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## District Stories

### State superintendent and state school board members tour Walla Walla schools

Walla Walla Public Schools continues to draw interest around the state on how it uses data to drive instruction. Thursday, members of the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn toured Blue Ridge Elementary, Walla Walla High School and Lincoln High School. Blue Ridge Principal Kim Doecker explained the school's platooning teaching model which calls on teachers to specialize in specific content areas and students to rotate from class-to-class.

She also provided an overview of the school's dual language program. Blue Ridge worked its way off the state's lowest performing schools list through its reform efforts and school-wide improvement plan.

"I wanted to see how the Walla Walla School District is making strong gains in achievement with English Language Learners, said State Board Member Tre Maxie of Seattle. "The census information tells us the majority of our state is going to be non-white so we have to do a better job of educating all students."

Walla Walla High School Principal Pete Peterson shared information about the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. State board members toured Mike Gobel's AVID class and Casey Monahan's and Kim Kelsay's Tier II English class. Lincoln High School Principal Jim Sporleder revealed how his staff members are using data from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) studies to better understand how trauma impact learning. Lincoln Health Center Director Holly Howard spoke about how the school and health center work collaboratively to promote healthy living.

"Everywhere we went today it was clear every teacher and administrator had high expectations of all students and a real belief all students can learn," Maxie said. "Walla Walla is using data in a strategic way, not a punitive way, to support kids and determine what types of interventions are needed. Walla Walla uses data as a lens as how to best meet the needs of all students."

### Q & A with State Superintendent Randy Dorn (from his visit to Walla Walla schools on Thursday)

*Q: What are you trying to accomplish during your tour of Walla Walla schools?*

A: It is an opportunity to gather information. The State Board of Education (SBE) has to make a decision on our new accountability system. The new accountability system is based on student growth, not just on test scores. We want to determine if kids are growing academically. We all know students start from different places academically. For example, a score of 60% on the test is good for one group of kids. But, if a student started at 25% and is now at 40%, he has grown 15 points and that is dramatic growth. We want to have a better picture of where kids start and how they are moving through the system so we know how it is working.

*Q: Why is it important for SBE members to visit school districts outside of their hometown?*

A: There are a wide range of schools and a wide range of challenges in schools throughout our state. School districts like Mercer Island in the Seattle area have high income parents and many advantages in the home. We also have students who come from poverty from all areas of the state, whether it be Seattle or it be Walla Walla, and they have challenges. The schools have to address issues and move forward. We cannot simply say they are a poverty student, they can't learn. These students can learn, but we have to find different ways to educate and continue working with parents in the home.

*Q: What are your goals moving forward?*

A: We must fully fund basic education. That is number one. Adequate funding helps every kid. It helps every district. Special levies are not to pay for to and from transportation or for heating and cooling and copy machines. However, this is how schools today are forced to use their levy funds. I also want to make the state assessment system more understandable, shorter and more useable. We need to do a lot more with early childhood education if we are going to get all kids to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading. We need more early learning opportunities and all day kindergarten. I also want to see more Career and Technical Education opportunities to help our students obtain the skills necessary for good paying jobs.

**School board work session and meeting Tuesday, Oct. 2**

4:30 p.m. - Public Work Session on facilities planning (open to public)

6:30 p.m. - Regular meeting (open to public)

District Board Room (364 S. Park St.)

**Ladderud selected to take Jim Lehmann's vacant position**

School board members appointed Ruth Ladderud to fill the vacant school board position which came available when Jim Lehmann resigned to move closer to his family on the east coast. Conrado Cavazos, Jr. and Dr. Christopher Jenkins were also interviewed for the position.

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, Whitman College (biology) and WSU (animal science). Ruth is married to John, a veterinarian, and they have three children: Jeff who attends WSU, Annie who is at Whitworth and Jerry who is at Garrison.

When her oldest started school, Ruth began spending time volunteering in their schools and working in the district. Ruth and her mother, retired teacher Mirney Wagner, were honored last year as co-recipient of the Art Regier Volunteer of the Year award through their work with Ruth's 4-H Club. Ruth served on both the High School and the Facilities Task Force and is active in AAUW (American Association of University Women) and her church.

Ladderud will be officially sworn in Tuesday, Oct. 2. Ladderud stands for election November 2013 to fill the remainder of the term through 2015.

**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](mailto:mhiggins@wwps.org)

**First annual "Taste Washington Day" was an enormous success – By Pamela Milleson**

Our budding Farm to School program took a big step forward this week with the "Taste Washington Day" event. Wednesday, all 10 Walla Walla Public Schools served a menu of roast chicken lunch with locally grown fruits and vegetables.

I would like to say thank you to the Nutrition Services staff members who went above and beyond to pull this all together. Thank you to the teachers and para-educators who promoted the plan in the classroom and joined us for lunch. Thank you to the volunteers who gave freely of their time to prepare food, serve, and shuck corn.

I would also like to extend a big thank you to the local farmers and vendors who worked with us to bring in amazing produce from our valley and the Northwest.

Taruscio Farms: pears & corn; Walla Walla Produce: peppers & corn; Edwards Farm: tomatoes; Key Farm: Pluots; Welcome Table Farm: carrots; LeFores: apples; Zerbas Farm: corn; Andy's Market: northwest cucumbers.

## School Stories

### String quartet students charm State Board of Education members

Wednesday afternoon Walla Walla High School string quartet students Jennifer Cho, Nathaniel Lynn, Kelsey Gabel, and Quinn Anderson performed for the State Board of Education as part of their board meeting in Walla Walla.

