

## Queen guitarist salutes Pioneer student's LEGO music video

### Brian May compares video to work of Spielberg

A Pioneer Middle School 7th grade student has a rock n' roll Hall of Fame admirer. Queen Guitarist **Dr. Brian May** recently saluted **Peter Tucker's** animated LEGO music video on his personal website.

Set to the group's legendary song Bohemian Rhapsody, May compared Tucker's work to famous filmmakers such as Disney and Spielberg. "I began to listen to Queen music in the springtime, and soon, I became a fan," Tucker said. I had seen some LEGO videos on the Internet, and I wanted to make my own. So I decided to merge LEGOs with my favorite band.

May heard about the video after his guitar strings supplier watched it and sent him the link. Thus far Tucker's six minute animated video has had thousands of online hits.

*"I pressed the button, expecting the usual mildly amusing nonsense ... but I reeled in shock watching this. This is a really great piece of art, and ought to win prizes. I laughed loud when it got to the middle bit. This is worthy of Spielberg, Matt and Trey ... Walt Disney ... Itchy and Scratchy!!!"*

**Dr. Brian May**, Queen Guitarist

(Note: This was not a school project. Tucker created this video at home, using his own equipment. Some scenes are intended for mature audiences.)  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_15G\\_tII38&mode=related&search](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_15G_tII38&mode=related&search)



Pioneer Middle School 7th grade student **Peter Tucker** works on a LEGOs set for his next computer animated music video.

Peter said he was in shock to hear that his favorite guitar player **Brian May** of Queen had praised his video.

Walla Walla  
Public  
Schools

# Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Fall 2007 | Volume 9 | Issue 1

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## Community joins high school study



Principal **Darcy Weisner** leads members of the district's High School Facilities Task Force on a tour of Walla Walla High School as part of a community supported study.

School board members have kept their promise to involve the community in a comprehensive study of the condition of high school facilities and how they support learning and programs.

More than 20 community members are serving on the High School Facilities Task Force Co-Chaired by School Board member **Cindy Meyer** and Nelson Irrigation employee **John Rowley**.

The task force formed in June and now members are working on sub-committees to narrow their focus of  
 See **Task Force** page 4

## Rubber hits the road -- New graduation requirements here

Fifteen years of education reform in the state have come down to new graduation requirements seniors in the Class of 2008 face this spring.

Walla Walla seniors must earn 22 local high school credits, pass the reading and writing portion of WASL (math and science delayed

until 2013) to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement, complete a culminating project, develop a 5th year plan and log volunteer hours if they are to walk with their classmates.

See **Class of 2008** page 6

## New Online Grades offers parents one-stop access

Parents with children in grades 6-12 now have instant access to their child's academic progress thanks to a new web-based system called *Online Grades*.

"While a number of teachers in the district have provided parents with similar access in the past, the *Online Grades* offers one-stop, grade checking" District Assessment Director **Ron Higgins** said.

"Parents with more than one student in a school, or parents who have students at both middle school and high school, will have a single access point to retrieve grades for all their middle school and high school students."

See **Online Grades** page 4



Please vote!  
November 6

## Walla Walla Public Schools

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It's simple! Just go to the *News and Events* area on the district website ([www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)) and sign up!

We'll e-mail you school closure announcements, news briefs and more, directly to the computer of your choice.

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Permit No. 35

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

Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect | Courtesy



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*"The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth."*

John F. Kennedy

## District focused on helping all children learn

School has begun and we are more focused than ever before on improving student achievement and providing opportunities for students.

This year we have made several administrative changes and have assembled an outstanding leadership team to meet our challenges.

This year's Class of 2008 seniors are held to the new state graduation requirements. We are working hard to help all students meet these rigorous standards so they can graduate.

Voters in November will have an opportunity to determine if school levy elections should be decided by a 50% + 1, simple majority. I encourage you to learn more about how levy dollars enhance public school programs.

We are moving ahead on Edison, studying high school facility issues and finding more ways to connect students to their learning. Thanks again for all your support!

*Richard B. Carter*

### What to look for this year

- Simple Majority for School Levy election on ballot -- November 6, 2007
- Four-year replacement M&O Levy election (Winter 2008)
- Edison construction project planning (Preparing for June 2008 groundbreaking)
- Boundary review/planning (To allow for more students at new Edison)
- Districtwide High School study



Just go to the News and Events area on the district website ([www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)) and sign up!

