



School Board Student Representative

ABRIL SALAZAR

Earlier this school year, Walla Walla High School junior Abril Salazar officially took the Oath of Office to begin her service as the Student Representative to the Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors.

A lifelong Blue Devil, Abril began her educational journey at Sharpstein Elementary and has been a proud member of Walla Walla Public Schools since kindergarten. At Wa-Hi, she is an active participant in tennis and Youth and Government at the YMCA, and she looks forward to expanding her involvement in additional extracurricular activities in the months ahead.

Abril says she is honored to serve in this important role and is committed to ensuring that the voices of students across the district are heard. She sees the position as an opportunity to grow as a leader, while also helping to shape the decisions that impact her peers and future generations of students.

"Being part of the School Board allows me to represent students and share their perspectives on the issues that matter most," Abril said. "I'm excited to learn, contribute, and make a difference."

The district congratulates Abril on this achievement and looks forward to her leadership and contributions in the year ahead.



Banners Celebrate State Recognition for Walla Walla Schools

Superintendent Dr. Ben Gauyan recently joined principals to celebrate the mounting of banners recognizing four Walla Walla Public Schools honored by the Washington State School Recognition Program for outstanding performance during the 2023-2024 school year.

Dr. Gauyan emphasized the significance of this achievement, noting that only 16% of schools across Washington received honors this year.

"We proudly hang these commemorative banners to display their achievement to the entire community," said Dr. Gauyan. "These schools have closed achievement gaps, generated academic growth, and continue to improve achievement."

The Washington School Recognition Program is a partnership

between the State Board of Education (SBE), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC). The program shines a spotlight on schools that demonstrate effective practices, foster student success, and prioritize continuous improvement.

The following schools earned state recognition:

- ★ **Green Park Elementary School** – Closing Gaps
- ★ **Pioneer Middle School** – Closing Gaps (pictured above)
- ★ **Prospect Point Elementary School** – Growth
- ★ **Sharpstein Elementary School** – Growth



WA-HI GRADUATES EARN PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AMERICAN FFA DEGREE

Congratulations!

THREE RECENT WALLA WALLA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED WITH THE HIGHEST HONORS AWARDED BY THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION – THE AMERICAN FFA DEGREE. THE AMERICAN FFA DEGREE IS PRESENTED TO LESS THAN ONE PERCENT OF FFA MEMBERS NATIONWIDE IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR YEARS OF ACADEMIC DEDICATION AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

WALLA WALLA HIGH SCHOOL RECIPIENTS INCLUDE:

- *Kenny Gabel* (CLASS OF 2024)
- *Kylie Cochran* (CLASS OF 2024)
- *Rem McBride* (CLASS OF 2024)

Board of Directors:

Alayna Brinton
Ruth Ladderud
Kathy Mulkerin
Derek Sarley
Terri Trick
Ari Kim-Leavitt, Student Rep.
Abril Salazar, Student Rep.

BOARD



Walla Walla Public Schools

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COMPREHENSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Walla Walla Public Schools does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

- **Title IX Coordinator & Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator**
DR. MINDY MEYER, Dir of Human Resources
364 S. Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-3000
mmeyer@wwps.org
- **Section 504/ADA Coordinator**
BARB CASEY, Director of Special Education
364 S. Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 527-3000
bcasey@wwps.org

Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all requirements of the ADA.

Where Are They Now?

Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates

Walla Walla High School graduate Cailin Price, Class of 2013, has taken a unique journey since her days as a Blue Devil—one filled with learning, resilience and new passions.

Cailin began her education in Walla Walla at Prospect Point Elementary for kindergarten, moved on to Blue Ridge Elementary for grades 1–5, and later attended Garrison Middle School before arriving at Wa-Hi. During her high school years, she was an active member of the school community, participating in track and field, National Honor Society, Key Club and Latino Club.

After graduation, Cailin pursued her love of health and science at the University of Idaho, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition in 2017.

Looking back on her Wa-Hi experience, Cailin says she is grateful for the staff who supported her during some of her most difficult times. She fondly remembers Ms. Bickelhaupt, whose fun and engaging lessons made class a joy, and counselor Carolyn Franklin, who, along with Ms. Bickelhaupt, was an anchor of support following the passing of her father right before her senior year.

