

# **REPORT BY THE CITIZEN'S TASK FORCE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF 9-12 SCHOOL FACILITIES**

**WALLA WALLA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON**



**May 2008**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Citizens Task Force for the Walla Walla Public Schools spent many hours providing valuable information for this document. Without their considerable time and effort, this project would not have been possible.

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# **Walla Walla Public Schools Citizen's Task Force for 9-12 School Facilities Executive Summary**

In May 2006, the Board of Directors presented a bond to the Walla Walla community to address facility needs for support services and several schools. The bond did not pass. It became clear that issues surrounding the 9-12 schools were at the heart of the bond failure. To sort through those issues, the Board appointed a task force consisting of community members, diverse in terms of opinions and areas of expertise. The Board asked the task force to address the 9-12 facility issues and make their recommendations to the school board by the end of the 2007-2008 school year. An Advisory Committee was established to help with organization and day-to-day operations of the Task Force.

The Task Force organized itself, elected co-chairs, began its work in June 2007 and continued into May 2008. The Task Force met a total of eight times. Subcommittees of the Task Force met between regularly scheduled meetings. Nine subcommittee reports were filed with the Task Force and were adopted by the Task Force after due consideration and discussion. The subcommittee reports were in the following areas:

- A Summary Report on the Condition of the Two High Schools
- Quality High Schools
- Quality Alternative High Schools
- Small Learning Communities
- College Place Issues
- Facility Impact on Student Achievement
- Career Technical Education
- Safety and Security
- Deferred Maintenance

After the Task Force had received and approved the subcommittee reports listed above, they embarked on a series of meetings to explore some of the other topics brought forward by the group. These topics included the capital and operating costs for several options to improve facilities for grades 9-12.

After hours of study, committee discussion, subcommittee discussion, and consultation with experts from a variety of related fields, the Task Force concluded its work. Some of the Task Force's conclusions and recommendations were developed through the subcommittee process. Others were developed through surveys (see Appendices B and C), and some were simply from a show of hands. A few items dealing with operations, personnel issues, curriculum, and a future bond committee were deemed outside the charge of the Task Force. These were set aside for future work.

The conclusions of the Task Force are:

- Walla Walla High School should not be split into two high schools of equal size because the "split" lacks educational benefits (see subcommittee report on smaller learning communities) and the costs would be prohibitive.
- The current Lincoln Alternative High School facility is not an acceptable home base for the important alternative education programs in Walla Walla.
- The Walla Walla Public Schools should continue to accept College Place high school students because Walla Walla Public Schools legally cannot unilaterally exclude College Place students from attending Walla Walla schools and the likelihood of College Place building its own high school in the foreseeable future is remote.

- Walla Walla Public Schools maintains its physical facilities as they were built and with “superb professionalism.”
- Walla Walla High School, despite some physical building limitations, has an active and effective safety and security program.
- The current condition of the two high schools in Walla Walla indicates a need of renovation and perhaps replacement of some buildings.
- Walla Walla High School enrollment currently is over its capacity.
- Although it’s not the primary factor, current scientific research shows a connection between student achievement and the physical condition of school buildings (lighting, acoustics, air quality) .
- Career technical education brings relevancy to students’ education and helps develops a framework for cross-training or re-tooling the workforce.

The recommendations of the Task Force are:

- The Board of Directors should embark on a sequence of school facility improvement projects that address the facility deficiencies and meet student learning needs over time.
- The Board of Directors should design this sequence of improvement projects so that each 9-12 school receives some improvements in each phase.
- The Board of Directors should pursue a Skills Center for Walla Walla Public Schools to the extent that state funding is available. A Skills Center would:
  - a. Increase the relevancy of current programs and improve the educational offerings at both Walla Walla high schools.
  - b. Provide relief to the overcrowding at Walla Walla High School.
  - c. Allow some increase in enrollment at the Lincoln High School.
- At Walla Walla High School, the Board of Directors should pursue a combination of renovated space and new space if a cost-benefit analysis shows renovation is not a cost effective solution to housing the programs the community supports.
- The Board of Directors should consider the historical significance of buildings as they move forward on facility improvement plans.
- At Lincoln Alternative High School, the Board of Directors should pursue a large project that provides new space and not renovation of existing space because renovation is not a cost effective solution to housing the programs the community wants .
- The Board of Directors should continue to work toward acquisition of land for future school sites.
- When the time comes, the Board of Directors should seek assistance from members of this Citizen’s Task Force to promote necessary funding for school facility improvements.
- The Board of Directors should report the work of the Facilities Task Force and the Board’s response to the public through a variety of ways (i.e. workshops, media, websites, email, etc.) and receive additional information for future planning through community discussion.
- The Board of Directors should consider all construction approaches to meet facility needs.

