

# 2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 509

*Commending Walt Whitman Middle School.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 2021

WHEREAS, in 2021, Walt Whitman Middle School celebrates 60 years of educating and nurturing young people in Mount Vernon; and

WHEREAS, as one of Fairfax County's first 11 intermediate schools named for famous authors and poets, Walt Whitman Intermediate School opened on September 5, 1961, to provide students with a specialized program of study geared to the specific needs of their age group; it had 45 classrooms and a capacity of about 1,000 students; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the intermediate school traded buildings with Mount Vernon High School, moving to the Old Mount Vernon High School site on Route 1 in 1973 and staying until 1985; and

WHEREAS, at the start of the 1985 school year, population changes in Fairfax County necessitated the closure of 20 schools; the Stephen Foster Intermediate School building, opened in the Alexandria area in 1965, was renamed Walt Whitman Intermediate School and then Walt Whitman Middle School in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, recognizing the needs of its students, their families, and the community, Walt Whitman Middle School became the first community school in Fairfax County, adopting a model used elsewhere with the help of United Community Ministries and the United Way of the National Capital Area; and

WHEREAS, as a community school, students and their families receive the resources they need to overcome hunger, homelessness, and other hardships that impede the academic success of the students, and residents can receive health care and social services they might not otherwise have access to; and

WHEREAS, through a sense of collective responsibility and collaboration with peers, parents, and community members, Walt Whitman Middle School fulfills its mission to create a positive, respectful culture that sets high expectations, achievable goals, and a pathway to success for all students; and

WHEREAS, alumni of Walt Whitman Middle School have gone on to reach great heights in many professions, including television and radio personality Tony Perkins, journalist Katie Rice, professional football player Callie Brownson, and Olympic medalist Ashley Wagner; and

WHEREAS, other notable alumni of Walt Whitman Middle School include Rachel Sutton, a doctoral candidate at Wichita State University studying applications of psychology in engineering and design; Alexandria Sutton, M.D., a resident physician at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center; Darryl Williams, the first African American superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point; and E. J. Coleman, who was the first African American class president at West Point; and

WHEREAS, Walt Whitman Middle School's dedicated teachers inspire students to discover and pursue opportunities as they become innovative and productive global citizens; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the staff and administration of Walt Whitman Middle School share the beliefs that all students have the ability to learn and that diversity is a strength in creating a resilient, open-minded community of learners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Walt Whitman Middle School hereby be commended on the occasion of its 60th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Walt Whitman Middle School as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the school's many achievements in service to local youths and the Fairfax County community.

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