



**School Board  
Student  
Representative**  
**HAILEY THRALL**

Walla Walla High School senior Hailey Thrall was sworn into office in September as the district's first-ever official Student Representative to the School Board. She participates in the AVID program, has been a member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council for three years and has participated on numerous district committees. Upon graduation, Hailey plans to attend college and is interested in studying psychology.

In July, school board members approved new Policy #1250 to allow student participation on governing boards. With this new policy, the School Board recognizes the unique and valuable insight students possess on the direction of the district and decisions made on their behalf. In alignment with the district's beliefs, the Board is committed to maximizing student voice. The school district will strive to annually seat two student representatives. Student representatives will communicate with other district students and receive their input and perspectives. Student representatives do not attend executive sessions, make or second motions, vote or hold official board offices.

"I wanted to get involved with something like this because I believe student voices need to be heard," said Hailey. "I know many students have opinions and I want to be able to share their thoughts with the school board and let them know how students feel."

# INTO THE BLUE



**ANNUAL CAMP WOOTEN ADVENTURE HELPS FRESHMEN TRANSITION TO WA-HI**

More than 300 Walla Walla High School freshmen made the two-hour trek to Camp Wooten for an overnight adventure as part of the inaugural Into the Blue event Sept. 12-15. All freshmen were invited to participate in the event at no cost thanks to the generous financial support of the Walla Walla Public Schools Foundation. This annual event is part of the district's new Vision 2030 Strategic Plan to engage students in school and support a positive transition to high school.

Students participated in fun games, connected with student leaders and spent a night in a cabin in the heart of this majestic Blue Mountains recreational getaway. Sessions included service projects, hiking, canoeing, fishing, art, games, dancing, archery, a rope bridge and more.

"As a school district and community, we have been

looking for ways to support the transition to high school for our incoming freshmen," said Assistant Principal Carina Stillman, who helped organize the event. "This is a great opportunity for students to connect with each other and learn about school programs and develop a positive school community."

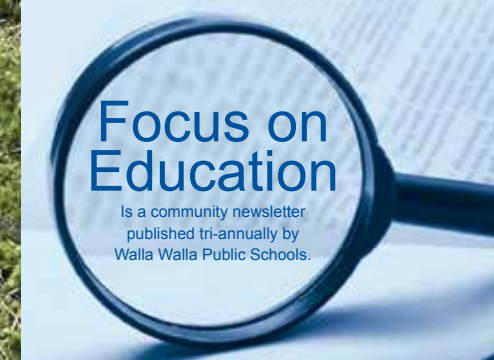
Nearly 40 adults, mostly staff, volunteered to provide supervision and lead activities. Several upperclassmen also volunteered to serve as mentors and camp support. Groups of students were divided into thirds to have the space to accommodate the entire class of freshmen over three nights. The focus of the event is service, connection and fun. Thanks to everyone involved for making this memorable experience possible for our newest Blue Devils.



**Board of  
Directors:**

- Ruth Ladderud
- Kathy Mulkerin
- Eric Rindal
- Derek Sarley
- Terri Trick
- Hailey Thrall, Student Rep.

## BOARD



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**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  
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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

Wa-Hi Class of 1952 graduate Dean Lodmell's career in engineering and construction management has benefited the staff and students of Walla Walla Public Schools and the Walla Walla community for decades. His latest work includes volunteering to conduct an independent audit of all costs associated with the recommended outdoor athletic and activity facilities improvements.

Dean grew up in Walla Walla and was a standout athlete in football and a champion downhill skier in high school and college. He was also an accomplished quartet singer. After high school, he attended Whitman College before moving on to Columbia University, NY to continue his education in engineering. As a recent college graduate, he was hired to help manage construction of Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles. He worked on several dam projects, constructed highways and bridges and built tunnels in New York City. Locally, Dean was the construction manager for the Sharpstein Elementary Bond. He also managed construction of the Walla Walla Regional Airport Terminal, Key Technology Facility, Penrose Library at Whitman College and the Walla Walla University Administration Building. For years, Dean has served on the WWPS Community Facilities Task Force assisting in the development of long-range facility improvement plans.