Matters for future consideration are:

- At an appropriate time in the future, the Board of Directors should utilize a citizen’s committee to promote the necessary funding for school facility improvements.

## ***1.0 INTRODUCTION***

### ***1.1 Background***

In May 2006, the Board of Directors presented a bond to the Walla Walla community to address facility needs for support services and several schools. The bond did not pass. Subsequently, the Board and administration embarked on a “We’re Listening” campaign to identify what other options might exist to address the facility deficiencies. The community responded and it became clear that issues surrounding the 9-12 schools were at the heart of the bond failure.

It was apparent to the school board that our community wanted to study the 9-12 facilities and address these recurring questions:

- Should we build a second high school?
- Does the school district physically maintain the buildings we already have?
- Should Lincoln Alternative High School be remodeled?
- Is it likely that College Place will build their own high school?
- Is Walla Walla High School safe?

In the spring of 2007, the Board directed Dr. Carter, superintendent, to form a task force consisting of community members, diverse in terms of opinions and areas of expertise. The Board also directed Dr. Carter to hire a school facility planner to assist the task force. One of the school board members was selected to serve as a co-chair of the task force. After careful study, the Board asked the task force to address the questions listed above and identify 9-12 facility priorities that they believe are a good fit for the Walla Walla community. The task force was asked to make their recommendations to the school board by the end of the 2007-2008 school year, remembering that it is up to the school board to make any final decisions regarding facility needs and when to run bond campaigns.

### ***1.2 Citizens Task Force***

Potential task force members were identified and asked to commit to a year-long study of the issues surrounding the high school facilities in the Walla Walla Public Schools. Cindy Meyer, a Board Member, was selected by the Board to act as a co-chair. The Task Force, in its first meeting, selected John Rowley as the other co-chair.

Members of the Facilities Task Force included:

Cindy Meyer, Co-chair  
John Rowley, Co-chair  
Rob Ahrens  
John Butenhoff  
Max Carrera  
Dick Cook  
Clint Gabbard  
Jim Hayner  
Lawson Knight  
Everett Knudson  
Scott Krivoshein  
Ruth Ladderud  
Jim McCarthy

Mindy Meyer  
Linda Newcomb  
James Payne  
Mike Pettyjohn  
Ruth Russo  
Jim Sanders  
Jody Schneidmiller  
LaDessa Smelcer  
Carina Stillman  
Dave Warkentin  
Cindy Widmer  
Nanqi You

In addition, an Advisory Committee of the Task Force was established to help with organization and day-to-day operations of the Task Force. Members of the Advisory Committee are ex-officio members of the Task Force and include:

Cindy Meyer, Co-chair  
John Rowley, Co-chair  
Ann Golden, Board Chair  
Dr. Richard Carter, Supt.  
Mark Higgins, Dir. Communications

Darcy Weisner, Principal Walla Walla HS  
Jim Sporleder, Principal Lincoln Alt. HS  
Kay Schisler, Secretary  
Dave Teater, Facility Planning Consultant

### **1.3 Task Force Ground Rules**

In discussions with both the Task Force and the Advisory Committee these “Ground Rules” emerged:

- There should be no pre-conceived conclusions for the Task Force’s work.
- Minutes of each Task Force meeting will be kept.
- Task Force meetings should be kept to approximately two hours.
- The Task Force recognizes the authority of the Board of Directors to make final decisions. The Task Force’s final product will be a recommendation and not policy.
- Each member is encouraged to participate fully. The co-chairs will work to elicit comments and ideas from all members.
- Member’s ideas and comments are to be welcomed and treated respectfully.
- All ideas and comments, once stated, become the “property” of the group and no longer belong to the individual.

- Members recognize that ideas from different members may have to be combined, modified, and sometimes abandoned in order to craft the best solution or recommendation for the community as a whole.
- Much of the Task Force’s work will have to be done in subcommittees and, in the interest of time, the Task Force will need to trust the work of its subcommittees.

