

Walla Walla Public Schools Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Fall 2022 | Volume 25 | Issue 1



Inside This Issue:

- Superintendent's Message ■
- School Board of the Year ■
- Native American Heritage Event ■
- Maintenance Projects Update ■
- Paul Schneidmiller Bond Update ■
- Dick Neher Legacy Scholarship ■
- Ribbon Cutting Recap ■
- First Responders Support ■
- Where are They Now? ■

Historic 2018 Bond Delivering on our Promise

All Bond projects came in on schedule and on budget

History was made on the campuses of Walla Walla High School, Lincoln High School and Pioneer Middle School this fall as hundreds of district supporters and alumni flocked to these schools to celebrate during the official ribbon cutting ceremonies.

Guests also toured the campuses to see the updated classrooms and renovated facilities made possible thanks

Ribbon Cuttings continued inside . . .

“ Thanks to the voters for making these dreams come true. We now have beautiful facilities because of the support of our community. ”

Ruth Ladderud,
School Board President

Our Vision
“Developing Washington’s Most Sought-After Graduates”

Our Mission
Walla Walla Public Schools ensures all students receive high quality instruction in an aligned and coherent system while addressing their social and emotional needs in a safe and engaging environment.

www.wwps.org

Where are they Now?

Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates

Walla Walla High School Class of 1986 graduate Jill Peitersen is currently Deputy Prosecutor for Walla Walla County, a position she has held for almost 16 years. Earlier in her career she worked for the Northwest Justice Project, was a law clerk in Kootenai Co, Idaho and in private practice.

Jill attended Garrison Jr. HS and Prospect Point and Edison Elementary schools as a child. She earned her Bachelor in Arts degree and Juris Doctor from the University of Idaho and paralegal certificate from the College of Legal Arts.

Jill has been active in service clubs and organizations in the past, including the Walla Walla County Bar Association, Exchange Club, Junior Club, AAUW and Sand Castle Crisis Nursery. She also served on the Blue Mountain Humane Society board and assisted in a fundraising project to build the new animal shelter. Jill says there were several teachers who had a positive influence on her life. She says Bill Perrault and Phil Rolfe from Garrison Junior High and Richard Poole and Mary Jo Geidl from Wa-Hi all taught her the power of words and language and how to use them. Jill's husband, Jim, teaches at Walla Walla Community College and their daughter Jena recently graduated from WWCC. Jill enjoys reading, walks with her dogs, hiking, travel, spending time with family and gardening. She says when she no longer works full-time, she hopes to travel more to far away places, learn a new language and how to play an instrument. She also hopes to foster dogs who need a temporary home while they find their forever home, and volunteer more time at the local animal shelter.



JILL PEITERSEN



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

Board of Directors:

- Ruth Ladderud
- Kathy Mulkerin
- Eric Rindal
- Derek Sarley
- Terri Trick

BOARD



Walla Walla Public Schools

364 S. Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-3000
website: www.wwps.org

COMPREHENSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Walla Walla Public Schools does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination.

- Title IX Coordinator & Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator
DR. MINDY MEYER, Dir of Human Resources
364 S. Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-3000
mmeyer@wwps.org
- Section 504/ADA Coordinator
BARB CASEY, Director of Special Education
364 S. Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-3000
bcasey@wwps.org

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

Walla Walla Public Schools

State Board of the Year



Board of Directors recognized for excellence

Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors received the Washington State School Directors Association Board of the Year award for medium-sized school districts. WSSDA recognized the WWPS school board out of all 74 medium-sized districts in the state. They were honored for their successful bond program that delivered on its promises. They were also lauded for their leadership throughout the pandemic and their academic recovery response. WSSDA also noted their commendable transparent and open communications with students and parents, and their continued work to close the opportunity gap for students.

"It is such an honor to have our hard work recognized at the state level," said School Board President Ruth Ladderud. "This acknowledgment highlights ways we have successfully worked to close the achievement gap and communicate openly and transparently. We are all the more motivated to further support the success of all students and to improve communication and involvement with our students and families."