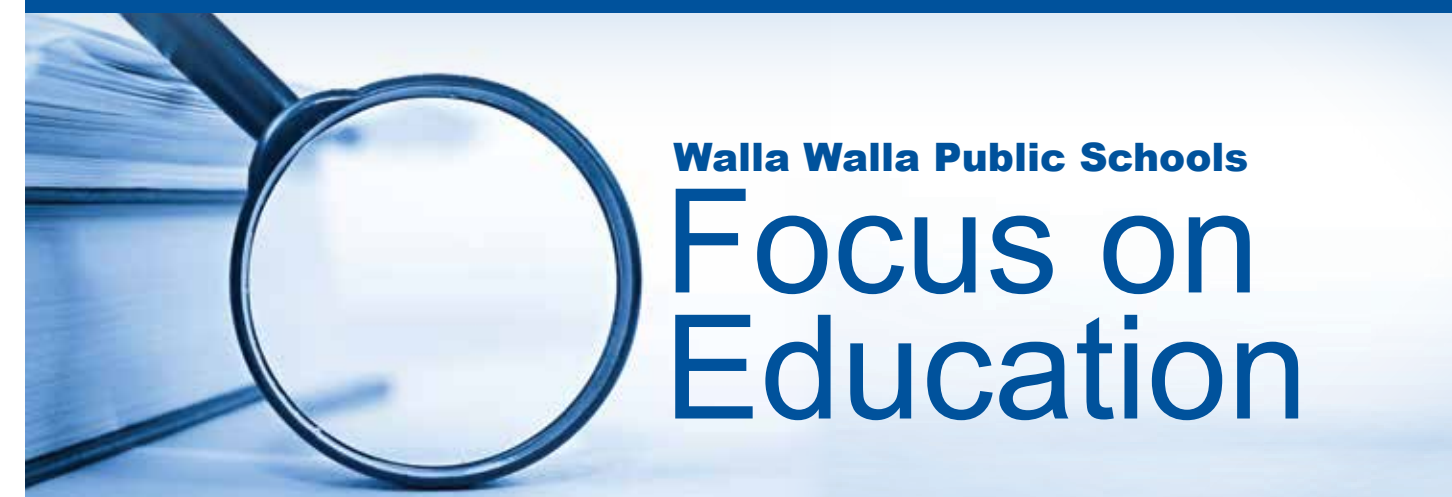
Dean is married to Betty, who owned and operated Betty's Preschool for more than 50 years. Dean loves his community and does whatever he can to make it a great place to live, work and raise families.



**DEAN LODMELL**

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FEBRUARY 13, 2024 LEVY MEASURES

WALLA WALLA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2024 LEVY  
MEASURES

# STRONG

SCHOOLS | FAMILIES | FUTURE

INVESTING IN  
THE SUCCESS  
OF OUR  
STUDENTS

## Replacement "Learning Levy"

The replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy (EP&O), commonly referred to as the "Learning Levy," requires voter reauthorization every four years. Its renewal maintains the programs and offerings our community has approved at the ballot box for over half a century. This is not a new tax, but a replacement of the existing levy approved in 2020. From honors classes to band programs to the arts, the "Learning Levy" funds the programs, experiences and student opportunities not funded by the state.

## Outdoor Athletic & Activity Facilities Capital Levy

The short-term Capital Levy will be used to update outdoor spaces for athletics, activities, JROTC, physical education, marching band and other outside programming. In order to minimize impact to taxpayers, the district has identified grants and outside funding sources. As a result, the capital levy rate is estimated to be no more than 38 cents and will automatically expire after six years.

Upcoming Levy measures continued inside . . .





“ 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  
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wsmith@wwps.org  
Twitter: @WallaWallaSup



WWPS Volunteers of the Year



## Vision 2030 Update...

This summer the district unveiled its new Vision 2030 Strategic Plan which ensures students graduate prepared for today’s competitive world. During the year-long outreach process that preceded its adoption, we heard from our stakeholders the importance of parent and community engagement in our schools. Our Walla Walla School Board heeded this input and identified maximizing family engagement and community involvement across our schools as one of our four priority goals of Vision 2030.

Led by Beth Swanson, a WWPS parent, community leader and Communities in Schools advocate, in addition to Pam Clayton, our district’s Parent and Family Engagement Coordinator, multiple parent and community listening sessions were held. From this outreach, priorities and strategies were developed to ensure families had more opportunities to engage and become actively involved in their child’s learning experience. Additionally, plans were developed to enhance community and business volunteerism and partnerships within our schools and classrooms.

One of the more exciting developments to come from our commitment to family and community is our Volunteer in Person Program, or VIP. This new program was developed to streamline and support parents, community members and business partners who are interested in volunteering in our schools. After completing background checks and online training, prospective volunteers can log in to the VIP system to peruse volunteer options available by school, sign up for specific events, or simply let the district know what skills or support they may be able to provide in the future. From reading to a child, chaperoning a field trip, or volunteering for a specific teacher, the VIP program allows parents and community members an easy and efficient way to get involved.

