

# Berney students log more than one million words

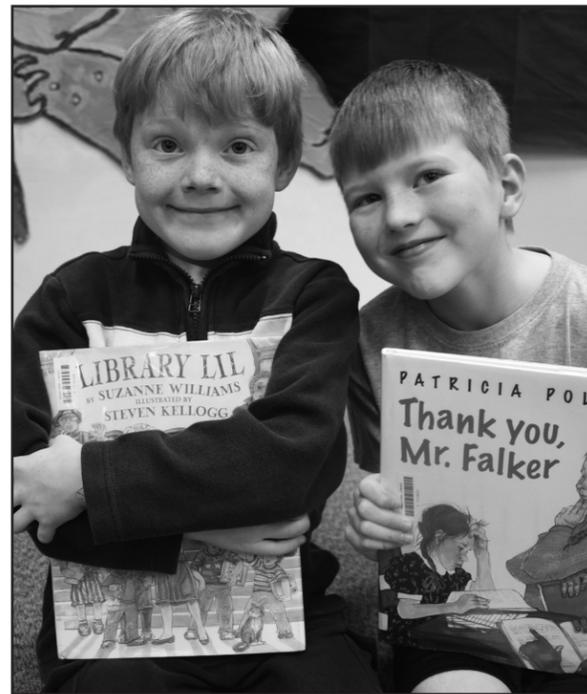
Berney Elementary first grade student **Finn Mosher** and Berney second grader **Stephen Burt** love to read and motivate each other to excel! Last year, Stephen read one million words and when Finn heard this news he said he wanted to join the one million word club too.

Finn set a personal Accelerated Reader goal to read one million words by the end of the year. He's already reached that goal and the school year is not over. Finn is in Stacy Morrison's class. Stephen has exceeded two million words total since starting school at Berney and is pushing towards three million as the end of the school year draws near. His teachers are Kelley Hubbard and Shannon Hand. Great job boys!

"Stephen has loved reading from a young age, and we are lucky the only thing we've had to do as parents is to try and keep enough books around the house," said Mary Burt, Stephen's mother.

Finn's mother Barbara Mosher said they have supported Finn at home by reading to him every night until he could do so on his own.

"We made a graph to show his progress over time, and we often asked if he was ready to take an Accelerated Reader test," Barbara said. "I think it energized our entire family to work towards this goal."



(L-R) Berney Elementary students Finn Mosher and Stephen Burt both love to read. They have logged more than one million words this school year and are leaders in the school's Accelerated Reader program.

**Walla Walla  
Public  
Schools**

# Focus on Education

*Excellence in Every Classroom*

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## High School Skills Center groundbreaking Partnership with Walla Walla Community College key to program



In March, Walla Walla Public Schools broke ground on the Southeast Area Technical Skills Center which is located on the campus of Walla Walla Community College. The building is expected to be completed March 2014 with classes beginning Fall 2014.

The Skills Center will offer high school courses in construction trades, welding, renewable resources and health occupation programs. Partnering districts include Dayton, Waitsburg, Touchet, Prescott and College Place.

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### District schools receive state Achievement Awards

Walla Walla High School, Blue Ridge Elementary and Prospect Point Elementary have been named recipients of 2012 Washington Achievement Awards.

#### Award Categories

- Wa-Hi, Extended Graduation Rate
- Blue Ridge Elementary, science
- Prospect Point Elementary, science

- 91.7% - Wa-Hi extended graduation (3rd consecutive year for Wa-Hi)
- 78.3% - State extended graduation
- 85.4%- Richland HS extended graduation rate
- 91.9%- Bellevue HS extended graduation rate

#### Passing Percentages:

- 87.5% - Prospect Point, science
- 87% - Blue Ridge, science (Regional and State Comparisons)
- 66.3% - WA State 5th grade science
- 77.2% - Richland 5th grade science
- 82.7% - Bellevue 5th grade science

### Wa-Hi senior named Washington Scholar recipient

Walla Walla High School senior **Samantha Case** was named a 2013 Washington Scholar. The Washington Scholars program recognizes the accomplishments of four high school students in each of the state's 49 legislative districts; three Washington Scholars and one Washington Scholar-Alternate. Washington Scholars recognition is based on academic achievement, leadership, and community service.

