



# Skykomish Rockets News

# March 2015

Vision statement:

website: [www.skykomish.wednet.edu](http://www.skykomish.wednet.edu)

- The Skykomish School continues to focus its energy and effort to become a student-centric learning center which offers students a welcoming, comfortable, stable, safe, clean, organized environment, and a challenging, meaningful, rewarding, curriculum.
- The Skykomish School continues to strive towards healthy interpersonal relationships among all staff, students, and communities, and encourages active participation and individual responsibility among all.

## Superintendent's Message

I hope you have been enjoying the mild winter



that we have been having. It is hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner and flowers are already coming up.

This month I would like to highlight the outstanding work of our Parent Teacher Student Organization

(PTSO). Our PTSO does so much to help to make our school a fun and rewarding place for students. I was really impressed by how so many people pitched in to support the concessions at our athletic events during the Fall and Winter. In about 20 minutes, before our home games, tables are set up, food is set out, hot dogs get cooked and popcorn gets popped. All of this effort on the part of our PTSO makes for a fun night for all of the spectators.

The PTSO helps make possible many events and activities throughout the year such as the: Pumpkin Party, Ski Program, Field Day, and the Summer Swim Program. Our students would miss out on a lot fun if it weren't for the PTSO. The leadership of the PTSO is a team of individuals that are committed to the students

of Skykomish School. Those individuals that faithfully serve our school are Allison Luker, Becky Daly, James Knisley, Cathy Bittner and Kim McCullough. PTSO meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 4:15 in the Community Center across the street from the school. The PTSO welcomes the participation of all parents and staff.

On March 12th our students will experience Musical Journey Around the World by the Marianna Group. The music performance will occur at 2pm and parents are welcome to join us.

On March 18th, mobile dental services will be available to our students free of charge. During the week of March 9th an informational flier and consent form will be sent home. It is recommended that school-age students see a dentist as least once a year.

I wish everyone a wonderful Springtime and hopefully a lot of sun.

Martin Schmidt

## Interviews for Superintendent This Week

In June 2014 the Board of Directors made the decision to hire an "interim superintendent" for one year and in early months of 2015 conduct a search for a new superintendent. In early January the Board conducted stakeholder

meetings in which staff, students, parents and community members were given the opportunity to give input regarding their vision for a new superintendent. The open position was posted publicly for much of January and February. This week the search committee (composed of the Board of Directors, staff, students, and community members) will be interviewing the selected candidates. The Board will announce their decision at the board meeting on March 25th.

## New Website

Skykomish School has a new website. [www.skykomish.wednet.edu](http://www.skykomish.wednet.edu)

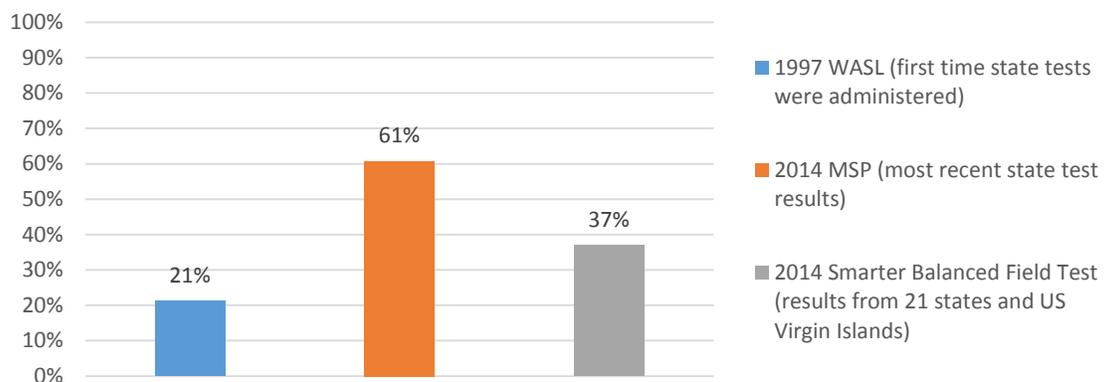
## Facts about Smarter Balance Assessment

Since 2011, teachers and students across Washington have been transitioning to new K–12 Washington State Learning Standards (the Common Core State Standards) in English language arts (ELA) and math. These K–12 learning standards are designed to ensure students are college- and career-ready when they graduate from high school. The learning standards establish clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in ELA and math, and emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and effective communication skills.

New learning standards mean new state tests to measure student progress. This spring, students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 will take the Smarter Balanced assessments in ELA and math. These new assessments will be rigorous and address the new, more challenging standards teachers are teaching.

