



MAPLE HILLS ELEMENTARY PTA
15644 204TH AVE SE, RENTON WA 98059 * 425-837-5100
PTA UNIT 2.6.15

THE EAGLE'S NEST

PTA PRESIDENT: JENNIE WILDERMUTH
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: LESLIE WALTZER
PRINCIPAL: MONIQUE BEANE

"Making a Difference"

JANUARY 2009
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

NEWS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year. I hope everyone has had a wonderful Winter vacation. I know the kids loved the record snowfall, even though it caused a few headaches for us parents it did make for some beautiful pictures.

As we look to the New Year there are many PTA events still to come. First will be the Variety Show on January 9th and then the PTA General Membership meeting on January 29th. Hope to see all of you there.

Sincerely,
Jennie Wildermuth
PTA President



AUCTION UPDATE

Dear Maple Hills Parents and Staff!!!

With the end of 2008 we hope that all of you had a happy holiday and a joy filled New Year. Our auction team has been very busy preparing to ramp up for the Auction May 30th, 2009. Our Procurement, Decorations, and Class Basket Chairs have been very busy. You have no doubt seen the bulletin board and received fliers for the class baskets. The decorations are TOP-SECRET - we can't wait until you see them! Know that the chairs are in full swing with many surprises for you! Lisa and I appreciate all of your efforts to date and want to inspire you all to help in anyway you can.

Every family can help by volunteering, by procuring, by donating and most of all attending and supporting this upcoming Auction. In January, our emphasis will be Auction, Auction, Auction. We want everyone to remember that without a successful Auction, our children will be the ones who suffer. Without the monies raised, many enrichment programs will not happen - please keep this in mind when thinking about how important Maple Hills Auctions are.

If anyone has further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa or I.

Happy New Year to all!!!

Kelly & Lisa
Auction Co-Chairs
kflyeapple@hotmail.com, devogel@earthlink.net



Education: A World of Possibilities

SKATING PARTY!

Don't miss the Castle Ice Skating Party on Feb 6th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Admission plus skate rentals will be \$7.00 per person and non-skaters are free. The snack bar will be open. There will be two 'skate patrol' people on the ice. Please bring and wear helmets for extra safety! Hope to see you there!

*Lisa Huntley
Ice Skating Party Chair*

EAGLE READER NEWS

Due to the snow day we had on December 17 - the day the Eagle Reader Clubhouse was scheduled for November calendars, we will hand out books for the November calendars on January 21, 2009. This is the Eagle Reader Clubhouse date for the December calendars. Please turn your December calendars in as soon as possible after your return to school on January 5, 2009. Keep up the reading!

*Dana Warner
Eagle Reader Chair*

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to our volunteer of the month **Sharon Jaeger**. She volunteers nearly every Wednesday, working through lunch up until the kids leave. She always does an excellent job with everything. Recently, she dropped everything to volunteer all morning in the classroom when I had a last minute cancellation. Our classroom just wouldn't be the same without all her hard work and dedication.

Submitted by Kelly Brunell

Congratulations to our volunteer of the month **Kim Weiss**: Thank you, Kim, for all your hard work and caring in organizing and taking care of the Giving Tree.

Submitted by Sue Schantz, Patti Flanik & Monique Bean

Congratulations to our volunteer of the month **Rebecca Wachtman**: She has helped at reading stations, filled in many times for parents that have been unable to help at their scheduled times, taken field trip and classroom pictures, making them available on a web site for all parents, helped extra hours in the classroom, volunteered for field trips and classroom parties, and always is a ray of sunshine in the classroom to everyone.

Submitted by Diane Danklefsend

Do you know someone that's given extraordinary service to Maple Hills through advocacy, education and volunteering?

*We welcome your nomination for this award. Nomination forms are available in front of the office,
or e-mail Leslie Waltzer at Waltzer LA1@aol.com*

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

It's Basic: First you have to define it

Washington's system to pay for schools is broken. By law, the state is supposed to pay for basic expenses like salaries and utilities. But across Washington, districts face severe financial shortfalls and some may become insolvent. The state is underfunding K-12 education, primarily by not covering actual staffing costs and not keeping up with inflation.