**1.4 Meeting Schedule**

The Task Force met at the times and places detailed in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1  
TASK FORCE MEETING TIMES AND PLACES**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>
June 20, 2007	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	District Office
September 27, 2007	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	District Office
October 25, 2007	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	District Office
November 29, 2007	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	District Office
January 24, 2008	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	District Office
February 28, 2008	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Walla Walla High School
April 10, 2008	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Airport Conference Room
April 24, 2008	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Lincoln Alternative High School

Minutes for each of the meetings are in Appendix A.

In addition to the meetings listed above, most members of the Task Force physically inspected the two high schools on tours conducted in September 2007.

## **2.0 TASK FORCE STUDY**

### **2.1 Scope of Study**

The Task Force had its first meeting on June 20, 2007. The main purpose of that meeting was to organize itself and begin the process of identifying major topics of study in addition to those provided by the Board of Directors. The following additional topics surfaced:

- Alternative education
- Career Technical Ed. (Vocational Ed.)
- Facility condition
- Facility impact on student achievement
- High schools of the future
- One vs. two high schools
- Safety and Security

In order to study these topics in an orderly and systematic way, the Task Force determined to approach the issues in three phases. Figure 2 details the phases:

#### **FIGURE 2 STUDY PHASES**

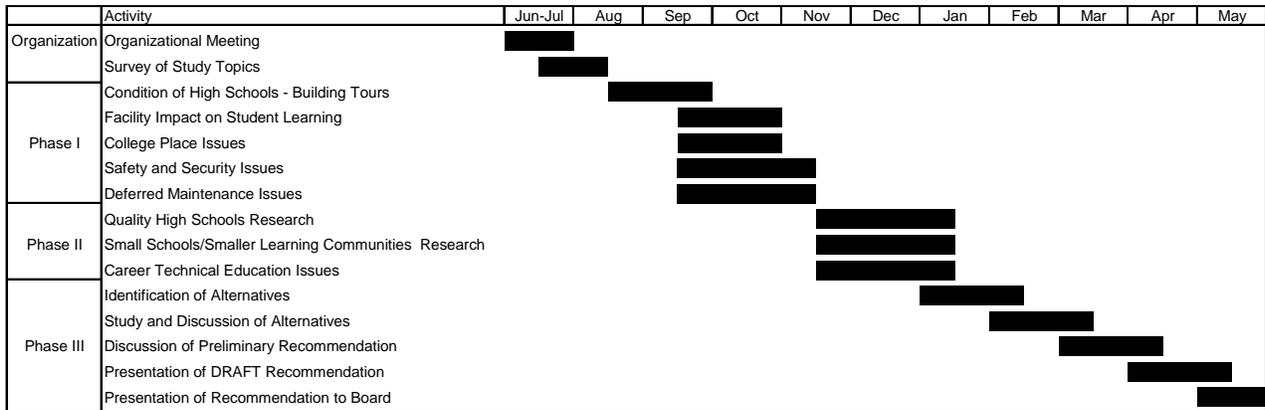
Phase I - This phase answers the question "What Is?" This phase will require the Task Force to understand the present curriculum, the present condition of the high schools, and the current research on the relationship between facilities and student achievement. It will also require the Task Force to determine the likelihood of College Place high school students leaving the Walla Walla Public Schools in the foreseeable future. Safety and security issues have been raised to the Task Force and a risk assessment will probably be necessary. Any concerns related to the quality of maintenance or deferred maintenance practices will need to be tackled.

Phase II - This phase answers the question "What Should Be?" This phase will require the Task Force members to determine the factors that make up quality education in today's American high schools. They will have to compare and contrast the small school research to that of the research on smaller learning communities. They will need to determine how career technical education fits into the modern high school, the community college system, and work force training needs. Walla Walla Public Schools' Strategic Plan will be used as a baseline.

Phase III - This phase answers the question "How Do We Narrow the Difference?" This phase will require the Task Force to determine if any changes in facilities are warranted for the high schools in Walla Walla. Many issues related to cost-benefit will have to be determined and the collective judgment of the Task Force will be called upon. Questions about the cost-benefit of new construction versus renovation will undoubtedly need to be answered. During this phase, the question of dividing Walla Walla High School into two smaller high schools will certainly have to be answered. That discussion will require an analysis of operating costs under different scenarios. The place of athletic programs in the community and the adequacy of the facilities that support that program will have to be determined.

