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District Stories

Superintendent Miller discusses options for modernizing Walla Walla High School

Superintendent Mick Miller presented options for modernizing Walla Walla High School during Tuesday evening's school board public work session. Walla Walla High School ranks number one on the list of greatest need, according to the Community Facilities Task Force 2010 study.

Miller reviewed construction options ranging in total project costs from \$68 million to \$82 million. The local bond contributions for these projects would range approximately from \$47 million to \$55 million. The difference between the total project costs and local bond contributions is made up from state matching dollars.

Miller would like to see the district move forward with a bond this school year to fund the modernization of Walla Walla High School. Board members would like additional information on how Lincoln High School's needs will be met should the Wa-Hi project proceed. Miller will continue to seek input, discuss options and work with architects to obtain more information on Lincoln High School.

American Flag flown over U.S. Capitol Building donated to Walla Walla High School

Thanks to U.S. Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers for donating an American flag certified to have flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

The flag was presented during the Wa-Hi girls soccer match on Saturday. The flag will be flown at the soccer field during athletic events.

Thanks to local businesswoman and longtime community volunteer Jill Richardson for coordinating this event.

"Last year I discovered that our Walla Walla High School soccer field did not have an American flag on the field and we had to look towards the front of the school for our Pledge of Allegiance before the game and we could not see that flag," Richardson said. "I felt it is important for our school and visiting schools to show pride for our flag, country and community. I was given the opportunity through Cathy McMorris-Rodgers to have a flag flown over our national Capitol Building in honor of our youth and would be able to give it to the school for future athletic events at the field."

District rejects Skill Center bids

Tuesday night, school board members rejected all bids for the Southeast Area Technical Skill Center after general contractor bids for the \$7.7 million construction project came in approximately \$1.1 million over estimations.

Superintendent Mick Miller says the district will work with Architects West to scale back the project to reduce costs and put it out for re-bid. Last spring, the Washington State Legislature allocated \$10.3 million to fund the High School Skill Center. These funds will also pay for equipment, furniture and other costs associated with the project.

The Southeast Area Technical Skill Center is expected to open in the Fall of 2014 and will serve regional high school students at its Walla Walla Community College location. It will offer construction trades, welding, renewable resources and health occupation programs. The Skill Center will be a branch campus of the Kennewick School District's Tri-Tech Skills Center.

Board says 'no' to Charter Schools

School board members approved Resolution No. 12-2012 which opposes the passage of Initiative 1240 -- Charter Schools. See the entire resolution on the district web site. Initiative 1240 (Charter Schools) will be on the the Nov. 6 General Election Ballot.

Ladderud officially joins school board

Tuesday night, Ruth Ladderud was sworn in as a school board member by Superintendent Mick Miller. School board members appointed Ladderud to fill the vacant Position 3 school board slot which came available when Jim Lehmann resigned. Ladderud, an administrative assistant at Whitman College, has lived most of her life in Walla Walla.

She attended Prospect Point, Paine and Garrison and graduated from Wa-Hi and Whitman College. Ruth is married to John, a veterinarian, and they have three children: Jeff attends WSU, Annie is at Whitworth and Jerry is at Garrison Middle School.

District joins area Realtors for “Care and Share” Food Drive

- Food Drive Dates: Oct. 19-21

Walla Walla Public Schools is teaming with area realtors to help those in need through the “Care and Share” annual food drive. There are many ways for parents, students and staff to get involved. All donations help the Blue Mountain Action Council Food Bank. Demand remains high. Peter Swant is the project coordinator: pswant@cbfr.biz

Here's how you can help:

- “Fill the Bus” drive at area grocery stores: Saturday, Oct. 20 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Pick a section of town to distribute bags to area homes and then collect them the following day (Oct. 20 & 21)
- Donate food during Walla Walla High School home football games
- Donate food at all district schools (collection barrels are now in place)

District science test scores above state average

Wa-Hi graduation rate 16% points higher than state average

District assessment Coordinator Maria Garcia briefed the school board Tuesday night on results from last Spring's state testing. Spring state test scores revealed positive trends in elementary reading, math and science and results for high school assessments were above the state average in all but one subject.

WWPS 5th grade science scores were above the state average for the second year in a row. Blue Ridge and Prospect Point Elementary results were at or above 87 percent. Especially notable is Blue Ridge's improvement from only 11 percent meeting science standards in 2010.