Based on results from the Smarter Balanced field tests administered in spring 2014, fewer students are expected to reach “proficiency” on these new tests the first time around. We see this each time there is a major shift in testing. For example, the chart below compares 4th-grade math proficiency rates on three tests:

### 4th-grade Math Proficiency Rates



Washington administered state tests for the first time in 1997. That year, only 21 percent of 4th graders who took the state test, then known as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), were considered “proficient” on the new learning standards.

Fast-forward to last spring: The proficiency rate on the state test, now known as the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP), has increased to almost 61 percent in 4th-grade math. The increase over the years is attributed to more familiarity with the learning standards, not only in the assessed grade level (4th grade, in this example), but also in the earlier grades so 4th graders have the foundational skills taught in grades K–3.

Compare our most recent pass rates with the Smarter Balanced field test results from this past spring. While the proficiency rate on this test of the new learning standards is not as low as it was in 1997, it is significantly lower than we're used to, at 37 percent. In time, we expect to see similar growth on the Smarter Balanced assessments. Some students who are used to passing the state test might find they don't quite pass the new tests. Those students and their parents should not interpret those results as the student's failure, but rather as a new baseline for moving forward with learning the new skills.

We have high expectations for our students and are confident in our teachers who are helping students grow academically in these areas, along with other subjects.

If you have questions about Washington's new state learning standards in ELA and math, or about Smarter Balanced tests, we encourage you to talk with your child's teacher(s) or school principal.

There is also additional information at the following websites:

- <http://k12.wa.us/SMARTER>
- [www.WAtesting.com](http://www.WAtesting.com)
- [www.k12.wa.us/Resources](http://www.k12.wa.us/Resources)
- [www.YourChildsProgress.comwww.ReadyWA.org](http://www.YourChildsProgress.comwww.ReadyWA.org)

We know you want your child to succeed in school, and we want to be partners with you to make that happen. We welcome your calls and your visits. We hope you will share any ideas you may have about how we can continue to improve our school.

**PTSO Scholarship Applications can be picked up from Mr. Dempsey. They are due no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Math and Science Corner**

**January 2015**

Kimberly McCullough

In December, our high school math and science students participated in An Hour of Code, an international program to introduce people to coding. The Hour of Code was done during Computer Science Education Week, December 8 – 14, 2014. It was a way to introduce Computer Science basics and coding to people in over 180 countries. The students

learned the basics of programming, or coding, for games such as Angry Birds. More jobs are being created that use computer science skills so this is a great way to help prepare our students. Students were encouraged to continue learning more using Khan Academy. A couple of students took on the challenge and have become more interested in Computer Science. Anyone can learn about coding by going to Code.org. Overall, I think the students had fun learning these new tools.

Students have access to Khan Academy at any time to help supplement instruction in math and science. Khan Academy is a free

program with supplemental instruction in a variety of subjects. My students can earn extra credit by completing lessons. I can track student progress and assign additional materials to help students. Check it out at [Khan Academy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org)

### **Somewhere** **By: Anya McCullough**

Homesickness for a place I've never known,  
A place somewhere beyond horizon lines.  
Forest paths through which the winds have  
blown-

A place beyond the churning seas of  
time...  
Where ancient voices speak along the  
breeze  
And flowers spring up underneath my  
feet,  
Where paths are made among wisteria  
trees  
And wand'ring hearts are made to feel  
complete.  
As human hearts go, mine was  
made to roam,  
And find within this earth my  
long-lost home.

### **Tataywei** **By Ariel Aman**

Working with Tataywei is such an amazing experience! She is a bay horse, and I absolutely love everything about her. We are working on riding without bucking, and getting her to trust me. I have been working with her since July, and plan to keep working with her. She is a great project, and I am so happy to get to work with her.

### **A Road Less Traveled** **By Ashley Wahl**

This is my 'essay' however, I'm just sharing a quote from Walt Whitman.

"Not I, nor anyone else can travel that road for you. You must travel it by yourself. It is not far. It is within reach. Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and did not know. Perhaps it is everywhere - on water and land."

— Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass

### **Skykomish** **By Justin Coors**

Six months are over now. There are four months left. Football is over, basketball is over, and finally we start the "real sport," soccer. Basketball was a really fun time. Both of the teams and the coaches did a really good job. I thought at the beginning of the season that I didn't like basketball. But after a while, I started to understand it and it was pretty nice to be on such a great team.

I'm really sad that we are already more than half way through the year. I made some really good friends and I will miss every single one of them a lot. The only thing I will not miss is the Washington weather. How can there be so much rain in one place?

