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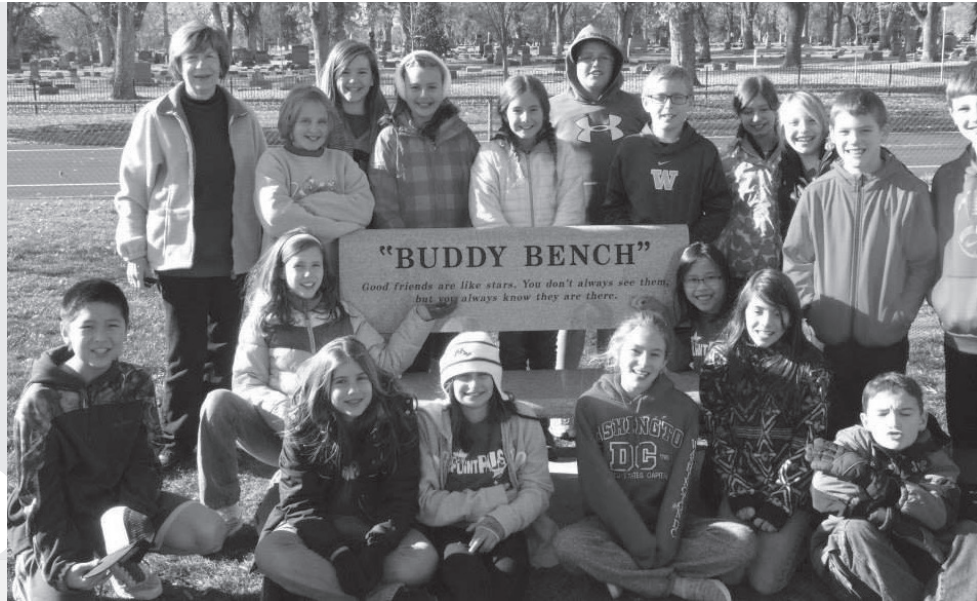
**Focus on Education**

Is a community newsletter published tri-annually by Walla Walla Public Schools.

**Walla Walla Public Schools**

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**Buddy Bench**

Many thanks to Prospect Point grandparents Tish and Tye Watts for donating a "Buddy Bench" for the 3rd and 5th grade playground. The Buddy Bench concept provides a special place where students can sit if they are feeling bored or lonely. Other students can then go to the bench and ask them if they would like to play or talk. The bench is helping to foster student friendships.

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**Walla Walla Public Schools**  
**Focus on Education**

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**Community Pride**  
Schneidmiller to co-chair facilities study

Longtime local business owner Paul Schneidmiller learned the value of hard work during his junior high school days employed at World Wide Travel Service. He would take out the garbage, clean office spaces and do whatever task necessary to support the business during these years. In 1970, he graduated from Walla Walla High School and attended the University of Washington with a vision of becoming a school teacher. In fact, he had a job offer from the Castle Rock School District as soon as he finished college. His heart remained

*"This community and school district have been so good to my family, the natural thing to do is give back."*

**-Paul Scheidmiller**

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*"Our Core Values are more than mere words; they're our business!"*

- Quality**
- Integrity**
- Accountability**
- Respect**
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- Innovation**
- Diversity**



# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE...



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Superintendent

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## Legislative session on district radar

“Numerous educational issues are on the agenda in Olympia as the 2015-17 biennium gets underway. School funding is at the core of these conversations. The McCleary vs. Washington decision remains tenuous and the November 2014 voter-approved Initiative 1351 puts additional pressure on our elected officials to further fund our public schools.

Our Constitution states it is the state's “paramount duty” to amply fund basic education. In January 2012, the state Supreme Court upheld this concept in its McCleary v. Washington decision. The primary argument in the lawsuit is school districts across the state are being forced to rely too heavily on local levies to fund their basic education programs.

I support and request the implementation by our legislators for full funding of ESHB 2261 and SHB 2776 which define the state's “Program of Basic Education” and the funding amounts and methods needed. I also believe our state needs to fully fund special education. Currently,

nearly \$1 million annually are used from our local levy to fund special education.

State Superintendent Randy Dorn recommends full state funding for transportation; materials, supplies and operating costs; and full-day kindergarten. He is also pushing for funding to lower class sizes (17 students per teacher maximum) in grades K-3. Dorn has also called for full state funding of the salaries of current educational staff and adequate state funding for enhanced levels of educational staff and increased salaries.

Initiative 1351 sets the limit of students per class and calls for full funding by the end of the 2017-19 biennium.

These are critical issues to address. I, as well as our school board, will remain in close contact with our elected officials as we work together in finding solutions to best meet the needs of our students.”

## Lincoln Dominance Parade Float wins again

Lincoln High School earned top honors for the 6th consecutive year in the Holiday Parade of Lights. Jeremy Gradwohl, Jane Eacker, Americorp staff, and students created a Magical Muppets Holiday.



## High demand jobs focus of new director

*“Each of these CTE programs will enable students to choose their career path, whether this is to the military, workforce, trade/technical school, community college, or a four-year university.”*

Dennis Matson is committed to helping students find jobs in a career they are passionate about. His vision as director of the district's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program centers on employment.