The chart in Figure 3 details how the Task Force approached their study.

**FIGURE 3  
TASK FORCE APPROACH TO STUDY**



**2.2 Subcommittee Findings**

The Task Force was divided into subcommittees to study the major issues raised by the Board plus those raised by the Task Force itself in its first meetings. The topics identified for subcommittee study were:

- A Summary Report on the Condition of the Two High Schools
- Quality High Schools
- Quality Alternative High Schools
- Small Learning Communities
- Facility Impact on Student Achievement
- Career Technical Education
- Safety and Security
- Deferred Maintenance
- College Place Issues

The subcommittees met between regularly scheduled Task Force meetings to complete their study. The findings of the subcommittees are summarized in the following reports. Considerable additional information was provided to the Task Force in the formulation of these summaries. This additional detail can be obtained at the Walla Walla Public School Central Administrative Office.

## A Summary Report on the Condition of the Two High Schools

The condition of the two high schools has been studied several times over the past three years. In 2004 the condition of every school building in Walla Walla was assessed as part of a facility master planning process. Since that time, there have been additional internal assessments, agency inspections, and patron reviews. For Walla Walla High School a recurring theme has been the contrast between the well-kept exterior of the buildings versus the aging systems inside. For Lincoln Alternative High School, there has been no such contrast. Both the exterior and interior reflect the age of the building.

Walla Walla High School has significant problems in two major areas: (1) the physical condition of many of the building systems, and (2) the educational suitability of many of the spaces. The major physical condition problems generally include: (a) lack of thermal qualities for walls, doors, windows and roof; (b) the HVAC systems are old, inefficient and past their serviceable life; (c) there is no ventilation and the systems do not meet indoor air quality standards; (d) light fixtures are not energy efficient; (e) the wall and floor finishes are worn and contain asbestos suspected materials; (f) ceiling finishes are worn, marred and damaged; (g) there are no fire sprinklers; (h) many doors are worn, fail frequently, and operate with difficulty; (i) ADA standards are not met; and (j) the structure and other components likely do not meet current seismic code requirements. The most serious educational suitability problems include: traffic circulation, parking problems, undersized classrooms (especially science labs), a “disconnected” campus preventing adequate integration of programs and access to technology, undersized fine arts spaces, undersized performing arts spaces, “mis-sized” career technical education spaces (some too large, some too small), and poor storage. The support spaces (teacher work areas, offices, clinic, food service, counseling, and reception) for Walla Walla High School are generally undersized and difficult to access from some buildings.

Lincoln Alternative High School has even more problems, but they can also be categorized under “physical condition” and “educational suitability.” The major physical condition problems include: (a) the structure and other components likely do not meet current seismic code requirements; (b) there is some evidence of cracks in the foundation and floor; (c) there is a lack of thermal qualities for walls, doors, windows and roof; (d) the HVAC systems are old, inefficient and past their serviceable life; (e) the plumbing fixtures and plumbing are old, outdated, failing, and need replacement; (f) there is no ventilation and the systems do not meet indoor air quality standards; (g) light fixtures are not energy efficient; (h) the wall and floor finishes are worn and contain asbestos suspected materials; (i) ceiling finishes are worn, marred and damaged; (j) there are no fire sprinklers; (k) many doors are worn, fail frequently, and operate with difficulty; (l) ADA standards are not met; (m) there are not appropriate fire walls to separate occupancies; (n) there are not enough exits in some areas meeting appropriate separation requirements; and (o) there is no elevator. The most serious educational suitability problems include: traffic circulation, parking problems, poor fencing, poor signage (although some of this has been corrected recently), and poor storage throughout. Many of the special learning spaces (library, art room, science room, etc.) are simply general classrooms. These special learning spaces lack the utilities necessary for their programs. Like Walla Walla High School, the support spaces (teacher work areas, offices, clinic, food service, counseling, and

reception) are generally undersized and difficult to access. The Lincoln Alternative High School facility was originally designed as an elementary school. Many of size and scale problems in this building can be traced back to this underlying factor.

The design capacity of Walla Walla High School is just over 1,400 students. It is presently housing approximately 1,850 students. Lincoln Alternative High school is at its capacity of approximately 200 students.