### **River** **By Kitty Foster**

With all the stress and work that people have to do in their daily lives, people have to find something that they're passionate about. For me, that's working with a rescue horse named River. Her previous owners abused her and almost starved her to death. When I first started working with River she was terrified of

people and was pushed around by other horses because she was too scared to stand up for herself. Over the last few months that I've been working with her, I've gotten her to trust people again and build confidence in herself. Although it was a lot of work to get her to trust me, and it would have been easy to just give up on her, I didn't. The connection that I have built with River has been worth the hard work and time I've put in. I encourage everyone to find the one thing they're passionate about, because even on your worst days there is always that one thing that will brighten your day.

## **Skykomish**

### **By Santos Garcia Rosado**

I can't believe my exchange school year is almost over. It looks like I got to Sky just a few weeks ago, but the truth is that I've been here for more than 6 months. I can't believe how many new experiences I've lived in these few months.

I played football for 3 months. This sport is unknown in my country, and it looks like a completely crazy sport. But once you play it, it is an awesome sport!

During winter I played basketball, another sport that wasn't very exciting at first for me, but I found out that I was pretty good at it and I really enjoyed playing it. I can't believe how much I am missing these sports now that I know that I probably won't play them again.

I just have 4 more months left in Sky, and I can't believe how fast the time runs in this little town. I just have one more sport left, soccer, but it is a sport that I've been playing my whole life. I am pretty good at it, so it won't be something new for me. After all my time here, I will really miss this community.

## **Preschool News:**

We have been very busy in the preschool room! Our young learners are really enthusiastic about learning and making friendships. Through play, young children learn to communicate, problem solve, explore and challenge themselves mentally and physically.

The weather in Skykomish has been wonderful, which has given us the opportunity to have a lot of outside time. Our bulbs are coming up in the garden, we planted flowers and the strawberries are coming back to life, it is fun to watch! We recently have been exploring wind through our new garden decorations, the kids love them.

The preschool has some exciting field trips coming up a little later in spring, including a trip to the Children's Museum in Everett and the ferry trip from Edmonds to Kingston then back to Edmonds beach where we search for sea life and explore. Both will be great learning opportunities as well as great family fun.

We are already in the process of thinking about next year and will begin registration in March for preschool in the fall of 2015. Children must be three by August 31st of the school year. If you have questions about preschool or would like to schedule an appointment for registration please call Edie Hartz at 360-677-2623 ext. 233.

"It is in playing and only in playing, that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self."

- D.W. Winnicott, British Pediatrician 1896-1971

## Measles

“From January 1 to January 28, 2015, 84 people from 14 states were reported to have measles, a highly contagious respiratory virus which was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000. Most of these cases are part of a large, ongoing outbreak linked to an amusement park in California. Measles is a vaccine-preventable disease.”

This statement from the CDC explains a little more about the hype going on with the measles, but only 84 cases seems pretty small, right? It helps to look at how many cases we have seen in the U.S. in the past years since the discovery of the vaccine, to get an idea of the magnitude of the situation. Going from zero to 84 is an 84% increase in one month. Now that is a large difference! That, combined with the fact that it is traveling rapidly, crossing over 14 states, makes it a big deal.

But what to do with the information now? The easiest and most sure way of preventing a measles infection is to get vaccinated. Research done in Washington State has shown that getting 2 MMR vaccinations has a 99% success rate of being immune to the measles. Avoiding contact with anyone who might have been exposed or who has the disease will help prevent infection as well.

If you need help getting a vaccination or you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at [jdumont@skykomish.wednet.edu](mailto:jdumont@skykomish.wednet.edu).

Joy Dumont, Skykomish School Nurse

## Solo and Ensemble Music Competition

(Kimberly McCullough)

Anya McCullough represented our school at the Solo and Assemble contest in Everett on February 7, 2015. She sang a soprano piece – Pie Jesu from Gabriel Faure’s Requiem. This was the first time she has competed in this type of competition. Students are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being distinguished. Anya scored a level 2 (excellent). This was a wonderful opportunity – thanks to Mr. Dempsey for all of the hard work to get her into this competition.

## Career Guidance Award of Excellence 2015

Skykomish School has received the distinct honor of being one on 46 schools recognized by the state for our Career Guidance Program (Navigation 101). This is a tremendous honor for all of our staff, who help to provide guidance to our students in preparation for life after high school. According to the state, schools receiving this award, “take advantage of resources available through Career Guidance WA to maintain high standards and a clear process for college and career readiness. Their goal: every student ready for career, college and life.” Congratulations Skykomish!

Kimberly McCullough, Navigation  
Coordinator