

# 10-10 Staff News

School Board Meeting Recap »

October 6, 2020

## Board targets return date

*District prepares for Oct. 26 transition to Yellow Stage AM/PM hybrid model*

Last night, Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors instructed Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith to make preparations to transition to its Yellow Stage Monday, October 26 which allows preschool to 2nd grade students to return for in-person instruction through the AM/PM hybrid model.

During the hour-long discussion, school board members reviewed case counts released from the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health identifying Walla Walla Public Schools has met the state's 75 case/100K threshold to safely pivot to in-person instruction.

In addition, they reviewed provisions outlined in the district's Roadmap to Safely Reopening Schools plan required to support the transition, including low community hospitalization rates, decreasing test positivity rates, and the district's successful ability to control viral conditions in its schools. The district has developed a public COVID dashboard identifying student/staff transmission instances by campus for another layer of safety and transparency. Walla Walla Public Schools has also developed a comprehensive COVID-19 Safety Plan following safety guidelines and protocols framed by CDC guidance, Washington State Department of Health recommendations, and input from local health advisers.

"In accordance with provisions in our Memorandum of Understanding with the Walla Walla Valley Education Association, the School Board instructed Superintendent Smith to consult with union leadership over the coming days to review the case count data, in addition to plans and provisions necessary to support staff and student



**Sam Wells**  
Board President

safety," said Board President Sam Wells. "While the district technically could transition as early as Oct. 19, the Board chose a more cautious approach that provides the district additional time to monitor viral conditions, plan with staff and communicate with families."

Over the coming days and weeks the district will continue to monitor case trends to ensure levels support the Yellow Stage transition, meet and review data and plans with union leadership and fine tune logistics related to transportation, nutrition services, safety and parent communications.

Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors will conduct its regularly scheduled Business Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Community members have an opportunity to share their input on the topic for public record prior to the meeting. Public comments must be submitted by email to Administrative Assistant Susie Golden at [sgolden@wwps.org](mailto:sgolden@wwps.org) by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14.

Comments will be public record and shared with the school board in advance of the meeting and posted on the district's website. Public comments must include the citizen's name, address and contact information.

Citizens may also drop off comments at the District Office drop box located at 364 S. Park St. The drop box is located adjacent to the main entrance.

More information regarding the district's Safely Reopening Schools Plan, visit: <https://www.wwps.org/safely-reopening-schools>

## Board Meeting Highlights

### APPROVED »»

Minutes from the Sept. 15, 2020 regular business meeting and Sept. 29, 2020 special meeting, personnel report, non-athletic extra & co-curricular contracts, 2020-21 teachers assigned out of endorsement area, Oct. 6 accounts payable and Sept. payroll and annual Highly Capable Program compliance.

### BUDGET UPDATE »»

Superintendent Smith reported better news is coming out of Olympia regarding the state's General Fund budget. Currently legislators are projecting a \$4.3 billion budget shortfall, about half of what was projected this summer. Superintendent Smith said he will continue to monitor the state budget and its impact on school funding.

### CEE SURVEYS »»

School board members instructed Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith to postpone the annual community survey due to COVID-19 implications and budget savings strategies.

The district will also delay conducting a survey with Blue Ridge families who relocated to new schools following the repurposing of the school to the Walla Walla Center for Children and Families. Board members reported the survey should be delayed until students are back in school to get an accurate account of the transition.

The district will move forward on conducting the Center for Excellence in Education surveys of staff, students and parents. The district will announce survey details next week. This year's survey will have a new module addressing diversity and equity in schools.

**EMPLOYMENT ...****Classified:**

BEN PENA | GROUNDS, FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

**RESIGNATION/RETIREMENTS ...****Classified:**

MARGI AULT | HUMAN RESOURCES, 26 YRS

TANIA FARRENS | BERNEY, 8 YRS

JULIE FLETCHER | WA-HI, 8 YRS

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE ...****Certificated:**

CHANTAL RAMIREZ | WWCCF, 2 MONTHS

- NOV. 23, 2020 - JAN. 29, 2021 (STUDENT TEACHING)

BRISA MAYA | GREEN PARK, 5 YEARS

- 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

**Quote of the Week**

"Only a generation of readers will spawn a generation of writers."

Steven Spielberg

**Free flu vaccines for students**

The Health Center of Walla Walla, in conjunction with Walla Walla County Department of Health and Walla Walla Public Schools, is offering FREE flu vaccinations for ages 5-18 in a drive-by vaccination clinic at Walla Walla High School on Wednesday, October 14 from 4-6 p.m.

If you wish to reserve a vaccine for your child, email [help@thehealthcenterww.org](mailto:help@thehealthcenterww.org) with an idea of the time you'd prefer. Unscheduled vaccinations will be offered on a first-come first-serve basis during the 4-6 p.m. window. Families who wish their students to receive the flu vaccine through THC need to complete a THC permission form, which can be found at <https://www.thehealthcenterww.org/parent-info>.

A vaccine administration consent form needs to be completed at arrival on October 14. The Health Center is Walla Walla's school-based health center offering medical and mental health care needs for in-person or virtual visits during this time. Information about The Health Center is available at [www.thehealthcenterww.org](http://www.thehealthcenterww.org)

**Garrison Middle School receives state award**

Congratulations to Garrison Middle School for receiving the 2020 Prevention Award of Excellence – Youth Leadership – Middle School Club award from the Washington Health Care Authority. The award recognizes the school's Prevention Club advised by Counselor Angie Gardea. Peggy Needham of Walla Walla County Health Services nominated Garrison for the award. Garrison Middle School was trained in Sources of Strength and uses their evidence-based structure to build peer led programs that target mental health promotion and suicide prevention. In addition, Garrison Middle School students also implemented Red Ribbon Week activities and the "You Can" marijuana prevention program. Last year there were 55 student members in the prevention club, which coordinates events, programming and implementation during the school year. Angie Gardea will represent the school during the virtual awards ceremony November 4.

**Special Education Department Update**

Special Education Director Libby Thompson and teachers Nate Dross (Pioneer MS), Michelle Paine (Garrison MS) and Marcia Frandsen (Green Park Elementary) provided an update to school board members on the Special Education program.

Approximately 100 of the district's highest needs special education students are receiving in-person instruction at Sharpstein, Green Park and Berney Elementary Schools, Pioneer MS, Garrison MS and Walla Walla High School. In-person programs include Life Skills, RISE autism program, Social & Emotional learning and STEP. The in-person program features eight teachers and multiple para-educators utilizing the A/B hybrid model.

Approximately 60 special education students are enrolled in the new Walla Walla Online program. Thompson and Walla Walla Online Director Carina Stillman collaborated to develop a hybrid online program for some of the students who needed synchronous instruction for core subjects, one-on-one support and electives. Students not in the hybrid model take traditional Walla Walla Online classes. Two teachers and three para-educators are assigned to Walla Walla Online.

Other special education students are participating in Distance Learning 2.0 with additional support from special education teachers and para-educators working with students in small groups. Thompson said her team is providing support based on the individual needs of students. Individual Education Plan reviews and evaluations are held via Zoom with documentation logged on DocuSign.