In summary, the Task Force finds the two high schools in need of renovation and perhaps replacement of some buildings. The needed renovation or replacement is in keeping with the age of the buildings and the different systems inside each building. Some additional space will need to be added to provide additional capacity. Updating the sizes and placement of many of the classrooms and support spaces will help keep Walla Walla Public Schools in a position to provide the quality secondary programs required for the future of our community.

## Quality High Schools

In recent years, there has been considerable research into what makes a quality high school. The research is showing a number of factors that are common to high school quality. First, quality high schools meet the needs of all students, from those heading towards four-year colleges to those who may be in danger of never graduating. They provide students with challenging intellectual work, authentic experiences that will apply in life outside of school, and opportunities for collaboration. (The Gates Foundation dubs this the “New 3 R’s”: rigor, relevance, and relationships.) Quality schools engage students so that they don’t feel simply like they are jumping through hoops. Such personalization is evident when students feel they are well known by staff, and programs of study are organized around student needs and interests rather than subjects or teachers. In these schools, teachers feel a part of a professional community.

High school improvement efforts share some common reform strategies to maximize student engagement:

- The organization is communitarian rather than bureaucratic. Teachers work in teams and have power for decision-making, from discipline to curriculum. Student performance is boosted through increased use of effective pedagogy and increased social support for student learning. Teachers have professional development opportunities.
- The curriculum has interdisciplinary courses, project-based learning, flexible scheduling (more blocks, fewer transitions), mixed-ability classes, advisories led by the same teacher for long periods of time (one or more years), explicit career goal or other mentoring strategies, explicit discussion of relevance of classes—all without sacrificing excellent college-prep classes that serve a minority of the students well.
- More classes are based on discussion and expression. Student voices are encouraged (as opposed to writing towards the test) and there are many community-based learning opportunities (shadowing, service learning, work-based learning). There are high expectations combined with high levels of support. Teaching builds in risk-taking, revision, learning from mistakes, and culturally appropriate materials. Student learning is assessed through a variety of means, such as performance and portfolios.
- Activities such as sports, the arts, and volunteering give students an opportunity to develop social skills and “social capital.”
- The business community is involved in mentoring students. There is family involvement in upper grades through active volunteer programs, parent input on empowered committees, and guest teaching.

In order to maximize the five facets of student engagement (above), the facilities must have: flexible spaces for both content delivery and small group discussions; meeting spaces for large group discussions; plenty of labs and other places for hands-on experiences; art and music rooms; gyms and fields for exercise and organized sports; and well-equipped vo-tech spaces. Technology must stay current.

## Quality Alternative High Schools

We believe facility questions, in the context of alternative education, can only be answered when the school district and community have a clear vision of the importance of alternative education and embrace a well-devised plan to provide it. This is more than a “community conversation.” It is an in-depth effort to evaluate and plan. Lincoln is not an acceptable home base for alternative education programs in this district.

There will always be students who need alternative education, those who direct themselves to it and those who are not best served by a large learning environment but continue to languish there. We know students who ultimately seek alternative education begin to lose ground early on, sometimes before entering school. Intervention strategies should be based on assessments of individual students throughout their K12 academic career. Alternative education addresses grades six through twelve and must be recognized as a viable part of the system, properly funded and in proper facilities. We believe Lincoln has or will become, perhaps more by default than plan, the “second high school.” If this is the case, shouldn’t we actually plan for this and do it right? If Lincoln does evolve into a “second high school,” there will still be a need for alternative education at all levels, including middle school.

The factors affecting quality alternative education closely mirror those of the more traditional high school. There are many successful alternative education models in districts of similar size and demographics to Walla Walla but there are some important distinctions. We believe high school students will become more complex and the clash of poverty, language, and family and cultural differences will always present students who are best served in an alternative learning program. Facility requirements are much like a traditional high school, but scaled for the smaller class sizes and school sizes typical of exemplary alternative high schools. Many alternative high schools operate for extended hours and some offer year-around programs. These schools may need additional lighting and night time safety and security features.

In an article [Stacey Rosenkrantz Aronson 1995] read by the subcommittee, “true educational alternatives are based on the theory that all students can learn if provided with the right educational environment. These programs strive to meet students’ needs in order to help them succeed.” Exemplary programs usually incorporate many of the following features: choice in involvement (students, teachers, support staff, administrators); focus on the whole student (academic, personal, emotional, social); warm, caring relationships (with a focus on a supportive peer culture); expanded teacher roles (mentors, advisors, personal & career/life counselors); academic innovation (giving teachers flexibility in design & method strategies); sense of community (that fosters positive relationships among students, teachers, staff); and high student expectations (allowing for flexibility according to student needs).

