

New Green Park teacher overcomes barriers to realize dream

“When I think about someone living their dream, I think of **Berta Herrera-Trejo**,” said District Bilingual Coordinator **Diana Erickson**.

Berta Herrera-Trejo overcame numerous barriers to get to where she is today as a bilingual kindergarten teacher at Green Park Elementary.

“Her parents worked in the fields, just as she did as a child,” Erickson said. “As was common with migrant youth in the 1980s, Berta did not finish high school, married young and started a family.”

Eventually, she stopped working in the fields and landed a job working as a paraprofessional in the migrant program. She realized that she was born to be a teacher, but without a high school diploma that was not possible.

“There were many obstacles to overcome,” Herrera-Trejo said. “I was a single parent with four children (including triplets); I had to move to a new and big city without any outside financial aid support; my English skills were limited; and I was academically low in all subjects.”

She was determined to do more with her life. She eventually obtained her GED in the High School Equivalency Program at WSU in Pullman. She then graduated from WSU in 2005 with two degrees: Elementary Education and Foreign Language. She also has two specialized endorsements: Bilingual and English as a Second Language. Now she is living out her dream.

“What I like the most about teaching is watching children discover for themselves how talented they are,” Herrera-Trejo said. “It feels wonderful, divine, exuberant and intensely fulfilling.”



Green Park Elementary Bilingual Kindergarten Teacher Berta Herrera-Trejo lived the life of a migrant field worker as a teen and is now realizing her dream as a school teacher.

“Berta is truly an example of having made it in spite of huge barriers. She is a joy to watch as she lives her dream!”
Diana Erickson, District Bilingual Coordinator

Walla Walla
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Schools

Focus on Education

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High fuel costs spur bus route changes

Restructuring also improves service

With diesel pushing \$5 per gallon and no end in sight to the high costs, district Transportation Director **Steve Olson** knew he had to lead a major restructuring of bus routes to improve efficiencies.

This summer Olson, with the support of the Transportation staff, meticulously went through each route to make sure multiple buses were not in the same location and that they were all carrying as many students as possible.

“Upon evaluation of the routes, I knew we could cut costs,” said Olson, who is now in his second year with the district. “I also wanted to improve service, so students didn’t have to be on buses as long.”

See **Fuel Costs** page 6



This year the district increased its fuel budget 40 percent to keep pace with rising diesel costs.

Public weighs in on new boundary proposal

District encouraged by positive responses to proposed changes

Changing school district boundaries is never easy and is always emotional, according to Superintendent **Dr. Rich Carter**.

“We knew we had to take our time and involve the community in this process if we were going to be successful,” Carter said. “After more than one year of study, we are getting close to taking a recommendation to the school board.”

This fall, the Boundary Committee chairs **Dana Jones** (Pioneer Middle

See **Boundary** page 6

“I think the district has done a great job listening to parents, particularly those at Green Park Elementary.

“We were really concerned about our neighborhood school being preserved -- and I know this is a terribly difficult process -- but we feel like we were heard.”

Mari Sanders
Green Park Elementary Parent

Enrollment remains stable

The district is serving more students to start the school year than it did last year.

Elementary grade levels represent the most growth -- up approximately 100 students across the six schools from this time last year.

Middle school enrollment numbers are about the same as last year. Garrison’s counts are up about 20 students, while Pioneer is down about 20 students. Walla Walla High School is down approximately 20 students, while Lincoln Alternative High School is serving 240 students.

“We feel good about our enrollment counts to start the year,” Deputy Superintendent **Dr. Bill Jordan** says. “Many districts in our region are losing students, so it’s nice to see our numbers remain stable.”

Jordan noted the district’s general fund budget is based on enrollment, which is critical to maintaining programs and current staffing levels.

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 are more than mere words;
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"The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth."

John F. Kennedy

Projects abound with start of new school year

As we settle into a new school year, I'm excited to report on numerous projects we are working on in the district.

We continue to work to find ways to improve our school system without seeking additional tax dollars.

We hope to capture state dollars to help develop a Support Services complex and High School Skills Center to offer vocational training. We are at the beginning phase of researching the feasibility of these state funded projects, but we feel the outlook is promising.

I'm also engaging in a community awareness communications effort this year by getting out and meeting with business leaders and community groups to discuss these projects and more. Thanks again for your continued support.

Edison Construction Project

- Project remains on schedule and within budget.

