

# 10-10 Staff News

School Board Meeting Recap »

October 20, 2020

## Yellow Stage Delayed

*Board pauses on Oct. 26 transition to Yellow Stage AM/PM hybrid model*

Last night the School Board delayed bringing preschool through 2nd grade students back for in-person learning Oct. 26 to allow more time for parent, staff, student and stakeholder engagement. School Board President Sam Wells released a statement on next steps.

### School Board President Sam Wells:

Last night the board met for nearly three hours as we reviewed our preliminary decision to transition to the Yellow Stage this coming Monday the 26th. Our deliberations included consultation with the Walla Walla County Health Officer Dr. Jecha and his two colleagues, review of public testimony, analysis of viral trends, and considerable board discussion. We failed to reach consensus on our Oct 26 opening. At the conclusion of the meeting we provided Dr. Smith with the following direction.

- To notify staff and parents of our decision to suspend the October 26th transition to the Yellow Stage.
- We asked him to reach out to WWVEA/ Union leadership to review and discuss if our formally-approved metrics/triggers to open up schools should be modified. This



**Sam Wells**  
Board President

became very apparent in light of the information received from the local health officials last night, providing compelling testimony that our current metrics, while established, agreed to and communicated to families many months ago, may no longer be applicable based on current viral understanding.

- To work with staff and WWVEA to develop a parent, staff, and student survey to elicit feedback from stakeholders regarding possible metric modifications and/or other options to consider.
- To work with WWVEA to consider possible modifications to our reopening plan based on staff, stakeholder and health official input.

I want to thank my fellow board colleagues for what was a thoughtful meeting where many feelings, ideas, and perspectives were shared and discussed in an open, transparent, and respectable manner.

Thank you all again for your incredible efforts and patience as the Board weighs this important decision.

## Board Meeting Highlights

### APPROVED »

Minutes from the Oct. 6, 2020 regular study meeting and executive session, personnel report, Oct. 20 accounts payable and Sept. financial report.

### ENROLLMENT REPORT »

The official October enrollment count is 5572 FTE. This is approximately 120 students less than this time last year. The biggest impact on enrollment has been fewer kindergarten students. This is a similar trend to statewide data. Superintendent Smith said he expects overall enrollment numbers to be down about 150 FTE from budget projections for the school year.

### HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE »

Last night, Wa-Hi student representative Jaden Bergevin reported the school's first virtual assembly will be held Oct. 30 via a pre-recorded program featuring student and staff engagements. The JROTC is planning to stream a Veterans Day program. More details to come. Jaden said several new ASB clubs are forming, including an Outdoor Adventure Club.

### WIAA SPORTS UPDATE »

Superintendent Smith reported earlier this month the Governor's Office and Washington State Department of Health issued new guidance for returning to education-based sports and activities. Superintendent Smith said Athletic Director Dirk Hansen is developing plans based on this new state guidance to allow district athletes to resume some level of activities. More information will be coming out soon.



### School Board members L-R:

Eric Rindal, Terri Trick, Derek Sarley, Ruth Ladderud and Sam Wells.

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

MICHAEL HENRY | CUSTODIAN, WWCCF

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

CONNIE GOUDE | PROSPECT POINT, 23 YRS

BRYAN WINN | TRANSPORTATION, 2 YRS

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

JEANA HOBBS | WWCCF, 8 YEARS

- FOR REMAINDER OF THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

**Quote of the Week**

"Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation."

Walter Cronkite

**SEATech students in high demand**

Jackson Contractor Group is reaching out to SEATech Construction Technology teacher Eric Matson to see if more of his former students are available for hiring following the success of other recent graduates on Jackson's crews. Matson says for the past three years Jackson Contractor Group and SEATech's Construction Technologies have worked together to create a long term partnership to give students the opportunity to learn the skills needed to transition into the construction industry.

Jackson Contractor Group has recently hired three SEATech graduates for local and regional work and are looking to hire more carpenters and laborers for the Walla Walla High School and Pioneer Middle School projects and Pasco job sites.

"Of the candidates that I have interviewed, the SEATech students have better interview skills than the rest, hands down," said Project Superintendent Chris Webb. "They also have a good understanding of construction in general and know how to work."

Webb also reports the SEATech students have a tremendous work ethic and are in the company's long-range plans.

"We're hoping to make this a career for them and want them to be part of our family we are building here in Walla Walla," said Webb. "We plan on staying in the community and want them to be a part of our company until they retire."

These projects are prevailing wage government jobs and hourly rates for these positions start at \$32 per hour. Matson is reviewing his list of former students and is planning to send potential candidates to Webb soon.

"The success of our graduates embodies the vision of Walla Walla Public Schools to Develop Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates," said CTE and SEATech Skills Center Director Jerry Maher. "We are very proud of our students for investing time and effort into their education and utilizing their skills to pursue careers that are in high demand. They are setting a great example for future students who are interested in following in their footsteps."

**Bond Update**

(September 2020 Progress Report)

**Walla Walla High School**

- In early September, Jackson Contractor Group completed the new Science Building in time for teachers to use the new building for teaching.
- Infrastructure package is nearly completed.
- The design team completed work on the culinary arts classroom and submitted it to Jackson for review and pricing.

- Jackson initiated the following construction activities: demolition of the Old Science Building interiors; abatement began on the Old Science Building; demolition of the exterior canopy on the Library building; interior demolition of the Library building; set up safe walking pathways for when students return to avoid construction activities.

- The design team began to work through reviewing and approving submittals to ensure the construction activities are in line with the design intent.

- Commissioning activities were ongoing to ensure that new HVAC, plumbing, fire alarm, and electrical equipment were working in the correct manne. Documentation presented to the district.

- Hazardous chemicals were removed from the old Science Bldg and disposed of by Clean Harbors.

**Pioneer Middle School**

- Nelson Construction installed egress doors in the Library as well as a new doorway into the north wing's temporary computer room.

- Jackson Contractor Group began to mobilize on site and also initiated getting temporary fence installed to keep students out of the construction area.

- Jackson also began demolition activities which included removing interior walls and items that require disposal. In addition, abatement activities began in order to remove hazardous materials from the structure.

- Architects West and their team began to work through reviewing, responding to, and approving submittals to ensure that the construction activities are in line with the design intent.

- Jackson began work on a construction schedule in order to communicate with the district and Pioneer staff to ensure proper coordination.

**Blue Ridge**

- Roof and landscaping projects nearly completed.