Case plans to attend Washington State University and major in history. She has been accepted into WSU's Honors program. With a GPA of 3.984, Case is ranked 10th in her senior class. She is in choir, National Honor Society, Future Farmers of America Floriculture Team, and was a member of the Link Crew her junior year.



## Walla Walla Public Schools

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### Board of Directors

- Max Carrera
- Anne Golden
- Dan Hess
- Ruth Ladderud
- Cindy Meyer

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

**Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect**  
**Courtesy | Innovation | Diversity**



**Mick Miller**  
Superintendent

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**Message from Superintendent Mick Miller**

The school year is almost in the books ... thank you so much for your support of our students and our schools during 2012-13!

Commencement for Lincoln High School is June 6 and the following day, June 7, seniors at Walla Walla High School will graduate. We are so proud of our graduating seniors, as they have met ever increasing standards in order to earn their diplomas. Graduation is culmination of thirteen years of education. For many, all thirteen have been in the Walla Walla Public Schools. If you can, please join us at the Walla Walla County Fairgrounds (Lincoln) or the Commons Green (Wa-Hi) for commencement.

I am very proud to recognize Walla Walla High School for earning a Washington Achievement Award for the third consecutive year for extended graduation rate. Also, Prospect Point Elementary and Blue Ridge Elementary received Washington Achievement Awards for their work in science. It is wonderful to see our schools earning statewide awards.

However, it is not the awards that will mark the success of the 2012-13 school year... it is the incredible growth made by so many students in our district. It seems like just yesterday we began school after Labor Day -- for the first time in years -- and now it is almost June. We have seen our students grow, learn and mature. It has been a very good year!

I consider it both a privilege and honor to work in the Walla Walla Public Schools and I thank you for your support. As always, if you have a question, comment, concern or compliment, I would love to talk with you. My office phone is 526-6714 and email is mmiller@wwps.org. Please have a wonderful summer and we will see you in September.

**Walla Walla Public Schools board member to resign position**

Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Director **Max Carrera** announced he will resign his seat on the school board effective August 1, 2013. Carrera is currently serving year two of his second four year term.



Carrera indicated he wants to be part of the bargaining process, budget approval process and evaluation process, which occur in the summer. He is also co-chairing the Lincoln High School Facilities Committee which should wrap up in June.

"It has been a pleasure to serve on the school board and I feel honored to have been a part of a group of people who I deeply respect," said Carrera, a 1985 Walla Walla High School graduate.

Carrera cites additional demands on his time, personally and professionally, as factors for needing to resign his position.

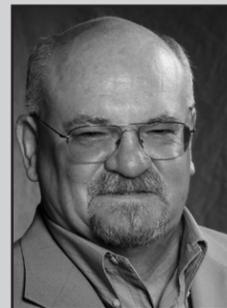
"Mr. Carrera has been a dedicated member of the Board of Directors and has contributed greatly to the success of Walla Walla Public Schools," said Superintendent Mick Miller.

The Board of Directors will appoint a person to complete Carrera's term after the effective date of the resignation. This process will begin August 2. The newly appointed director could then stand for election November 2015.

**Hess to retire from school board**

School board member **Dan Hess** announced earlier this spring he is retiring from the school board at the end of his term in December.

There will be a primary in August if there are two or more candidates running for the position.



The November General Election determines the winner. The new school board member will be sworn in at the December 2013 school board meeting.

Hess served two terms from 1985 to 1993 and is in his third term on the school board after being re-elected in 2010.

**Garrison Middle School student wears blue for Juvenile Arthritis cause**



Garrison Middle School sixth grade student **Allison Wan-ichek** organized "Wear Blue Day" earlier this month at all schools to raise awareness about juvenile arthritis. Allison was diagnosed with the disease and has decided to make a difference.