Experts hired by the Washington Learns committee recommend 71 certified instructors for every 1,000 students; the state funds 46 per 1,000. Caught in the discrepancy are kids who aren't getting the help they need. So districts hire more teachers and pay for them with local funds. Statewide, local funds pay for 22 percent of our teaching corps.*

Then there are non-employee costs, like utilities. In 2006-07, districts spent \$259 million on utilities. The state paid \$118 million.

So the question is: How much do schools really cost? To answer that, the Basic Education Finance Task Force – a group of state and education representatives charged with making sure schools get enough money – *first* has to define what we need to pay for. What skills do employers expect? What standards do colleges stipulate? How do we prepare kids for life and career, and what infrastructure does that require?

The Legislature hasn't addressed this issue in 30 years. In the interim, PTA members – you guys – have argued for tougher graduation requirements, better diagnostic assessment, stronger math and science curriculum, and more funding for facilities. The PTA position is we need to make schools better for all students. And when the state only pays to replace textbooks every 18 years, and only pays for five hours of the average six-hour school day, we need to re-evaluate the state's definition of "basic."

Over the summer, a number of groups testified before the task force, discussing everything from accountability to collective bargaining. The Washington PTA was there, too, laying out our positions, asking the state to match financing to expectations, and reminding them: Kids first. Members of the task force have since written or sponsored preliminary proposals. Some want fundamental overhaul, such as changing the way teachers are certified or evaluated; others just want enough state funds to cover what districts have cobbled together. The task force is meeting weekly and is seeking public input. By mid-December it will send a report to the state Legislature. What happens after that depends on all of us.

We need to ask ourselves: What do our kids need? What reforms are essential and doable? And we need to ask our representatives in Olympia: Why is our current system unstable? Our schools are financially at risk and we have high drop out rates. Will the proposed changes fix the problem? We as a community need to speak up and make sure that the Legislature plans and budgets for what kids really need.

"It's Basic" is a campaign of the state PTA. Our goal: Make sure Washington kids have stable, secure and sufficient funding for basic education. Campaign materials are posted at www.wastatepta.org/leg/funding.htm.

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*All budget information in this article comes from figures provided by the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction.

How to get involved

Send comments on the proposals to: bef@wsipp.wa.gov

Contact your legislator: <http://capwiz.com/npta2/wa/home/>

Read a summary of proposals: http://www.wastatepta.org/leg/FUNDING_COMMITTEE/BEF_proposal_sum.pdf

Read the full proposals or get background info: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/joint/committees/bef/>

Review WSPTA testimony: http://www.wastatepta.org/leg/BEF_July_2008.pdf

Learn more about Washington State schoolfunding: www.fundingwaschools.org

MORE LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Dear Parents,

The editorial in the Seattle Times on Sunday, December 7th was excellent. The work of the Task Force is to change the definition of Basic Education and fundamentally shift how we fund schools. Here is the article for your review:

Solid education funding begins with a clear vision

The strength of an education-funding proposal put forth by a state task force is that it correctly places funding second to the need to change what funds are used for.

The state Legislature ordered a task force to develop ways to improve education funding. The result offers compelling vision and solutions that must be viewed in the context of the state's huge financial challenges.

Funding for kindergarten through 12th grade is short, by some estimates, by about \$3 billion a year. Early-childhood and post-high-school education must be part of the equation, thus the tally of neglect grows. The strength of the proposal put forth by the Basic Education Funding Task Force is it correctly places funding second to the need to change how education is funded. Shifting more money into education won't make a difference without substantial changes in how it, and existing funds, are spent.

The task force, a bipartisan group that includes state Reps. Ross Hunter, Skip Priest, Fred Jarrett and Glenn Anderson and state Sen. Rodney Tom, offers compelling ideas on how to address this. The first step must be a redefinition of basic education, one that accounts for a changing landscape such as the state Board of Education's proposal to increase to 24 the credits required for a high-school diploma.

More credits mean schools must offer more classes: The task force agrees upon seven. Many districts already offer seven periods a day, using levy dollars to pay for it. But basic education is the state's responsibility and seven is the new basic.

