

Options in education

The Newsletter of the Washington Association for Learning Alternatives

A Look Ahead to Our Spring Conference By Gary Babcock, Conference Coordinator

Salt air, wistful breezes and rolling surf are just part of the sideshow that accompanies the gathering of educators resolved to advocate for all students and to discover and share the best practices, known as WALA's Annual Spring Conference.

March 11 - 13, 2004 will offer attendees a wide variety of topics to choose from as they strive to meet their individual and school or program needs. In order to offer a full program and the best opportunity to network and gain useful information, the first breakout session will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday evening. This session will be followed by a social which will incorporate several tables for informal discussion based around subject areas, issues of interest and concern or job-alike assignments. During this time participants will be free to move from area to area as they desire.

Friday's session will begin with a dynamic keynote, Ron Glodoski, who will offer a fresh new perspective on how to effectively connect with kids and help them look past their anger and fear to take charge of their lives. He will not only identify the issues but will offer practical solutions. Ron will also host a breakout session later in the program. Keynoting on Saturday, Dr. Terry Bergeson, will bring an update from the legislature and the state of education in Washington.

Session topics to be presented will include, but are not limited to, the latest information related to No Child Left Behind and Annual Yearly Progress, the WASL and reform efforts, examples of how technology can be used to enhance the educational process, charter schools, ESEA and the highly qualified teacher requirement, success at the middle level, career counseling, science and math in the alternative setting, audits and Alternative Learning Experience Plans.

Descriptions of these and other sessions, as well as the conference session time schedule, will appear on the website at www.walakids.com February 1st. Registration forms are also available at the site with special rates for early birds and for groups attending from member schools. (If your school is not a member school, e-mail Lile Holland at walakids@gte.net to see the great benefits for your staff and students).

There will be special entertainment by the Wapato Native American Dancers at the lunch on Friday, along with the annual meeting, which will include discussion of proposed by-laws changes and election of officers, to be voted on during regional meetings. At the banquet Friday evening there will again be a silent auction along with a short live auction to provide scholarship monies for students of WALA member schools. Bring something to add to the auction and add to the fund. Awards and recognitions will also be part of the evening program.

Join your friends, meet and make new ones, have fun, and share the wealth of knowledge and experience you have as we continue to provide educational options and opportunities, based on research and best practices, for students to meet the needs and challenges they face.

WALA Auction Reminder

by Dianne Korvola



Please, please remember that our goal for this year's Auction is to have each person attending the Annual Conference bring *at least one item* for the Auction. Please use the forms/letters on the WALA web site for solicitation, coding items for the Auction, and for thanking those who give.

The Inside Scoop

Conference News	Educational Reform	Secondary Scholarships	Board Contacts	Regional News	Board Minutes	Elections/ Bylaw Changes	Curriculum Corner	Calendar
1-2	3	4	4	5	2, 6	7	8-9	10

A master can tell you what he expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectations.

Patricia Neal



Alternative Middle School Programs Presentation

by Jim Sparks

Quite often, WALA receives a request for information on alternative middle school programs. Being an alternative middle school teacher, these requests are forwarded to me. In the past, we have conducted discussion groups at the conferences, invited observations to my school, and conducted panel discussions for middle schools considering starting a program. In Ocean Shores, I will present my program, and hold an open discussion on this subject.

At the conference, we will present the basics of my school-within-a-school program. Topics of consideration are the program's structure, criteria for selecting students, improving student learning, home based learning and tracking, curriculum, and program funding. We have blocked two hours for this presentation. There is plenty of time to have an open forum for questions and input from other programs. If you have questions or are interested either in attending or hosting a discussion table on this subject, please e-mail me at jimsparks3098@msn.com or call me at (253) 537-0211, ext. 4266. See you at the conference.

WALA Executive Board Minutes

Centralia Alternative Program
January 24, 2004

by Darlene Quayle, Secretary/Treasurer

Present: Cathy Hammerberg, Lile Holland, Darlene Quayle, Jim Sparks, Cheri Exner.

Lap Top computer & software: Lile has a replacement laptop and accompanying software. Adobe software allows .pdf files for the website.

Appointments: Cathy appointed Mary Ann Campo as Region V Representative to replace Melissa Petty who has resigned from the position. This appointment is the result of a lengthy discussion concerning the appointment with members of Region V. Mary Ann will continue as Leg. Liaison too.

Financial Update:

Lile presented the budget update. The cash report showed growth in balances. Income/Loss statements for the conferences since 2001 showed a growth in proceeds over the years and a stabilization of expenses.

Total cash receipts for the Fall conference totaled \$56,023.

Expenditures totaled \$32,547.45, including a paid speaker for \$1,000 and supplies of \$1,744.57 which included merchandise for the store at \$1,566.56.

Travel expenses included preview planning trips to meet with Campbell's staff. 2001 "miscellaneous" expense was for covering board member substitute costs.