Her most recent activity challenged staff and students to wear blue for the cause. She designed posters for all the schools, handed out blue bracelets for some of the students and staff and distributed information. She has also organized fundraisers for juvenile arthritis.

**End-of-Year Celebrations**

- Lincoln High School Graduation**
- Thursday, June 6 @ 6 p.m. - WW Fairgrounds
- Walla Walla High School Commencement**
- Friday, June 7 @ 7 p.m. - Wa-Hi Commons area (gym if raining)
- Pioneer Middle School 8th Grade Recognition**
- Tuesday, June 11 @ 7 p.m. - Wa-Hi Gym
- Garrison Middle School 8th Grade Recognition**
- Wednesday, June 12 @ 7 p.m. - Wa-Hi Gym

**Community Connections**

**WWCC president salutes AVID students**



Walla Walla Community College President **Dr. Steven L. VanAusdle** was the keynote speaker at the 4th Annual AVID Academic Recognition and Family Night early this spring. AVID students were recognized for academic achievement and performance.

AVID program supports students by providing them with skills necessary to be successful in college. AVID students are expected to access rigorous curriculum. The AVID elective class is an avenue for students to acquire skills in communication, critical thinking, note-taking, peer-tutoring, organization and time-management. The AVID Senior Celebration is Thursday, May 30, at 6:30 p.m. in the Wa-Hi Commons.

Photo - L-R: Walla Walla High School students Yadira Cornejo, Maria Del Carmen Trujillo, Patricia Martinez and Beatriz Ramirez celebrate their AVID success with Dr. VanAusdle.

**City receives grant for sidewalks near Garrison**

The City of Walla Walla received a grant earlier this year to fund the Orchard Street Sidewalk Improvements project. This project received \$161,760 via a sidewalk grant program. Another \$269,330 in Transportation Enhancement grant funding was previously secured for this multi-partner project with Walla Walla County, Walla Walla Public Schools, Valley Transit, Fair Board, City of College Place, and the City of Walla Walla.

This project will provide safety enhancements and add sidewalks to both sides of Orchard Street between 9th Ave. and Chase Ave. Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2013.

### Berney and Green Park principals hired

Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors approved the hiring of **Christy Krutulis** as principal of Berney Elementary and **Gina Yonts** as principal of Green Park Elementary.

Krutulis will succeed current Berney Principal Donna Painter who is retiring from the district at the end of the school year. Yonts will succeed current Green Park Principal Mike Lambert who is retiring from the district at the end of the school year. Krutulis and Yonts will assume their new duties July 1, 2013. They were selected from a large pool of qualified principal candidates through a rigorous interview and selection process.

#### Christy Krutulis

Krutulis, a Whitman College graduate, is currently the principal of Clyde Hill Elementary in Bellevue, WA. She served as principal at Stevenson Elementary in Bellevue from 2007 to 2011. Her educational experience also includes one year as a literacy facilitator at Lake Hills Elementary in Bellevue and 12 years as an elementary classroom teacher.



#### Gina Yonts

Yonts has served as principal of Garrison Middle School in Walla Walla for the past six years. She was assistant principal at Garrison Middle School for four years prior to her principal assignment. She spent three years as the Walla Walla Public Schools Truancy Coordinator and 12 years as a classroom teacher at Berney Elementary School in Walla Walla.



### New teacher evaluation tool next year

Walla Walla Public Schools is fully implementing a new tool for teacher and principal evaluations in the fall to meet requirements of the education reform bill E2SSB 6696. Evaluations will be based on a four-level evaluation ranking system: Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient and Distinguished. Currently there are only two rankings: Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory.

Assistant Superintendent **Laure Quaresma** is heading the effort for Walla Walla Public Schools. She says the new evaluation tool is based on student growth goals by using multiple measures.



Laure Quaresma

“It is student growth, not student achievement, that is relevant in demonstrating the impact teachers and principals have on students,” Quaresma said. “Student growth means the change in student achievement between two points in time.”

Quaresma said both the teacher and principal evaluation tools utilize eight criteria and place an emphasis on recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs.

