

Evergreen Public Schools getting good grades despite growth, poverty

Over the past four years WASL scores in Evergreen Public Schools have improved dramatically, reports school superintendent **Rick Melching**. The percentage of 10th grade students meeting the standard in writing has gone from 28.5 percent, in 2000, to 71.7 percent in 2004.

SAT scores have increased by 13 points on the verbal test and by 7 points on the quantitative test over the past five years.

During the past four years the increase in the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches has skyrocketed to 42.12 percent. More than four out of ten Evergreen Schools' students (9,863) are living in poverty, Melching says. There were 25,217 students enrolled in the district in 2004.

In an unadorned report to the community, titled "Evergreen: A Story of Success Amid Changes and Challenges," Melching, who is retiring in June, says, "The achievement gains in the midst of varied and growing challenges are a testimony to the quality of the staff and the educational opportunities in Evergreen Public Schools."

Evergreen is the largest school district in Clark County.

In the past four years Evergreen's enrollment has increased by 3,159 students, a 14.3 percent gain, making it the fastest growing large school district in the state and the fifth largest of 296 state public school districts.

According to Melching, the number of English-as-a-Second Language students has more than doubled to almost 2,000 students. The number of languages other than English spoken by the students has increased to 46. The top five native languages spoken by students are Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and Korean.

The number of special needs students has increased over a four-year period by 23 percent, to nearly 3,000 students receiving special services.

Racial minorities constitute 20 percent of the district's students, according to Melching. Ethnic minorities from the former Soviet Union add another ten percent to the total, Melching says.

Ridgefield gets advanced life support ambulance from AMR

American Medical Response, Clark County's primary ambulance provider, yesterday transferred a fully-stocked advanced lift support ambulance to Fire District 12, which provides emergency services to Ridgefield and La Center, a collective population of about 12,500 persons.

In addition, Fire District 12 and AMR have established an advanced life support system that includes jointly staffing the ambulance, according to **Dave Fuller**, director of AMR Clark County Operations.

InterACT to take demographic pulse of Clark County this evening

The independent community forum InterACT will probe the depth and effectiveness of citizen participation in Clark County at a forum at 7 p.m. this evening in the Water Resources Education Center, 4600 SE Columbia Way.

The program is titled "A Changing Clark County: Whose County is It?" Following a presentation of changes occurring in the county, participants will form smaller groups and, led by trained facilitators, will discuss specific demographic and geographic changes.

Responses will help form InterACT's 2005 dialogue season, according to InterACT chair **Dan Euliss**. For further information, call **573-5854**, or go to www.interactclarkcounty.org.

Scott Harris named a director at Leadership Institute of Seattle

Scott Harris, academic advisor for the School of Business, City University, has been appointed director of Professional and Academic Admissions at the Leadership Institute of Seattle. The institute is affiliated with Bastyr University.

While with City University in Vancouver for the past four years, Harris has been involved with the Southwest Washington Center for the Arts, was a member of the Clark County Railroad Advisory Board and the Community Higher Education Consortium, and served on the Vancouver City Charter Review Committee.

People

Pantelis Zafirlou, Clark County Skills Center instructor, was named Washington's Outstanding Lodging Management Program Teacher of the Year at the State Lodging Management Program competition in Seattle. 🏆

Evergreen Public Schools swimmers **Joanne Hsu** and **Peggy Liang** won first place in swimming for their age groups at the recent Oregon Swimming Championships. Hsu, an Image Elementary School 5th grader, placed first in the 50-yard breaststroke. Liang, a Cascade Middle School 6th grader, placed first in the 50-yard breaststroke and third in the individual medley. Both swim for the Columbia River Swim Team.

Thursday headlines from at home and around the world:

[City giving Grant House Restaurant a break on rent--Oregonian, **Allan Brettman**](#)

[Senate Democrats OK two-year budget, which would pay for 200 freshmen students at WSU Vancouver in 2006--Columbian, **Don Jenkins**](#)

[Clark County commissioners may open up Vancouver urban growth area to development early--Columbian, **Erin Middlewood**](#)

[County looking at allowing payments for everything from permits to property tax by credit card, but running into jurisdictional snags--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)

[Fortune rates Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut among the top ten most admired hotels, casinos, resorts--Columbian, **Margaret Ellis**](#)

[Pope's condition deteriorating--KGW-TV \(Video\)](#)

Thursday on the air

Clark College Orchestra Winter Concert—4:30 p.m. CVTV
Diverse Families: Hopes and Fears—6 p.m. CVTV
Cowlitz Casino Roundtable (2/26)—8 p.m. CVTV
2005 Women of Achievement—10:30 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Al Angelo sharing the winning number. ☞ **Gene Lynch** making presentation. ☞ **Manny Helm** getting in a couple of zingers. ☞ **Freeman Keller** telling honest and true store. ☞ **Lucie Drum** getting out the word. ☞ **Bill Demme** getting 11 eggs from 11 chickens. ☞ **Thursday**, sunbreaks, scattered showers, 60. **Friday**, gray and rainy, 53. **Saturday**, light precipitation, some sun, 55.