The new concept of basic education would include one period a day of planning and professional development for teachers. Class sizes would be 25 students, dipping far lower in career and technical classes where hands-on learning and safety challenges — presented by equipment in classes such as welding, auto shop and culinary arts — lend themselves to smaller

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BIRDS + BEES + *YOUR KIDS*



Parent Education + Professional Training
birdsandbeesandkids.com
206-661-2245

**Birds +
Bees +
YOUR Kids -
It's time
to start talking!**

It's not about one "talk" it's about continuing the conversation with your kids. Come and learn compelling reasons to start the conversation early and how to keep it going throughout your child's adolescence. **PARENTS ONLY!**

Date and Time: January 15 7-9pm
Location: Sunny Hills Elementary

Amy Lang, MA teaches parents how to talk to their children of any age about sex, love and relationships. She has a 16-year history as a Sexual Health Educator, a Masters in Applied Behavioral Science and loves to help people learn about this vital part of parenting.

www.birdsandbeesandkids.com
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For more information visit www.birdsandbeesandkids.com or call 206-661-2245.

Are you wondering when you should start talking to your kids about the birds and the bees? Are you unsure of what to say and how to say it? Do you *have* to have these conversations with your kids? Come find out the answers to these and many other questions on January 15, 2009 at Sunny Hills Elementary and join us for a lively and engaging lecture with parent and sexual health educator Amy Lang, MA.

Amy's lecture *Birds + Bees + YOUR Kids – It's time to start talking!* is for parents of elementary school age children and older. This interactive talk helps parents understand the need to start the conversations early and continue them throughout childhood and adolescence. Parents learn what works for kids, have time to talk about their own experiences and values, and learn about teen sexual behavior in an open and candid atmosphere.

Through her business, Birds + Bees + Kids, LLC, Amy Lang, MA helps parents talk to their children of any age about sex, love and rela-



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.MAPLEHILLSPTA.COM

The deadline for the
February 2009 Eagle's Nest is :

Wednesday, January 21st.

Please e-mail submissions to
Leslie Waltzer at

Waltzerla1@aol.com

(425) 392-4334

CALENDAR

JANUARY 2009

5th Back to School
7th Variety Show Dress Rehearsal
9th Variety Show 7:00 pm
19th No School
20th First Grade Musical Rehearsal
21st PTA Board Meeting 9:45 am
21st PTA Newsletter Deadline
23rd First Grade Musical Rehearsal
27th First Grade Musical 2:45 pm
and 7:00 pm
29th PTA General Meeting 7:00 pm

FEBRUARY 2009

2nd- 13th Stanford Testing
6th PTA Ice Skating Party at
Castle Ice 6pm
10th Fifth Grade Musical Rehearsal
13th Fifth Grade Musical Rehearsal
16th No School – President's Day
17th Second Winter Break – No
School
18th PTA Board Meeting 9:45am
18th PTA Newsletter Deadline
20th Fifth Grade Musical Rehearsal
24th Fifth Grade Musical 9:45am
and 7:00pm
26th Legislative Focus Day

**Please Note that this
Calendar is
Subject to Change!**

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groups. On so many levels, this is good. It offers a baseline for what school should look like. It moves education funding from a pot of money to an array of services easily understood by those who pay for them. It would also force districts to standardize their accounting systems.

Salaries are nearly 85 percent of education spending. They ought to be part of any sea change. An underlying weakness of education funding is that local districts bargain with teachers unions but do not control the budgets out of which any compensation will come. The end result is districts are often left scrambling to pay for teacher raises they agreed to, but the state declined to fund.

The solution: Give the governor the authority to bargain with the teachers. This would end the practice of the state's responsibility being settled at the local level.

Teachers unions may chafe at this but they should face the reality: Local districts are financially tapped out. Most cannot go to their voters for more levy money. The governor controls the education budget and that is where the real money is. Another shift ought to be rewarding teachers for skill and knowledge, not for how long they've taught. Merit pay is the way to go. Pay based on peer evaluations might make the process less subjective and ominous for teachers.

The next step: The task force will narrow its proposals this week into a to-do list for the Legislature.

Lawmakers ought to take the recommendations seriously. The ones we've mentioned are among the most far-reaching. Our state budget is busted, but the economy will rebound, and nicely. It will be critical for lawmakers to have begun the legwork toward improving schools and how we pay for them.