March Conference:

Sessions: The keynote speaker, Ron Glodoski, will discuss real-life problems that some students face and how to connect with them. Class.com, a private Native American vendor organization from Shelton, will present their adult -level basic skills computer program. Other sessions include PPP, charter schools, curriculum, and graduation requirements. There are 28 presenters scheduled.

Banquet: The Shilo Inn's Conference Center was booked. The Quinault Hotel/Casino will let us use their dining hall and presentation area for the banquet and silent auction.

Auction: Live auction will be limited to 5-6 items.

Registrations: Discounts for groups of 4 from member schools are allowed by sending all on the same purchase order. Some districts are sending multiple program staff members on one PO with only one member school.

Website: Lile will post the conference schedule to the website by February 1st.

Administrator's Workshop:

Cathy reviewed the speakers from yesterday's workshop. Norm Dicks attended briefly. Bob Brooks, a Washington lobbyist presented information on how members can access the House and Senate. He promoted the idea that schools and program should invite legislative assistants and local legislators to visit their school. Ann Randall was very informative about audit information.

Elections: Nominations were reviewed for the annual elections in March.

WALA Position Paper on NCLB: The position paper will be posted to the website by February 1. It will remain a work in progress.

Legislative Update:

WASL retesting bill passed the state legislature to allow for multiple retesting of the WASL.

Nominations to the A+ Commission's Reading and Mathematics Standard Setting Committee. This committee will set the new cut rates for the WASL testing.

House Bill 2704 was presented to the legislature by Gigi Talcott (ranking Republican on the House education committee). The added language was pulled from the WAC committee's draft and placed into the educational contractor law. Lile and OSPI staff, Martin Mueller, Melinda Dyer, and Cal Brodie, will address the legislative committee.

Next Executive Board Meeting:

February 7 in Zillah at the ZAP program.



Education Reform and Alternative Education

By Lile Holland, Executive Director of WALA

Beginning in the 1930's, alternative education in Washington has been one of the leading forces behind education reform. Not only have alternative programs been the laboratory for innovation, the success demonstrated by alternative programs has led traditional programs to adopt many new methodologies.

For the past 29 years WALA has followed the belief that all children should be given unlimited opportunities to excel. To that end, WALA has supported efforts to individualize instruction, provide smaller classroom student/teacher ratios, and challenge each student to perform to the maximum of their ability. When the current rounds of reforms were begun in the early 1990's, WALA supported the concept. When a minimum level of achievement was discussed, WALA supported the concept. As it was "discovered" that many children were not achieving at a satisfactory rate, WALA supported the discussion of identifying those students and providing for their needs. When data driven decision making was mandated, it was welcomed because most WALA member alternative schools had been doing this for years - it was about time the rest of education caught up with us.

But, when all students are required to pass a "one-size fits all" test as the only way to show both individual and school success, our opposition became a loud voice of dissent. That the WASL is not a fair assessment of every student's progress is acknowledged by OSPI. That up to 50% of Washington's students are not able to pass all aspects of the test is a reflection of unfairness of the test. That the WASL does not accurately assess successful alternative student learning is another example of the unfairness of the test.

Because education reform has altered in the original goals from providing the tools needed to help children learn, to mandating a punitive system of tests and distorted consequences, WALA can no longer support many specific areas adopted by the State leadership.

WALA has produced a position paper on education reform and alternative education. The purpose of the paper is to identify areas of concern and offer suggestions for improvement. The paper is available for reading at the WALA web site. <http://www.walakids.com>. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Statistics and What's Right

By Andy Wheeler

As some of you know, State Street High School, where I work, has an annual dropout rate of around 38%. OK, so if you multiply that by four years of high school you get, um, let's see 152% of the students drop out. Hmm.....

Now imagine standing in front of a group of educators (or a school board) and saying, "Yes, my school has a drop out rate of 150%." There is some laughter, many snickers, and usually some comment something like, "And you still have a job?" After I state this, I usually try to sneak in a "yes, but..." statement to explain why that statistic is the way it is. Some people care, some don't. My point is that, taken alone, this statistic is a misleading and damning statement about my school. I'm proud of my school, though. It's not perfect, by a long shot, but we try to find programs for our clients that serve them. One group of our clients we serve at the Job Corps High School Completion Program. Students enter the Cascades Job Corps Center and attend high school every other week. Since the average length of stay at this center is around 6-8 months, we lose a large number. Statistics would dictate that we close down this program because of its dismal statistics. Should we therefore not offer students this opportunity at all? We manage to get roughly 100 students a diploma every year. Many are over 21, or in what would be their 5th or 6th (or more) year of high school. NCLB classifies these students as dropouts also, since they aren't graduating in their four years of high school. I count each of these as a personal success. I have a deep sense of joy and pride when I give them their diplomas. That's my emotional paycheck.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not proud of that dropout rate. And our WASL scores are miserable. The school should not be left the way it is - I am not satisfied with the quality of graduates we're producing. I am proud, however, of the opportunity we are offering students in all of our programs at SSSH. Students have 5-6 programs to choose from in our school. We spend a lot of energy finding a fit for each student, and pushing them in that direction. Our staff, overall, feels fairly cohesive - they like being with each other. Many students like being in school. There is a strong sense of community and caring in the school.