Support Services Complex

- The district is working to develop a plan for a new Support Services Complex to relocate from the Park Street property.

High School Skills Center study

- The district successfully received state funding for a feasibility study for a potential regional High School Skills Center. The district concept is to have a branch campus of the Tri-Tech Skills Center in Walla Walla. This study continues.

Boundary Review/Study

- A recommendation is expected to go to school board by the winter break. New boundaries take effect next fall.

Safe and Civil Schools

- Our goal is to create a more civil school environment. The district's Safe and Civil Schools Committee will make this issue a priority this school year.

Safe and Civil Schools Committee

- Mark Higgins**, Chair
Scott Brashear and **Matt Wood**, Law Enforcement Specialists
Mark Thompson, Crisis Prevention Specialist
Kirk Jameson, Crisis Management Specialist
Matt Bona, Post-Crisis Recovery Specialist
Liz Campeau, Student Safety Assessment Team Chair
Max Carrera, School Board
Gay Ernst, Emergency Management
Keri Abernathy, Parent Volunteer
Harvey Crowder, Health Services Department
Susie Morris – (GriefBusters/Health Services)
Al Escalera, Washington State Patrol
Terry Heisey, Walla Walla City Police
Brad Morris, Walla Walla City Fire
Rocky Eastman, Fire District 4
Peggy Needham, Parent Involvement Specialist
Patty Courson, Emergency Medical Services
George Wiese, Juvenile Justice Center
Steve Echevaria, School Resource Officer
Luke Waggoner, Walla Walla County Health Department
Norrie Gregoire, Juvenile Justice Center
 (*NOTE: All district principals and directors are also members)

Community experts partner to help keep Walla Walla schools safe

Respect and civility this year's focus

Preventing, managing and recovering from a crisis continues to be a community-wide effort, thanks to the support of area experts on the district's Safe and Civil Schools Committee.

This year, the committee is focusing on civility and respect. District schools have established core values emphasizing the need for civility in schools and the link between feeling safe and learning.

Administrators have pledged to support this effort and are working with teachers to develop strategies for intervening when students demonstrate poor behavior.

Students are being empowered and trained through this process to be leaders and peer mentors to help curb abusive behavior and bullying.

The committee is also working to ensure all required emergency drills are completed, emergency plans are updated, staff and student training occurs and grief counselors are in place to lend support should a crisis strike.

Pioneer Middle School students raise money for new school electronic sign

Pioneer Middle School ASB Officers wanted to do something "big" for the school, so they set a goal to raise enough money to purchase an electronic readerboard sign for the school.

With their lofty goal in place, students sold dozens and dozens of cookie dough containers before ultimately raising \$12,000 to buy the sign.

"I would say I am most proud of the fact that our kids set a goal, planned to achieve that goal, and then achieved it."

Angie Gardea

Pioneer Middle School Counselor

The colorful sign, which features the school's emphasis on respecting others, is now mounted on the gym wall where it displays important messages of school events, activities, and programs.



Eddy Hayte of *Dwinell's Visual Systems* installs the new electronic sign at Pioneer Middle School.

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.

Board gives okay to Lincoln Health Center

With a clear understanding that Walla Walla Public Schools will not fund or manage a school-based health center at Lincoln Alternative High School, board members earlier this fall voted to approve the concept of having an outside agency provide comprehensive primary and behavioral health services for Lincoln students.

Local physician **Alison Kirby, MD** brought the idea of having a privately funded health center at Lincoln to the school board last school year. Since that visit a feasibility study was completed revealing these services are needed at Lincoln. Walla Walla County Health Department coordinated the study under the direction of **Harvey Crowder** and **Holly Howard**.

The advisory group working to bring the school-based health center to Lincoln proposes offering comprehensive age appropriate physical, mental and dental health services beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year.

The center will be housed in close proximity to the current Lincoln Alternative High School campus. The group is now focused on raising funds and developing an operational plan for the center.

Lincoln School-Based Health Center -- Scope of Services

- Age appropriate screening and counseling
- Primary and acute health care assessment, diagnosis, treatment and referral
- Age appropriate reproductive health care
- Age appropriate family planning and counseling
- Mental health screening, counseling, case management, and referral
- Care coordination and referral for drug/alcohol services

Federal *No Child Left Behind* targets leave districts across the state and nation struggling for answers

By: **Ron Higgins**

District Assessment Director

Statewide Concern: 212 of the state's 296 school districts did not make Adequate Yearly Progress

Nationwide Concern: No state in the nation met Adequate Yearly Progress requirements

What is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

- Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, all schools must test students every year to make sure they are learning key reading and mathematics skills. By 2014, 100 percent of students in all schools nationwide must be proficient in reading and mathematics.

