

# West Point graduate assumes new mission

## New Wa-Hi Math teacher expects to use leadership and Civil Engineer training to help students learn

Vivian Glaeser is often asked how a West Point graduate on track for a life as a career Army Officer turned to teaching.



In fact, her father was a career Army officer and she married Randy, a career Army officer who most recently retired after serving as the Commanding Officer for the Corps of Engineers Walla Walla district. But with two children and a passion for family and learning, Vivian turned her focus to the classroom and teaching math and stepped away from the demands of the military.

She credits her military experiences for helping her develop strong leadership skills and team building strategies.

“An effective team is only successful if all members succeed, so each member has a vested interest in helping the team along,” she says. “I hope to create the same environment in my classroom by motivating my students to help each other succeed.”

Vivian also loves to sing and has been active in theater.

“Alone’ is almost never the best way to operate - effective teamwork will outperform anything I am capable of individually.”

**Vivian Glaeser**

*Reflecting on her experiences at West Point*

**Q - How will you use your military experiences to help Wa-Hi students learn?**

*A - I believe the military does a very good job of taking a group of diverse people and making them into an effective team. If everyone helps everyone succeed, there is less chance of students falling behind and failing.*

**Q - Why did teaching appeal to you?**

*A - Actually, I never considered teaching until my mother-in-law recommended it to me. She spent several years telling me I would love being a classroom teacher and should consider it as a second career. She was right. I love seeing the light go on in a student’s brain when they finally ‘get it.’*

**Q - What are you most excited about?**

*I am very excited about getting back in the classroom after a two year break. I am most excited that it is here at Wa-Hi. My daughter was a freshman here last year, and had a great year. She influenced my family’s decision to retire and stay here in Walla Walla.*

**Walla Walla  
Public  
Schools**

# Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Fall 2006 | Volume 8 | Issue 1

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## Wa-Hi Latino Club shows community pride



The Walla Walla Latino Club received the Sweepstakes “Community Award” in recognition of the club’s many efforts in preparing for the Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days. Latino Club members volunteered more than 200 hours cleaning up the fair grounds and setting up displays.

“This makes a great start for this year’s club activities” said District Bilingual Coordinator **Diana Erickson**. “We have a strong group of 25-30 members, and the club leaders have stepped forward to make this service project happen.”

## “Let’s Talk Schools -- We’re Listening”

*Community has opportunity to be heard on facilities issues*

“Let’s Talk Schools — We’re Listening,” the district’s information gathering campaign, begins this fall to involve the community in a facilities needs study in light of last May’s failed bond issue.

This listening campaign is an opportunity for community members, staff, parents and students to be heard and be involved in the district’s facilities planning efforts.

See **We’re Listening** pages 4 & 5

## Reading scores up

*Bergeson recognizes district*

State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Dr. Terry Bergeson** recognized Walla Walla Public Schools for our outstanding achievement in reading during her annual Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores release.

District reading WASL scores jumped 10 to 15 percent in 4th and 10th grades as the district is witnessing more than 80 percent of its students in these grade levels meeting reading standards.

“We have more work to do, especially in middle school content areas and districtwide math, and will not be satisfied until all students meet standards, but we are witnessing tremendous improvements and have much to celebrate,” Superintendent **Rich Carter** said. “Our staff members continue to challenge our students to be the best.”

See **WASL Wrap-Up** page 6

## Walla Walla Public Schools

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Focus on Education community newsletter is published tri-annually by Walla Walla Public Schools.

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

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

**Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect | Courtesy**



**Rich Carter**  
Superintendent

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

John F. Kennedy

## District goes back to community for facilities input

We are off to a great start this school year. Our hiring practices over the past several years have brought in top-notch staff districtwide.

We are excited about the level of professionalism and experiences they bring to our school environment.

We have launched a communications campaign this fall, "Let's Talk Schools -- We're Listening" to gain vital information and direction from our community and staff about future facility improvements. Listening is a key step in the facilities planning process.

Even though there were elements of the failed May bond issue that were well received, it's clear we need different direction to meet the needs of this community.