None of the testing statistics measure this.

For grins, ask Lile Holland next time you see him what his graduation rate and drop out rate are. There's another interesting story.

How is your school doing? Know your statistics and learn all you can from them. Look also at the other parts of your school. Decide what it is that you like and what you don't. Celebrate the first part of this, and go to work on the second. Statistics are only part of the school profile.



WALA Secondary Scholarship Gets a Facelift

By Billie Needham, Secondary Scholarship Committee Chair

The WALA Scholarship committee has revamped the WALA Secondary Scholarship form and information. The published packet information is no longer date specific - the deadline is now stated simply as the third Friday of each April. This year, the third Friday is April 16. This will allow information on the WALA website to remain current from year to year.

Another change is that the "portfolio" requirement has been renamed the "focus project." The intent of this portion of the application process has always been to give the student the opportunity to showcase one area of personal strength the student believes will help move her or him to fulfill future plans. As such, "portfolio" was a misnomer; we did not seek a collection of materials. "Focus project" is more to the point; we seek one example of each student's personal strength. In addition, unlike previous years, these projects will be returned to the student if he or she provides return postage and packaging. Final fixes are on the application form itself.

Our goal has been to make the application process a little more user friendly for students.

The sponsoring staff member is asked to verify program membership as a WALA school. This can be a confusing point because WALA offers two categories of membership.

School/program membership is required for applicants to be eligible to apply for the Secondary Scholarship. This type of membership must be purchased for the school or program on a yearly basis. The membership that comes with attending WALA conferences is an Individual Membership. It does not qualify either the program or the student applicant for the Secondary Scholarship. Long story short, you can verify whether or not your school or program is a school member by going to our web site www.walakids.com or by calling Lile Holland, our Executive Director, at 1-(800) 455-WALA.

The committee is also asking, for the first time, that the sponsoring staff member provide a projected graduation date or GED completion date and tell the number of credits required by the district for graduation.

The remainder of the scholarship packet information is largely unchanged. (There are some adjustments regarding letters of reference and personal essay.) Remember, this process takes time and students who want to apply should be putting the materials together soon. For many districts, the third Friday in April is during their Spring Vacation; however, no extensions of the deadline are given. The application materials must be submitted with the original and four copies, including copying videos, cassettes, photos, CD's, etc. Remember also that official transcripts and copies of GED certificates (signed by a school official) must be mailed separately by the school to me, Billie Needham, the WALA Secondary Scholarship Committee Chairperson.

Our goal has been to make the application process a little more user friendly for students. You can download the entire packet of information and forms from the WALA web site. Feel free to call or e-mail me with questions or to get a hard copy of the application packet. My phone is (360) 879-1218 at work, (253) 847-7134 at home. My e-mail is billie_needham@eatonville.wednet.edu.

WALA Board Contacts

President:

Cathy Hammerberg (509) 877-6138
chammerberg@nwinfo.net

President-Elect:

Jim Sparks (253) 537-0211
jimsparks3098@msn.com

Past President:

Andy Wheeler (360) 855-3534
awheeler@swsd.k12.wa.us

Sec/Treasurer:

Darlene Quayle (360) 379-4251
dequayle@olympen.com

Region I:

Steve Hoffman (360) 647-6871
shoffman@bham.wednet.edu

Rob Slater (360) 383-9344
rslater@ferndale.wednet.edu

Region II:

Cherie Exner (253) 537-0211
Cherie_Exner@fp.k12.wa.us Ext. 2415

Martha Daman (425) 836-8348
madman@lkwash.wednet.edu

Region III:

Randy Hill (360) 582-3400
rhill@orca.esd114.wednet.edu

VACANT

Region IV:

Maureen Harkcom (360) 748-2163
mharkcom@centralia.wednet.edu

Tom Hays (360) 904-7824
tom.hays@washougal.k12.wa.us

Region V:

Mark Brundage (509) 682-4061
brunm@lchelanel.org

Melissa Petty (509) 354-6470
melissap@spokaneschools.org

Region VI:

Mike Carlson (509) 942-2595
carlsonmik@hotmail.com

Allan Korvola (509) 786-2527
akorvola@bentonrea.com

Admin Rep:

Terry Smith (509) 877-3138
TerryS@wapato.k12.wa.us

Parent Partner:

Marianna Hanefeld (425) 702-3331
mhanefeld@lkwash.wednet.edu

Grants and Scholarships:

Billie Needham (360) 879-1218
billie_needham@eatonville.wednet.edu

Legislative Rep:

MaryAnne Campo (509) 354-6470
maryca@spokaneschools.org

Exec. Director:

Lile Holland (800) 455-WALA
walakids@gte.net

Fall Conference:

Gary Babcock (509) 836-8407
babcockg@sunnyside.wednet.edu

Newsletter:

Jim Sparks (253) 537-0211
jimsparks@3098@msn.com



Education is the guardian genius of democracy. It is the only dictator that free men recognize, and the only ruler that free men require.
Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar

Region II

Region II had a teacher meeting at the Emerald Queen Casino on January 30 from 10am to 2pm in Auburn. We had a decent turn out for it, and look forward to a great turn out for the Spring Conference. The focus of this meeting was No Child Left Behind and how this is impacting those of us in alternative education. We had a representative from the OSPI there to provide us with specifics. Cheri and Martha also passed around a questionnaire to get feedback from the members about interest for further information. Finally Chris Allen from the Options program in Shoreline attended and brought with him some brochures regarding the Friendship Games that he will be hosting the Friendship Games for Region II on May 27. Chris and his students are putting together what sounds like a very enjoyable time for all. We will be discussing further the Friendship Games at the Spring Conference. Thank you all who attended the Emerald Queen meeting.

Region V

Just want to inform all Region V members that there will be a mini-conference at City Schools in Spokane on Feb. 21. We plan on having a guest speaker, a curriculum share, and visitation to city schools showcasing their unique programs. PPP's are also invited for a get-together and tour of the PPP program in Spokane. Exact details will soon be e-mailed to everyone with directions.

Region V

by Allan Korvola

Region VI will hold its Winter Mini-Conference at Zillah Alternative Program on February 7, 2004.

The keynoter for the Mini-Conference is Mrs. Diane Shepherd from ESD 123. Her presentation title is "Supportive Learning Environment and School Improvement Process." In addition to this timely topic, there will be time for discussion, sharing, and learning. Participants will be hosted to a Region VI WALA lunch.

Region VI members are also encouraged to attend Region V's Mini-Conference February 20-21 at City School, East Valley School District, Spokane. There will be a no-host dinner Friday evening, a Saturday morning Mini-Conference, followed by a tour of Havermale School.

Remember to bring one item for the Annual Auction per conference attendee. If you are not planning on attending, secure an item anyway, and have someone who is attending bring it for you.

There are many, many wonderful programs in Region VI which are serving our youth. Hopefully, from these many programs there will be individuals and groups who will come forth to present at the Conference.

In Passing

Jan Wheland, Teacher and Friend

by Darlene Quayle

Jan was supportive of alternative education, teaching in the 1st - 12th grade Chimacum Pi Program for a year, then remaining involved with both the Pi Program and Port Townsend's K-12th I.C.E. Program during the next year while she taught exploratory technology at Blue Heron Middle School in Port Townsend. Jan volunteered in the programs' jointly operated Puget Sound Explorers, demonstrating camaraderie and seaworthy endurance to the high schoolers involved in the class. Students said when they spoke to her, she gave them her full attention, showing the respect they felt from her. Fellow teachers became instant life-long friends, almost from the moment they met her.

Jan died in a car accident in November. She leaves behind family in Portland, and countless friends. She will be greatly missed. u

Shoreline Options To Host Friendship Games

Mark your calendars for Thursday May 7th to come to sunny Shoreline, WA for the WALA Friendship Games. We will be meeting at the Shoreline stadium for field games, music, art and food. Here's your chance to display the talents and uniqueness that make your school special! At last word, both Region I and II schools want to get in on the action; that means students from Bellingham to Olympia have the chance to gather for a day of fun. We want lots of schools to participate, but we will need participating schools to bring something to the event besides bodies.

We are looking for co-operative events, competitive events, cerebral events, physical events, events that touch the soul, events that touch the funny bone. In order to have something for everyone, we need participating schools to run events that other schools can sign-up for.

How do you get involved? It's easy! Come to the Region II conference on Jan 30th and/or the annual conference at Ocean Shores and look for Chris Allen. Or, you can get on the list by e-mailing chris.allen@shorelineschools.org. u

In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

Eric Hoffer

WALA Board Minutes



WALA Full Board Meeting Minutes

Lake Chelan, WA

November 7, 2003

Submitted by Darlene Quayle,
WALA Board Secretary/Treasurer

Present: Jim Sparks, Gary Babcock, Melissa Pettey, Allan Korvola, Marianna Hanefeld, Martha Daman, Lile Holland, Cathy Hammerberg, Terry Smith, Steve Hoffman, Randy Hill, Maureen Harkcom, Billie Needham, Cheri Exner, Andy Wheeler, Rob Slater, Darlene Quayle.

Minutes of last meeting: Minutes approved with spelling corrections to two names.

Position Paper: We are allowed to do a position paper. A 501c3 (non-profit) corporation cannot take a political stance, but can provide an advisory position. We can provide background on situation, the impact it's having on our programs, and viable solutions to current solutions. Lile is developing it and is requesting feedback. The proposal will be presented for adoption in January, and will then be available to OSPI, legislatures, schools, etc. We are trying to reach the decision-makers. Lile is asking for board members to provide feedback and suggestions to him, preferably by mid-December. A position paper should be reflective of many voices.

