the computer lab. These programs provide another opportunity for career and college/technical school exploration. By the time all juniors have been seen, next year’s schedule should be in process, and I will begin talking to freshmen and sophomores about their five year plans and schedules for next year. Eighth grade planning takes place in the Life Skills class they take during either the third or fourth quarter.

Please note that the **SAT** will be given twice more this school year: May 1st and June 5th. The May 1st test will be given at OHS. The regular registration deadline has passed, but students can still make the late registration deadline of April 7th if they need to take this test. I recommend that all juniors take the SAT at least once during their junior year. The June 5th test will not be given at OHS, but it will be given at Lopez. The registration deadline for this test is April 29th. Registration materials are available in the office.

The Local Scholarship Booklet will be distributed to seniors the week of April 5th. Sometimes there are a few organizations that have not submitted their criteria by the time we distribute the booklet. If this occurs, once the school receives the information, it will be passed on to seniors in their social studies classes. Please encourage students to take time with these applications, paying special attention to grammar, spelling, neatness, and thoroughness. The quality of the application does make a difference. They are also required to meet the cited deadlines.

Hannah Halliday and Tyler Holmes are OHS’s representatives to **Girls’ State** this year. To date **no junior boys have been named to attend Boys’ State**. Every year two junior girls and two junior boys are chosen by the local American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion respectively to represent OHS at these week long, summer conventions at which students learn about Washington State government firsthand. Costs are underwritten by the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion. Special thanks to them for offering this opportunity to OHS juniors every year. This is a wonderful learning experience for students as well as a fine addition to their resume.

On Monday March 29th, a group of 40+juniors and sophomores plus Mrs. Kline and myself attended the **High School/College Conference at Skagit Valley College**. Twenty colleges, universities, two-year colleges and technical schools were represented. Students had the opportunity to talk to admissions officers from Washington State schools. College fairs are great opportunities for students to glean information about post high school educational opportunities.

In the elementary, middle, and high schools students in the fourth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth grades will be taking state required **tests the weeks of April 19th through May 7th**. Ninth grade students will

take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and fourth, seventh, eighth, and tenth graders will take the Washington State Assessment devised to measure student competencies in the identified Washington State Essential Learnings. Make sure students get extra rest and are in school that week. In order to facilitate testing please schedule any appointments or off-island trips for another week if possible.

Listening

Parents are consistently encouraged to talk with their kids about values, about drugs and alcohol, about sexuality as a part of promoting safe and healthy choices. Likewise, they are encouraged to provide good supervision and monitoring when teens are making social plans. But equally important for solid parenting and good prevention is having good communication with your teen. A parent at the most recent 10th grade meeting said, "What's most important to me is that my teen and I are talking, that I know what's going on in his life."

But that is sometimes easier said than done for a number of reasons. For one, there is a teen's natural developmental tendency to separate from parents and look to their peers. Another obstacle to good communication is the lack of ability to really listen. I know I struggle with this. I am too quick to want to jump in with advice or ask questions.

The following are some pointers about good listening from Teens Under the Influence by authors Katherine Ketcham and Nicolas Pace:

- Be open minded and willing to learn from your children. When parents think they know it all, then teens don't feel like their opinions are valuable.
- When your communication occurs between you and your teen, stop what you are doing and give your undivided attention.
- Make sure your body language says you are interested in what is being said and care. If you look like you are ready to do battle or lecture, your child will shut down.
- Convey a sincere desire to understand what your child is thinking and feeling.
- Invite your child into a discussion.
- Let your child talk without interruptions – no matter how outrageous the statement or information. Let your child finish.
- When they are finished talking, ask if they are finished.
- Then take time to repeat back to them what you think they said. This ensures that your child agrees you have heard and understood his or her concerns.
- Ask questions that might motivate your child to further explore thoughts and feelings. "What would you have done? How did you figure that out so well? I am wondering if you ever considered?"

Sometimes doing something fun like going out to lunch together or taking a trip to the mainland provides opportunities for some good conversation. Or just hanging out on the couch and doing nothing when your teen is around. Another great way to get conversation going about stickier subjects is to hang out for awhile when friends are over and ask their opinions. Sometimes your child's friends will be more willing to engage with you and then your child gets drawn in.

Moriah Armstrong, Orcas Island Prevention Partnership

THEFTS

As many of you know, we continue to experience a theft problem at both the middle and high schools. We will continue to look for the person or persons who is responsible for stealing from our students. However, we do not anticipate being able to stop this entirely.

Please remind your students to leave valuable items at home whenever possible. All students have access to safe locking storage during PE. Both high school and middle school students have lockers available for their use in the commons or hallway. Please encourage your student to use the lockers or basket available to them and to lock up their stuff.

Please encourage your student to report items that have been stolen. At the suggestion of parents, we will publish a list of missing items in the hopes that some things may be returned and that we will deter future thieves.

SPRING REMINDERS

Skateboarding is not allowed at any time around the school or school walkways. There is a temptation for students to skate past the school buildings on their way to the skatepark or to skate here instead of in the skatepark. To avoid having their skateboard collected by a staff member, please remind your student that the only place on school property where skateboarding is permitted is in the skatepark.

We have a dress code and it will be enforced as fairly as we can do so. We recognize that what appears to be acceptable may not look acceptable on a student of a different size, sex or shape.

Please assist us in this effort by reminding your students of the expectations for dress here at school. From the high school student handbook:

“-Students are not to wear any clothes that expose their midriff. In other words, tops and bottoms should meet without skin showing for both males and females.

-No one should be able to see a student’s undergarments; this means that pants and tops should cover straps and waistbands and all other parts of underwear. Pants should not be so loose that they fall down as a student moves around.

-Shorts should be long enough to at least meet the fingertips of the student’s arms hanging at his/her sides. Skirts should be that long or longer.

-Tops should be modest both in how low they are cut and in how tight they fit.

There may be other clothing that will result in a student being asked to change or cover up. These specific guidelines are intended to help clarify the following section of our student handbooks which outlines the general expectations for student dress and grooming:

..... Dress and appearance must not present health or safety problems or cause disruption. Students are expected to come to school well groomed and neatly and appropriately dressed. All students must wear shoes. Students who do not meet these standards will be asked to return home to correct the problem. If a student chooses to regularly wear inappropriate clothing to school, he/she will be subject to disciplinary actions including detention and suspension from school.

Clothing which carries a sexual, vulgar or offensive message or references the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or gang affiliation will not be permitted. Read your T-shirts and hats and please do not wear clothes that offend or advertise illegal substances including alcohol, drugs or tobacco. If you choose to wear these, we will have to request that you change your clothes.

It is understood that individual teachers in consultation with the school administrator may restrict appearance and attire with special consideration for safety, cleanliness, or class requirements.

Decisions regarding the appropriateness of clothing will be made by the principal/staff member. In the event that there is some question regarding clothes or appearance, parents/guardians may be contacted.” - High School Student Handbook page 12

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Orcas Island School District's DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION serves people with disabilities from birth to age 21. If you suspect that you or your child may have a disability, please call the District Office at 376-2284.

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT CARD

The Annual School Report Card for the Orcas Island School District and its individual schools as required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act can be found at www.k12.wa.us <<http://www.k12.wa.us>> (Click on ESEA Report Card link, select Orcas Island School District, and click on ESEA Report Card for the district or an individual school.) If you do not have Internet access, copies of the Annual Report Card are available at the District Office."