

## Board of Directors:

Anne Golden  
Dr. David Hampson  
Ruth Ladderud  
Cindy Meyer  
Sam Wells

# BOARD



## Focus on Education

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

## Walla Walla Public Schools

364 South Park Street  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
509.529.7713 (FAX)  
509.527.3000  
website: [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all the requirements of the ADA.



## Youth of the Month

Lincoln High School seniors Hunter Degerness and Adrianna "Anna" May received the Exchange Club of Walla Walla Youth of the Month awards this spring.

Hunter is a talented musician who excels in math and English. He plans to attend WWCC next year. Anna is an accomplished artist and has won several awards for her art. She plans to attend WWCC next year and then transfer to Pacific Northwest College of Art. Her hope is to someday open her own gallery.

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362  
Permit No. 35



Walla Walla Public Schools

# Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Spring 2015 | Volume 17 | Issue 3



## Inside This Issue:

- End of Year Celebrations **2**
- District Office Reorganization **3**
- Volunteers of the Year **4**
- School Board Forum **5**
- Recovery High School **6**
- Green Park Buddy Bench **7**
- Youth of the Month **8**

## CONTENTS

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

**Quality**  
**Integrity**  
**Accountability**  
**Respect**  
**Courtesy**  
**Innovation**  
**Diversity**

## Math Counts

### Wa-Hi math program supports STEM jobs

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math -- better known as STEM -- continue to create job opportunities for skilled workers. Walla Walla High School offers a rich math curriculum to help students gain the skills necessary to be competitive in today's job market.

Wa-Hi's Math Department offers 13 specific math courses and the Career and Technical Education program has additional applied math opportunities for students.

*"About seven out of 10 new careers will require a STEM education and STEM is all based on mathematics."*

**Ty McEuen**  
Wa-Hi Math Chair

*continued on page 7 ■ ■ ■*

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE...



**Bill Jordan**  
Superintendent

Direct Line:  
526.6714

Email:  
bjordan@wwps.org

Website  
www.wwps.org

“As we approach the end of another amazing school year, it's time to thank our students, parents and staff for supporting our mission of preparing students for college and careers. Soon our more than 400 seniors will be entering a new chapter in their lives where they will rely on the skills we helped hone over the past 13 years. This foundation was built over time with the support of our entire community. It truly is a time of celebration.

The work in the school district moves on however as we continue developing the budget for 2015-2016. We are also entering our busiest hiring time of the year and are preparing summer school programs for many of our students.

The school board recently approved a two-year waiver of State Board of Education's new credit requirements for the Class of 2019. The new minimum requirement is 24 credits, up from the current 20 credit state mandate.

The WWPS minimum credit requirement is 22, but we still felt it was important to have two additional years for implementation. The two year waiver pushes the impact back to this year's 6th graders. Now we will have adequate time to develop curriculum and review our master schedules, especially at Lincoln High School.

The Legislative front remains a moving target. Both the House and Senate budgets have been passed and include efforts to address district reliance on local levies. It appears additional funds will be available for special education, full day kindergarten, supplies and lower class size. However, we need to keep in mind, lower class size puts additional stress on facilities and the need for more support around our teachers. Our legislature must provide the funds in the capital budget for additional classrooms if we are to reduce class size.

I hope to see you during the summer. Be sure to say hi and know we value your continued support.”

## Join Us!

*Public invited to end of year celebrations and academic recognitions*

### Opportunity Program Graduation

• Thursday, June 4 / During school day / Opportunity Program (1917 E. Isaacs Ave.)

### Lincoln High School Graduation

• Thursday, June 4 / 6 p.m. / Marcus Whitman Hotel

### Walla Walla High School Commencement

• Friday, June 5 / 7 p.m. / Commons Grounds

### Pioneer Middle School 8th Grade Recognition

• Wednesday, June 10 / 7 p.m. / Walla Walla High School Gym

### Garrison Middle School 8th Grade Recognition

• Thursday, June 11 / 7 p.m. / Walla Walla High School Gym

## Buddy Bench

Green Park Elementary strives to promote kindness

A beautiful green bench has found its home at Green Park Elementary after staff, students and PTA leaders organized a dedication ceremony this spring for this new addition to the school. A “Buddy Bench” is now permanently housed at Green Park to help students who are feeling lonely find a friend to play with at school. Students simply sit on

the bench to alert their classmates. The intent with this strategy is to help improve school climate and reduce bullying. The Green Park PTA funded the project. SEA-TECH students in James Polson's Advanced Manufacturing and Welding class designed and built the bench at cost. It will be placed on the playground on the southside of the school.