Wa-Hi continues to vastly out perform the state graduation rate with an impressive 92 percent on-time rate. The state graduation rate is 76.6 percent.

With the ESEA waiver, there are substantial changes to the way the state uses results from these assessments to hold schools and districts accountable for student achievement, according to Garcia. “The concept of “AYP”, or Adequate Yearly Progress, has been replaced by the more fair and realistic system of “AMO”, or ‘Annual Measurable Objectives.’ Under the old AYP provisions, all groups of students (e.g., Limited English, Low Income, Special Education) were to meet the same achievement targets regardless of where they started, with increasingly severe penalties when they didn't.”

Garcia says under the new AMO system, improvement is much more fine-tuned. Each school has its own set of AMO targets for each subgroup of students, and for each subject area. Further, rather than an ultimate (and unrealistic) goal of reaching 100% proficiency, the aim is to close the achievement gap by half for each subgroup by 2017.

- Reading AMO targets were met in 10/11 subgroups
- Math AMO targets were met in 2/11 subgroups

For a complete listing of state test scores, visit www.wwps.org.

Personnel Report (from 10/2/12 school board meeting)

Employment

(Certificated) - NONE TO REPORT

(Classified)

Kathy Carranza, Para-Educator (temp), Prospect Point
Jack Dickson, Trades Assistant, Facilities & Operations
Jeana Hobbs, Para-Educator (temp), Blue Ridge
Yvonne Huff, Custodian, Wa-Hi
Judy Pinney, Para-Educator (temp), Prospect Point
Sylvia Pedroza, Para-Educator (temp), Green Park

Resignations/Retirements

(Classified)

Deborah Tolley, Food Services Assistant, Blue Ridge, 6.5 years
Margo Anderson, Bus Assistant, Transportation, 25 years

Superintendent's Patron Tour program invites community members to visit schools

Superintendent Mick Miller is continuing his Superintendent's Patron Tour program Wednesday, Oct. 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Guests will visit Green Park Elementary, Walla Walla and Lincoln High Schools as part of the program.

Miller's goal with the program is to build relationships, learn about each other and listen. Please ask your friends, family, neighbors and parents of students to participate. They will value the experience and learn a lot along the way. Patron Tour guests will meet with Superintendent Miller, tour schools and conclude with lunch and a debriefing. If you are interested in participating in a Patron Tour, contact Communications Director Mark Higgins: 509.526.6716 or by email: mhiggins@wwps.org.

Whitman Partnerships support kids

Susan Prudente, Whitman College Outreach Coordinator, and Whitman students involved in district programs reported to school board members Tuesday night.

Whitman Mentors Program

- Approximately 120 Whitman students
- School visits are one day per week

Story Time

- Approximately 70 Whitman students
- Target students: P-2 (literacy-based)

College Coaches

- Approximately 17 Whitman students
- Guided study program, academic tutoring

America Reads Program

- Approximately 30 Whitman students
- Work study position (5 to 8 hours per week)

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School Stories

Fall 2012 – Parent/Teacher Fall Conference Schedules

Berney Elementary

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Blue Ridge Preschool

Monday, November 5 - 3:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Tuesday – Thursday, Nov. 6-8 - 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Friday, November 9 8:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Blue Ridge Elementary

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:45 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Edison Elementary

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:15 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. – Noon; 12:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Green Park Elementary

Wednesday, October 10 - 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Prospect Point Elementary

Tuesday, October 9 - 3:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:30 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Sharpstein Elementary

Tuesday, October 9 - 3:00 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:00 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Garrison Middle School

Wednesday, October 10 - 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. (Arena style in gym)

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Scheduled Conferences)

Pioneer Middle School

Wednesday, October 10 - 4:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. (Drop in - classrooms)

Thursday, October 11 - 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Scheduled conferences)

Thursday, October 11 - 4:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. (Drop in - classrooms)

Lincoln Alternative High School

Monday, October 8 - 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 10 - 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 11 - 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Walla Walla High School

Tuesday, October 9 - 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Arena conferences)

Thursday, October 6 - 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Scheduled conferences – classrooms)

Thursday, October 6 - 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Drop in conferences – classrooms)

No school Oct. 11 and 12

There is no school for students Thursday, Oct. 11 and Friday, Oct. 12 due to Parent/Teacher conferences. Classes resume Monday, Oct. 15. Also, all elementary students will be released for early dismissal today (Friday, Oct. 5) so teachers may prepare for conferences and grade reports.