Wa-Hi student Adam Bauer performs at the 2022 Wildhorse Pow Wow. Photo by Dallas Dick of the CTUIR.

District welcomes Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Walla Walla Public Schools is proud to partner with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) for a special performance in Walla Walla Nov. 17 to celebrate Native American Heritage Month. District 4th and 7th grade students will travel to Cordiner Hall on the campus of Whitman College to be part of this event. Walla Walla Public Schools is working with CTUIR to further enhance opportunities for students to explore the heritage, culture and experience of Indigenous peoples both historically and in American life today.

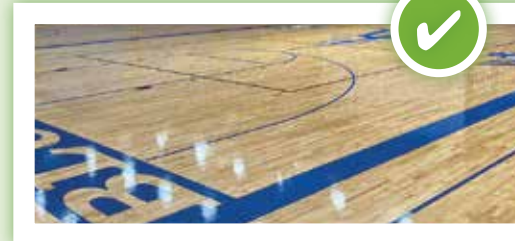
Maintenance Progress

Preserving our community's investments

The district's preventative maintenance program was in full swing this summer as local businesses partnered with the district to help preserve its facilities. The maintenance projects listed below, and many more, were completed over the summer as part of the district's efforts to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.



SK Mountain Construction put a new roof on historic Sharpstein Elementary this summer.



Thanks to Big Blue Boosters' generous donation to help fund Wa-Hi's 30-yr-old gym floor refurbishing & design.



Local arborists representing Walla Walla Public Schools, Whitman College, the City of Walla Walla and local businesses converged at Jeannette C. Hayner Park on the campus of Walla Walla High School for tree regular maintenance and clean up on the world's largest London Plane tree.

Staff Spotlight

TRESA REIBEL

New Walla Walla High School Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Tresa (Oliver) Reibel is focused on bringing back the tradition and culture she knew as player for the Blue Devils as a 1991 graduate.

"Returning to Walla Walla felt like home right away," said Reibel, who will be in her first year as head coach this season. "Walking on campus, I instantly felt the connection and nostalgia settle in. It feels good to be back and have an opportunity to make new memories as a Wa-Hi Blue Devil."

Reibel has coached basketball for the past 19 years in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Her coaching experience includes middle and high school teams, 12-17U club teams and a 17U national AAU team.

"It is an honor to be asked to lead the girls basketball program, which I am grateful to have had the privilege of being part of as a player," said Reibel. "My plan is to bring a new level of competition and intensity to the program, as well as create opportunities for Wa-Hi girls basketball players to go on and play at higher levels."

She says building a winning high school program starts in elementary school with skill development and getting the girls playing when they are young. She appreciates coaches and parents who are volunteering their time to develop these young athletes.

Reibel married her childhood sweetheart Ryan Reibel. Ryan's mother is retired Pioneer Middle School Principal Lyla Reibel. Tresa and Ryan met in 9th grade on a basketball road trip and their love for each other and basketball remains strong as the couple recently celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary. They have three daughters and a son.

“ Superintendent’s Message ”



Walla Walla Public Schools mails the Focus on Education newsletter to the homes of residents three times per year. This publication serves as a platform to keep our community informed and connected to the school district.

We appreciate your involvement and support. The Board of Directors and I value your input and welcome your ideas as we strive to "Develop Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates."

Dr. Wade Smith
Superintendent
(509) 526-6715
wsmith@wwps.org
Twitter: @WallaWallaSup

Fall Focus | 2022

A Fall for the History Books

We have so much to celebrate across our schools, and this fall was truly one for the history books. We successfully completed the largest school construction program ever tackled in our district's history, delivering on every bond project promise made when voters overwhelmingly approved the measure in November 2018. Despite the pandemic, skyrocketing inflation, and global supply chain issues, we were able to partner with over 50 local contractors and vendors who helped us complete every project on time and on budget.