“Measures can include classroom-based, school-based, district-based and state-based tools,” Quaresma said.

### District high school students ace state math Collection of Evidence process

This spring, 44 Walla Walla and Lincoln High School students submitted “Collections of Evidence” to the state for math proficiency and 100 percent of the students met the state math standards through this process. The state average is 78 percent. These students did not meet standards via the state High School Proficiency exam route and were in jeopardy of not graduating if they did not pass the Collection of Evidence.

“Both Lincoln and Wa-Hi dedicated staff resources this year to supporting students in completing the Collection of Evidence,” said District Assessment Coordinator **Maria Garcia**. “Needless to say, there were celebrations all around when we received the news.”

As is the case every year, there are a handful of students who are not on track to graduate on time due to being credit

deficient, or because they have not yet passed either the reading or writing portions of the state assessment, according to Garcia. However, Walla Walla Public Schools does a great job of retaining students into a 5th year, providing credit retrieval and summer school options so students can continue to pursue their diploma.

“Our recent Washington Achievement Award for Wa-Hi’s extended graduation rate -- 91.7% -- is evidence of this work,” Garcia said. “Lincoln is continually improving its extended graduation rate as well. It was 69.7% for the Class of 2010, up from 13.4% for the Class of 2008.”



Maria Garcia

## 2013 Art Regier Volunteers of the Year

**Van Woolfe** – Walla Walla High School Pottery Program

Nominator: John Butenhoff

- He volunteers in Butenhoff’s Open Studio evening program five hours every Wednesday evening.

**JoAnne Savage** – Homelink Program

Nominators: Connie Taylor-Randall, Kate Venneri, Pam Clayton and Valerie Gentzler

- JoAnne volunteers in the Homelink curriculum library.

**Caty Ramirez** – Edison Elementary

Nominator: Sarah Rathbun

- Caty volunteers Monday through Thursday where she supports Spanish and Language Arts programs.

**Kara Schulke** – Garrison Middle School and Prospect Point Elementary

Nominators: Jackie Scholl, Gina Yonts, Chris Gardea

- Kara has volunteered at Garrison for the past two years and seven years at Prospect Point.

**Kanet Turner** – Sharpstein PTA, Walla Walla Citizens for Schools and district athletic programs

Nominators: Matt Bona and Brandy Martinez

- Kanet currently serves as the Sharpstein PTA President and is a regular classroom volunteer.

**Margarita Almanza** – Blue Ridge Elementary

Nominator: Kim Doepker

- Margarita volunteers most every day at the Blue Ridge cafeteria, classrooms and office.

**John Ladderud** – Prospect Point Elementary

Nominators: Michele Briones, Leah Taylor, Debbie Smyth and Karen Watson

- John has volunteered for the past four years at Prospect Point helping with math and reading.

**Katie Christianson and Kathryn Southwick Hess** – Safe Travels Alliance

Nominators: Michelle Higgins, Donna Painter, Ki Bealey and Pete Peterson

- Katie and Kathryn formed To & From: The Safe Travels Alliance to improve school zone safety.

### May is Partners in Learning Month



“Walla Walla School District established Partners in Learning Month in May 2010. This month the district will send more than 130 proclamations and letters of recognition to our *Partners in Learning*. We so appreciate the businesses, organizations and agencies who partner with the district throughout the year to support our students.”

**Anne Golden**  
School Board President

#### 2013 Partners of the Year

- JL Stubblefield Trust
- Big Blue Boosters
- Abajian Toyota
- Books for Babes

Thank you for supporting Walla Walla Public Schools students and staff!

### Rick's Boxing Club offers safe haven for Walla Walla High School student

*Rick Brown relates to Wa-Hi teen looking for a second chance*

With the gentle sounds of classic Motown playing in the background, the constant thump of boxing gloves making contact rings through the air at Rick's Boxing Club in College Place.

Walla Walla High School student **Alexis Morales**, who plans to finish up a 5th year of school in the Opportunity Program in the fall, has found a safe haven at Rick's Boxing Club. Morales says he made poor choices during his younger years which often led to trouble. Now he spends his evenings boxing and working out with Rick Brown.