Wa-Hi student receives Microsoft Award

Walla Walla High School student Madeline Brooks received a \$1000 check for earning a Certificate of Excellence award from Microsoft. She is one of only 15 students in the state to win this award for computer excellence. Teacher Gay Buissink presented the check to Ms. Brooks.

Trunk-or-Treat offers safe and fun Halloween experience

- Trunk-or-Treat is sponsored by Key Club for all elementary school students
- Candy, treats and other goodies for all
- Wednesday, October 31 from 5 to 7 p.m.
- Wa-Hi Science Parking lot
- Haunted Barn and Auditorium
- Admission is two cans of food for donation to the Christian Aid Center Food Bank

Berney's SWAT team helps develop responsibility skills

Berney's Kristen Duede and Becky Jo Curtis have formed a job program for 4th and 5th graders called SWAT -- Students with a Task. The program centers around 13 different jobs at the school. A "supervisor" for each position helps keep the students on task.

Students are given the SWAT Policies and Expectations with a complete list of the jobs and their requirements as part of the process. The students will "work" during their lunch recess time and learn how to read a job schedule, sign in/out of a time sheet, and learn to be responsible for reporting to their supervisor.

"The students are excited and eager to find out where they will work," Curtis said. "The students will earn an extra recess at the end of the quarter."

Walla Walla tween to be featured in Arthritis Today Magazine

Walla Walla tween, Allison Wanichek, will be featured in the November/December issue of the Arthritis Today magazine. The magazine interviewed Wanichek because of her determination to bring awareness about Juvenile Arthritis to the public and raise money on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation.

Because of her work, Wanichek has also been selected by the Arthritis Foundation to be the Honoree at their Inaugural Jingle Bell Run/Walk in the Tri-Cities on November 17.

At age 10, Wanichek was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Since then, she set out on a mission to raise awareness about the disease and let people know that "kids get arthritis too." Summoning courage beyond her years, she has bravely stepped into the spotlight to communicate the realities of Juvenile Arthritis to the public.

Over the past two years Allison, along with her friends and family, have raised over \$8,000 for the Arthritis Foundation by hosting their annual Juvenile Arthritis Lemonade Stand in July. She also helped organize 'Blue Day' at her school last year, where all students were encouraged to wear blue in an effort to raise arthritis awareness (blue is the color for arthritis).

In addition, Wanichek wrote a letter to the local newspaper informing people that May was National Arthritis Awareness Month. Wanichek and her brother, Jack, are continuing to raise awareness (and money) about the disease and for the upcoming Jingle Bell Run/Walk by "flocking" yards of unsuspecting individuals with pink flamingos.

Wa-Hi Jr. ROTC names first Cadet of the Month for new academic year -- By cadet Capt. Uriel Bermoy

A Walla Walla High School JROTC cadet has earned top honors as the Blue Devil Cadet Battalion's "Cadet of the Month" for September 2012.

Cadet Pvt. 1st Class Micah Gordon, freshman, was rewarded for his achievement with an immediate promotion to his new rank after he won the top spot with a average score of 70 points, according to the president of the board.

The top cadet was selected from three candidates who were inspected and examined in oral interviews by a board of four advanced cadets, according to Lt. Col. Bill Bialozor, Senior Army Instructor for Wa-Hi's Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

Gordon said that he joined JROTC to increase his understanding of military and his chances of acceptance into the Air Force academy. He plans to become an Air Force officer after graduating from the academy. He enjoys flying, running and playing video games.

"His strongest competitive category was his military courtesy," said cadet Command Sgt. Maj. Brandon Webster. "This Cadet of the Month was a close match, since the cadets' performances were outstanding."

First runner up was cadet Pvt. Hunter Lynn, freshman, whose strongest suit was bearing. He came in second with 69 points. Second runner up was cadet Pvt. Alexis Nordman, freshman, whose strongest suit was confidence. She came in third with 67 points.

"After the board tallied the points and the winner was clear, we held a ceremony to promote the winning cadet one rank higher, to recognize him for his hard work and personal success," said Bialozor.

Wa-Hi JROTC Cadets participate in the program to develop leadership skills and to strive to be better citizens in society. Many cadets compete as members of WWHS drill, marksmanship, and physical training teams as well as attending the JROTC class. These cadets get to travel to and compete in drill meets at 16 other schools in the Cascade Division that include Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy cadet programs.

