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Focus on citizenship

Students will live as responsible citizens

The value of a student's education is ultimately measured by how it is put into action in the community, nation, and world—which means that the school experience must not only provide students with facts and figures but also skills to help them become responsible, engaged *citizens*.

“The strength of our democracy can be traced back to public schools,” said Issaquah School District Superintendent Steve Rasmussen. “Our students need to graduate aware of their place in history and the world and ready to contribute in a positive way.”

While student citizenship takes many forms—from sharing crayons to analyzing major world religions—the Issaquah School District has outlined a set of specific targets in End 3 (E-3), “Citizenship.” As *Focus Community Newsletter* explores each of the District's five End student learning goals (see “E-4, Technology,” December 2008; and “E-2, Academics and Foundations,” April 2009), this edition highlights how E-3 is preparing today's students to be tomorrow's civic leaders.

E-3 states that students “will live as responsible citizens” by understanding and participating in the American democratic process; acting according to ethical principals; being aware of global events and

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economics; respecting diverse cultures; and efficiently using natural resources.

A standards-based Social Studies curriculum aligned across grade levels provides the historical context required under E-3. As the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction describes, citizenship is the bedrock of this subject area: “Social Studies equips learners to make sound judgments and take appropriate actions that will contribute to sustainable development of human society and the physical environment.”

From kindergarten through senior year, students in Social Studies learn about human society in the most basic groupings, families, to the most complex, empires and nations, throughout ancient and modern times. Often, the lessons are hands on. Students transform into American pioneer families, even cultivating their own gardens. They don powdered wigs to reenact the Second Continental Congress and interview veterans of the Spanish Civil War. They put historical figures on trial.

Additionally, almost all other subject areas incorporate elements of E-3’s citizenship

goals. For example, students frequently learn about environmental sustainability in science and global economic models in business electives.

Outside formal instruction, the school experience itself is a powerful lesson about how to interact responsibly and ethically with diverse people in many situations.

“When adults joke that all they really need to know they learned in kindergarten, they’re on the right track,” Rasmussen said. “Think about all of the societal skills students rely on when they walk through the schoolhouse doors: cooperation, communication, good decision-making, leadership, adaptability. Maybe the world would benefit if we behaved more like a citizenry of elementary students!”

Please flip inside to read the full text of E-3 and explore how students are learning to be responsible, ethical citizens.

For more updates on what’s happening in the Issaquah School District—including information about the 2010 Levy—please visit www.issaquah.wednet.edu.

Ends: What every grad needs to know

Mission: Our students will be prepared for and eager to accept the academic, occupational, personal, and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment (E-1).

Ends: Academics and Foundations (E-2); Citizenship (E-3); Technology (E-4); Personal Awareness and Expression (E-5); and Life Management (E-6).

The School Board’s mission and five Ends provide a roadmap of the skills and knowledge every graduate needs to succeed in today’s global environment. It is the Board’s primary responsibility, then, to ensure that the District makes progress toward achieving the Ends.

The Board has embarked on a yearlong process to monitor the mission and Ends by intensely reviewing student data and evidence of Ends success at its meetings. This will culminate in a comprehensive evaluation before the cycle begins anew. Everyone is invited to participate in person or to track the data—and read the full text of the Ends—at www.issaquah.wednet.edu/board/.

To parallel the Board’s work, the *Focus* newsletter will spotlight one End per issue for the school year. This edition explores E-3, Citizenship.



Global compassion

Pine Lake students “loosen chains” with loose change

Three years ago, students at Pine Lake Middle School thought slavery was a phenomenon relegated to history books. Then the Associated Student Body decided to raise funds for an organization called International Justice Mission (IJM), and now—\$87,000 in donations later!—students and staff have a new global perspective about freedom and a passion for action.

“I didn’t even know there were modern-day slaves,” said eighth-grader Caroline Cindric. “But I’ve learned a lot about it, and now I know that on the other side of the world there are kids my age in slavery—and the money we raise can help save their lives.”

IJM is a group of legal workers that assists international authorities as they try to liberate the almost 20 million people who are held captive through physical or financial constraints. Examples of those rescued include Indian families forcibly confined at agricultural plantations and Thai children working in brothels. What started as a simple pitch at Pine Lake Middle School—donate “loose change to loosen chains”—has turned into a multi-year educational campaign as more and more students became incensed by stories of human-rights abuse. The fund-raiser has even spread to Pacific Cascade Freshman Campus and Issaquah High.

This year, the campaign got a human face—or faces. Teacher Eric Ensey traveled to India in February with IJM representatives to shake the hands of several people who were freed because of Issaquah students’ donations. He returned with stories and pictures of poverty and abuse almost unimaginable to his students. Since then, it’s not unusual to hear buzz around Pine Lake about fair-labor practices: *Who made your shirt? Does that company use sweat shops?*

Ensey thinks the humanitarian spirit is infectious. “More students than ever before are involved in community service, whether it be for [IJM] or other service through their church, their sports teams or their clubs,” he said. “Students tell me that they love serving with their friends for a purpose. I also think that, secretly, they like doing something for someone other than themselves!”