Challenge: All students are held to the same standards, this includes:

- Students with Limited English Proficiency (ELL) -- (All tests are in English only)
- Students with Disabilities (Special Education)

What happens if a school doesn't make AYP?

- Schools that do not make AYP two years in a row in the same area (proficiency, participation or other indicator) and subject enter "improvement status," which consists of five steps.
- Each year a school does not make AYP in the same area, it moves to the next step of improvement. Ultimately, the school could lose federal funding and be reorganized.
- Schools exit school improvement once they make AYP two years in a row.

Was there an increase in schools and districts not meeting AYP throughout the state?

- Yes
- Large school districts throughout the state do not meet AYP: 111 of 112 districts in the state with an enrollment of at least 2,000 students did not meet AYP.
- More schools throughout the state are not meeting AYP: 1,313 schools in the state did not meet AYP in 2008 compared with 742 schools in 2007, and 338 schools in 2006.

Does an AYP designation of "Needing Improvement" indicate that our district and schools are not doing well?

- No. The sole designation of "Does not meet AYP" is not sufficient to make conclusions about a district or school's success with students. The WASL test is a single measure which may help us to identify strengths or weaknesses of a student and a school, but in Walla Walla Public Schools we use multiple measures to identify student strengths, determine deficiencies, and to evaluate district programs' effectiveness.
- Just as every student is unique, so are schools and districts. When one compares districts of similar size and demographics, Walla Walla measures up quite well despite the district and some schools having a "Does not meet AYP" designation.

How do our SAT scores compare?

- For the sixth consecutive year, Washington state 2008 SAT averages are the highest in the nation among states in which more than half of the eligible students took the test.
- Walla Walla Public Schools students' SAT scores were well above the state averages in both 2006 and 2007.

Does Walla Walla Public Schools have room for improvement?

- Absolutely. Every school in our district constantly seeks improvement. We use many different standardized assessments and classroom-based assessments to determine how we can meet the individual needs of every one of our students.

Did Walla Walla Public Schools make AYP in 2008?

- No. Walla Walla School District, along with 212 of the state's 296 districts, did not make AYP.
- At the individual school level in the district, Edison Elementary School met AYP in all qualifying cells, while the remaining schools in the district each had at least one cell not meeting the AYP target.
- Please refer to the AYP Summary chart for specific school results. Even more detailed information is available at <http://reportcard.k12.ospi.wa.us>

Is there more to this story?

Yes, Walla Walla Public Schools' scores compare favorably to districts with similar demographics.

Among 21 districts in the state with comparable enrollment and demographics (2000+ students enrolled, 8+% Limited English Proficiency (ELL) students, 8+% Special Education students, and 40+% poverty students):

- None of the 21 other districts have all scores at all grade levels and all subjects that are higher than those of Walla Walla Public Schools.
- Walla Walla Public Schools ranks 2nd in elementary scores (only one school district has higher scores in all elementary subject areas.)
- Just two school districts show higher scores in all middle school subject areas.
- Only one school district has higher scores in all high school subject areas.
- Walla Walla Public Schools district-wide science scores rank 1st of the 21 districts (none of the other 21 districts have science scores that are higher at all three grade levels.)

Walla Walla Public Schools AYP Summary

	WWPS Grades 3-5	WWPS Grades 6-8	WWPS Grade 10	Berney	Blue Ridge	Edison	Green Park	Prospect Point	Sharpstein	Garrison	Pioneer	Lincoln Alternative	Walla Walla High School
All Students	No	No	Yes-Reading No-Math	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes-Reading No-Math	No	No	Yes-Reading No-Math
Hispanic Students	No	No	Yes-Reading No-Math		No		No	No	No	No	No		Yes-Reading No-Math
White Students	Yes-Reading No-Math	Yes	Yes-Reading No-Math	Yes	Yes-Reading No-Math	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Limited English Students	No	No			No		No		No	No			
Special Education Students	No	No					No	No		No	No		No
Low Income Students	No	No	Yes-Reading No-Math	Yes-Reading No-Math	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		Yes-Reading No-Math
Met AYP in 2008? →	No			No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
2008 Improvement Status→	Step 2			1st year	1st year		Step 1	Step 1	1st year	Step 1	Step 1	Step 4	Step 3

AYP status is not published for student categories when a district or school has fewer than 30 students in the category.