“Our Career Technical Education (CTE) Program will evolve into a system that will provide students with career opportunities in high demand, high wage industries,” Matson said. “Students will take a sequence of courses related to a career field that will provide them with the knowl-

edge, skills, and education necessary for success.”

Prior to coming to Walla Walla a year ago, Matson was principal at Newport High School, Newport, WA. His career also includes stints as a Marketing and Business Education teacher and CTE Director at Deer Park School District and 15 years of experience in private sales, marketing and management.

Matson said there will be changes to existing course offerings and programs during this transition. He will work with staff and students and use data to help drive these decisions.

“This is not a new concept; many of us use Google Maps to help guide us when we are unsure which is the best route to get to our destination,” Matson said. “This is what Career Pathways do: list the scope and sequence of courses enabling students to plan their education.”



“Career pathways will provide our students with a road map to achieve their career goals. They show learners of all ages which courses will give them the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to pursue their career choice.”

*Dennis Matson*  
Career & Technical Education  
Programs Director

### Continued from page 1 - Paul Scheidmiller

in Walla Walla, so he worked with former World Wide Travel Service owners San and Harriet Sherman to purchase the business.

“They didn't have children of their own and we had a very close relationship,” said Schneidmiller. “I began the process of buying the business in 1976 with a five to six year transition period.”

Paul married Jody and they have four grown daughters who all attended Walla Walla Public Schools. He has been involved in three Maintenance and Operations levies as a co-chair and was actively involved in the Green Park and Sharpstein bond campaigns. Paul also served his community as a Port of Walla Walla Commissioner.

Now he has agreed to co-chair the district's Community Facilities Task Force with district Business Services Director Ted Cohan. This group studies district facility needs and

makes recommendations to the school board regarding improvements.

“This community and school district have been so good to my family, the natural thing to do is give back,” said Schneidmiller. “We need to invest in quality school facilities in Walla Walla to provide our children the best education possible.”

Schneidmiller replaces long-time co-chair Dan Reid who led the Task Force for two decades and helped get several school facility improvement projects completed.

“Dan Reid did an amazing job with the Task Force and I can't thank him enough for all he has done for our community,” Schneidmiller said.

The Task Force is set to meet this winter and begin planning. Schneidmiller says community involvement and input will be critical throughout the process.



# Common Core

## Monahan steps out of the classroom to support teachers

Casey Monahan is taking her 17 years of teaching experience on the road in Walla Walla this year to help prepare teachers for the Smarter Balanced Assessments set to be used this spring for the first time to test understanding of the new Common Core State Standards. Monahan is on a leave of absence from her English teaching position at Walla Walla High School this year to enhance district professional development.

"I'm listening to teachers to grasp their understanding of Common Core and provide support in areas where they need more information and materials," Monahan said. "I work with teachers to develop effective strategies to help students meet these new learning targets."

The district has been preparing for the Common Core State Standards for years, but it has become more urgent now with this year's assessment factor. As a local



(L-R) Casey Monahan reviews Common Core State Standards with Green Park teacher Amy Hartford.

teacher, Monahan understands the pressure district educators are feeling.

"I'm working to forge relationships and gain trust," Monahan said. "The Common Core State Standards are a positive step to help students prepare for college and career readiness. It's just a matter of working together to be successful."

# Ballet Folklorico

Successful fundraiser supports dance program



Shakespeare Walla Walla Executive Director Ron Williams presents a check for \$2200 to Board President Sam Wells and Ballet Folklorico coach Norma Arceo. The funds were raised through successful shows at the GESAPower House Theatre this fall in support of Hispanic Heritage Month. The funds will help purchase dresses and other equipment for the program.

## Whitman student receives AVID internship

Whitman College Senior Molly Emmett has been awarded the 2015 Spring Internship Grant from Whitman College. Emmett will work for Walla Walla Public Schools with a specific focus on the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program.

"We are so fortunate to have a dedicated position which will exclusively support AVID and whose primary focus is to develop alternate sources of funding for the AVID program in Walla Walla," said Sue Weber, WWPS AVID Coordinator.

Emmett will research and write grants, develop partnerships and promote the AVID program.

AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college.



Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors has established the School Board Forum to respond to questions and issues from the community.

Q.

What action has the school board taken to encourage more in-depth discussion and public input during board meetings?

A.

During the second school board meeting of the month, directors will adjourn the meeting following the business portion of the agenda. The board of directors will relocate from the school board podium and reconvene at the public tables to discuss a variety of issues. This meeting format change is aimed at providing more opportunities for dialog and communications surrounding today's complex educational issues. The school board also schedules special public work sessions as needed throughout the year to address topics in greater detail.

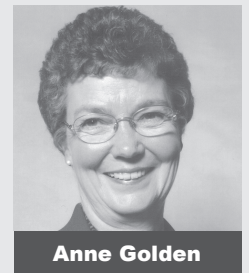
Q.

How can I learn about upcoming board meetings?

A.

