

Hurricane Katrina victims find comfort at Edison

Former student brings family home to regroup following storm's devastation

As Hurricane Katrina bore down on New Orleans, a former Walla Wallan joined the millions of others in the region fearing for their lives and livelihoods.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Walla Walla was a distant thought for storm victim **Angela Vincent** -- having moved away from the valley in 1979 after attending Edison Elementary. When she was given notice to evacuate from Harahan, LA, a suburb 15 miles from New Orleans, there was not much time to prepare for life after the storm.

Upon learning her family's home was flooded and their belongings lost, Vincent and her five-year-old son **Dalton** returned to Walla Walla for refuge. She enrolled Dalton in kindergarten at Edison Elementary while her husband has remained in the New Orleans area to work. She said that may change too as the family considers their future.

"I'd like to fix up our house and sell it and make Walla Walla our permanent home," Vincent said. "I don't think I could ever endure suffering this kind of loss again."

Vincent said she doesn't think New Orleans will ever be the same. She says she's just happy they all survived and is thankful to the people of Walla Walla. District students and staff across the district are pitching in to help all the victims through various fund-raising activities.

"I am overwhelmed by the kindness and compassion people have expressed, especially Edison Principal Nancy Withycombe. She has gone out of her way to help us fit in."
Angela Vincent



*Edison Elementary staff, parents and students opened their arms to welcome **Angela Vincent** and her kindergarten son **Dalton** into their school after their home was flooded and they lost their belongings to Hurricane Katrina.*

**Walla Walla
Public
Schools**

Focus on Education

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New Garrison track benefits students and community

School board salutes citizens group during dedication celebration



No tax dollars used to build Garrison track

What began as a vision of two community members to bring an all-weather track to Garrison Middle School, officially became reality earlier this school year during a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony at the school's new addition.

Community members **Craig Nelson**, **Ed Nelson**, and **Steve Gerling**, representing Citizens for the Garrison Track, led a fund-raising campaign to raise the \$170,000 necessary to complete the project and provide long-range maintenance.

Superintendent **Rich Carter** and Board President **Dr. Rich Jacks** presented appreciation plaques to project contributors to thank them for enhancing the school and community.

Major Project Contributors

- Nelson Irrigation
- Braden & Nelson Construction
- Anderson Perry & Associates
- Apollo Construction
- Konen Rock Products
- Noble Panels
- Sun Rentals
- L & G Ranch Supply
- Water Watch
- Transtate Asphalt
- Opp & Seibold Construction
- Mike Johnson Excavation
- Noble Rock Products
- Cummins Athletic Supplies
- Concrete Industries

From all of us at Walla Walla Public Schools --
Thanks for your support!

State matching dollars available to fund projects District heightens study to find state funds to improve schools

As the district continues its facilities study to help schools keep pace with today's learning demands, significant potential state matching dollars are now being added to the equation.

According to estimates by Architects West -- the district's architectural consultant for facilities studies -- the district is in line to receive millions of state matching dollars should local voters approve a facilities improvement construction bond.

State rules changes now allow for more square footage to be eligible for the needed state matching dollars.

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See **State Match** page 7

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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



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

John F. Kennedy

Quality schools an investment in our community

Throughout our facilities studies over the past two years, I've been charting why quality schools are important to our students, staff, parents and community. Quality schools both nurture and inspire students and staff.

Although my list kept growing and growing -- with some thoughtful editing -- I've been able to narrow it down to the following:

Why are quality schools important?

- Improved test scores
- Expanded curriculum opportunities
- Safe learning environments
- Improved air quality / ventilation
- Less absenteeism
- Designed for learning (more flexibility)
- Healthier learning/working spaces
- Reduced operating costs
- More environmentally friendly
- Less expensive to maintain
- Business recruitment

Richard B. Carter

Symposium Reunion

District delivers progress report to Strategic Plan 'think-group'

Last fall more than 100 community members, staff, parents, students and business leaders gathered on the campus of Whitman College to help define what Walla Walla expects of its public schools and what graduates will need to be successful in the 21st Century.

Many of the ideas and concepts shared during the two-day Symposium were used to develop the district's recently approved Strategic Plan (see pages 4 & 5).

Recently this group and other community leaders were reconvened for a progress report from the district.

"This provided an opportunity to help validate their work and demonstrate how it is being used to improve student achievement," Superintendent **Rich Carter** said. "We are united as a community to get better."

Get more Information

- Contact your school principal or visit the district website:
www.wwps.org
- Attend teacher conferences, and school or district meetings about testing.
- Check out the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Web site:
www.k12.wa.us
- Explore the Partnership for Learning Web site:
www.partnership4learning.org
- Get involved in your local Parent Teacher Association:
www.wastatepta.org

Test scores jump

Students at all grade levels post gains in all areas of WASL

With significant gains at all grade levels in all subject areas, results of the Spring 2005 Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) indicate that Walla Walla Public Schools are providing all students with the academic knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Walla Walla Public Schools 4th, 7th and 10th grade students posted gains in all areas of the 2005 WASL. In addition, 5th and 10th grade students made gains in science, with 10th graders exceeding the state average in that area. Walla Walla's 7th graders also exceeded the state average in Writing.