“They did a fantastic job representing our school, community, and music program,” said Julia Woods, music teacher.

According to Woods, one of the audience members recorded the students on his phone and his ‘app’ identified the piece they were playing. Another one asked the students how many started their musical careers in the public schools, as opposed to starting with private lessons, as many students do on the west side.

“I was very proud as they all responded ‘all of us’,” Woods said. “The board members seemed very impressed with the quality of their performance -- hooray for public school music education! Thank you for your support of orchestra in our district!”

### 6<sup>th</sup> grade students take top honors in Pioneer Middle School ‘Fund Run’

The Pioneer Middle School 2012 Fund Run was another success! The event tallied \$12,224 for the Associated Student Body. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade students won the class competition with \$4,593. They defeated the 8th graders by \$39 and all 6<sup>th</sup> graders earn the ALL Grade Party!

The top 50 students earned a trip to the Corn Maze Oct. 6. The top 10 students get to ride in a limousine and all you can eat pizza. The staff donations for raffle prizes are valued at nearly \$750. These are given to students who earned money.

“This event is great exercise and fun,” said Assistant Principal Jack Mehn. “We even had a live local band performance. Thank you students, staff, parents and community members!”

### Blue Ridge receives grant from Blue Mountain Community Foundation

The Trustees of the Blue Mountain Community Foundation recently awarded a grant of \$9000 to Blue Ridge Elementary. The grant is made from the First Fruits Fund, a component of the Blue Mountain Community Foundation. Principal Kim Doepker says the funds will be used for an afterschool girls club and boys club which focus on self-esteem and physical fitness. In addition, Blue Ridge staff are working with the YMCA to organize intramurals during lunch time.

“The goal is the healthy whole child,” Doepker said. “We have the fruits and vegetables twice a week and we couple this with physical fitness and education!”

### Walla Walla High School Choirs Car Wash Oct. 6

- “Suds-a-thon” car wash
- Saturday, Oct. 6
- O’Reilly’s Auto Store on 9th and Poplar
- 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Car Wash is free
- Donations are accepted (Funds support Choir Scholarships to help students pay for outfits and trip fees)

### High School Scholarship fund is now over fifteen thousand dollars,

Jerry Zahl, Class of 1962 graduate and founder of the newly established High School Scholarship Fund, reports the fund now exceeds \$15,000. Zahl says he believes this will give the fund the needed support to receive a \$5000 matching donation, plus a \$2,500 bonus.

To make a donation or learn more about the Walla Walla Public High Schools Scholarship fund, visit the Blue Mountain Community Foundation website: [www.bluemountainfoundation.org](http://www.bluemountainfoundation.org). For additional information, contact Jerry Zahl at: [jkzahl@charter.net](mailto:jkzahl@charter.net).

### **District students donate school supplies to Christian Aid Center**

Pioneer Middle School 7th grade student Tori Matlock and her younger brother Luke, a Berney Elementary 5th grader, recently donated a backpack with school supplies for a family receiving services at the Christian Aid Center. Tori and Luke used their own money to help the children at the shelter. Tori and Luke's mother Annette is an assistant secretary at Berney. She says her family believes in giving and her children have developed a love for helping others.

### **Wa-Hi Volleyball team plans Breast Cancer Awareness event**

Walla Walla High School Volleyball is once again hosting "Get Your Pink On" during the Oct. 4 match against Pasco. Team members are hoping everyone will join in the "Pink Frenzy" and wear their pink T-shirts.

### **Sign up forms now accepted for annual Big Blue Weekend event -- Scholarships available**

The event is October 12-14 at Washington Family Ranch in Antelope, OR. More than 450 Wa-Hi students and staff will travel to Antelope, OR to build connections, listen to inspirational speakers and have fun. This program is specifically targeted to encourage freshmen and students who need extra support to attend. Visit the Wa-Hi website for more information online.

The cost is \$90. A limited number of scholarships are also available and you may pick up that application in the ASB Office. There are several ways for staff, parents and community members to help us make this a great experience for Wa-Hi students.

Items needed for donation:

- a coat or thick sweatshirt
- a small suitcase or zippered bag
- \$60 student scholarships

Approximately 50 chaperones and 30 work crew members are also needed. Work crew members work behind the scenes to prepare and serve meals. Chaperones sleep in cabins with 10-14 students and are members of small student groups that meet approximately four times throughout the weekend.

Contact Carina Stillman [cstillman@wwps.org](mailto:cstillman@wwps.org) or Kristina Duncan [kduncan@wwps.org](mailto:kduncan@wwps.org) for more information 527-3020.

## **Community Stories**

### **Walla Walla Public Library Mural Dedication**

You are invited to celebrate the new Walla Walla Public Library mural dedication Saturday, October 6 at 10 a.m. at the Poplar St. parking lot in back of the Library. The library address is 238 E. Alder. St. Thanks to former Walla Walla Public Schools teacher Vicki Shafer for coordinating the effort.

### **Whitman READS program at public library promotes learning**

Whitman READS will be held this fall at the Walla Walla Public Library in the Children's area from 3-3:45 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month. This outreach is an effort to provide local elementary students with a fun, educational and free outing on early release Wednesday once a month.

Whitman faculty, staff and students are invited to make an interesting presentation to local children (geared toward K-5 students specifically). On October 3, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Allison Calhoun, will share about coral, coral reefs and diving. Please come out and join the learning and fun at Whitman Reads!