Successful organizational structure includes: small size (small school with class size of not more than 15:1); relative autonomy (students, teachers, support have a voice in management decisions); comprehensive programs (experiential, vocational classes linking future life to work); counseling (with a focus on the whole student and life/work planning); safe environment (with clear, fair, consistent behavioral standards); separation from traditional school (separate building/wing); and school-linked services to the community (health, social, employment).

## Small Learning Communities (SLC)

The term “small learning communities” has had various meanings over the past years. For purposes of the Walla Walla Facilities Task Force, the term “small learning communities” refers to efforts aimed at creating smaller, learning-centered units of students and teachers in a school organization. While Small Learning Communities might mean a high school with a smaller enrollment, it can also mean smaller, discrete sets of students within a very large high school.

Drawing on current research<sup>1</sup>, the subcommittee studied critiques of the various types of small learning communities and their benefits. While some small learning communities were as large as 900 students, most ranged from 200-400 students. The poorer the socio-economic composition of the school population, the smaller the learning community should be. Further, overcrowding in an SLC is a barrier to student improvement.

Technically, a SLC is not simply a small high school, but an integral functional unit within a larger institution. A small high school is characterized by (1) broad-based educational experience, (2) traditional setup and scheduling and (3) the teacher as instructor and source of all knowledge (i.e. teacher-centric).

Conversely, the Small Learning Community is marked by (1) its focus on college readiness or career themes, (2) a culture of continuous improvement, (3) teams of teachers are assigned a cohort of students through a program’s progress, (4) scheduling is flexible, (5) learning opportunities are expanded (vis-à-vis a small high school), (6) learner-centric. SLCs may be a freshman academy, although grade-level SLCs are outside the scope of this inquiry.

While advantages of SLCs and small high schools have been identified, few examples of successful conversions (i.e. large schools to SLCs) exist. Recent research has shown that the education benefits associated with smaller schools or SLCs (relative to large high schools) are not clear<sup>2</sup>. The process of converting a comprehensive high school to SLCs can be disruptive to the school and efforts may or may not be successful. In fact, the Gates Foundation stopped funding to create small schools and SLCs because they found that track records of academic improvement were more linked to effective leadership. Improved academic progress was not necessarily occurring in the “small schools” they were funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Educational Equity and School Structure: School Size, Overcrowding and Schools-Within-schools. Rady, Lee and Welner. TCREcord The Voice of Scholarship in Education, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Leading the Conversion Process: Lessons Learned and Recommendation for Converting to Small Learning Communities. Fouts & Associates, LLC. September, 2006. Prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

## Facility Impact on Student Achievement

Until recent times, the impact of school facilities on student achievement was only a point of conjecture. However, in the last decade, several studies have shown that school facilities have an impact on student achievement, especially when the environmental aspects of the facilities are considered. Optimizing these aspects will have a positive impact on student achievement. The major elements affecting achievement are:

- a. Acoustics – Learning spaces need noise controls (1) to reduce the background level of noise generated in the room, (2) to reduce echo, (3) to reduce reverberation, and (4) to prevent outside sound transmission into the room. Providing an environment that limits acoustical distraction to between 35-40 decibels increases concentration time and scores on a variety of tests.
- b. Light – Although there have been numerous studies from the 1930's to the present showing the importance of good lighting, recent studies show that natural light in classrooms fosters student progress more than artificial light.
- c. Temperature and Humidity – A number of studies have determined that students perform mental tasks best in rooms kept at moderate humidity levels (40% - 70%) and moderate temperatures (68<sup>o</sup> F – 74<sup>o</sup> F).
- d. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) – Poor indoor air quality (airflow of less than 10-20 ft<sup>3</sup>/min/person) has a two-fold negative impact on student achievement through (1) chronic student and staff absenteeism and (2) increased carbon dioxide levels that decrease concentration times. Improved air quality promotes healthier students and staff, thereby decreasing absenteeism and measurably increasing achievement. The building condition assessment conducted several years ago identified substandard fresh air and ventilation systems at both Lincoln and Walla Walla High School. Additional scientific studies would be necessary to determine if either of the two high schools have IAQ issues due to airborne contaminants (such as bacteria, molds, etc.).