“We have an autism and life skills program here so this is a terrific tool for all students to communicate their needs without talking. It is a great addition to our school and an opportunity to make a difference.”

**Cyndy Knight**  
PTA President

### Continued from page 1 - Wa-Hi Math prepares students for STEM careers

Three out of four Walla Walla High School students take four years of math as they prepare for careers in biology, chemistry, engineering, computer science and other technological fields.

Students in Washington state are required to take three years of math to graduate. Walla Walla High School Mathematics Department Chair Ty McEuen says to be successful in the rigorous math program at Wa-Hi it requires a commitment from all parties involved.

“It not only takes the student working hard, but also the staff members

around them, their families and the additional supports we have on campus outside of the math class,” said McEuen. “We have a grades 6 to 12 mathematics pathway developed in our district to chart a course for all students to meet these high stakes challenges.”

McEuen says the new Common Core State Standards and more rigorous Smarter Balanced state exams further continue to challenge staff to find creative ways to help students learn.

“Our students are benefiting from our focus on math,” said McEuen. “Wa-Hi offers a pathway for all students.”

### Wa-Hi Math Classes

- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Honors Geometry
- Algebra II
- Honors Algebra II
- Collection of Evidence
- Algebra II w/Trigonometry
- Statistics
- Pre-Calculus
- Honors Pre-Calculus
- Financial Algebra
- Advanced Placement Calculus A/B
- Advanced Placement Calculus B/C

NOTE: 300 Wa-Hi seniors are enrolled in a math class.



## Art Regier Volunteers of the Year



In celebration of Volunteer Appreciation Month, Walla Walla Public Schools is proud to announce Darrell and Von Gomsrud, Donna Chapin, Linda Clark, Jean Gibbs, and Linda Arms as the district's 2014-2015 Art Regier Volunteers of the Year. Volunteers of the Year were selected based on exceptional service, unusual dedication and compassion.

PHOTO L-R: Sam Wells, Jean Gibbs, Donna Chapin, Linda Arms, Linda Clark and Dr. Bill Jordan. Not present: Darrell and Von Gomsrud.

### State recognizes Walla Walla High School for strong gains in reading and math

Walla Walla High School is a recipient of the 2014 Washington Achievement Award for the fifth consecutive year for high progress in math and reading. Washington Achievement Award winners are selected using the State Board of Education Revised Achievement Index and are based on statewide assessment data for the three previous years.

"This award reflects the dedication our staff puts forth every day to improve our students education and their futures," said Principal Pete Peterson. "This simply reinforces we will continue to make improvements in our instruction and do everything to make sure all students graduate college and career ready."



## Volunteers create Berney garden



Berney Elementary students have a school garden thanks to a volunteer effort to build raised beds and prepare the soil for planting. Teacher Lori Thomas is the Berney Garden coordinator.

PHOTO: Project coordinator parent Joy Bader. She is excited about the learning opportunities the school garden will offer to Berney students.

## Donations fund new dresses for Ballet Folklorico



The Pioneer Middle School Ballet Folklorico group shows off their new dresses purchased this spring thanks to successful shows at the GESA Power House Theatre in support of Hispanic Heritage Month. Fifteen dresses were bought as well as outfits for the boys in the program.

School Board...

Proud to serve our community.

...Forum

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

**Q. Why did you vote to approve a waiver to delay the new state graduation requirements for two years?**

**A.** The State Board of Education is increasing the number of credits required to graduate to 24, up from the previous state requirement of 20 credits. Our district currently requires 22 credits to graduate. The new high school graduation requirements are set to take place for the Class of 2019. Walla Walla Public Schools is seeking a two year waiver which will impact the Class for 2021, this year's 6th grade students.

We anticipate losing 300 plus students over the course of the next three years as College Place High School comes on board. Our staffing will be reduced accordingly and this additional two years will allow adequate planning time for this transition. A waiver will also allow the school board time to explore and implement more opportunities for students to earn high school credit. These include options such as College in the High School, adoption of new courses, offering high school level courses in the middle school, as well as time to further develop Career and Technical Education equivalencies within our high school curricula.

Delaying the implementation will also allow our district to provide professional development to our teaching and counseling staff. The waiver allows us to develop a comprehensive communication plan to share the new graduation requirements with students, families and the community.