Conference: Gary said that three things sold the conference: 1) a flyer w/program information; 2) location; 3) Lady of the Lake cruise. We will provide similar brochure for the March conference.

Cruise: The boat could hold 200 people. We set a cut-off mark of 200. This morning, we had 198 signed up to go, and 210 meals were purchased. Only 116 came on the cruise for a cost of \$3-4000. A banquet & dance would have cost \$5000. People relaxed and seemed to have a good time. Extra meals went to Lake Chelan Prep High School to the kids who were there tonight. Maureen asked about a lunch cruise instead.

Budget Update/Review (2003 amts. are initial figures)

Lile reviewed revenues and expenditures comparing the current year with the two previous years' figures. For the March conference, we are working on providing credit & or clock hours for paraprofessionals through Antioch Univ.

Spring Elections: Region Reps position 2 will be running. Exec Board: President Elect & Secretary Treasurer.

Scholarships: The Secondary Scholarship Application has been revised. Billie has more information for those interested.

Software Needs: Need Adobe software for publishing .pdf files website. Rob mentioned a free option for saving as .pdf. From Word documents, Isabel is transferring files over for us. The software will cost \$1000.

Laptop: The memory is not working in Lile's laptop and he cannot open documents. He estimates a cost of \$3000.

All items were referred to Executive Board. Lile will explore prices and will return to the executive board with information.

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Lake Chelan, WA

November 7, 2003

Present: Cathy Hammerberg, Andy Wheeler, Lile Holland, Darlene Quayle, Jim Sparks. Joined after conference by Terry Smith, Gary Babcock.

The previous executive board meeting was attended by Lile, Gary and Cathy and focused on a site visit to Campbell's resort. There were no minutes.

Information Items:

Executive Director's Annual Assessment: Andy presented a form used by another organization. Categories applied to our executive director position. A rating scale of S/U/NA was suggested instead of R/S/U/Unk. It will be presented to the board as an information item. Executive Board will complete the evaluation, per by-laws.

Education Reforms and Alternative Education in Washington State

Two drafts were presented by Lile & Andy. This is not a finished document, but will get input from Lile & Cathy's presentation in the morning session and get input from the attendees. Many members have asked for a position on NCLB & WASL, and we need to include as many voices as possible in drafting language in a document. The paper needs to state problems, issues, then solutions/recommendations. Goal: present final document to the full board at the January meeting as a semi-permanent document.

Conferences

Fall Conference: Lile presented numbers comparing last year's revenues & expenses for Fall conference. Final profit should be around \$16,000. Possible reasons why the conference was well attended: programs out with information, location, cruise, overall program package. Lots of PR. The conference has so far met and exceeded expectations. 240 showed up. 250 were registered.

Next year: If we reserve early, we can use more rooms and have more sessions, 3rd ballroom would be available to better accommodate meals. Boat could be every other year possibility. Other options: winery, theme dinner, two boats instead of one, two separate dinners.

Cruise: capacity is 200, and 210 were arranged. 198 are currently scheduled to go. Extra lunches will go to Chelan Night School.

Lile and Gary have signed a two-year contract with Campbell's. Evaluations were reviewed. Gary will tally the evaluation results and will email them to the board.

Spring Conference: A flyer for the March conference will be mailed in January, providing highlights & topics. Keynote speaker will be Ron Glodoski, author of *How To Be A Successful Criminal*. He will also offer two break-out sessions.

We discussed the priorities of having two conferences: there was a feeling on the part of some PPP members that we would have a conference focused on traditional alt-ed, and one focused on just PPP-type programs. For the fall conference, we need roughly 150 paid registrations to break even. We can't run a PPP-only conferences with 90 people, as we would lose money.

Next Meeting: Next executive board meeting will be held on January 24th in Centralia at the CAPS Program.



Education is much more than a matter of imparting the knowledge and skills by which narrow goals are achieved. It is also about opening the child's eyes to the needs and rights of others.

the Dalai Lama

WALA Elections – March, 2004

The WALA Board is made up of representatives from each of six regions. We do not have representatives for special groups within the alternative community, the Region Directors represent all programs within their regions. If you feel your program or group is not receiving adequate representation, the solution is election to the WALA State Board of Directors as a Region Director. You will represent all alternative programs in your region and you can insure that your group is getting adequate representation.

One of the region meetings agenda items at the conference in Ocean Shores will be the selection of the President-elect, the Secretary-Treasurer, and one representative from each region. The names and positions shown below asked to have their names placed on the ballot. The positions shown as OPEN were not filed on. You will have the opportunity in your region meeting to nominate additional individuals for each of these positions. The individuals so nominated will be part of the write-in ballot.

The following individuals have asked to be placed on the 2004 ballot for election to the positions indicated.

