



# District Award Spotlight

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR HONORED AWARD WINNERS!**

### SEWASA LEADERSHIP AWARD

School Board President Ruth Ladderud and Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith presented Nikki Sharp with the Southeast Washington Association of School Administrators (SEWASA) Leadership Award. Sharp played a key role in supporting the school district during the pandemic while with the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health.

### GRADUATES OF DISTINCTION

- » Russ Colombo .....Class of 1974
- » J.P. (Jack) Fredrickson...Class of 1952
- » Mark Thompson .....Class of 1970
- » Deborah Underwood.....Class of 1979

### PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

- » Chervenell Construction
- » Jackson Contractor Group
- » Big Blue Boosters of Walla Walla
- » Walla Walla Valley Disability Network

### VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

- » Ann Ray
- » Scott Morasch
- » Heidi Leinweber

## Walla Walla Public Schools



### State Champs Advance

Garrison Middle School 8th graders (L-R) Natalia Horn Quintero, Eva Maxwell and Natalie Williams took first place for the state of Washington in the National History Day competition for their exhibit entitled "The 1967 Space Treaty." More than 300 students participated. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty bans the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, prohibits military activities on celestial bodies and details legally binding rules for peaceful exploration/use of space. This victory qualified the team for the National competition to be held virtually in June. The event was sponsored and funded by GEAR UP, under the direction of Teresa Gingras.



### WA Youth Advisory Council

Wa-Hi sophomore Marcela McLendon has been selected to be a member of the Washington State Youth Advisory Council. Approximately 400 people applied and she was one of 20 youth selected. Marcela is active in the Wa-Hi Sources of Strength program. Her role on the advisory council is to share thoughts, opinions, advice and recommendations on important and current health topics. "I hope that even though there is a pandemic people are still able to be open and have a community where they feel safe and welcome," said Marcela. Marcela attended Berney Elementary and Pioneer Middle School. She plays volleyball at Wa-Hi, works for a party planning business and has career plans to be a dental hygienist. Her parents are Phil and Jennifer Provost.



### Going Green!

Walla Walla Public Schools received an award from the Department of Ecology for an "Air Quality Clean Diesel Electric School Bus Grant." The district applied and received funding for three electric buses and charging stations. The district is expected to receive the buses by June 2023. Walla Walla Public Schools has partnered with Columbia Rural Electric Association to provide power for the charging stations.

### 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](http://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  
LIZ CAMPEAU, Director of Human Resources  
364 S. Park Street  
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lcampeau@wwps.org
- Section 504/ADA Coordinator  
LIBBY THOMPSON, Director of Special Education  
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Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all requirements of the ADA.

## Where are they Now?

### Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates

Walla Walla High School Class of 2005 graduate Zackary Porter is living life in the fast lane as a Performance Engineer for A.J. Foyt Racing #4 car. Porter began his racing engineer career in the GT4 Champions series and he specialized in race car simulation engineering in Italy. He was born and raised in Walla Walla and attended Green Park Elementary and Pioneer Middle School. Following graduation from high school, Porter received his bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Idaho.



ZACK PORTER

After college he served in the Washington National Guard for seven years and was a General's Medal recipient. Zackary served two years active duty in the Iraq War stationed at Joint-Base Balad-Baghdad, Iraq. He went on to become a Mechanical Engineer at the Department of Defense. Zackary's father is longtime district educator Tom Porter and Zackary considers his parents his most influential educators. Other teachers who had a profound impact in his life were high school science teacher Rob Ahrens and one of his Green Park Elementary teachers, Marc Randow. Zackary said these outstanding educators helped create a foundation of excellence he maintains to this day. When he is not working, Zackary enjoys competitive CrossFit and spending time in the outdoors. His goal is to win the Indy 500 and become part of the history of "The Greatest Spectacle in Racing".

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# Walla Walla Public Schools Focus on Education

Your School District Newsletter | Spring 2022 | Volume 24 | Issue 3



## Ruff goes from Iraq battlefield to combating global pandemic

*Ruff has been the district's front line COVID commander since 2020*

As a little girl Health Services Director Amy Ruff knew it was her calling to serve her country in the military. Amy's father was a career Naval officer and her grandfather helped set up the first medical hospital on Normandy Beach in World War II.

Her father wanted her to join the Navy, but she was ready to see different places, having moved to a different base every two years as a child. After graduating from the nursing program at Washington State University, she received a direct commission to join the Air Force Nurse Corps where she would serve for

*"Managing operations during the pandemic was like living in a war zone at times. There's a reason it's called the fog of war. Things changed so fast on a daily basis that it was hard keeping up. The most difficult part of COVID is not knowing the end game."*

Amy Ruff, Health Services Director

Amy Ruff continued inside ■ ■ ■

### Inside This Issue:

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**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](http://www.wwps.org)

“  
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

# Spring Focus | 2022



Congratulations to the Wa-Hi Boys Track team!



2022 3A Track & Field State Champions!

## Congratulations Class of 2022!

As we wrap up the 2021-22 school year there is much to celebrate.

To begin, we continue to deliver on every one of our promises made with our historic bond program. All of our renovation, preservation and safety improvement projects remain on time and on budget. Nearly all of the construction activity will be wrapped up before students arrive back on our campuses next fall, and our Bond Oversight Committee continues to safeguard taxpayer resources under their careful supervision. It’s been a remarkable experience partnering with dozens of local contractors and vendors, ensuring quality craftsmanship and timeless design standards are incorporated in the most cost-efficient manner.