The school board has committed the district to listening and engaging you as we shape the future of our schools. Your input and feedback will play a key role in the future decisions of our school board in relation to upcoming facilities decisions. The investment of your time will pay big dividends for your public schools. Thanks for your support.

*Richard B. Carter*

### Highlights to look for in 2006-2007

- Continued efforts in literacy districtwide.
- Intense push to improved mathematics achievement.
- Ongoing professional development support for our teachers.
- District to study a K-12 collaboration schedule (*same day, same time*)
- Improved community and staff involvement in facilities improvement planning.

Sign up for E-News weekly updates on your Walla Walla Public Schools ([www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)).

## School board continues to make learning top priority



By **Mary Jo Geidl**  
President, Board of Directors

\*\*Note: Geidl spent 30 years as a Wa-Hi English teacher.

high school level, more students are taking and passing Advanced Placement tests, giving them college credit.

Of course, we always face challenges as well. For example, Walla Walla educators are continuing to work on developing a mathematics curriculum that meets the needs of all students and better prepares them for the WASL.

The district also will continue to address facility needs. School Board members are listening to opinions of community members as we consider options for future bond proposals. Anyone who wants to present ideas is asked to contribute them in any of a variety of ways -- surveys, focus groups, planning symposium, School Board listening posts, and open conversation with district leaders.

We can all be proud of the Walla Walla School District and its employees. They are a team that represents the community well and provides students with the best possible education.

As another school year gets off to an exciting start, we can be pleased with the many successes in our district.

It is always nice to be recognized for a job well done. State Superintendent of Schools Terry Bergeson recognized the Walla Walla School District for the excellent job in teaching reading K-12.

Teacher collaboration, high expectations, and intervention programs allow for student achievement. All day kindergarten has been very beneficial in teaching skills needed for success in elementary school. At the

## Maintenance crews dedicate summer to get schools ready for students

*Summer Maintenance Projects at a glance:*

### Berney Elementary

- Remodeled 3 classrooms for Homelink Program.

### Blue Ridge Elementary

- Remodeled main office to improve service and safety through enhanced visibility.

### Green Park Elementary

- Installed two exterior drinking fountains to help keep students better hydrated while on the playground.

### Prospect Point Elementary

- Repainted exterior trim of administration building.

### Sharpstein Elementary

- Built new storage building for custodian supplies.

### Garrison Middle School

- Installed new freezer and relocated shelving in kitchen to improve food service operations.

### Pioneer Middle School

- Installed new carpet in main entry to reduce slip hazards and noise.

### Paine Alternative

- Installed new carpet in classroom and upgraded HVAC unit to improve learning environment.

### Walla Walla High School

- Upgraded and relocated staff room and mail boxes.
- Built wall partition in A 34 (improves flexibility).
- Upgraded kilns in Art Room to better serve program.

### Districtwide

- Routine maintenance on all HVAC Units -- including new filters.

## Blue Devil Football KTEL 1490 AM

Don't miss a down of Wa-Hi Blue Devil football this season by tuning to KTEL 1490 AM.



## Community Connections

### Boise Cascade Paper Mill donates paper to schools

Boise Cascade donated a pallet of paper in September for use in district schools. The paper will be used in the district's Print Shop to support classroom printing requests.

"I'm proud to live in a community that supports education," Superintendent **Rich Carter** said. We are very thankful to Boise Cascade for this generous donation. This gift will help the district put additional resources into the classroom to support instruction and learning."

### Penitentiary employees donate school supplies

A heartfelt thank you from the school district goes out to all the Washington State Penitentiary employees for their generous donation of backpacks and school supplies this fall.

The items were divided up among the elementary, middle and high schools to be distributed to students in need.

"We appreciate the employees of the Washington State Penitentiary for their support of students and education in Walla Walla," Assistant Superintendent **Linda Boggs** said.

### 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.

### Area business leaders cautioned about purchasing advertising for sports posters from outside groups

Several times a year Walla Walla business owners are contacted by groups outside of Walla Walla to purchase advertising for Walla Walla High School sports schedule posters.

Sales representatives often say the purchase of the advertising directly benefits Wa-Hi Athletics.