- President-Elect: Darlene Quayle, ICE Program
 - Secretary-Treasurer: Cherie Exner, Transition Program
 - Region I, Position 2: Rob Slater, Clearview High School
 - Region II, Position 2: OPEN
 - Region III, Position 2: Randy Hill, Sequim Comm.School
 - Region IV, Position 2: Marilyn Boerke, Camas High School
 - Region V, Position 2: Mary Anne Campo, Havermale
 - Region VI, Position 1: Doug Gall, Rivers Edge HS
- President-Elect is a three year commitment*; President-Elect, President, and Past President. This position serves as a voting member of the State Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, Nominations Committee Chair, and Editorial Board Chair.

Secretary Treasurer is a two-year commitment. This position serves as a voting member of the State Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

Region Representative is a two-year commitment. Representatives are selected from their home region (Region boundaries can be found on the web at <http://www.walakids.com>). Representatives serve as voting members of the State Board of Directors, host region meetings for staff and student activities, and perform various functions at WALA conferences.

Positions are open to active member of WALA. If you wish to be considered for one of the offices listed below, make your desires known to your region representative at your region's meeting in Ocean Shores.

*A motion to amend the current by-laws and extend the term of the president to two years making the position a four-year commitment beginning in 2005 is before the membership for vote at the annual membership meeting in Ocean Shores.u

By-law Amendments Proposed Notice to the Membership

The WALA Board of Directors at its annual Retreat in Leavenworth, Wa. on September 12-13, 2003, did pass a motion to amend the by-laws of the corporation. The purpose of the motion is to change the term served in office by the President from one (1) to two (2) years and the election of a President-Elect from every year to bi-annually. The amended By-laws are as follows:

Original Language:

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

The officers of this organization shall be President, President-elect, immediate Past-president, and Secretary-treasurer. Each officer's term of office shall coincide with the organization's fiscal year. The Secretary-treasurer's term of office shall be for two (2) years.

ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 4

The immediate Past-president shall perform duties incident to the office of immediate Past-president and all other duties as prescribed by the President. If for any reason the immediate Past-president cannot serve the term or fulfill the duties of the office, a successor shall be selected by the WALA Board to serve until the next general election.

ARTICLE VIII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND STATE BOARD

Section 1

The officers of the organization (President, President-elect, immediate Past-president, Secretary-treasurer), with the OSPI Representative and the Executive Director serving ex-officio, shall constitute the Executive Committee. They shall meet or otherwise confer at the summons of the President for the purpose of making policy decisions deemed by the President to be of an emergency nature. The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall be reviewed at each meeting of the State Board.

Section 4

The immediate Past-president shall perform duties incident to the office of immediate Past-president and all other duties as prescribed by the President. If for any reason the immediate Past-president cannot serve the term or fulfill the duties of the office, a successor shall be selected by the WALA Board to serve until the next general election. u

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.

John Lubbock



A Practical Look at Math WASL Scores And Ways to Improve Them, Part 1 of 2 by James Slosson

(This story started out at an alternative school. It is playing itself out at a big high school, but it needs to finish at an alternative school.)

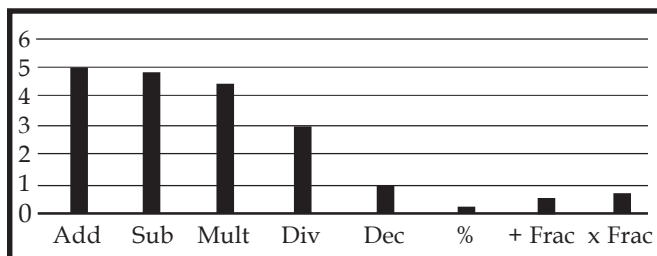
All you had to do was watch the kids take the WASL; it hurt more than a toothache. To anyone with eyes it was obvious; their best effort wasn't going to be good enough. They gave it the best they had, but they just couldn't do the work. The kinds of questions—the kinds of answers required—were not what they had learned in math at the alternative school—or anywhere else.

It wasn't that the math teachers weren't working hard, and it wasn't that the kids weren't working hard. The average improvement in math skills was over 2 ½ years of gain on standardized tests. The kids worked hard, attendance had improved, assignment completion rates were up. They had done everything we asked them to do. We were disappointed and so were they. "Face it Slosson;" one of the guys who tried the hardest said, "We just suck at math."

Once we got past the guilt and anger we got analytical. "We worked hard, our kids worked hard, why can't they pass?" was the question we asked ourselves. We looked hard at the test, we looked at our kids, we looked at ourselves, we looked at the curriculum we were using and eventually we looked at the whole system. Three years later I can say this: **"Our kids—General Math kids—the first quartile in math—can pass the WASL, but not if we keep using the system we have always used. If old ways were going to work, they would have worked by now."**

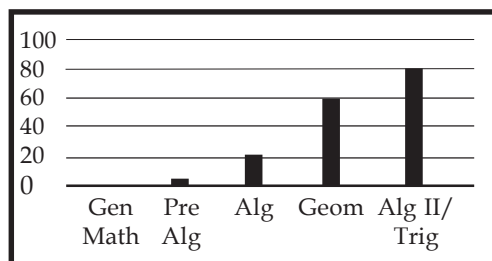
Analytically then, there are several reasons kids can't pass the WASL. Each of them has to be dealt with, and dealt with in a way that makes a complete system of math instruction.