## New Edison Elementary conceptual designs on district website



Architects West continues to make progress on design work for the new Edison Elementary School. The latest conceptual designs are now posted online. ([www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org) -- click on Edison Construction Project)

### Edison Elementary Construction Schedule

(tentative -- subject to change)

- Building plans bid **Winter 2008**
- General contractor named **Spring 2008**
- Groundbreaking ceremony **Spring 2008**
- Site work/excavation begins **Spring 2008**
- Major construction begins **June 2008**
- New school opens **August 2009**

## Maintenance crews enhance schools

Summer 2007 Maintenance Projects at a glance:

### Berney Elementary

- Installed a wall on the stage to enclose Homelink classroom

### Blue Ridge Elementary

- Upgraded whiteboards

### Prospect Point Elementary

- Assisted with the installation of new playground equipment

### Garrison Middle School

- Installed a wall on the stage to enclose Band classroom

### Pioneer Middle School

- Built and installed office desks and counter for Administration Office

### Lincoln Alternative High School

- Converted 2nd floor classroom into principal's office
- Installed security cameras

### Walla Walla High School

- Remodeled S-15 for computer lab
- Remodeled Health Clinician's Clinic
- Upgraded "White House" to be ADA Compliant
- Removed lockers from four locker lobbies creating classroom space
- Installed security cameras

### Blue Devil Football KTEL 1490 AM

Don't miss a down of Wa-Hi Blue Devil football this season!

Tune to KTEL 1490 AM



## Community Connections

### McDonald Zaring sponsors sports schedules

Thanks to McDonald Zaring Insurance for being the sponsor of this year's Wa-Hi pocket sports schedules.

Partner Mark Thompson said McDonald Zaring has proudly served the community since 1932 and believes community involvement is at the core of his firm's beliefs and successes.

### Rep. Walsh dedicates new parent resource center

In September State Representative Maureen Walsh joined the staff and partners of the Washington State-Parent Information and Resource Center (WA-PIRC) to dedicate the region's second PIRC site at Blue Ridge Elementary School.

The Washington State-Parent Information and Resource Center has been established as part of a \$3.9 million grant allocated to Columbia Basin College Foundation by the U.S. Department of Education, with Educational Service District 123 serving as the Lead Agency for this program.

The WA-PIRC program strives to provide families with resources and information to better prepare their children for school.

Walla Walla Parent Center features:

- 8 computers w/printers (internet ready)
- Educational videos
- Books and brochures (parenting skills)
- Parenting classes and support groups



Representative Maureen Walsh says the new parent resource center is needed in Walla Walla.

### Lincoln students remember 9-11 victims



District Four Firefighter **Nick Loudermilk** shows a fire truck to Lincoln Alternative High School students **Josie Criswell**, **Colton Langworthy**, and **Mary Peery**.

The students visited Fire District 4 firefighters at their Howard Street fire station as a tribute to those lost during the 9-11 tragedy. They brought cookies and thank you cards to recognize them as our local heroes.

### Musical anti-bullying program set

“Life’s a Dance, Rhythm of a Caring Community,” is coming to the Walla Walla Community October 22 through 26.

Nationally recognized singers/songwriters **Monte Selby** and **Steve Seskin** will join a number of Walla Walla organizations and businesses and the Walla Walla Public Schools to help build community awareness about the issues of bullying and harassment.

Students at several Walla Walla schools will have the opportunity to meet with Seskin, who wrote the Grammy award-nominated song “Life’s a Dance,” and foremost educational entertainer Selby.

“We are very excited to bring a program of this quality and scope to the community,” Pioneer Principal **Dana Jones** said. The Pioneer staff has been instrumental in putting this program together for our students. We truly thank our community partners who are making such a positive program possible through donations of money, services and goods. ”

#### Life’s a Dance Community Concert

- Thursday, October 25 @ Cordiner Hall
- 6-8 p.m. / FREE

### New parent notification system to improve communications

In an effort to improve communications with parents and staff members, Walla Walla Public Schools has teamed with US NetCom to provide a new instant notification system.

This new service allows each school and the district office to send out telephone calls and e-mail messages to parents and staff in a matter of minutes.

