

John Wetten still visits his namesake school

John Wetten retired as principal 25 years ago, but he’s still working with students at the Gladstone elementary school named in his honor. Wetten started his career as a fifth grade teacher in the school in 1956 before serving as vice principal. He then served as principal from 1972 to 1992.

“Mr. Wetten comes to the school three or four times a year and works with a pair of students to make bread boards,” explained school secretary Linda Alberico. “He brings the supplies and talks to the kids about what they like, then helps them create a bread board that highlights their interest. When they are done, he writes a letter to the parents and attaches it to the back.”

This fall, Wetten worked with fourth graders Nate Seymour and Carson Morrow. Nate created a bread board showing his love of baseball. Carson’s demonstrates his love of bacon.

"Carson very excitedly pulled his cutting board out of his backpack," said his mother Ashley Morrow. "He was so excited to tell me all about the process and surprise me. What a special memory he will now have of Mr. Wetten."

She has her own special memories of Mr. Wetten. "I actually went to John Wetten Elementary over 25 years ago and I remember going on a field trip to Mr. Wetten’s farm after he had retired," she said. "Mr. Wetten was also my mother’s fifth grade teacher at Gladstone Elementary. How fun that so many generations in our family now have lasting memories of him."

PHOTO: Former principal John Wetten returns to his namesake school in Gladstone to work with students a few times each year.

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PHOTO: Gladstone students honored first responders, presenting a banner at the homecoming football game. The banner was signed by students from Kraxberger Middle School, John Wetten Elementary, and Gladstone High School.

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Gladstone schools expand classroom technology

A dramatic increase in classroom technology is one of the biggest education changes in Gladstone schools over the past four years. First the district sought strategic advice from a team of 40 community members and staff who created a plan for the district’s technology infrastructure, staff training needs, and educational best practices for technology in the classroom.

Since fall 2014, Chromebooks have become the most widely used technology tool, with nearly 1300 devices spread across the district. These affordable laptop computers enable secondary students to do Internet research, and also to use cloud-based software for writing, creating graphs, and sharing documents for group projects. Elementary students use them for instruction in weekly technology classes.

“It’s important that students and teachers harness the unique opportunities technology provides rather than just using it to replace paper and pencils,” said Gladstone High Spanish teacher Brad Kuntz. “This takes extra time and effort, training, experimenting, and creativity.”

Another tool used in Gladstone classrooms is the iPad, with about 130 devices spread across the four schools. Most iPads are used with special education students. In kindergarten and at John Wetten elementary, their use is focused on reading and math activities. At Gladstone High, students use them for research and accessing documents in the Google drive.

“Teachers and students alike appreciate their ease of use and versatility,” said Technology and Communication Specialist Jo Strong. “Using Google docs and Google classroom makes assignments easy to share with teachers and classmates so printing costs are reduced.”

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Northwest Family Services honored for school partnership

Northwest Family Services CEO Rose Fuller accepted the *Growing Great People Award* from Gladstone Schools for the organization’s long-term partnership with the district.

“The non-profit provides several services in Gladstone Schools,” said Lennie Bjornsen, director of student and family supports. “Their focus is stabilizing families, providing support and enrichment to at-risk middle school students, and reducing teen drug use.”

The organization provides two Family Resource Coordinators -- one at the GCCF and one at Kraxberger Middle School. They serve as social service navigators, helping families connect with resources for housing, jobs, education, transportation, and health care.

Their PreventNet program at Kraxberger provides group sessions for at-risk girls and boys as well as the KAOS after school and summer enrichment programs, including a soccer camp.

Northwest Family Services also funds an alcohol & drug counselor who works one-on-one with secondary students during the school day.

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Gladstone High robotics team wins grant

Gladstone High School’s robotics team has been awarded a grant of \$1,500 from the Oregon Department of Education. Led by School Board member Steve Stewart, the team annually hosts FIRST Fair, the nation’s largest robotics conference. Last year they placed second among 31 teams in a state competition, and this month the girls team took second in a competition with 20 teams from across the Portland area.