



**October 28, 2011**

**From Superintendent Bill Lahmann**

### **October is National Principals Month**

To recognize the essential role that principals play in preparing today's students for the challenges of tomorrow, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has declared October National Principals Month. Principals set the academic tone for a school, and it is their vision, dedication and determination that provide the mobilizing force behind any school reform effort. National Principals Month seeks to honor these unsung heroes for their tireless efforts in pursuit of excellence in education. In the Olympia School District, we are very fortunate to have 28 very talented, caring and passionate principals and assistant principals who are deeply committed to making our District one-of-a-kind. Thank you for ensuring our students' futures are very bright!



### **Avanti High School Recognized as a School of Distinction**

This past week, Avanti High School was honored with the 2011 School of Distinction Award, which recognizes schools that made the biggest gains in standardized test scores, mainly in reading and mathematics, during a five-year period. *"This award is confirmation that the Avanti staff and students are the best kept secret in the Olympia School District,"* said Michael Velasquez, Avanti Principal. *"They are truly extraordinary and I'm very proud of their collective efforts and accomplishments."* At Avanti, it's a team effort, as teachers and staff use a combination of strategies to address student achievement. For example, in reading, staff use a variety of evaluations to get a baseline understanding of student needs. Student goals and learning plans are then designed to target areas such as vocabulary, fluency, word recognition, word patterns and phonemic awareness. The personalized approach to learning is a reason why Avanti was honored as one of the top ten alternative schools in Washington State in 2008. The OSD is fortunate to have such a strong magnet high school program, and I am proud of our students, staff and teachers for their achievements. A special awards assembly will be held on Tuesday, November 8th at 11:45 a.m. in the Knox Center Board Room to commemorate this special event.

[Read more...](#)

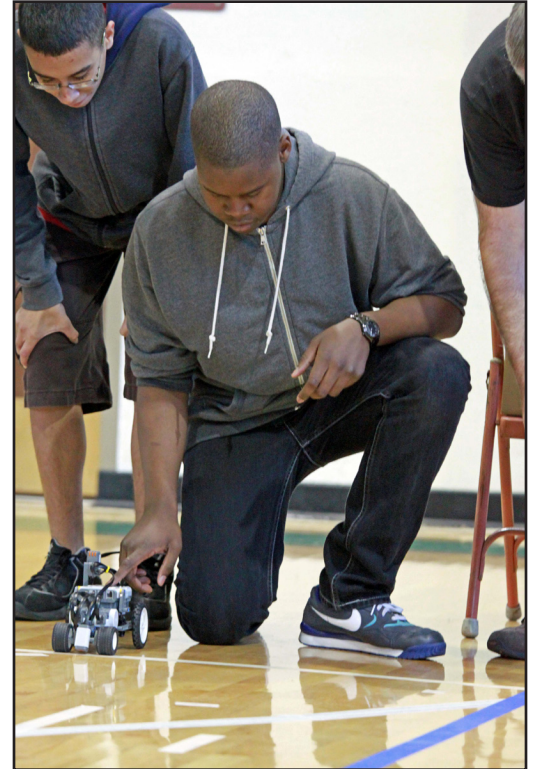
## KOMO 4 News to Feature McLane Elementary

On Wednesday, November 2nd between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m., McLane will be featured in Paul Deanno's weather forecast on KOMO 4 News. McLane was nominated by members of the community to be next week's featured school, and McLane will have its own school forecast. In addition, Mr. Deanno will share some quick fun facts about the school and will highlight pictures of students and staff. Congratulations to McLane on this exciting honor!

## OSD Chosen to Receive \$40,000 LEGO Smart Schools Grant

The Olympia School District was selected this week as one of 14 school districts in North America to be awarded the \$40,000 LEGO Smart Schools Grant by the Education Blueprints Association (EBA). EBA selected OSD as a regional center of influence that demonstrates the full continuum of LEGO Education products and services from elementary through high school--based on the LEGO System of Learning.

Students master science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills, and are also given the opportunity to integrate STEM knowledge with critical-thinking, teamwork and creative problem-solving skills. As a result, students are able to form the necessary characteristics for becoming active participants in the ever-changing high-tech world. This integration forms the vision that has driven the creation of the EBA LEGO Smart School Grant Program. *"These funds, along with our recent \$10,000 grant from Vernier, will allow us to fuel STEM initiatives below the 7th grade limit imposed by Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding restrictions,"* said Randy Steele, OSD CTE STEM Coach. *"Our program is designed to grow our students from being consumers of technology into creators of technology."* In the coming weeks, Steele says the CTE team plans to launch STEM Pals, an OSD STEM Booster Club to recruit local resources and professionals to help mentor and coach students throughout the District. Thank you to everyone on the OSD team who pulled together across departments and schools to make this grant a reality.



## Grand Slam Book Drive Supports Reading Foundation

From today through Friday, November 18th, the South Sound Reading Foundation is hosting its annual Grand Slam Book Drive. This is an annual event where local schools collect as many books as possible, and the Foundation helps promote literacy throughout our county with the books received. Last year, the Foundation gave away more than 26,000 books, thanks to support from community organizations like the Olympia School District and neighboring school districts. I want to thank all of our participating schools in support of this effort each year, and encourage you to run a book drive again this year. For more information, please contact Paige Bonitz, Literacy Outreach Coordinator at (360) 412-4585 or [PBonitz@nthurston.k12.wa.us](mailto:PBonitz@nthurston.k12.wa.us). The school donating the most books will get a visit from the Mariner Moose!

## Upcoming Board Meetings

- Monday, November 7, 2011: Study Session at Knox Administrative Center, 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, November 14, 2011: Regular Board Meeting at Knox Administrative Center, 6:30 p.m.
- Monday, November 28, 2011: Regular Board Meeting at Capital High School, 6:30 p.m.