Community Stories

Girl's Council plans 3rd Annual Harvest Moon dinner and silent/live auction

Girl's Council, the non profit organization that brought "Finding Kind" to girls in the Walla Walla Valley in September, is hosting its 3rd Annual Harvest Moon dinner and silent/live auction on October 13 at the Walla Walla Country Club. If you are interested in learning more about Girl's Council, want to lend your support via an auction item, or would like to attend the event please contact Karen Neher, Marci Knauff or Brandi McIntire at 527-3083 for more information. Tickets are only \$40.

Walla Walla Crush Run supports Children's Home Society

Experience the joy of running through the vineyards of the Walla Walla valley while supporting Children's Home Society of Washington. The rolling course consists of paved and dirt roads that loop around and through the vineyards, and you can choose between the 5K walk/run or 10K run.

Proceeds from this event help fund our Walla Walla family support services, child and family counseling, early learning programs, early head start, and parenting classes. Prizes will be given to male and female winners in seven age-group divisions and more than 75 prizes will be given away by random drawing, including fine Walla Walla wines, Brooks Sports shoe certificates, and gift certificates from local businesses. Free post-race refreshments will be also served.

Date/Time: 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012

Location: Pepper Bridge Farms (4013 Peppers Bridge Road, Walla Walla, WA)

Cost: \$15 to pre-register; \$20 for day of the event (Optional T-shirt available only to those who pre-register by Sept. 21)

Registration Closing Date: 11:59 (PST) Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2012

<http://www.active.com/running/walla-walla-wa/walla-walla-crush-2012>

2012 Home Stay helps to promote peace and friendship - Robert Keatts

A delegation of 17 students from Wa-Hi accompanied by five adult chaperones depart October 3 for Sasayama Japan. The students all signed up for the trip last December and have attended a series of orientation sessions to learn about Japan, more specifically Sasayama, Walla Walla's sister city.

The home stay program through the Walla Walla and Sasayama Sister Cities program has been on-going since 1994. Students live with a family in Sasayama and have a total immersion into Japanese life for ten days. The students have all received some language skills to make the experience a little easier. Most host families have a member or two who can speak some English and normally communication is not a major obstacle. Through a home stay students learn about the culture and develop a friendship that can last a life time. Students will be visiting Kobe, the capitol of Hyogo Prefecture and also Nara, the old Capitol of Japan. In addition they will be attending classes at Homei High School where they will also be meeting Homei High School sister school students from Australia.

During the trip everyone will have the opportunity to attend the annual food fair, local shrine festivals, National Sports Day activities, and Kasugi Shrine Festival. Students will also be participating in a pottery class and a Japanese cooking class where they will learn to make mochi for rice cakes, harvesting edamame, and a tie dying project.

This years participants are Wa-Hi freshmen Andrea Beko, Cooper Bolduc, Kiauna Canada, Asia Clark, Eli Gentzler, , Sabrina Keenan, Annika Michelson, Davison Norris, Alejandro Perez, Sarah Ray, Cameron Spencer, and Simone Tuilaepa , and Sophmores Ryan Hammond, Hayden Hartwell , and Geneva Petterson.

Chaperones include Andy Alexander, Frances Nishi, Melia Wallace-Wong, and Robert and Linnea Keatts. The delegation returns from Sasayama on October 15.

Recruitment for students to participate in this event in 2013 will begin in Nov/Dec of this year. Parents of and students interested in participating can contact the Walla Walla-Sasayama Sister City Committee by email to robert_wwscc@yahoo.com or call 525-0049 after Oct 15. Students can be from any high school in the area, not just Walla Walla. Adults interested in being a chaperone can inquire through the same contact.

Exchange Club donates American flag to city police

Monday, Exchange Club of Walla Walla President Brian Dohe presented an American flag to the City of Walla Walla Police Department for use in the Chuck Fulton Community Room. Dohe said Americanism is one of the Exchange Club's pillars of success.

"We're pleased to donate this U.S. flag to the Police Department to use in the Community Room," Dohe said.

Exchange, America's Service Club, is a group of men and women working together to make our communities better places to live through programs of service in Americanism, community service, youth activities, and its national project, the prevention of child abuse. The Exchange Club meets each Monday at 12 noon at the Marcus Whitman Hotel.