The subcommittee noted, however, that capital expenditures and the age of school facilities are not in and of themselves determinants of student achievement.

The size of schools is also a factor in student achievement. Since school size is a separate Task Force study topic, more on that topic can be found in that report. However, to the extent that the subject crosses over into this area, we have found no evidence that larger schools are superior to smaller schools in terms of student achievement.

In summary, the subcommittee found that numerous scientific studies show a relationship between school facility factors and student achievement.

## Career Technical Education

For several generations, the term “vocational education” referred to a number of programs primarily in secondary schools and community colleges that concentrated on preparing students for production and trades jobs. In many cases those programs were seen as less valuable and less rigorous than college preparatory programs. In fact, vocational programs in the worst cases were seen as second-rate programs to place students who either could not, or would not, find success in school. In the years since, vocational education has transformed and evolved into what is now known as career technical education or CTE.

CTE programs now lead to employment in many of the most respected and highly paid careers in the country. The States’ Career Clusters Initiative (SCCI), an initiative established under the National Career Technical Education Foundation (NCTEF), has organized CTE into 16 career clusters that have been aligned with all of the academic areas. A Career Cluster is a grouping of occupations and broad industries based on commonalities. They represent the knowledge and skills, both academic and technical, that all students within the cluster should achieve regardless of their career field. The CTE programs within each cluster typically do not result in a bachelor degree, but instead have been aligned with the job market where 80% of the jobs do not require bachelor degrees. The clusters are:

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Education and Training
- Government and Public Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security
- Human Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math
- Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics
- Health Science
- Art, Audio-Visual Technology, & Communications
- Finance,
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Information Technology
- Business, Management, & Administration

For students, CTE brings relevancy to their education and opportunities to explore multiple careers. Because CTE provides a durable technical preparation, the world of work is more connected and transitions between careers are seamless. For employers, CTE programs build a pipeline of workers that are well qualified and able to adapt to the changing needs. It requires a meaningful engagement with the school system and develops a framework for cross-training or re-tooling the workforce. In summary, CTE

- Reduces the need for remedial studies in college,
- Increases enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education,
- Raises academic and technical achievement in high school and college,
- Increases the percentages of students receiving postsecondary degrees, certificates or other recognized credentials, and
- Improves students’ chances of getting good jobs and pursuing further education.

## Safety and Security

Some teachers and citizens of Walla Walla Public Schools have expressed concerns about the safety and security of the two high schools. These concerns have centered on the campus style arrangement of buildings at Walla Walla High School and the multi-story building for Lincoln Alternative High School. A subcommittee of the Facilities Task Force reviewed school safety and security at these two sites based on (1) the facility conditions and (2) the actions being taken to alleviate any risks. As part of the review, the subcommittee interviewed the principals and law enforcement personnel.

At Walla Walla High School, there are currently four major entries and exits. In addition, there are over 125 doors that must be secured. The school needs an improved parent and bus drop-off area. At Lincoln Alternative High School fencing is a problem. In some areas, the fencing prevents paramedic access close to the building and in other areas there needs to be additional fencing and gates for security. There are multiple entry points into the building and poor separation of traffic and play areas. The older design of Lincoln presents stairwells and small, winding hallways that are difficult to supervise. Both schools have portable classrooms which pose additional security risks.

Both schools have taken steps to improve safety and security. To improve sight lines at Walla Walla High School, the “locker bays” have been removed and the trees and bushes have been trimmed for better sight lines. A dress code has been implemented, too. Both schools have security officers and security cameras. Two of the most important aspects of the District’s safety and security program are the level of involvement by the school leaders and the development of crisis contingency plans.

Both schools have challenges in monitoring multiple entrances and traffic patterns. Although fewer buildings and fewer entrances have many positive aspects, they also may create bottlenecks in student pedestrian traffic. In summary, the subcommittee has concluded that despite some problem areas, the District has an active and effective safety and security program. Renovating the two high schools for safety and security reasons alone would probably would not merit the expense. Of course, if renovation is advantageous for other reasons, the safety and security features of both buildings could be improved.