As the district finishes the last of the site improvements this fall, thanks to the careful stewardship of the citizen-led Bond Oversight Committee, over \$300,000 of leftover bond funds will be credited back, helping further reduce tax rates for voters. I would like to thank the hundreds of community members, families and distinguished guests who helped commemorate this historic accomplishment at the various fall ribbon cutting celebrations.

While students across our campuses rebound and recover from COVID-related school interruptions, there is a remarkable energy that permeates our schools and classrooms. Having persevered over two years of learning disruptions due to mandated closures and other impacts, we are now seeing historic-level participation and involvement taking place. For example, our Center for Children and Families (formerly Blue Ridge Elementary) is abuzz, serving hundreds of our valley's preschool children for the first time. A decades-long dream is now a reality following the School Board's thoughtful decision to repurpose the former elementary school into a wall-to-wall community early learning center. This facility and programming will help ensure every student who enters kindergarten is ready with the requisite social and foundational skills for success.

Additionally, we have more students than ever participating in athletics and activities across our secondary campuses. We are seeing all-time high turnout for high school ASB events. Nearly 1,000 students attended the recent homecoming dance. Spirit assemblies are more raucous and energized than ever, and more and more fans are coming out to support our student-athletes thanks to the elimination of fees. The return to "normal" has truly brought a renewed sense of school spirit and appreciation and our students are taking full advantage of these opportunities across our campuses.

Finally, in the vein of historic accomplishments, our WWPS Board of Directors recently learned they were selected as the state's Board of the Year for all medium-sized districts. This is the state's highest honor for school boards, earning the top honor out of all 74 medium-sized districts.

This is truly a fall and school year worth celebrating!

Stay Connected!
» Web: wwpsbond.org
» Twitter: @bondwwps

FINAL BOND REPORT

DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISE! ON SCHEDULE. ON BUDGET.



Paul H. Schneidmiller attended Green Park Elementary, Pioneer Jr. HS and graduated from Wa-Hi (Class of 1970)

Delivering on Our Promise!

by Paul H. Schneidmiller

Thank you Walla Wallans for your overwhelming support (73% yes) for our 2018 facilities bond measure. This successful campaign has provided our Walla Walla Public Schools system with \$120M in local and matching state funds to complete critical infrastructure and safety updates at most of our district's facilities, most especially major renovations at our Wa-Hi, Pioneer and Lincoln campuses.

I am so proud of our community for investing in our children's futures. Our committee's mission was to undertake and complete a comprehensive review of the district's 11 facilities. This included extensive research, reviewing reams of data, in-depth tours of the district's buildings, and lively discussions as we then put together a proposal for our WWPS Board of Directors to consider.

During this process it became clear to our committee that we would recommend a renovation and preservation approach as opposed to tearing down our historic buildings and starting over from scratch. Our committee's proposal, which included a no increase in tax rates, was unanimously passed by our school board.

My thanks go out to Dr. Wade Smith and his outstanding administrative staff, who provided our committee with the necessary information and arranged and conducted our facilities site visits over an 18-month period.

Thank You!

Legendary Principal's Legacy Lives On



Neher Challenge Coin

Neher Plaza Bronze Plaque

DICK NEHER STUDENT PLAZA

This fall the district announced the naming of the new student plaza outside the Wa-Hi Commons as the Dick Neher Student Plaza, after the legendary principal who served from 1970 to 1990. Mr. Neher passed away in 2018, just three weeks following the successful bond. He narrated an informational video, recorded in July of 2018, which was viewed by thousands, serving as an anchor to the measure's communications platform. A special bronze plaque affixed to a sizable rock in the plaza notes Mr. Neher's impact on the campus and community. Mr. Neher's son Mike said the naming of the student plaza would have been his father's greatest honor.