Preparing today’s youth for tomorrow’s world is a rewarding yet challenging task that is best realized when parents and community feel welcomed, appreciated and supported. Our commitment to family engagement and volunteerism is one way we are seeking to expand upon this powerful partnership. I look forward to seeing many of you in our classrooms, our lunchrooms and on our playgrounds.

Dr. Wade Smith  
Superintendent



## VIP | VOLUNTEER IN PERSON PROGRAM

### Long-time community leader Beth Swanson helps shape new volunteer program to support schools

Have you ever considered volunteering to read to a child, help out in a classroom, or assist a classroom on a field trip? These volunteer opportunities and many others are now easier thanks to Walla Walla Public Schools’ new Volunteer in Person - VIP program. VIP features a one-stop, easy-to-use online volunteer management system.

Those interested in volunteering, whether a parent, grandparent, community member or local businessperson, will simply visit the district or any school website and click on the VIP logo graphic. This will allow you to see what volunteer opportunities are available by school, complete an online onboarding and background check process, and sign up for volunteer opportunities. Potential volunteers can register for a specific school experience or sign up to be contacted when their assistance may be needed.

“Goal 4 of our new Vision 2030 Strategic Plan is centered on leveraging partnerships with families and the community,” said Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith. “We are committed to maximizing family engagement and enhancing volunteer opportunities across our schools.”

Long-time community leader and Wa-Hi graduate Beth

Swanson is serving as the district’s Volunteer Coordinator through a partnership with Communities in Schools. Beth has raised four children in Walla Walla and believes in giving back to the community.

“Volunteers help make our community stronger and a better place for everyone who lives here. We have great kids in Walla Walla and they need the support of volunteers to maximize their school experience.”

—BETH SWANSON



HONORS/AP COURSES



MUSIC PROGRAMS

### THE REPLACEMENT “LEARNING LEVY” WILL CONTINUE TO FUND:

- Arts Programs
- Music Programs
- Honors & Advanced Placement Classes
- School Nursing/Health Services
- Explorers Program
- Athletics, Activities and Clubs
- Drivers Education
- Intervention Specialists/Counseling
- Facilities Maintenance & Custodial Staff
- School Safety
- Classroom Technology and Staff
- Physical Education
- Educational Assistants/Para Educators
- Staff Professional Development
- Curriculum and Classroom/Lab Supplies and Materials

## How will the levy dollars be used?



### THE SHORT-TERM CAPITAL LEVY WILL:

- Replace the 60-year-old tennis courts at Wa-Hi
- Install an all-weather track at Pioneer MS for athlete, school and community use
- Repair the 43-year-old Garrison tennis courts (Chubb Courts) and resurface the 20-year-old track
- Consistent with all league schools, install high-quality artificial turf playing surfaces and field lighting (low spill/low glare) in order to maximize utilization, participation and post-season play at both the Klicker and Hayner Park fields at Wa-Hi
- Install outdoor lighting (low spill/low glare) in order to minimize instructional loss and maximize family participation for baseball and softball players
- Install elevated bleachers with ADA access at the Klicker Track and Field site for soccer, football and track and field spectators
- Provide adequate access to restrooms and changing rooms for high school athletes
- Construct a JROTC “Raider Obstacle Course” for student, first responder and community use



## NEWS ALERT

Walla Walla High School earned high national marks from U.S. News as a 2023-2024 Best High School. Ranking factors include college readiness, college curriculum breadth index, state assessment proficiency, graduation rates and performance from students of color and poverty.

“We are so pleased to learn that Wa-Hi earned recognition as a U.S. News Best High School,” said Walla Walla High School Principal John Schumacher. “We ranked in the top 1/3 of all high schools in the state and nation, boasting especially high marks on our college readiness and breadth index, in addition to our strong graduation rates, reading and science scores.”

By earning a national ranking in the top 40%, Walla Walla High School achieved status as a U.S. News Best High School and gained eligibility to display a U.S. News-trademarked 2023-2024 Best High Schools award. Wa-Hi’s ranking landed them as one of the top rated high schools in the entire region.

The U.S. News Best High Schools rankings include data on nearly 25,000 public high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 18,000 schools were ranked on six factors based on their performance on state assessments, graduation rates and how well they prepare students for college.