#### How will the notification system be used?

- School activities/events reminders
- School and district level crisis/emergency information and instructions
- School delays/closures messages
- Safe Schools TipLine reporting
- Attendance calls to parents

#### Report threats on Safe Schools Tipline

Break the silence and help keep our schools safe. If you hear a threatening rumor, put a stop to it now. We take all threats very seriously. Call TipLine and report it anonymously. No one will know it’s you calling.

TipLine Telephone Number: **(509) 526-6789**

- Free
- Confidential
- Available 24/7

#### US NetCom Caller ID Telephone Number:

417-782-1996

The caller ID number that will come across parent/staff telephones during US NetCom Notification messages is 417-782-1996.

- Parents and staff are encouraged to answer these calls for important school information
- Parents/staff can call this number back to retrieve messages they may have missed

### Transportation scores perfect on inspection



The district’s Transportation Department recently received a perfect 100 percent score on its Washington State Patrol bus inspection.

Inspectors test lights, brakes, tires, safety equipment and more during this comprehensive inspection. No unsatisfactory marks were noted on the district’s entire bus fleet.

“In three years as a bus inspector, this was the best inspection I have been involved in,” Washington State Patrol Inspector **Michael McKnight** said in his recap report to the district.

Special thanks to Transportation Mechanic **Colter Mohny** for his dedication, experience and attention to detail to help the department meet this outstanding standard.

### Paine name change attempts to improve culture

Changes continue for the district’s alternative programs under the leadership of new Principal **Jim Sporleder** as school board members this summer unanimously approved changing the name of Paine Campus to Lincoln Alternative High School.

According to Sporleder, the name change will help create a new culture and climate at the school which headquarters the district’s alternative programs.

“One of the main challenges is to remove the label and perception that our students are the throw away kids,” Sporleder said. “However, with a structured environment wrapped around care, I think we can change the image and negative perception of our school.”

The school’s new mascot is the Phoenix.

#### Task Force continued from page 1

study. Sub-Committee work will continue throughout the fall. Each group will provide summary reports of their work and findings to the entire Task Force. Eventually the task force will make recommendations to school board members on future solutions for high school facilities needs.

#### High School Facilities Task Force Sub-Committee Assignments:

##### Facility Impact on Student Achievement

Rob Ahrens	Dick Cook	Jim Hayner
Linda Newcomb	Ruth Russo	Dave Warkentin

##### • College Place High School Issues

John Butenhoff	Lawson Knight	Everett Knudson
Ruth Ladderud	Mike Pettyjohn	

##### • Safety and Security Issues

Max Carrera	Clint Gabbard	James Payne
Jim Sanders	Carina Stillman	Nanqi You
Scott Krivoshein		

##### • Deferred Maintenance Issues

John Rowley	Jim McCarthy	Mindy Meyer
Jody Schneidmiller	LaDessa Smelcer	Cindy Widmer

#### Online grades continued from page 1

##### Online Grades Features

- 24/7 access to the system – Because the system is online, you are able to log-in at your convenience, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Provides support for communicating with teachers – The *Online Grades* system places teacher e-mail contact information just a click away. Parents are encouraged to have regular communication with teachers regarding their student’s progress in classes.

- Detailed information about a student’s grade – Parents get to know more than just a letter grade. Individual assignments that teachers place in their electronic grade book are displayed in *Online Grades*.

Visit *Online Grades* to get started:  
<https://resources.wwps.org/onlinegrades/parents>

## Sisters to lead Citizens for Schools



Sisters **Jennifer Northam** and **Katie Christianson** are set to lead the Citizens for Schools community organization to inform Walla Walla residents regarding the district's four-year, replacement M&O Levy set to be on the ballot later this winter. Northam and Christianson have children in the Walla Walla Public Schools.

"The children in public school right now are your next doctors, lawyers, plumbers, mental health professionals," Christianson said. "Public schools of excellent quality will be a reflection of Walla Walla as a whole and will help to demonstrate why it is that this is a community for families."

Class of 2008 continued from page 1

### Class of 2008 Graduation Assistance

*District strategies to help students meet new requirements*

Monitoring student status in earning one of the following options:

- Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA)
- Certificate of Academic Achievement options
- Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA)
- Diploma only

- Providing WASL preparation course for students who have not met the standard

- Assigning an adult advisor to each senior to help them prepare their Blueprint Senior Presentation (per culminating project requirement)

**NOTE:** Students have five state paid tries to pass the WASL. Students will only need to retake the portion(s) of the WASL they do not pass.