When philanthropy, awareness, passion, and youth leadership combine so powerfully, the results often change lives on both ends of the fund-raiser—which is why every Issaquah school actively promotes local, national, and international charitable projects. Are they making a difference? The hundreds of community members who receive gifts, food, warm clothes, and necessities from a coordinated holiday giving drive would definitely say so. As would the many African students who annually get much-needed school supplies from Beaver Lake Middle School. And Apollo students swear they heard WOOFs! of thanks while delivering a donation check to the Humane Society recently!

E-2: Citizenship

Students will live as responsible citizens. Students will:

- (3.1) understand and respect the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities of being an American citizen and participating in representative democracy at the local, state, and national levels;
- (3.2) understand and apply ethical principles in all aspects of life;
- (3.3) demonstrate an awareness of global events and economics and their impact on local communities and personal lives;
- (3.4) understand and respect diverse cultures;
- (3.5) utilize natural resources in an efficient, sustainable way, ensuring the rights of future generations to enjoy a clean and resourceful planet;
- (3.6) recognize how their personal and collective actions impact the environment.



A “producer” for good

Although Issaquah Valley Elementary fifth-grader Claire McGreave was unsuccessful in her run for student body president, her enthusiasm for the democratic process and community service was undimmed. In addition to representing her classroom on the Student Council and serving as a crossing guard, Claire was inspired to start “Caring Cougars,” an organization dedicated to collecting new and gently used teddy bears for less fortunate children.

“I had the idea on the playground, and decided I would be the ‘producer,’” Claire explained. “I’ve always been sort of the leadership type. Caring Cougars was a chance to take charge and help the community.”

Claire enlisted three friends as “co-producer,” creative manager, and artistic director, and the group publicized the effort, collecting more than 120 bears. She’s also arranged for a younger group to continue the effort at IVE, and plans to start a “Caring” chapter at Issaquah Middle School next year.

“I just want to help,” she said. “It’s who I am.”

Citizenship: embedded in Social Studies

Statewide in fifth, eighth, and 11th grade, students complete common classroom-based assessments that include this introduction: “Citizens in a democracy have the right and responsibility to make informed decisions. You will make an informed decision on a public issue after researching and discussing different perspectives...” In a paper or presentation, students must state and support a position on a social issue while considering both the public good and individual rights.

Other state grade-level learning goals in Social Studies include:

Kindergarten: Sense of time/history (now and then)

First: Family importance and historical significance

Second: Community importance and historical significance

Third: Culture: people, places, and the environment

Fourth: Washington state history, including tribal history

Fifth: U.S. History (through Independence)

Sixth: Ancient civilizations and world geography

Seventh: World history (600 to 1450)

Eighth: U.S. Government

Ninth/10th: World History (1450 to present)

11th: U.S. History and Government (20th and 21st Centuries)

12th: Contemporary world problems

Green kids, green schools

Kids willing, able to make a difference



Second-graders in Juli Trochim's class at Endeavour Elementary this year became so alarmed when they learned about the high rate of destruction of temperate and tropical rainforests that they asked what they could do to make a difference. After brainstorming, they invited parents to plant trees with them in the school's wetland area during an educational community "field trip."

"By using the outdoors as a centerpiece for learning, this activity provided students with the opportunity to learn how they can individually affect the fate of our natural world," Trochim said.

At Discovery Elementary, teacher Tasha Kirby also actively incorporates the school's wetlands into her lessons. Recently, her fourth-graders designed and tested a streambed restoration plan, spending two days outdoors with a local biologist and presenting their findings to city officials.

"The project has definitely made the students more aware of the world around them," Kirby said. "While they were not the ones to damage the streambed, they have learned that they have the ability—and responsibility—to create a positive change in the environment."

Across the District, students of all ages are becoming similarly green minded through environmental class projects as well as school conservation programs. Often, the two converge. Liberty High School this school year won \$36,700 in grants from Puget Sound Energy and the Issaquah Schools Foundation to install a sophisticated rooftop solar panel system that will allow students to study and advance this renewable energy source while providing the school with thousands of watts of clean power.

To honor Issaquah schools and students for being on the forefront of conservation efforts

and education, King County in April awarded the District its most prestigious environmental award, the Green Globe. The County Executive commended the District's impressive recycling rate and 6-percent decrease in energy use, despite the fact that new-building square footage has increased by 15 percent. Over the past four years, these efficiencies have saved the District almost \$3 million in operating costs.

No dollar figure, however, can capture the value of a generation of students embracing sustainable life habits for the future. Issaquah students every day ask to go beyond the curriculum to lead real-world conservation projects: They host eco-car washes to raise money for salmon restoration, set Guinness World Records for recycling, design and build systems to reclaim heat from shower water, grow and harvest native vegetables, sell products made from recycled materials at local markets, and much, much more!