"Big Blue Boosters are the district's only officially recognized group affiliated with sports calendars & posters," Athletic Director **Don Wilkins** said. "We don't get anything from the sale of ads from outside groups. We want people to support the boosters."

Profits made from the sale of the Big Blue Boosters sports schedule calendar does benefit the Wa-Hi Athletics through the purchase of equipment and supplies.

Partners in Learning

www.wwps.org

# “Let’s Talk Schools! - We’re Listening”

*Be Heard - Get Involved*

## HOW CAN I BE HEARD?

### FILL OUT ONE OF OUR SURVEYS

- Complete and return the survey provided here (see survey to right)
- Or, take the survey online at: [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

### COME TO A LISTENING POST

- Talk to a school board member one-on-one
- Participants may also leave written copies of their thoughts, ideas, concerns at their listening post following their session with a school board member.

#### School Board Listening Post Dates:

- Tuesday, September 19  
District Office: 6 to 7:30 p.m. (prior to regularly scheduled board meeting)
- Tuesday, October 3  
District Office: 6 to 7:30 p.m. (prior to regularly scheduled board meeting)

### SCHOOL BOARD AT SCHOOLS

- Talk to school board members at open houses and before school throughout September.  
(Contact your neighborhood school for dates and times.)

### ATTEND A FOCUS GROUP

Contact Communications Director Mark Higgins and schedule a school district team to come out and listen to your group’s thoughts, ideas and concerns.

### VOLUNTEER FOR A SYMPOSIUM

- Working Symposium Date:
- October 13: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Location: Walla Walla Regional Airport

To volunteer to be a participant, please RSVP by October 2, to Mark Higgins at: (509) 526-6716 or by e-mail: [mhiggins@wwps.org](mailto:mhiggins@wwps.org)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Communications Director Mark Higgins  
364 S. Park St. • Walla Walla, WA 99362  
E-mail: [mhiggins@wwps.org](mailto:mhiggins@wwps.org)  
(509) 526-6716

## SURVEY: NOTE - - THIS SURVEY IS ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org) Attach additional sheets if necessary.

The following themes/messages surfaced from the feedback the district received during and following the rejected May 2006 bond issue. Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors and its Administrative Team are listening. We need your feedback and involvement. The district wants to be sure the feedback listed below is reflective of what you are hearing and feeling regarding district facilities needs. Thank you for taking a moment to respond.

### Messages heard from post May Bond election: (A=Agree, D=Disagree, U=Undecided)

• We need stronger community involvement in bond pre-planning process.	A	D	U
• Bond had too many projects on ballot at one time.	A	D	U
• We wanted choice – not “all or nothing.”	A	D	U
• Edison Elementary project had strong community support.	A	D	U
• Support Services should not be located at Wa-Hi.	A	D	U
• District should consider preserving historic Paine School. (even if it costs more)	A	D	U
• Remodel Wa-Hi rather than build new. (“We like open style campus”)	A	D	U
• Consider building a second high school. (Wa-Hi too large)	A	D	U
• Community did not believe extent of the district’s facilities needs. (lack of trust)	A	D	U
• Additional dollars for: technology, maintenance and safety improvements needed.	A	D	U
• A 25-year long-range facilities plan — based on priorities — makes sense.	A	D	U

### Projects, facility needs and planning:

1. The following projects were on the May 2006 bond issue. Please check the projects you would like to see the district pursue on its next bond issue.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edison Elementary          | <input type="checkbox"/> Paine Alternative         | <input type="checkbox"/> Walla Walla High School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wa-Hi PE/Athletic Facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Services facility |  |
| Additional dollars districtwide:                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology                | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance             |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety/Security           |  |

2. List other projects you desire or changes to the way the projects were presented on the May bond.

3. What are your thoughts on the district’s facilities needs? What should be the district’s next steps?

4. How should the district involve the community in the planning process?

Hand deliver or mail your completed survey to Communications Director Mark Higgins.  
Or, deliver to your neighborhood school. Contact information listed on the left.

