

Independent facilities study helps take emotion out of district needs

Well researched data for years has driven curriculum and budget decisions and is now poised to impact a long-range facilities plan for Walla Walla Public Schools thanks to a recently completed third party facilities study by *MGT of America* and *Architects West*.

During a special work session last night, representatives of *MGT of America* and *Architects West* outlined to school board members findings of its Master Facility Planning Interim Report. This detailed document scores all schools and support departments in three areas: physical condition, education suitability, and technology readiness.

"This document will be a valuable tool as we embark on a journey to develop a plan for transforming our schools into 21st Century learning communities," Superintendent **Rich Carter** said. "Facilities needs are always emotional. Now we have an independent, objective study of our facilities we'll be able to turn to when crafting our long-range facilities plan."

School board members in November hired *MGT of America* and *Architects West* to help with this process. Educational leaders from these firms have spent the past several months meeting with staff and administrators to gather facilities information. The process now shifts to developing standards for ranking district facilities needs and crafting the long-range plan. Carter has targeted Spring 2005 as a potential timeline for a district bond issue.

"We know what our program needs are so now we need to create learning environments to support them," **Carter** said. "We no longer can just open the doors and tell our staff to make it work. Facilities planning is clearly linked to improved student achievement and it's our goal to support our staff and students with facilities to make the academic gains we're being asked to make."

Representatives of *MGT of America* and *Architects West* will meet with Walla Walla Key Communicators tonight to discuss their interim findings and gather input. Carter will address facilities issues during his annual address, Wednesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m. in the Wa-Hi Auditorium.

School Board Meeting Recap • March 16

Reult announces retirement plans

After 31 years in education which included six administrative positions and three teaching assignments, Deputy Superintendent **Judy Reult** announced last night this school year would be her last.

"My years of teaching and administration have brought joy and fulfillment to my life and, I hope I have made a difference for many deserving students," Reult said. "It just seems fitting that Walla Walla is my last stop - I saved the best for last."



Reult

Reult was hired by Walla Walla Public Schools in 1999 to lead the district's Curriculum and Instruction Department.

Reult has since led the district through Science and Math Curriculum adoptions and is currently working on Social Studies. Reult was instrumental in crafting the district's recently approved Strategic Plan extension and organized a broad-based committee to develop a secondary late start plan.

Under Reult's leadership, her department expanded to offer more data analysis to better utilize assessment information to impact student achievement.

Reult plans to spend more time with her husband Greg in Pasco and her new granddaughter in Seattle. She enjoys fishing, golfing, traveling and playing with her black lab Maggie. Reult will continue teaching at WSU Tri-Cities. She hasn't ruled out further professional endeavors, but says she has no immediate plans.

Board keeps Wa-Hi swim team afloat

Board members last night voted to permanently add Wa-Hi girls and boys swim teams to the Wa-Hi Athletics Program. The program operated the past two years on a pilot basis.

The approval includes an annual budget of \$37,500 per year total for both teams. Wa-Hi will continue using the Whitman College pool for competitions.

In other School Board meeting business...

March 16 • Board Meeting

Board members:

- approved March 2, 2004 board meeting minutes; and Personnel and Out-of-State travel reports; and payment of March bills and payroll.

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

Quality

Integrity

Accountability

Respect

Courtesy

Personnel Report

• New Hires

(Certificated) - NONE TO REPORT

(Classified) - **Rodney Dyer**, Custodian, Wa-Hi

• Resignations/Retirements

(Administrative) - **Dr. Judy Reault**, Deputy Superintendent, 5 years (31 total in education), to retire at end of school year.

• Out-of-State Travel

Rena Bendix to Naval Educator's Orientation in San Diego, CA (funding - Professional Growth)

Diana Cox to American National Conference - Prevent Child Abuse in Orlando, FL (funding - Head Start/ECEAP)

Kirk Jameson and **Jeanne Ruecker** to Naval Educator's Orientation in San Diego, CA (funding - Special Programs)

Maria Marin and **Melito Ramirez** to 2004 National Migrant Ed Conference in San Antonio, TX (funding - Migrant/Bilingual)

Janifer Sams to 5th Annual National Renaissance Conference in Orlando, FL (funding - Staff Achievement Grant)

Meredith Mitchell to National MENC Conference in Minneapolis, MN (funding - Music/Professional Growth)

Quote of the Week

"Diversity: the art of thinking independently together."

Malcolm Forbes

Paine receives board approval to go away from traditional credits system

The State Board of Education is now the final hurdle to change Paine Campus to a performance-based system after Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors last night said yes to the shift from a traditional credits system.

Alternative Programs Principal **Jeff Weeks** said the proposed system would require Paine students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Academic Learning Requirement subject areas and vocational skill areas to meet the defined standards and advance.

Currently Paine Campus students must earn 22 credits to receive a Walla Walla High School diploma.

Paine students under this new model would still be required to meet Washington Assessment of Student Learning benchmarks, develop a culminating project and

create a fifth year post high school plan, all graduation requirements per the state's Certificate of Mastery.

Weeks said he is hopeful the State Board will say yes to the change.

Weeks said Truman Alternative High School in Federal Way and Quincy High School received approval in recent years from the State Board to develop a performance-based program.

Truman High School currently has a waiting list and all 20 graduates last year pursued higher education.

Weeks said Paine would be the third high school in the state to use a performance-based system.

Paine's proposal will go before the State Board in May.

If approved, the new system would be in place next school year.

Board congratulates Wa-Hi Boys Basketball team for state finish

Legendary Wa-Hi Boys Basketball Coach **Jim Thacker** and his staff of roundball experts were up to their old tricks last week at the Tacoma Dome during the WIAA/Dairy Farmers of Washington Boys 4A Basketball Tournament.

Board members took time last night to congratulate the team for its successful 7th place finish and the school's first-ever Regional title. Using Thacker's precision offense and stingy defense, Wa-Hi outplayed and hustled its way to state hardware.

Special thanks to Coach **Thacker**, Assistant Coach **John Golden**, Junior Varsity Coach **Chris Ferenz**, Sophomore Coach **David Blocklinger**, Frosh A Coach **Rich Gwinn**, and Frosh B Coach **Steve Gwinn** for all their efforts building a championship boys basketball program in Walla Walla.

Big Blue Power

Big Nine League Champions

1983, 1986, 1990, 1999

District Champions

1983, 1986

Regional Champions

2004

State Champions

1999

Regionals

1983, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990,

1991, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004

State Tournament

1976 (8th), 1983 (2nd), 1986 (6th), 1988, 1989, 1990 (5th), 1991, 1999 (1st), 2003 (8th), 2004 (7th)

Wa-Hi student-athletes earn academic awards

Wa-Hi Athletics Director **Don Wilkins** reported to school board members last night 12 of the 14 Wa-Hi teams competing in winter sports earned WIAA Distinguished Scholastics Team awards.

The WIAA Scholastic Award program is to recognize and reward those teams that maintain a high collective academic standard.

A team with an average of 3.00 - 3.49 qualifies for the Distinguished Team Award.

Wilkins thanked Wa-Hi student-athletes and their parents for making academics a top priority.

He thanked coaches for maintaining and communicating a clear expectation for high academic performance.

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'Keeping Our Team Informed'

Retired School Employees Appreciation Week • March 15-21

Thanks for making a difference in the life of a child!