"We are extremely proud of our staff and students for their efforts," Assessment Director **Len Taruscio** said. "Students at most levels have succeeded in making gains for the last three years."

Students take the WASL tests three times during their school careers -- 4th, 7th and 10th grades -- to see if they have mastered the Essential Academic Learning Requirements standards that have been set at the state level.

Beginning in Spring 2006, students will be tested at grades 3 through 8. High school students will have five opportunities to meet standard on the WASL, which becomes a graduation requirement of the current sophomore class, the Class of 2008.

For more specific information on the WASL, check the Washington State Report Card at the following website: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

Local artist judges student artwork



Area students who went home with ribbons for their artwork displayed at this year's Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days caught the eyes and attention of local artist **Squire Broel** and other local volunteer judges.

Broel -- who graduated from Seattle Pacific University with a degree in Studio Art - took time away from his own art projects to support students and their art interests. Broel and other volunteers judged hundreds of submissions in support of their local schools.

"Many of judges who volunteer their time have been through our educational system," Wa-Hi teacher and Education Building Supervisor **Jim Ebding** said. "We rely on these community partnerships to help facilitate the learning process."

State Match continued from page 1

Another change keeps districts choosing to build new schools, rather than modernization, from losing out on the precious state matching dollars.

"The district could get significant funding match from the state," Business Manager **Aron Rausch** said. "Although we don't know exactly how much yet until we finalize our plans -- we're talking about millions of dollars from the state to improve our schools."

The district will continue working with Architects West to seek state match funding sources.

Community Connections

District supports United Way fund drive campaign

District staff are once again supporting United Way fund drive campaign efforts this fall with a goal of \$30,000.

Last year the district ranked second in the region -- behind Banner Bank -- with a \$23,065 contribution.

"United Way distributes resources throughout the community and many of our students are the recipients of those resources," said District United Way program coordinator **Len Taruscio**. "This community effort not only helps us to do our job more effectively when kids have food, clothing and the support but also unites the people of Walla Walla in a community effort."

Total Office Concepts gifts paper stock to district

Total Office Concepts recently donated paper left over from its former copy center. Owner **Mark Carlile** decided the best use of this left-over paper would be to donate it to Walla Walla Public Schools as a way to support the community and students.

"This is a very generous donation of thousands of dollars worth of paper," Facilities Support Director **Dan Johnson** said. "Our district would like to express our profound thanks to Total Office Concepts for this exceptional gift to our schools."

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.

"This was brought on by **Mike Goodwin**, an employee of Boise Cascade, who was asked to bring a ream of paper for his children's class lists," Facilities Support Director **Dan Johnson** said. "We are very thankful to Boise Cascade for this generous donation. This gift will help stretch precious classroom budget dollars."

Penitentiary Diversity Committee supports students

Special thanks to **Mary Moss** and **JoAnne Sams**, Co-Chairs of the Washington State Penitentiary Diversity Committee for organizing a school supplies drive for area children in need.

The group delivered 433 items to help students get off to a great start for the school year.

Thanks for your generous contribution!

Walla Walla Public Schools

Roadmap to the Future



Destination

- Walla Walla Public Schools*
- Located in SE Washington
 - 6,000 students
 - 400 teachers
 - 350 support staff
 - 10 schools

**Washington's
Premiere
School District**



Our journey starts with Teaching & Learning

- Safe, personalized learning
- Rigorous academics
- Research & data
- Professional development

2005-2010 Strategic Plan



- Community partnerships
- Engaged students
- Productive citizens
- Life-long learners

Our Goals!

- Improved Student Achievement
- Better Communications
- Quality School Facilities & Technology



Communication leads the way

- Parent & community involvement
- Clear & understood expectations
- Community resources
- Customer service

Facilities & Technology help drive improvement

- Design standards
- Modern learning spaces
- Flexible classrooms
- Technology standards for all

Our Vision

Walla Walla Public Schools
*Centers of learning
 meeting the needs
 of all students.*

Strategic Plan Poster
 Walla Walla Public Schools developed this poster to make its new Strategic Plan visually appealing and easy to understand.

This poster will be used throughout the community to help connect people to the school district and its mission.

Art by Mira Gobel

Wa-Hi's Matau steps away from classroom to help her fellow teachers



"I just can't tell you how amazing it is to learn new methods and strategies that can help kids learn and empower teachers."

Mary Matau
Wa-Hi Instructional Coach

Wa-Hi's **Mary Matau** has seen a lot in her 33 years of teaching, so much in fact she's now ready to share what she has learned with others. Last year, Matau stepped away from teaching English to take on the new position of Instructional Coach.

"I had the chance to impact adults and therefore have a broader impact on kids," Matau said when asked why she made the move.