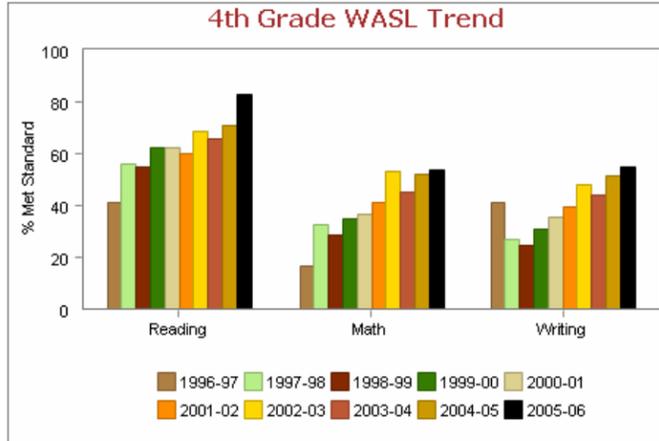
**PLEASE RETURN BY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6**

# WASL Wrap-Up

District emphasis shifts to math

## 4th Grade WASL

Year	Reading	Math	Writing
1996-97	41.3%	16.7%	41.4%
1997-98	55.8%	32.6%	26.8%
1998-99	54.8%	28.7%	24.7%
1999-00	62.1%	34.9%	30.9%
2000-01	62.2%	36.6%	35.5%
2001-02	60.2%	41.1%	39.6%
2002-03	68.6%	53.4%	48.2%
2003-04	65.6%	45.3%	43.8%
2004-05	70.8%	51.9%	51.7%
2005-06	82.6%	53.5%	54.7%

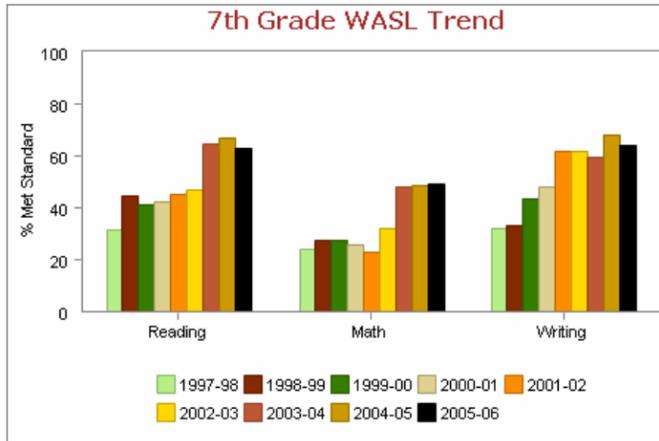


### 4th Grade Summary

- Steady, long-term growth and improvement throughout the years.
- Marked growth (more than 12%) in reading in the past year during which time the district focused on establishing a solid foundation in literacy.
- Less than 2% of our 4th graders are "Level 1" readers at the lowest level.

## 7th Grade WASL

Year	Reading	Math	Writing
1997-98	31.6%	24.0%	31.8%
1998-99	44.4%	27.5%	32.9%
1999-00	41.3%	27.3%	43.6%
2000-01	42.5%	25.8%	48.1%
2001-02	45.2%	23.0%	61.6%
2002-03	46.9%	32.0%	61.9%
2003-04	64.3%	48.2%	59.6%
2004-05	67.0%	48.5%	68.1%
2005-06	63.1%	49.0%	64.1%

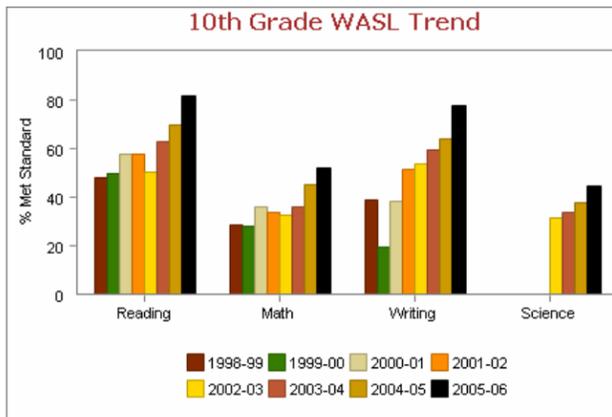


### 7th Grade Summary

- A modest increase in reading and slight declines in math and writing.
- WWPS scores in reading and math are above the state average.
- In 2004 as fourth graders, less than 50% of these students met standard in writing, whereas in 2006 more than 64% of the students met standard in writing.
- Just 3.3% of our 7th graders are "Level 1" readers at the lowest level.

