

Walla Walla Public Schools 10-10 Staff News



School Board Meeting Recap | March 5, 2019

Community Conversation

Board begins discussion to address elementary consolidation and early learning program expansion

Last night during the School Board Study meeting, board members launched a discussion with the community centered on potential elementary consolidation and an assessment of early learning program needs.

Elementary capacity as it relates to district finances is closely connected to the board study. The district is facing the reality of a reduction of 250 elementary students over the last nine years due to shifting community demographics. Kindergarten readiness data and feedback from parents suggests a need for more early learning programs. This topic of expansion will be studied as well.

The district is anticipating 25 empty classrooms across its six elementary campuses in the next few years. Enrollment is also expected to remain flat in the coming years.

School Board President Ruth Ladderud shared a draft timeline of the board study during last night's meeting. She reported the study will include site visits to elementary



Ruth Ladderud

"We have issues we need to be ahead of. It's a long process requiring a lot of community input, so we need to start now."

Ruth Ladderud
School Board President

schools, surveys, enrollment data reviews, financial impact analysis and preschool program options.

"We are thinking the answers will not be finalized until early November," said Ladderud. "There are multiple levels and questions that need to be answered, and there are multiple times when we need to involve others in the discussion."

Board members will review the draft timeline at the March 19 meeting and discuss next steps.

Transportation and school hours efficiency survey closes March 14

Superintendent Wade Smith outlined the district's Communication and Engagement Plan for the 2019-20 Transportation/School Time Efficiency proposal which would save more than \$400,000 a year in transportation costs by slightly adjusting school start times. Superintendent Smith is meeting with staff to discuss the proposal. The district also sent home a fact sheet to parents and created a webpage on the district's site which houses a public survey open through March 14. Superintendent Smith plans to review the data later this month and bring a recommendation to the school board March 19 for possible 2019-20 implementation.

Board Meeting Highlights

APPROVED . . .

Minutes from the Feb 19, 2019 regular business meeting and executive sessions, personnel report, extracurricular athletic contracts, March 5 accounts payable and Feb. payroll, General Contractor/ Construction Manager Services for Walla Walla High School, Superintendent's evaluation and Superintendent's contract renewal.

Behavior Team Update . . .

The district's Behavior Team provided an update to the school board last night. The team serves General Education and Special Education students at all grade levels. The bulk of the service is provided to elementary students who consistently demonstrate the greatest need. They work closely with the Community Resilience Initiative which is under contract with the district to support the social and emotional needs of students as part of Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan. Problem solving, screening and family support are key components of their work. Special Education suspensions are down this year compared to last year. Efforts to be more proactive are linked to this success.

WWPS Behavior Team:

- Jennifer Matson, Behavior Specialist
- Kristen Duede, Mental Health Specialist
- Heather Lane, Behavior Coach
- Nicole Hyatt, Behavior Coach
- Barb Casey, Lead Behavior Specialist

Developing Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates

PERSONNEL
REPORT

RESIGNATION/RETIREMENT ...

Certificated:

- MARY FLYNN | BR PRESCHOOL, 3 YRS
- BERTA HERRERA TREJO | BLUE RIDGE, 12 YRS
- CHARLENE MAIB | BLUE RIDGE, 12 YRS
- CHRIS MELIAH | WA-HI, 1 YR

Classified:

- ELISABETH AMMERMAN | GREEN PARK, 1.5 YRS
- EMANUEL GUERRERO | WA-HI, 2.5 YRS
- MONICA JIMENEZ | BR PRESCHOOL, 4 YRS

Superintendent's Evaluation Highlights

The Board found Superintendent Smith's performance this year to be excellent or outstanding across all the professional standards. Board members highlighted his leadership in the successful bond campaign, sound financial management, and his ability to develop a strong level of support from staff as witnessed in the CEE feedback survey. Board members also noted, however, that student performance still lags behind the goals established by the Board and must be improved upon. Staff members received an email today from School Board President Ruth Ladderud with additional information on Superintendent's Smith evaluation.

The Health Center update

Medical and Mental Health Services for Walla Walla students

The Health Center Executive Director Lindsey Engh provided an update to the school board last night. Founded in 2008, The Health Center improves the academic and life success of students at Blue Ridge Elementary, Pioneer Middle School and Lincoln and Walla Walla High Schools by providing on-site, no-cost, holistic physical and mental health care services, according to Engh.

Engh reported The Health Center is now billing Medicaid Insurance and is working to secure financial stability through potential partnerships. She said mentoring programs with Whitman College students have been successful and Walla Walla University practicum students are supporting service needs. Mental health counseling continues to be a large part of The Health Center's service to students. Care coordination with local providers is another key service offered.

The Health Center was the first school-based health center to open in Eastern Washington. Engh reported The Health Center's partnership with Walla Walla Public Schools is producing documented improvements in the academic and life success of participating students.



Safety and Security Improvements

Access control improvements coming soon

The successful November bond election cleared the way to begin safety and security infrastructure improvements at district schools. Facilities and Operations Director Mike Kay is coordinating a host of projects set to begin this summer with a focus of improving access control. Fencing, card readers, cameras and secure vestibules top the list of solutions to improve safety. Kay has been making site visits, working with security experts and district staff to develop these plans.

Blue Ridge roof replacement update

Replacing the nearly 40-year-old roof at Blue Ridge as a result of funding from the successful November 2018 bond election has proven to be an extensive planning process.

Last night, the School Board supported a unanimous recommendation from architects, roof consultant, Wenaha, and maintenance staff to replace the Blue Ridge roof system this summer using a "hybrid" approach.

"This concept will keep the look and feel of Blue Ridge, but does not put the dirt and sod back on the very top of the structure," said Superintendent Wade Smith. "Most stakeholders have never seen the very top of the roof as it is not visible from the street level."

The dirt and sod covered roof has led to problems over the years resulting in leaks. Gophers, rodents and watering the grass are the greatest factors. Also, the shallow soil levels on the very top provides a minimal R-value (R-4). The proposed new roof system will be minimum R-30 through the use of rigid insulation under the membrane covering. The new roof will be more energy efficient, less expensive to install and maintain and safer thanks to a decorative fence surrounding the roof structure. Superintendent Smith reported the new design remains within the \$1.3M project budget.