Walla Walla Public Schools student categories with less than 30 students at each grade level include:

Homelink, Creekside Alternative Middle School, Alternative Education Program (AEP), and students of American Indian, Asian, or Black ethnicity.

"Yes" in a cell in the table above indicates AYP was met in both Reading and Math.

"No" in a cell in the table above indicates AYP was not met in Reading and Math.

Blank cells in the table above indicates the school has fewer than 30 students in the indicated student group.

High School Facilities Task Force

Community leaders helping find solutions

Key Findings

- Walla Walla is not ready for two comprehensive high schools (*cost and program limits are greatest concerns*).
- Lincoln Alternative High School facility is not meeting needs (*age and condition of facility at core of concerns*).
- College Place is not planning for a high school (*College Place School District is focusing on K-8 facility needs*).
- District facilities have been maintained.
- Safety and security issues not at core of Wa-Hi improvement needs.
- Both district high school facilities are over capacity and need improvement.
- Quality facilities are linked to academic improvement.
- Career Technical Education (CTE) remains a priority.

Recommendations

- Phase in high school construction projects over time
- Include improvements for both schools
- Think “outside of the box” when designing improvements
- Consider developing a Vocational Skills Center (*if state funding is available*)
- Consider blending new construction with existing buildings at Walla Walla High School (*if this is most cost effective and meets educational needs*)
- Limit costs when improving Lincoln Alternative High School
- Keep eye on future school sites
- Collaborate with Citizens for Schools

High School Task Force Members

Cindy Meyer, Co-Chair
 John Rowley, Co-Chair

Darcy Weisner	Scott Krivoshein	Lawson Knight
Jim McCarthy	Mike Pettyjohn	Jim Hayner
Cindy Widmer	Clint Gabbard	Mindy Meyer
Jim Sporleder	Max Carrera	Rob Ahrens
Nanqi You	John Butenhoff	Dave Warkentin
Ruth Russo	Ruth Ladderud	Carina Stillman
Everett Knudson	James Payne	Dick Cook
Jim Sanders	Jody Schneidmiller	Linda Newcomb

LaDessa Smelcer

Complete Report Online - www.wwps.org

Comments & thoughts: E-mail to: mhiggins@wwps.org

Boundary continued from page 1

School Principal) and **Chris Gardea** (Prospect Point Elementary Principal) are leading public meetings to share the most recent boundary proposal and recommendations.

“Community input and suggestions were used to develop these recommendations,” Jones said. “Although no decisions have been made, the committee members believe this proposal meets the district’s goals and is sensitive to the feedback they heard last spring.”

A proposal is expected to be presented to the school board for approval prior to winter break. The new boundaries will take effect next fall. Visit the district website at www.wwps.org to view the current proposal and recommendations: (A to Z area -- Boundary Study).



Boundary Review Committee Chair and Pioneer Middle School Principal Dana Jones review the district’s most recent proposal with Green Park Elementary parent Max Coleman and his daughter Emily, who is in Diane Mires’ 4th grade class.

Fuel Costs continued from page 1

Olson said there have been some challenges requiring minor adjustments to start the school year, but for the most part the new route system is working well.

“Any time you completely restructure your routes, there are going to be some things you didn’t see or count on,” Olson said. “But we’ve worked hard this fall to make changes and, for the most part, it appears student ride times are shorter and our routes are more fuel efficient.”

Olson said he will continue to monitor fuel costs as the year continues. He is also proud to report district bus routes are now conveniently posted on the district website: www.wwps.org.

Edison Construction Project Update

Thanks Walla Walla for your support!

Edison Project

- On Schedule
- On Budget

New School Opens Fall 2009

Estimated Enrollment: 430 (Grades K-5)

Project Benefits

- State-of-the-art technology
- New classroom furniture/equipment
- Modern computer labs
- New library (adequate size)
- Improved safety
- Entrance moves off busy street
- Efficient to operate
- Supports future growth
- Additional staff/visitor parking
- More play spaces/upgrades
- Separate cafeteria
- New gym (for PE and extracurricular activities)
- Air conditioning
- Modern heating system



Natural light is used throughout the design to provide a warm and welcoming learning environment. This design also is more energy efficient.

Project General Contractor: Chervenell Construction

Project Architect: Architects West

Project Updates Online: www.wwps.org