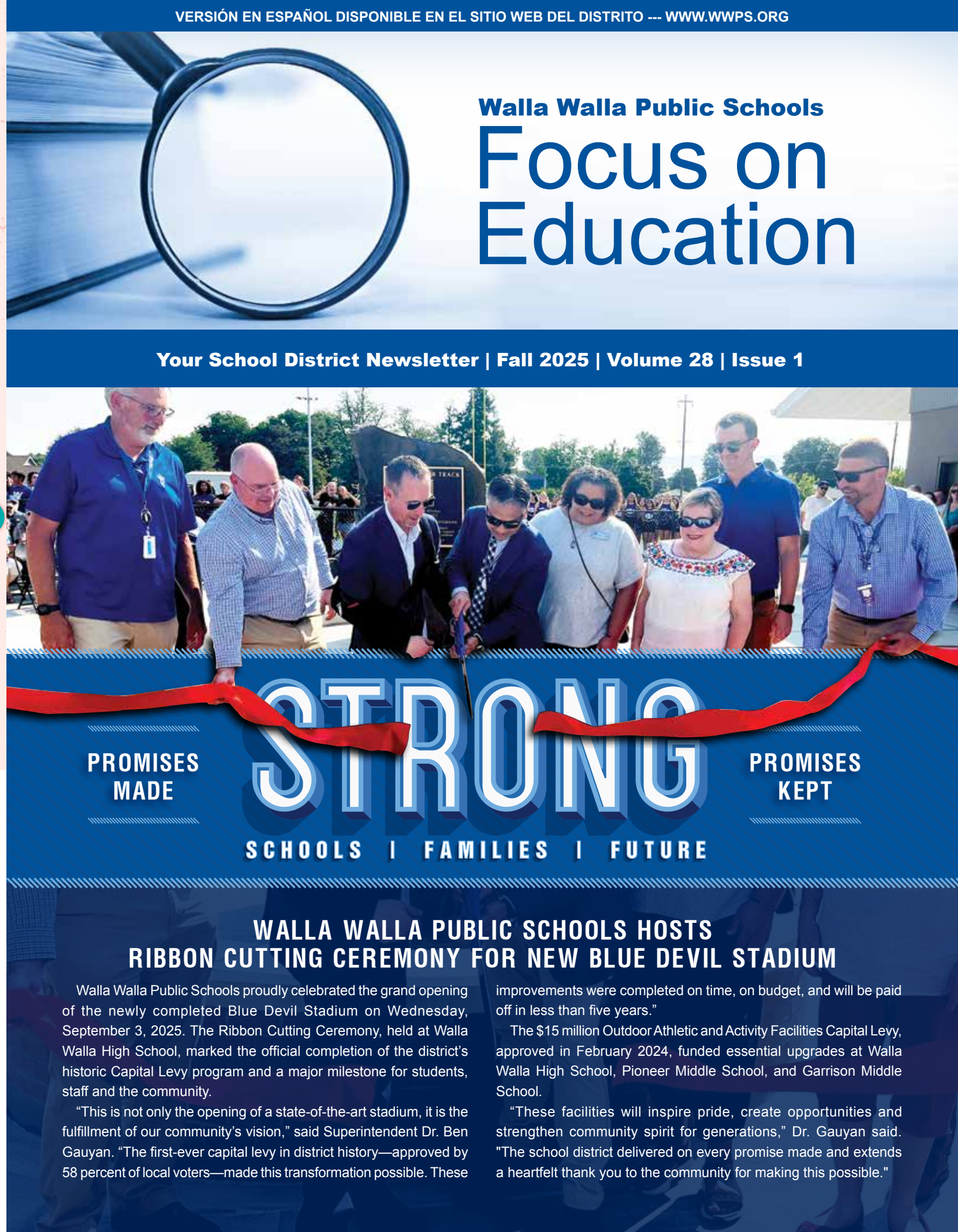
Today, Cailin has found her professional home in real estate, working as a Realtor for Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Walla Walla Realty. Before entering the field, she worked as a server and barista in both Walla Walla and during stints living in Kalispell, Montana, and Las Vegas, Nevada.

Outside of work, Cailin keeps busy with hobbies and interests that show her fun and adventurous side. She enjoys walking her sister's chocolate lab around Bennington Lake, creating short-form content for social media, and—most recently—building intricate LEGO sets. To date, she has completed around 15 builds, with her sights set on the ultimate challenge: the 10,000-piece Eiffel Tower.

Cailin's story is one of resilience, creativity, and community connection—proof that the lessons and relationships built at Wa-Hi carry forward long after graduation.



CAILIN PRICE



Walla Walla Public Schools

Focus on Education

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PROMISES
MADE

STRONG

SCHOOLS | FAMILIES | FUTURE

PROMISES
KEPT

WALLA WALLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOSTS RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR NEW BLUE DEVIL STADIUM

Walla Walla Public Schools proudly celebrated the grand opening of the newly completed Blue Devil Stadium on Wednesday, September 3, 2025. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, held at Walla Walla High School, marked the official completion of the district's historic Capital Levy program and a major milestone for students, staff and the community.

"This is not only the opening of a state-of-the-art stadium, it is the fulfillment of our community's vision," said Superintendent Dr. Ben Gauyan. "The first-ever capital levy in district history—approved by 58 percent of local voters—made this transformation possible. These

improvements were completed on time, on budget, and will be paid off in less than five years."

The \$15 million Outdoor Athletic and Activity Facilities Capital Levy, approved in February 2024, funded essential upgrades at Walla Walla High School, Pioneer Middle School, and Garrison Middle School.

