Legislators learn the time to fund basic education is now

In 2012, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled in McCleary v. State of Washington that the state has unconstitutionally underfunded schools. For failing to show how it will achieve full funding of all elements of basic education by 2018, per the McCleary decision, the state is currently in contempt with fines of $100,000 a day.

This fall, members of the Senate Education Committee conducted a statewide “listening tour” to gain input on how to meet the constitutional mandate. When the tour came to Bremerton, hundreds of teachers, administrators and community members, many from Bainbridge Island, showed up to tell committee members, the time to fully fund basic education is now.

State Senator Christine Rolfes of the 23rd Legislative District co-chaired the meeting. She later told the Kitsap Sun that committee members were consistently hearing about low teacher pay and disparities in educational opportunities. While they agreed the state’s education funding system needs fixing, convincing a majority of legislators to act remains the challenge.

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Legislative Roundtable on Education Dec. 2 at BHS


Clay Jenkinson will bring history to life for students Nov. 18

American Studies students at Bainbridge High School (BHS) are about to meet Thomas Jefferson—in the form of cultural commentator Clay Jenkinson. The award-winning radio host will inhabit the third President of the United States for two one-hour presentations primarily for 11th graders from BHS and Eagle Harbor High School Wednesday, Nov. 18 in the BHS Large Group Instruction Room. The event is part of the Bainbridge Schools Foundation-funded high school Arts and Lecture program.

The Bainbridge Island Historical Museum was planning to bring Clay Jenkinson to the island for events on Nov. 17 and offered the district and BSF a chance to partner with the program.

“This is as close as we can come to enabling students to hear from, and ask questions of, one of the central figures in American history. Jenkinson is very knowledgeable and gifted at bringing historical figures to life,” said Larry Holland, who teaches American Studies at BHS.

Jenkinson is an author, humanities scholar and host of the syndicated radio program “The Thomas Jefferson Hour.” He began bringing historical figures to life in 1984 when he portrayed Jefferson for a regional Chautauqua Program.

Also in this edition …

- Superintendent Faith Chapel to retire
- Budget Basics
- Your bond money at work
- Foundation pledges $900,000
- Scenes from Romeo & Juliet

Link Crew offers webinars in November, December

This fall, Bainbridge High School joined more than 3,000 schools nationwide in offering Link Crew teams to support incoming freshmen. The purpose of Link Crew is to help ninth-grade students—including those from Eagle Harbor with classes at BHS—feel welcome and ready to tackle the rigors of high school. In the yearlong program, peer leaders help freshmen on a regular basis with academic and social check-ins.

Learn more about Link Crew, visit www.boomerangproject.com/webinars and register for a webinar on one of the following dates: November 17; December 8, 10, 15, 16, 17.
After a 40-year career in education, Superintendent Faith Chapel has announced her intent to retire from the Bainbridge Island School District at the end of this school year.

In a letter to the board of directors, Chapel stated, “I want to express my gratitude to you and to the Bainbridge Island community for the opportunity to serve as the superintendent of one of the finest public school districts in the nation. It has been an honor to work with you and with a dedicated and talented group of administrators, certificated and classified staff to build upon a longstanding tradition of educational excellence and set the stage for the future.”

Chapel began her teaching career in Laguna Beach, California in 1975. After 11 years as an elementary and middle school teacher, she spent 14 years as an administrator in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Chapel served as the executive director of secondary schools in the Central Kitsap School District before joining the BISD in 2001 as the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. She became superintendent in July 2008.

To learn more about the listening tour, read “Legislators get earful from educators, parents” at http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/legislators-get-earful-from-educators-parents_54829911.
Different “pots of money” support different but important student needs. The district’s General Fund is its operating fund. State allocations, the local Educational Program & Operations (EP&O) Levy, donations and some federal dollars contribute to this fund, which pays for teachers, support staff, education programs, curriculum materials and other district operating expenses. There is a “levy lid” that limits how much the district is allowed to ask for in an EP&O levy, and Bainbridge Islanders are providing the maximum support allowed by law. Additional funding for staff comes from donations to the Bainbridge Schools Foundation.

The Capital Fund contains revenues from voter-approved bond measures and capital/technology levies. The district uses these dollars for new construction, major facility renovations, technology equipment and infrastructure, and capital or technology projects-related salaries. Projects completed with Capital Fund dollars, such as energy efficient buildings, can reduce maintenance expenses, which would come out of the General Fund.

By law, districts cannot use bond dollars to pay for classroom teachers or the day-to-day costs of running schools. But, in the absence of money in the Capital Fund, the district may use General Fund dollars to support facility needs.

How did Capital Projects spend your money and their time this past summer? By breathing new life into old spaces and a lot of heavy lifting. Freshly painted portables, once anchored at BHS, are now increasing teaching space at Ordway Elementary School. New HVAC units installed in adjacent portables improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality. Inside Ordway, a new room within a room provides needed quiet space for Special Education.

Cracked, unplayable high school and community tennis courts at the high school are gone. The department replaced four courts in accordance with United States Tennis Association standards. The new courts have US Open green and blue playing surfaces along with new bleachers, paths, drinking fountain and improved drainage. The two adjacent courts received resurfacing and fresh paint. The courts also have new nets, fencing and improved ADA access.

Asset preservation continues at Woodward Middle School. Last year it was a new roof, this year students got a newly painted, updated Commons, and underutilized cabinetry from the library now serves Woodward’s robotics program. Wall repair and paint brightened hallways at Sakai Intermediate School that had been untouched since the school opened in 1999.

The district’s bus drivers used to spend hours between shifts in a space that felt like what it was, an old bus storage shed. With new floors, walls, bathrooms, kitchen, lighting, and a mechanical system where there was none, drivers can now spend time between morning and afternoon bus runs comfortably.

All-in-all, it was a summer well-spent.
Scenes from Bainbridge High School’s
*Romeo & Juliet*

Emery Anderson as Juliet.

Emery Anderson and Trent Craighead’s balcony scene.

From left: Seb Hagman and Ben Greene from the BHS band Overcast.

Henry Bacon played Mercutio.

Punks (Capulets) and Grunges (Montagues). Standing (from left): Erin Melia (Punk servant), Kate Crandell (Rosaline), Kamden Dungeon (Punk) and Rory Schulte (Benvolio). Seated (from left): Paige Harbour (Punk), Annie Comstock (Prince’s bodyguard), Marissa Chappell (Gregory, a Grunge) and Alyssa Pazoff (bodyguard).

Emery Anderson and Trent Craighead.


Photos by Cary Melia and Tanya Howlett.