Problem 1—They have poor math skills—and not much aptitude. First Quartile math kids have big gaps in their basic arithmetic skills. Their standardized test scores range from 4th grade to 9th grade, but mainly the scores cluster in 7.2 range. Most of the students can add and subtract, but they never learned the times table very well. Because of these gaps they struggle with division, and they are not very good at estimating. They are calculator dependent and don't know a silly answer from a good one. Table one shows a relative breakdown of the skills they bring to high school. (The scale is arbitrary and meant only to show relative strengths.)



Math is hard for these students, they lack fluency and automaticity. Even if they were inclined to do their homework, they couldn't or it would take forever and conflict with their basic learning style.

Problem 2—They never see all the needed curriculum. It is pretty well known that you can predict students' chances of passing the WASL if you know what class they are enrolled in during their sophomore year. It varies a little district by district and school by school, but in general, it breaks down something like this:



Almost no students enrolled in LAP or General Math pass the WASL. The other pass rates are approximately: Pre-Algebra: 1 - 5%, Algebra (Integrated I) 20 - 25%, Geometry (Integrated II) 60 - 65%, Algebra II/Trig (Integrated III) 80% +.

Any math class that hopes to improve the test scores for kids who struggle with math needs to provide curriculum that matches the scope of the test.

Problem 3—Their learning style directly conflicts with the organizational patterns of most schools, especially mathematics classes. General math students tend to be intuitive extroverts who procrastinate and value feelings more than logic. They organize their lives and learn in ways that are at odds with the established order of schools. In fact their grade point averages tend to be .4 lower than their general intelligence might indicate. It is interesting to compare their style to high school students in general using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator.

	Gen. Math Students	All HS Students
Introvert	17%	25%
Extrovert	83%	75%
Sensor	37%	75%
Intuitior	63%	25%
Feeler	68%	50%
Thinker	32%	50%
Judger	12%	50%
Perceiver	88%	50%



Classroom Curriculum

The greatest challenge to leaders and educators is to bring idealism into the picture despite the cloud that hangs over humanity.

Golda Meir

These results strongly suggest that the same teaching learning activities that work well with successful students probably will not work well with general math students.

Problem 4— They come from a grading/credit system that promotes low quality and incomplete work. General math students struggle along year after year, barely passing, and mostly not filling in the gaps in their math learning. Sixty percent is usually the lowest passing grade and that is what they expect of themselves. They are highly resistant to any change in that system. They reject any notion that they could do better even when given more time and instruction. Because 60 percent is enough, they seldom do more.

The grading system fulfills its own worst prophecy and students, if they earn credit, earn credit without learning the math they need to be successful in the next class.

Problem 5— They tend to be the students with the most difficult behaviors and tend to get the least experienced teachers. Whether the lack of success begets the behavior, or the behavior begets the lack of success is probably not answerable. Experienced teachers avoid these classes if they can—not because they love trigonometry so much more than arithmetic, but because kids in trig class are a lot easier to teach. In most schools veteran teachers get higher level courses and beginners get the lower level classes.

To help these students be successful the teacher will have to spend time reshaping attitudes, behaviors and relationships as well as math skills.

It takes a whole system change to help these students be successful. Anything less will yield about the same results we have been getting. How many curriculum changes have you seen in your career? In my 30+ years I can remember at least 10 major adoptions, and the results have always been the same—no significant change. Buying another curriculum or attending another seminar on manipulatives will not in itself improve things for 1st quartile kids. If we want kids in General Math classes to be successful, we have to change four interlocking pieces of the whole instructional system.

Piece A (Problems 1 & 2) – Change the curriculum.

Expand it to include some geometry, probability, graphing, charting, pattern recognition, simple algebra and other concepts that will be tested on the WASL. Include instruction on decimals, percentages, and fractions. Accept and recognize that students struggle with math. It doesn't do any good to tell them they would be successful if they just worked harder; they know that isn't true. Intentionally teach them ways to deal with their lack of inherent math aptitude. Teach them to quickly make their own times tables on blank paper so they can use them on tests. Encourage them to do their finger counting on top of the table so they can be faster and more accurate. Teach them to use tricks and mnemonic devices.

Add activity components so that students work to solve real problems in measuring, volume, area, estimating and calculation. Use assignments that mirror the WASL. Ask them to generate data, make a table, create a graph, and draw a

conclusion. Ask them to write a complete sentence to explain their answer.

Include dispersed drill and practice on basic operations. Continue to add new skills and continue to practice all skills all year long. Recognize that students will never find math to be easy and let them use whatever shortcuts necessary—except **No Calculators** unless the numbers involved are so large or small as to necessitate a calculator. If you need to simply assignment problems so the concepts can be mastered with paper and pencil calculations that mirror the test.

Emphasize estimating and multiplication/division by factors of ten. Create assignments that ask students to guess the numbers involved and decide if answers are reasonable before they even begin calculating.