Instructional coaches collaborate with site administrators and teachers in implementing research-based instructional practices that result in increased student achievement.

Matau's now in her second year and is joined this year by former Wa-Hi science teacher **Anne Swant**. Garrison and Pioneer Middle Schools also have one coach each. The district is considering using this model at all grade levels.

"I was a teacher for years and I know how hard it is to teach, grade, and try to come up with new and better ideas all alone. If there is someone there for support, it has to be a blessing," Matau said.

To learn more about the role of the Instructional Coach, contact Director of Teaching and Learning **Oscar Graybill** at 526-6723.



Wa-Hi Instructional Coach **Mary Matau** (R) works with Wa-Hi English teacher (L) **Mindy Meyer** on strategies designed to increase student achievement. Wa-Hi Freshman **Anne Marie Jones** joins in the discussion during her Pre-AP Freshman English class.

Upclose with Mary Matau...

Birth place - McClearly, WA

Education

- Elma High School
- Grays Harbor Community College (AA Degree)
- Central Washington State College (BA Degree)
- Northwest Nazarene (Master's Degree)

Teaching Experience

- 33 years

Subjects taught

- Reading, English, History & Art

Hobbies

- Making quilts and reading
- Working around her farm
- Being a very proud grandma

Family

- Husband: John Matau (deceased) - Former district teacher, administrator and coach. - Children: Karri (36) & Shane (35)

How did John (who passed away after a battle with cancer) help inspire you to be a better educator?

John was perhaps the best teacher I have ever known. He taught me to love, honor, and respect kids, especially those kids who are hard to love, honor, and respect. I know it was because he was treated so badly when he was a little boy in school by so many of his teachers. His mantra was "They may not remember everything you taught them, but they will always remember how you treated them." So true, isn't it?

What do you miss most about John?

Other than everything? Probably his humor and laughter. I have never known anyone that made me laugh more than he.

Who have been your mentors?

Abe Roberts, Len Taruscio, Lynne Kuntz, Mira Gobel. I love all four of those people. I think they are the greatest educators in this valley.

District looks to community for input on facilities needs

Long-range improvement plan puts student achievement first

With a focus on improving student achievement, Walla Walla Public Schools is looking to the future to solve its facilities needs of today. By taking a long-range approach to modernizing facilities, Walla Walla Public Schools is proposing a 25-Year Facilities Improvement plan to address issues of the present and those of tomorrow.

Armed with results from a community-based Facilities Task Force led in 2003 by **Dan Reid** of Opp and Seibold General Construction and the independent consulting firm MGT of America's study last year, the district has ample data to help identify areas in need of improvement to help support learning.

The district is in the process of developing design standards with students and teachers in mind for all of its facilities. Flexible learning spaces, environmentally friendly buildings and low maintenance areas are key to any new or improved buildings.

The district is working with Seattle Northwest Securities to develop a funding plan to maintain a flat rate for taxpayers over the course of the plan.

Proposed four-component improvement plan

- Renovation, Replacement, Major Improvements
- Yearly facilities improvements at all schools
- Technology improvements for all schools
- Safety and security upgrades at all schools

The proposal calls for each of Walla Walla Public Schools to receive improvements to better support learning

Studies show Wa-Hi, Edison, Support Facilities and Paine at top of needs list

Both a community led facilities study and a recent independent review of district sites place Walla Walla High School, Edison Elementary, Support Services, and Paine Alternative School at the top of the district's needs list.

The reviews also indicated shortcomings in annual facilities maintenance dollars, technology upgrades, and safety and security enhancements.

The district has proposed a facilities plan offering improvements for all district schools -- depending on need to best support learning.

This fall, community forums will be held (*see more to right*) to review facilities issues and to get further public input.

Community members are highly encouraged to attend and provide feedback to the district.

Architects West hired to support facilities improvement efforts

Touting one of Walla Walla's most prized architectural jewels Sharpstein Elementary School in its design portfolio, Architects West of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho was brought on to once again work its magic on other district facilities.

The northern Idaho firm was recently hired to provide architectural and engineering services to further enhance facilities improvement efforts.

Architects West served as the lead architectural firm during the district's successful modernization of Sharpstein Elementary School in 2000 which won local, regional and national awards for its design and landscaping.

Architects West served as the lead architectural firm during the district's successful modernization of Sharpstein Elementary School in 2000.

Architects West will provide numerous support functions to help the district finalize its proposed 25-Year Facilities Improvement Plan.

Firm representatives will be in Walla Walla each month to meet with staff, parents, students and community members.

Facilities Improvement Community Forums

Architects West will team with the district later this fall (tentatively slated for November) to host Community Forums to discuss facilities improvement efforts.

The forums will be an opportunity for community members to see preliminary conceptual designs of proposed modernized schools, ask questions about district facilities needs, and discuss funding proposals.

Dates, times and locations are yet to be determined. Once these details have been finalized, this information will be posted on the district website (www.wwps.org), in district publications, school notices, and local media sources.