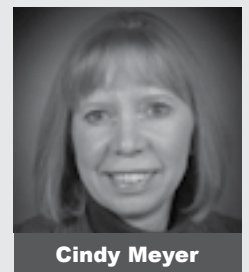
Email your questions to School Board President Sam Wells at: [swells@wwps.org](mailto:swells@wwps.org)



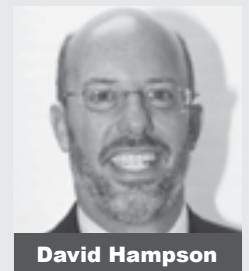
Anne Golden



Sam Wells



Cindy Meyer



David Hampson



Ruth Ladderud

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## Opportunity Program

Alternative pathway for earning diploma

Choices abound in the 21st Century and it is no different for public education. Opportunity Program provides student another option for completing their high school education. Located at 1917 E. Isaacs Ave, Opportunity Program currently serves 129 students at its off campus Eastgate location. This program offers students a flexible schedule to meet their personal needs, one-on-one in-



Opportunity Program teacher Jerry Quaresma reviews an assignment with student Kayla Garcia. This year 40 seniors are scheduled to graduate through the Opportunity Program.

"We are here to help and do whatever it takes to ensure students graduate from high school,"

Tom Porter, Opportunity Teacher



struction and opportunities to accelerate earning credits. Currently, 40 seniors in the program are on pace to graduate in June.

"I have more time to myself here and there aren't as many distractions," said student Trevor Harris. "I'm able to focus and get my work done so I can graduate."

Opportunity Program serves students ages 14 to 21, especially targeting 5th and 6th year seniors. It also works well for homeschool students who are transitioning to high school. Students have individualized learning plans and spend part of their school experience at the program site and the rest of the academic time studying on their own at home.

### Information:

- Tom Porter - tporter@wwps.org
- (509) 526-2057

## Recovery High School

Trilogy helps students address addictions

Trilogy is working in partnership with Walla Walla Public Schools to provide a program for students who want to stay clean and sober. Recovery High School allows students to meet at Trilogy daily for part of their school day. They complete their academic studies at Lincoln High School and participate in community internship programs. Recovery High School requires a minimum of a nine week commitment and parents must sign off on the program.

"Recovery High School provides students an opportunity to have a future and affords them the chance to experience hope."

Luis Rosales, Trilogy Director



Luis Rosales and Megan McGavock are coordinating Recovery High School at Trilogy. Thus far the program has served 10 students who have substance abuse issues. Students meet as a group to learn about specific drugs, understand addiction and develop a plan for their future. Rosales says living with addiction is a lifelong issue and students need ongoing support to be successful.

## District office reorganization supports learning

Education reform measures like No Child Left Behind, Common Core State Standards, Smarter Balanced Assessments and a more rigorous teacher evaluation model are spurring the district to put more resources into teaching and learning.



Laure Quaresma



Chris Gardea

As a result, after serving five years as Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, Laure Quaresma is transferring to the position of Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Quaresma will direct the district's Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project, new teacher induction programs and principal support functions. Quaresma will also be responsible for researching, developing and implementing innovative programs to support academic achievement.

Prospect Point Elementary Principal Chris Gardea will replace Quaresma as the Executive Director of Human Resources. Gardea has been principal at Prospect Point since 2008. He also has experience in the district office as the former Director of Math and he co-

"These leaders understand our philosophy of basing all decisions on what is best for students."

Superintendent Dr. Bill Jordan

chaired the district's boundary adjustment following the successful Edison Elementary construction project.

In another district office leadership move, Dr. Tracy Williams will assume the permanent position of Director of Curriculum. Williams has been serving as Interim Director of Special Education. Williams will direct the district's Bilingual, Title One and Learning Assisted Programs (LAP) and other grant programs. Williams has been in education for 32 years in various teaching and leadership positions. The Special Education Director position remains unfilled at present.



Dr. Tracy Williams

## Bledsoe homecoming supports youth



The 2015 Inaugural Celebrate Junior Achievement Breakfast was held this spring at the Reid Center on the campus of Whitman College. Walla Walla High School graduate and former NFL quarterback Drew Bledsoe was the keynote speaker. Pioneer Middle School student Katelyn Pitzer and Wa-Hi sophomore Poppy Small also addressed the packed ballroom about how Junior Achievement has had a positive impact on their school experiences. Pioneer Middle School Assistant Principal Ron Higgins is a JA Board member and challenged the group to empower the future by supporting Junior Achievement.

"I consider it a privilege to have grown up in Walla Walla," Bledsoe said. "There are so many people who cared about me as I was growing up and to be able to come back and be part of this community again is a great feeling."

Photo L-R: Ron Higgins, Katelyn Pitzer, Poppy Small and Drew Bledsoe.