"Boxing provides an outlet for my energy," Morales said. "I want to do what is right and have reasons for people to believe in me."

**Rick Brown**, a recovering addict who spent more than two decades in prison for his own poor choices, understands the need to get a second chance. He says boxing provides an avenue for redemption.

"Alexis has come a long way and is now a leader in our boxing program," Brown said. "He is a good kid who needs support and guidance."

Alexis would like to enroll in the Auto Body Program at Walla Walla Community College after he graduates from high school. He plans to continue his boxing passion and use his strength and power to help others make positive choices.



*Alexis Morales trains with mentor and coach Rick Brown.*

#### Students box free at Rick's Boxing Club

- Free boxing membership for all students
- Club hours: Monday-Friday, 6 to 8 p.m.
- Students must maintain a C average
- Homework support and academic expectations are part of the program, including book reports and cursive writing
- Written parent permission required
- Gym Location: College Place
- Information: Rick Brown, 509.386.1294

### Wa-Hi Trio takes state singing title



(L-R) Walla Walla High School students **Hirut Senter**, **Mary Beth Jones** and **Liya Senter** took first place in the Women's Small Ensemble category at the state music competition. They are coached by Walla Walla Community College Vocal Instructor Julie Jones. Soprano soloist, junior **Daisy Schoen**, took second place in her category.

"These are two of the most competitive categories at State. They have worked hard and deserve being recognized for their high level of work."

*Choral Director Norb Rossi*

### School Board Forum

*Proud to serve our community*

Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors have established the School Board Forum to respond to questions and issues from the community. The Forum will be published in the fall, winter and spring issues of the Focus on Education Community newsletter. Email your questions to School Board President Anne Golden at: [goldenaa@charter.net](mailto:goldenaa@charter.net).

#### Q: Why are my bond rates similar in 2013, even though the Sharpstein project was paid in full in December?

A: Walla Walla Public Schools strives to maintain a level bond rate, so taxpayers do not see significant spikes in their property tax payments. This is accomplished by structuring the funding of bond payments based on recommendations from both bond counsel and D.A. Davidson Co., the district's bond consultants.

For example, once the community approved the Edison bond in 2007, the district funded interest only to the Edison bonds and large sums to the principal for the outstanding Sharpstein bonds. Now that Sharpstein is paid in full, the district is funding large sums to the Edison bond principal. This practice allows the district to better maintain a flat rate for taxpayers while still meeting all bond payment obligations. Thank you taxpayers for paying off Sharpstein Elementary.

#### Q: What does the district do to ensure its schools and grounds are well maintained?

A: The district spends approximately six percent, or nearly \$4 million, of its General Fund budget annually to support district maintenance and grounds efforts. Despite budget reductions, the district hired an additional grounds employee in 2011. This significant investment was made to ensure the district's facilities meet or exceed their suggested life-cycle. The district also has a state approved Asset Preservation Plan for preventative maintenance scheduling and prioritizing of facility improvement projects and repairs.

#### Q: Why did the district begin a Lincoln High School study even though the Wa-Hi bond failed?

A: The process for improving school facilities takes time and a great deal of planning. The district needed to answer two important questions at Lincoln High School as part of this planning process: 1) Should the district build a new school or modernize the existing 1927 building? 2) Should the school remain at its current location or relocate to a new area?

Once these answers have been determined, the district can design the best facility to meet Lincoln's needs and establish a timeline for funding and construction of the project. Wa-Hi remains the top priority on the district's long-range facility improvement plan.

#### Q: What is the election process for the open school board positions?

A: There are three school director positions to be decided during the November General Election. Two four-year positions and one two-year position will be on the ballot. Current school directors Ruth Ladderud and Cindy Meyer stand for election. Dan Hess is retiring from the school board at the end of his term. His open position will be determined during the November General Election. Max Carrera is resigning August 1 and the school board will appoint to his open position.



*Anne Golden*



*Dan Hess*



*Cindy Meyer*



*Max Carrera*



*Ruth Ladderud*