

# Olympia School District

## Friday Update



**September 30, 2011**

**From Superintendent Bill Lahmann**

### **Harvest Festival a Smash**

As is their annual tradition, Lincoln Elementary celebrated a very successful Harvest Festival today. Students and staff greeted families and the Lincoln community, and enjoyed many fun activities like hay jumping, bobbing for apples, making mud pies and leaf crowns, face painting, temporary tattoos and pressing apples for cider. I look forward to this event each year, as it brings together the school and community, and is a great celebration of Fall. Kudos to Principal Marcela Abadi and the dozens of staff and parents who made this event such a success!



### **Montessori Program One-of-Kind in Thurston County**

As you may remember, the District piloted a Montessori program at ORLA last year with amazing results. This year, Administrator Joy Walton Kawasaki and Montessori staff Kristin Weed, Jann Clare and Jason Santa have seen promising growth. The program now serves students in grades K-3, and ORLA plans to include fourth and fifth grades in future years. Montessori is a comprehensive educational approach designed to help each individual child reach their full potential at their own unique pace. Students are grouped into multi-age classrooms, and younger students are inspired by and imitate the work of older students. In turn, older students gain experience and confidence in leadership. Montessori has been around since the early 1900's, but ORLA's program is the only such Montessori program in Thurston County that serves elementary school students. I am proud of Joy and her team for developing a creative and innovative program, serving students in our District and beyond.

### **JAMS Program Off to an Incredible Start**

Our new JAMS (Jefferson Accelerated Math and Science) program is off to a great start. JAMS is designed to provide a more rigorous, challenging academic environment for highly motivated middle school students. JAMS is also a part of the District's STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) track program. JAMS students attend three periods a day with teacher Jana Dean and focus on math, science and engineering. On all fronts, JAMS has shown tremendous



growth and success-- creating a positive learning environment that enhances both imagination and critical thinking to help students solve real-world challenges. Thank you to Principal Mike Cimino for his leadership and collaboration in getting this program up and running, and Jana for building a team atmosphere amongst her new sixth grade students. Excellent work!

### **OSD Education Foundation Breakfast a Huge Success**

I was very pleased to learn last week's OSDEF Breakfast raised more than \$23,000 to-date, thanks to donations from more than 200 people. Funds from the Breakfast support the Principal's Emergency Checkbook Fund, which provides funds for each school in the District to address emergent student needs like clothing, food, school supplies and medical care. I especially want to recognize and thank Welcome Room Coordinator and Homeless Liaison, Sarah Greenwell, for her inspiring and eye-opening speech regarding student and family needs that exist throughout our District. Reeves Middle School Principal Aaron Davis and Garfield Elementary Principal Bob Hodges also spoke about how the Principal's Emergency Checkbook Fund has made a big difference in the lives of their students and families. The heartfelt presentations from the event resulted in a very compelling editorial by The Olympian Publisher George LeMasurier, which appeared in last Sunday's paper. To read the story, please visit <http://www.theolympian.com/2011/09/25/1813843/the-economic-tornado-wreaking.html> Thank you to the OSDEF Board of Directors who give their time, resources and talents to make this event possible, and for the many people who open their checkbooks to this worthy cause!

### **Madison Hosts Cooking Program**

Thurston County Food Bank has teamed corroboratively with Madison and Garfield Elementary Schools to improve nutrition and science curriculum for students. The School Gardens Program encourages students to eat more fresh vegetables and fruits by growing crops in the school garden. Students also learn about the science of crops, and how fruits and vegetables grow. Beginning this week, Madison students will learn how to create a meal using produce raised in Madison's Giving Garden. This is a partnership with the Thurston County WSU Extension, and provides students a hands-on opportunity to create a healthy meal on their own.



### **Upcoming Board Meetings**

- Monday, October 10, 2011, beginning at 6:30pm at the Knox Administrative Center
- Monday, October 17, 2011, Levy and Bond Options Forum at the Knox Administrative Center
- Monday, October 24, 2011, beginning at 6:30pm at Madison Elementary School