### Walla Walla High School above state average in all WASL subject areas

Results from the Spring 2007 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL testing) reveal areas of strength throughout the district and some areas in need of focus.

Wa-Hi 10th graders scored above state average in all subject areas (math, reading, writing, science) -- with science scores tops among Columbia Basin League schools. This year the district will continue to focus on math improvement and districtwide literacy efforts.

"There are many reasons to celebrate, however, there is still a lot of room for system-wide improvement in targeted academic areas," District Assessment Director Ron Higgins said.

#### Spring 2007 WASL Highlights:

- District 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade *science* scores are well above the state average. Wa-Hi science scores tops among the Columbia Basin League schools and districts.

- Wa-Hi 10<sup>th</sup> grade scores are above state average in *all subject areas*.

- Edison 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Berney 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade scores are above the state average in *all subject areas*, highlighted by 93% of the Berney 4<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting standard in *reading*.

- Prospect Point meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) -- 4<sup>th</sup> grade low-income math.

- Garrison and Pioneer 8<sup>th</sup> grade scores are near or above the state average in *all subject areas* with 8<sup>th</sup> grade *reading* being *significantly above* the state average.

#### Areas in need of focus:

- Primary and Intermediate math (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade) scores are below the state average.
- Reading scores dipped at a variety of grade levels and schools.

For a complete listing of the district's Spring 2007 WASL results, visit the state's "Report Card" website at: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>

## Simple Majority in hands of voters

*EHJR 4204 on ballot November 6*

### Questions & Answers – EHJR 4204

**How does Washington's current school levy system work?** Currently, local school levies must receive both a 60% supermajority approval and meet the 40% validation requirement to pass.

**What would EHJR 4204 do?** EHJR 4204 would amend the Washington State Constitution and would provide that a simple majority of voters (50% + 1) could authorize local school district levies. The amendment also removes the 40% election validation requirement for levy elections. It does NOT apply to school bond elections. EHJR 4204 will be on the November 6 ballot.

**What do school levies pay for?** Local levies support school needs. Our levy pays for approximately 14 percent of the District's operating budget. In Walla Walla, the M&O levy helps to support education programs and school operations such as:

- approximately 30 additional teachers
- approximately 50 additional non-certified staff
- school safety staff
- technology
- elementary music specialists
- health clinicians
- library-media specialists
- elementary physical education specialists
- school supplies
- building maintenance
- extra-curricular activities (athletics, music, drama, FFA)
- transportation for school activities

**What happens if school levies don't pass?** Some school levies have failed because they do not meet the supermajority requirement. Levy failures can result in budget cuts, which require program cuts, staff and/or teacher layoffs, and other disruptions.

Elections cost money. If school districts need to run a subsequent election for the same levy, it will take money away from educational programs. *It cost our district approximately \$40,000 to run the most recent levy election.*

**Do all types of levies require a supermajority to pass?** No, they do not. Regular tax levies do not require supermajority approval. Public hospital districts, metropolitan park districts, and other taxing jurisdictions can pass levies to operate hospitals, parks, and other facilities with a simple majority vote. School districts are held to the supermajority standard to pass a local levy.

### School Board Candidates

*Ballot Issue - November 6*  
Learn more at [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

**Roger Bairstow** (*Position 3: Running against Dr. Jim Lehmann*)  
Employer: Broetje Orchards Executive

"Having two school-aged children as students in the School District, I have a vested interest in the continued development of the District's vision and mission: to enable all children to achieve his or her full potential."

**Dr. Jim Lehmann** (*Position 3: Running against Roger Bairstow*)  
Employer: Faculty and Program Advisor/Coordinator, MSED On-line, School of Education, University of Wisconsin—Stout.

"Being an educator for all of my life, I feel I have a lot of experience that I can bring to the school board."

**Max Carrera**  
(*Position 4 - Running unopposed*)  
Employer: Statewide Recruiter for the Department of Corrections

"Having attended Walla Walla Schools, and a parent of three children attending Walla Walla Schools, I know what a quality school system we have in Walla Walla. I look forward to serving on the school board and being a part of the continued success."

**Anne Golden**  
(*Position 5 - Running unopposed*)  
- Longtime community volunteer

"After having served on the School Board for a number of years, I realize that I really do enjoy the responsibility. Making an educational difference for our students is very important to me."