

10-10 Staff News

School Board Meeting Recap »

November 3, 2020

Survey Results

Board reviews preliminary feedback from Fall Learning & Reopening Survey

In what appears to be a modern record for input via a district initiated electronic survey, Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith reported approximately 3000 parents and students responded to this fall's survey. The survey addressed how distance learning is working for families and the comfort level of parents and students for returning to in-person learning during the pandemic. The survey was developed following the Oct. 20 school board meeting in which board members directed Superintendent Smith to further engage stakeholders on these issues.

Superintendent Smith reported on the trends which surfaced from the survey. He noted that 85% of parents and students praised teachers for their efforts providing a high quality distance learning program. While a majority of families noted they were doing well/fairly well coping with distance learning, about 1/3rd of parents and students



Dr. Wade Smith
Superintendent

noted they were just "getting by" or "struggling." Parents and students also gave high marks to teachers for strong communication and outreach.

Parents and students largely reported they are concerned with mental health issues and lack of socialization. Parents preferred bringing back all elementary students at the same time when conditions were safe and leaned towards using local COVID cases, other district experiences and local health opinions as the primary factor for reopening schools. Approximately 90% of students and parents said they are comfortable returning to school with 45 cases over a 14 day period. The higher the cases, the less comfortable they are returning.

Board Meeting Highlights

APPROVED »»

Minutes from the Oct. 20, 2020 regular business meeting, personnel report, extracurricular athletic contracts, non-athletic extra & co-curricular contracts, Nov. 3 accounts payable and Oct. payroll and CTE program five-year plan.

I-READY REVIEW »»

Assistant Superintendent Chris Gardea and Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Christy Krutulis provided school board members an iReady fall data review. Typically iReady data reflects a Fall to Spring growth analysis, but COVID impacts pushed the district to review Winter to Fall 2020 data for this round of review.

This fall students completed their iReady assessments in Reading and Math during the PM session of asynchronous time. Gardea and Krutulis said this caused some proctoring challenges without direct, in-person support from teachers.

Overall, the number of assessments logged was down slightly this fall from previous years.

Bright spots in math include students on grade level or above, met or exceeded last year's percentages. In reading, students on grade level or above, improved or stayed about the same. Concerns with the data include one-third or more of district students are two or more grade levels behind in reading and math.

"While we are pleased to see growth in most grade levels in math and reading through Distance Learning 1.0 last spring, we need to accelerate this growth during Distance Learning 2.0 to help students reach typical annual growth goals and mastery of grade level standards," said Krutulis.

Columbia REA donation provides internet to families in need

This week Columbia REA's Doug Case presented a check from their Community Giving fund to School Board President Sam Wells and Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith to help support students with internet access during distance learning.

"Walla Walla Public Schools will use the generous donation from CREA to ensure that all families, especially those most vulnerable and impacted by COVID and the ensuing financial challenges, have access to free, high speed internet so that their children are able to successfully access their distance learning curriculum," said Superintendent Smith.



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

JENNIFER DAVIS | WA-HI, 6 YRS

MIA MURRAY | SHARPSTEIN, 3 YRS

Quote of the Week

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

Steven Spielberg

New Monthly Financial Tracking Tool

Superintendent Smith and Director of Fiscal Services Nancy Taylor reviewed a new monthly financial tracking tool they recently developed.

This new way of tracking revenue and expenditures is designed to more accurately reflect budget conditions on a monthly basis. Previously the district's budget tracking tool was used three times a year to reflect on the budget status. Now the district will be reporting it monthly.

Superintendent Smith developed this tool a decade ago at a previous district and has been working with Taylor the past two years to implement it here.

The report has a series of columns which easily allows all revenue sources and expenditures to be monitored by Taylor and staff in the Business Office.

The new monthly financial tracking tool also allows the district to more accurately reflect its ending fund balance on a month-by-month basis.

School Board earns state Board of Distinction award

Congratulations to the Walla Walla Public Schools' Board of Directors for earning the 2020 Board of Distinction award from The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). This is the school board's third consecutive statewide honor. Walla Walla was recognized in the medium-sized districts category for their actions in helping close opportunity gaps. Walla Walla school board members were able to show a clear link between their leadership in applying the Washington School Board Standards and closing gaps that impact student success. Among other accolades, the Board was acknowledged for their leadership around expanding access to early learning and exceeding their target for high school graduation rate years in advance. They were also honored for a 19.5% increase in Hispanic/Latino graduation rates that were nearly 14% above state averages, technology improvements and their focus on district curriculum enhancements and staff professional development.

"All means all in Walla Walla," said School Board President Sam Wells. "Our strategic plan is focused on supporting the needs of all students and we do this through high quality instruction, sound operational systems and social and emotional supports in a safe and engaging learning environment."

Joining Wells on the school board is Vice President Derek Sarley and directors Ruth Ladderud, Eric Rindal and Terri Trick. A panel of 10 judges spent approximately six to eight hours each, not only reviewing applications but also working together with WSSDA staff, to collaborate with each other on how applications are evaluated. Judges from across the state included former and current Educational Service District superintendents, State Board of Education board members, former school directors, and others who are involved in education leadership on a statewide level.

Walla Walla remains in contention for the Board of the Year award that will be revealed during the virtual WSSDA state conference Nov. 19.