DICK NEHER LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

A new Dick Neher Legacy Scholarship was also announced this fall which will provide funding for future graduates to pursue higher education. The scholarship will get its seed money from one-of-a-kind Challenge Coins with Mr. Neher's photo and logo of Walla Walla High School. Only 100 are being made and are available through the Blue Mountain Community Foundation for \$1000. Donors will also have their names included on a special plaque to be mounted in the newly renovated entry of the school.

TO MAKE A SCHOLARSHIP DONATION

Contact Blue Mountain Community Foundation
(509) 529-4371 | bmcfc@bluemountainfoundation.org

RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATIONS



Wa-Hi

Mike Neher says naming the new student plaza at Wa-Hi outside the Commons after his father Dick Neher would have been his dad's proudest moment.



Hundreds of supporters attended the Wa-Hi Ribbon Cutting ceremony and then toured the campus to see the extensive improvements and expansions.

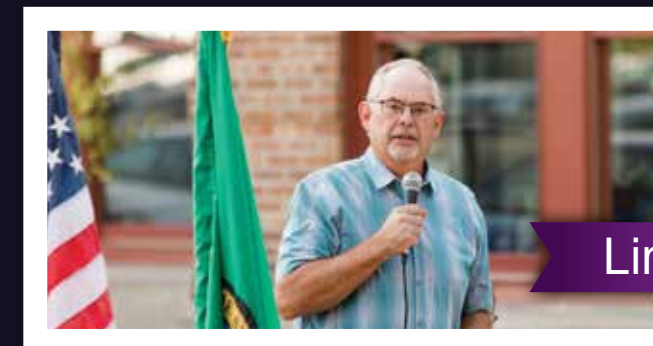


Pioneer MS

Former Superintendent Dr. Ellen Wolf (1990-2000) was a guest speaker at Pioneer's Ribbon Cutting ceremony. She spoke of the 1990 fire that damaged part of the school.

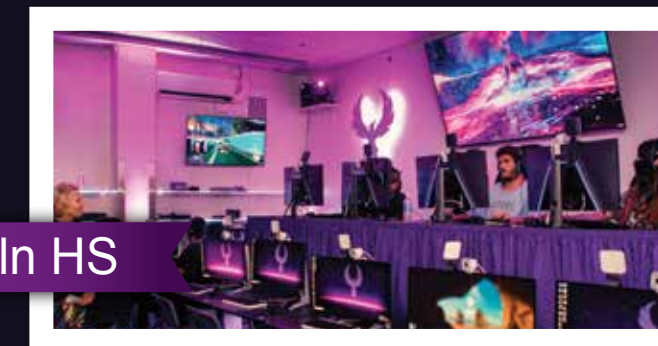


The halls were filled with guests checking out all of the bond-funded improvements.



Lincoln HS

Former Lincoln High School Principal Jim Sporleder spoke at the ribbon cutting, lauding the improvements at the school.



The new Esports classroom at Lincoln High School is a hit.



SAFETY FIRST!

First responders support schools

This fall WWPS emergency preparedness leaders Mark Higgins (Director of Communications) and Mike Kay (Director of Facilities and Operations) met with Bob Yancey (WW City Fire), Rocky Eastman (District 4 Fire), John Golden (District 4 Fire), Joe Klundt (WW Sheriff's Dept) and Kevin Bayne (WW Police Dept) to review school emergency procedures.

This group will meet three times during the school year to support school readiness for crisis prevention, management and recovery. Area first responders will also visit schools to observe state required emergency drills and help lead table top training exercises. School safety remains the district's top priority and the district appreciates all the support it receives from local first responders.

(Photo L-R) Mike Kay, John Golden, Kevin Bayne, Bob Yancey, Rocky Eastman, Mark Higgins and Joe Klundt.

Ribbon Cutting » Cont. from page 1.

to the successful November 2018 bond measure overwhelmingly approved by voters with a 73 percent yes vote.

"The district would like to thank the citizens of Walla Walla for your ongoing support and trust," said Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith. "Your vote of confidence in these historic improvements will help shape the lives of Walla Walla children for generations to come."