## 10th Grade WASL

Year	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
1998-99	47.9%	28.7%	38.9%	
1999-00	49.6%	27.8%	19.7%	
2000-01	57.7%	35.8%	38.4%	
2001-02	57.7%	33.6%	51.2%	
2002-03	50.3%	32.6%	53.7%	31.5%
2003-04	63.0%	36.2%	59.5%	33.6%
2004-05	69.8%	45.0%	64.1%	37.7%
2005-06	81.7%	52.1%	77.6%	44.3%



### 10th Grade Summary

- Significant gains in all subject areas.
- Four-year historical data shows a considerably sharp upward trend moving toward all students meeting standard in the near future.
- Science scores are nearly 10% higher than the state average and rank first among schools in the "Columbia Basin League."
- Just 3.3% of our 7th graders are "Level 1" readers at the lowest level.

## Peasley called on to mentor new teachers

"Our kids need strong, skilled and happy teachers."  
**Judy Peasley**  
 Induction Program Coordinator



Upon arriving in Big Sky country in 1984 for a spring teacher recruiting visit to Montana State University, **Bill Jordan** -- now Deputy Superintendent -- says he came across a recent graduate named **Judy Peasley** he knew the district had to have on its team.

Now twenty-two years later with stints as a classroom teacher, learning specialist, and Title One/Lap coordinator on her education resume, roles have been reversed and it's Peasley who has been charged with mentoring new teachers.

When Peasley started her career the district didn't have a formal mentor program for new teachers. It was tough she recalls. Now she is committed to making sure new staff have the resources they'll need to be successful.

As the Induction Program Coordinator, Peasley will work to keep Walla Walla's 17 new teachers from ending up a statistic which reveals 20 percent of all new hires leave the classroom within three years.

"The first five years of a teacher's career could be compared to the first five years of life," said

Peasley who will continue her duties as Title 1 / LAP coordinator. "Much of what we know as teachers is formed in those early years of our career."

Under Peasley's thoughtful watch, new teachers are well cared for.

From personal contacts and timely connections with mentors to helping new teachers get their rooms set up and introducing district-wide teaching strategies, support for these quality educators is the Walla Walla way.



Mentor teacher specialist Judy Peasley helps new Wa-Hi Career & Technical Education teacher Terry Olson get ready for school.

"Teacher mentoring could be likened to the Rest of the Story. It lets you dialogue about all the things not mentioned in education classes that are so necessary in the first days and months to a beginning teacher."

**Matt Bayley** • Wa-Hi Spanish Teacher

## Did you Know?

**Q: How much have my local school taxes increased the past three years?**

*A: From 2003 to 2006, Walla Walla Public School taxes on a \$200,000 home have increased approximately \$16 total during that time.*

*If you itemize your income tax return, it is approximately \$11.20 tax increase from 2003 to 2006.*

**Q: Is the All Day Kindergarten program having an impact on student learning?**

*A. Of the approximately 405 students who exited English and Bilingual kindergarten classes last spring, 330 were meeting reading benchmarks in both English and Spanish. Only 14 students are considered at-risk and 61 with some risk. At the beginning of the year 93 students were at-risk.*

## Wa-Hi teacher honored at WSU Educators of Excellence ceremony

Wa-Hi Science teacher **Rob Ahrens** was nominated by Class of 2006 graduate **Nicole Sawatzki** to be honored at the Washington State University *Educators of Excellence* ceremony. Nicole is an honors program freshman at WSU this year. Here's what she had to say about her former teacher.

"During the first few weeks of A.P. physics, Mr. Ahrens hooked me into the excitement of his class. His vivacious teaching style, combined with his encouraging attitude, pushed me to new intellectual heights as the year progressed. He influences every student he teaches both in and out of class."

**Nicole Sawatzki**