The district website is your best resource. School board information is available at [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org) under the district information tab. The meeting dates are posted on the district's events calendar and we also post meeting agendas and supporting documents related to the upcoming meeting. This information is generally posted on the Monday before a Tuesday school board meeting. We also archive the minutes from previous school board meeting. This open communication is another step to maintain transparent district operations.

Email your questions to School Board President Sam Wells at: [swells@wwps.org](mailto:swells@wwps.org)



Anne Golden



Sam Wells



Cindy Meyer



David Hampson



Ruth Ladderud

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## District becoming Google leader in the valley

*Google for Education program opens the door for technology in the classroom*

Walla Walla Public Schools has introduced the use of Google Apps for Education to support 21st Century learning. Last school year, the district conducted a system-wide technology needs assessment.

The study addressed current and future technology needs. The process led to pilot programs which are now leveraging the district's existing Google domain through the promotion of new online Google tools.

"This Google solution allows for easy collaboration

and flexible access for every student and teacher," said Forrest Baker, district technology director. "The successful pilot of Chromebooks is another tool that offers an affordable, portable, and easy-to-use device option for students and teachers in their use of Google Apps and other online resources."

Baker says the district goal is to provide good technology tools that engage, empower, and enhance student learning with the concept of access to education resources any time, from any place, on any device.



*"Google Apps for Education offers valuable tools for all our students and teachers that support access to our education resources any time, from any place, on any device."*

**Forrest Baker**  
Technology Director

Google for Education

### Google enhances WWPS education

- Online Google classrooms
- 620 new Chromebooks in 2014
- Individual Student Google Accounts
- Free Google training
- State assessment support
- Common Core State Standards
- Quick assessment feedback

## Principal of Distinction

Chris Gardea earns regional honors

Prospect Point Elementary Principal Chris Gardea was recently selected Distinguished Elementary Principal for the Lake Wallula Region for 2014. Gardea is now eligible for the National Distinguished Principal award to be decided next fall.

Nominators said Chris Gardea is a visionary, goal-oriented and focused on closing the achievement gap. His nominators went on to say he has experience with coordinating school-wide efforts and promoting instructional change through the implementation of the Common Core State Standards with elementary math curriculum.

Gardea is technology savvy and is an expert with Google for Education computer applications.



### Final push for Wa-Hi track donations

Class of 1983 graduate Scott Krivoshein is leading a private campaign to raise funds for a new all-weather track at Wa-Hi. Krivoshein reports a final push is needed from the community to secure the necessary funds to replace the 50-year-old cinder track.

He is hoping to complete the fundraising by April so construction can begin this summer. The existing track can no longer be used for track and field or physical education classes. Each year the district spends \$8,000 transporting student-athletes to and from Martin Field for track practices and meets.

**Donations** - Make checks payable to:

- Big Blue Boosters Track Fund
- 6 E. Alder Suite 307

## District students to test knowledge of new Common Core State Standards this spring

By Dr. Linda Boggs

Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment



Along with 42 other states, Washington has adopted the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts and Math. The actual adoption took place in 2011 and since then, teachers across the state have gradually been adjusting their teaching practices and curriculum to better align with what the Common Core asks of students.

The Common Core State Standards increase Washington State's already-high expectations for student

learning. Our students have been near the top compared to other states on tests like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and ACT, a college entrance exam, because we've had high expectations, and our students have risen to the challenge.

Washington State students are well-prepared for the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. This spring, students across the country will be tested for the first time on their

*"Passing scores on the SBAC indicate students are on track to be ready for credit-bearing college courses when they graduate from high school."*

attainment of the Common Core State Standards using the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). These tests will be delivered 100% online, and we will have results within a couple of weeks.

Passing scores on the SBAC indicate students are on track to be ready for credit-bearing college courses when they graduate from high school. In fact, community, technical and four-year colleges across Washington state will accept passing SBAC scores for access to college-level courses. This is a very big deal: We'll have some idea as early as 3rd grade whether a student is on the path to career and college readiness. This gives us time to provide supports to struggling district students.

Even so, results from this spring's testing will likely show

*"We will never use the results of one mandated assessment, given on one day, to decide what's best for kids."*

fewer students meeting these new, higher, benchmarks than have been passing the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) and High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) in recent years. In fact, pass rates are expected to be similar to those seen when the WASL, Washington state's first assessment, was implemented in 1997.

In that year, just over 40% of Walla Walla's 4th graders met standard in reading, and a scant 16% met standard in math (comparable to the Washington State averages). We've made huge strides since that time. We anticipate similar growth over the next few years in our students' achievement as measured by the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

With all these changes, key factors will stay the same. We always have, and we always will, take many things into account as we make important decisions for our students. We will never use the results of one mandated assessment, given on one day, to decide what's best for students. We will always strive to provide meaningful, rigorous educational experiences. We will continue to support all of Walla Walla's children to be ready for whatever life holds in store for them after high school.

Our teachers are amazing, our students are bright and capable, our community supports its schools, and we are ready for the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Consortium Assessments.

### Questions or Concerns

• Visit our Common Core webpage:  
[www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

• Contact Dr. Linda Boggs:  
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