Furthermore, congratulations to our student-athletes and coaches on one of the most successful spring sports seasons in recent history! Our baseball team had a great run, losing a nail-biter in regionals. Our fastpitch softball team placed 2nd in the state, battling hard until the end against Lake Washington. And our boys’ track team won state again, with 3 state champions and multiple athletes bringing home hardware.

Finally, as we celebrate the graduation of over 400 seniors, I couldn’t be more proud of these amazing young men and women. As a result of COVID, nearly half of their high school career was impacted by school closures, extra and co-curricular disruptions, and forced cancellations of many traditions that normally complement a high school experience. Yet, these graduates persevered and prevailed! This year we released a video series highlighting nearly two dozen of our amazing graduates and their academic and extracurricular accomplishments. Their testimonies, stories and success should make each and every one of us proud. We have incredible youth who are well prepared to take their next step in life; whether college, career, military or trade school bound.

They are living proof that we indeed are “Developing Washington’s Most Sought-After Graduates.”

### New Time Capsule SEATech student makes modern version for Wa-Hi Spirit Bell to go along with the original

SEATech Manufacturing student Nathanael Bennett designed and manufactured a time capsule for the modern day Spirit Bell being built in the new, bond-funded student plaza at Walla Walla High School. Wa-Hi ASB students will collect items like yearbooks and programs for the new time capsule which will be placed alongside the original, four-decade-old time capsule inside a cavity of the Spirit Bell.



Bennett, a senior, will be employed at Boeing next year as a fabricator, thanks to the partnership with SEATech. He used the SEATech plasma cutter, welder and painting system to create this sturdy, waterproof time capsule designed to stay preserved for decades. Bennett says he feels honored to use the skills he mastered at SEATech to have a place in Wa-Hi’s storied history.

# BOND REPORT

DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISE

Stay Connected!  
» Web: [wwpsbond.org](http://wwpsbond.org)  
» Twitter: [@bondwwps](https://twitter.com/bondwwps)



Amy Ruff » Cont. from page 1.

22 years and climb to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 2003, she was deployed to the Middle East as the medical commander for the deployed combat unit. She says this experience helped prepare her for managing COVID safety operations the past two years.

“Air Force Nurse Corps trains you for medical readiness in the event of war,” said Ruff. “Nurses have to make decisions in high stress situations, understand public health practices, manage disease outbreaks and keep troops ready to fight and fly.”

Amy says operating in a war zone reinforces the need to take care of your people and earn their trust.

“People are your greatest resource,” said Ruff. “It’s a great feeling knowing you are taking care of people and earning their trust. Teamwork is the only way to survive!”

Since the pandemic forced the closure of schools in March 2020, Amy has been managing the district COVID safety protocol operations. She oversees testing and reporting, dashboard case counts, stay-at-home orders, communication with state and local health departments and staff training.

“Our focus has been to keep our doors open and continue serving students and staff said Ruff. “If a principal or anyone else in the district needs something, they know they can call me.”

It is no coincidence Amy landed in Walla Walla following her military career. One of her sisters moved to Walla Walla in the early 1980s. Eventually her mother, father, another sister and brother would follow to take up roots in the Walla Walla Valley. It was just a matter of time before Amy joined them. Amy was working as a nurse practitioner on Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, CO when the Walla Walla Health Services Director position opened in 2017. She accepted the position and says Walla Walla is now her forever home.



## Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies & School Tours

Walla Walla Public Schools continues to deliver on its bond promises with the announcement of ribbon cutting ceremonies and campus tours of all three major renovation projects. Please mark these dates on your calendar and celebrate with the school district on these historic accomplishments.

**WA-HI**  
**9/21**  
Wednesday  
4 to 6 p.m.

**PIONEER**  
**9/28**  
Wednesday  
4 to 6 p.m.

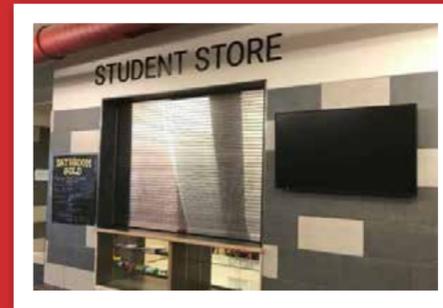
**LINCOLN**  
**10/5**  
Wednesday  
4 to 6 p.m.

## Bond Program Nears Completion

Progress continues on bond projects at Walla Walla High School, Lincoln High School and Pioneer Middle School. Students and staff will soon be able to occupy their new spaces. All projects remain on budget and on schedule. Ribbon cutting ceremonies and tours are planned at all three schools this fall.

### Pioneer Middle School

**L:** The new school store opened this spring as part of the bond project improvements. The school store is located in the main entry hallway near the new cafeteria at the hub of the school.



**R:** Site improvements near Roosevelt Street are underway. Portables have been removed and the grounds are being leveled off for outdoor use.



### Lincoln High School

**L:** New entry elevator tower. The three-story school did not have an elevator. The new elevator will support the needs of students with disabilities and those with other physical limitations.



**R:** The new entry addition to the north of the original front doors, will provide a safe and secure single-access point to the school.



### Walla Walla High School

**L:** The new main entry of the academic building off Abbott Road, includes a new roof design to make it more inviting and easier for guests to locate.



**R:** New raised letter signage was installed this spring by local business owner and graduate John Sasser. These beautiful metal signs make it easy to locate buildings across the campus.