Look for Part 2 of this article in the next edition of *OPTIONS*.

Volume 15, Number 3

A quarterly newsletter of WALA, a not-for-profit organization.

Editor: Jim Sparks
(253) 535-0211

jimsparks3098@msn.com

Production Editor: Isabel Gates

(360) 638-0240

gatesi@silverlink.net



WALA President Cathy Hammerberg and Congressman Norm Dicks at the Alternative Administrator's meeting on January 23rd at the Emerald Queen

WALA
P.O. Box 4596
Bremerton, WA 98312-0403

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rene's
Mailings, Inc.

Calendar Update

FEB 7, Winter Mini-Conference, 9 am-12:30 pm, Zillah Alternative Program (ZAP), Zillah. Location will also have Full State Board Meeting starting at 10 am. Lunch time will be a time for both to share. ZAP staff will present their program. Possible keynote presentations are on topics of 1) Safe Schools; 2) School Improvement Plans; or 3) Risk Management.

FEB 20-21, Region V Mini-Conference, Center School (an alternative middle school in East Valley). No-host dinner, Friday evening around 7 pm. After the Mini-Conference, there will be a tour of Havermale for those wishing to participate. Hopefully, several from Region VI will attend.

MAR 11-13, the Annual WALA Conference at Shilo Inn, Ocean Shores, WA.

MAR 12, State Board Meeting, Ocean Shores, time TBA.

APR 16, Secondary Scholarship Applications due

APR 24, Spring Mini-Conference, Stanton Academy, Yakima. Presentation by Stanton Academy staff and keynote by Randal Town, Federal Drug Free Schools Project

MAY 27, Friendship Games, Shoreline Stadium, hosted by Shorewood High School; for more info, contact Chris Allen at chris.allen@shoreschools.org.



Some student artwork on display

Art Fest: Celebrating Student Art At Ocean Shores

By Mike Carlson

Taking a position front and center as you enter the Shilo Inn is our annual WALA Art Fest. With 14 categories to enter, it is time to start collecting student art to bring with you for display in Ocean Shores. This year's categories include pencil/pen/ink, painting, cartooning, multi-media, photography, graphic arts, cooperative art, computer graphics, poetry, folk art, sculpture, illustrated writing, individual integrated curriculum, group integrated curriculum, and creative writing. Almost any art your students have done this year has a place in the Art Fest. We look forward to the displays by returning artists and first-timers. Submissions of artwork will be taken in the lobby of the Shilo Inn on Thursday night and Friday morning. If you need information or want forms emailed to you please contact Mike Carlson at (509) 942-2595 or by e-mail at mike.carlson@rsd.edu. The submission forms are also available on the WALA website.



Some student sculptures on display from past years

Alternative Educator of the Year - Primary School

Individuals are invited to nominate an exemplary educator (teacher, administrator, or support staff) employed in an alternative primary school or program, who deserves recognition by WALA. The educator must be a current member of the Association to be eligible.

Name of Nominee _____ Phone _____

Address _____

School Involved _____ Candidate's role in school _____

Specific contributions for Nomination _____

Community activities _____

Professional activities (contributions, publications, offices, memberships) _____

Names(s) of sponsor _____ Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____

Alternative Educator of the Year - Secondary School

Individuals are invited to nominate an exemplary educator (teacher, administrator, or support staff) employed in an alternative secondary school or program, who deserves recognition by WALA. The educator must be a current member of the Association to be eligible.

Name of Nominee _____ Phone _____

Address _____

School Involved _____ Candidate's role in school _____

Specific contributions for Nomination _____

Community activities _____

Professional activities (contributions, publications, offices, memberships) _____

Names(s) of sponsor _____ Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____

For all nomination forms, please complete and send the following information (adding extra pages as needed) to:

Cherie Exner, WALA Awards Chairperson, Tri Transition Program, 590315 129th St., Tacoma, WA 98444

Additional nomination forms may be printed from the WALA website at www.walakids.com. Your nominations must be received by **February 13, 2004**. Any questions, please call Cherie at (253) 539-2486.

Friend of Alternative Education Award

The Friend of Alternative Education Award is WALA's opportunity to recognize and honor an individual for his or her support of and contribution to educational alternatives. Nominees should be a parent, community member, or any special person who is not employed by the schools. WALA members are encouraged to nominate such persons for this award.

Name of Nominee _____ Phone _____

Address _____

School Involved _____ Candidate's relation to the school _____

Specific contributions for Nomination _____

Community activities _____

Professional activities (contributions, publications, offices, memberships) _____

Names(s) of sponsor _____ Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____

For all nomination forms, please complete and send the following information (adding extra pages as needed) to:

Cherie Exner, WALA Awards Chairperson, Tri Transition Program, 590315 129th St., Tacoma, WA 98444

Additional nomination forms may be printed from the WALA website at www.walakids.com. Your nominations must be received by **February 13, 2004**. Any questions, please call Cherie at (253) 539-2486.