"These facilities will inspire pride, create opportunities and strengthen community spirit for generations," Dr. Gauyan said. "The school district delivered on every promise made and extends a heartfelt thank you to the community for making this possible."



My First 100 Days!

SUPERINTENDENT DR. BEN GAUYAN

When I began my journey as the 17th Superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools, I set out to do three simple but important things: listen, learn and connect. The first 100 days have been about building relationships—with students, staff, families, and community members—while learning about the traditions, challenges and opportunities that make Walla Walla such a special place. I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome and the time so many of you have taken to share your stories, hopes, and ideas.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MY FIRST 100 DAYS

Over the past few months, I have:

- Visited every school and met with teachers, principals, and staff.
- Listened to students in classrooms, during activities, and even over lunch.
- Engaged with families and community members through meetings, school events, and community gatherings.
- Connected with local leaders in business, government, and higher education.
- Met with staff associations and employee leaders to better understand their priorities and perspectives.

These conversations have helped me see Walla Walla Public Schools from many different angles, and they will guide our work moving forward.

WHAT I HEARD FROM YOU

Several common themes came through in my conversations:

- **RELATIONSHIPS MATTER** – People value the close connections between staff, students, and families.
- **STUDENT WELL-BEING IS A PRIORITY** – Families and staff want strong support for mental health, social-emotional learning, and student safety.
- **HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL** – There is a strong commitment to academic success, but also to preparing

students as caring, confident, and capable people.

- **EQUITY AND ACCESS** – Many of you asked how we can ensure all students—especially those with unique learning needs—have the resources to thrive.
- **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY** – With limited funding, families and staff want us to be wise stewards of every dollar while protecting what matters most: student learning.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Walla Walla is a community that shows up for its kids.
- Our staff are dedicated and passionate about their work.
- Students are eager for relevant, hands-on learning experiences that prepare them for life after graduation.
- While resources are tight, there is a shared commitment to finding solutions together.

LOOKING AHEAD

As I move beyond my first 100 days, I am focused on:

- Strengthening trust and communication with families, staff, and community partners.
- Supporting goals of Vision 2030 to ensure we are Developing Washington's Most Sought-After Graduates.
- Prioritizing student well-being and safety while maintaining high expectations for all learners.
- Ensuring fiscal stability so that we can continue to invest in what matters most—our students.

It is an honor to serve Walla Walla Public Schools. Together, we will build on the district's strong foundation and create even more opportunities for our students to thrive.



HISTORY MADE AT BLUE DEVIL STADIUM

The new Blue Devil Stadium is already creating unforgettable moments in Walla Walla High School athletics history. On September 3, the Girls Varsity Soccer team became the first to compete on the new field, hosting the inaugural varsity soccer match at the state-of-the-art facility.

Just over a week later, on September 12, the stadium again made history as the Blue Devils Varsity Football

team took the field for its first-ever home game in the new venue. A capacity crowd filled the stands to celebrate this milestone, as the Blue Devils defeated Hermiston 34-12 in a thrilling victory.

Blue Devil Stadium has quickly become a centerpiece for school spirit and community pride, marking the beginning of a new era for Wa-Hi athletics.



NEW BLUE DEVIL STADIUM FEATURES STUDENT-RUN CONCESSIONS STAND

Walla Walla High School's new Blue Devil Stadium is not only home to exciting athletic events, but also to a brand-new, student-run concessions stand that provides valuable real-world learning experiences.



CAPITAL LEVY REPORT		
PROMISES MADE		PROMISES KEPT
	Delivered	In Progress
MURR SPORTS PARK		
Install Baseball and Softball Field Lights	✓	
PIONEER MIDDLE SCHOOL		
All-Weather Track	✓	
Baseball/Softball Improvements	✓	
GARRISON MIDDLE SCHOOL		
Track Repair and Resurfacing	✓	
Tennis Court Improvements	✓	
WALLA WALLA HIGH SCHOOL		
8 New Tennis Courts	✓	
JROTC "Raider" Obstacle Course	✓	
BLUE DEVIL STADIUM		
Artificial Turf, New Track Throwing Area, Resurface Existing Track	✓	
Install Field Lights	✓	
Bleachers, Outbuildings and Final Site Amenities	✓	
TRIDENT FIELD		
Artificial Turf and Install Field Lights	✓	
Field House Outbuilding	✓	

Superintendent Gauyan Honors Former Superintendent with Coin of Excellence

Walla Walla Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Ben Gauyan recently recognized former Superintendent Dr. Wade Smith with a prestigious Coin of Excellence for his leadership in guiding the successful Capital Levy Program. The honor was presented during the Blue Devil Stadium Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on September 3, which marked the completion of the district's historic Capital Levy campaign.

Thanks to Dr. Smith's leadership and the community's trust, these voter-approved projects were completed on time and on budget. In addition, the levy will be fully paid off in less than five years, highlighting the district's responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

The Coin of Excellence recognition program was recently launched by Dr. Gauyan to honor staff, students, and community members who go above and beyond in supporting Walla Walla Public Schools.