## Deferred Maintenance

As public school systems conduct long-range facility planning activities, a review of district maintenance practices is commonly part of the discussions. Such has been the case in the Walla Walla Public Schools (WWPS). A subcommittee of the Facilities Task Force reviewed the maintenance practices of the district and how they affect the two high schools. This was done after a review of literature indicating best practices in maintenance. The subcommittee examined the maintenance practices related to routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, and major maintenance. The subcommittee defined these three types of maintenance as follows:

- a. routine maintenance – the regular, day-in-day-out upkeep of the physical plant (fixing windows, replacing locks, changing filters, repairing electrical outlets, cleaning clogged drains, etc.)
- b. preventative maintenance – the preservation of existing systems (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, etc.) by keeping equipment in satisfactory operation condition prior to system failure (cleaning of coils, replacement of electrical breakers before they wear out, flushing systems, etc.)
- c. major maintenance – the repair or replacement of facility components upon failure or at the end of their life-cycle

All of these types of maintenance were examined against the background of the age and condition of the high school facilities. Walla Walla High School was constructed in 1963 with a new vocational building built in 1984. Renovations and additions to Walla Walla High School were completed in 1990 and 1991. Lincoln Alternative High School was constructed in 1927 and a gym was added in 1957. Walla Walla High School is nearly 45 years old and Lincoln Alternative High School is 80 years old. At these ages, the major system components in each school appear to have lasted longer than their expected life-cycles. (The subcommittee expressed concern that the age and condition of the Lincoln School might contribute to those students feeling like second-class citizens.) The District has upgraded some air conditioning systems and has upgraded the lighting systems in the schools. This has been a very effective energy saving program.

Last year, WWPS spent approximately 8.2% on maintenance, just slightly below other school districts of comparable size. WWPS typically handles safety-related maintenance work orders within two days. (The district has one of the lowest L&I claim records in the pool.) Other work orders typically take longer depending on the issue. For future discussions with the community, there will need to be a clear breakdown of historical maintenance expenditures.

In summary, routine maintenance and preventative maintenance have been conducted by a consistently strong maintenance department with superb professionalism. The buildings have been maintained as they were built, but major maintenance (or large system component replacement) has not been funded.

## College Place Issues

In recent years, the impact on Walla Walla high schools of approximately 400 grade 9-12 students from College Place has been argued at length. Some have claimed that College Place would soon build its own high school and those 400 students would leave Walla Walla schools, thus alleviating the present overcrowding. Others have asserted that the present relationship between the two school districts will remain. The Facilities Task Force created a subcommittee to study the issues. The results of their study follow.

College Place is a “non-high” school district operating only in grades K-8. To educate its grade 9-12 students, it has a legally “designated” high school which is Walla Walla High School. This relationship between the two districts is both legal and historic. It has both operational and procedural requirements. The Walla Walla Public Schools cannot unilaterally exclude College Place students from attending Walla Walla High School. However, all federal, state, and local operational funding for College Place students follows the students to the designated high school.

In addition to operational requirements, there are procedural requirements for capital or facilities renewal (Chapter 28.540 RCW). When voters in the Walla Walla School District pass a facilities bond for the “designated” high school, the College Place School District is compelled to support its proportional share of the project’s costs. College Place voters have two attempts to pass a bond to support these costs through property taxes. Should College Place fail to support its District’s measure, the State of Washington would intervene and initiate a proposal of annexation for the College Place School District to meet its obligation.

There are some in College Place who aspire to pass a bond to construct a new College Place High School. However, just three years ago, a high school bond placed before the College Place voters failed. Currently, the College Place School District has plans for \$25 million bond for improvements to its K-8 facilities. Their bonding capacity is approximately \$32 million. Even if the entire K-8 facility improvement plan moves forward, this leaves only \$7 million dollars for facility improvements for grades 9-12. This amount might be adequate to support facility improvements for the “designated” high school in Walla Walla but it would not be enough to construct a 9-12 facility in College Place. Therefore, the subcommittee has concluded that likelihood of College Place students leaving Walla Walla High School is remote and facility planning for Walla Walla School District should include the 400 College Place students.

**2.3 Other Task Force Findings**

After the Task Force had received and approved the subcommittee reports listed above, they embarked on a series of meetings to explore some of the other topics brought forward by the group. These topics included the capital and operating costs for several options to improve facilities for grades 9-12. They included:

- Renovate some of Walla Walla High School to accommodate approximately 900 students and and build a new second high school also to accommodate approximately 900 students;
- Renovate and enlarge Walla Walla High School to accommodate approximately 1,800 students;
- Build a new Skill Center to accommodate approximately 600 half-time students while renovating Walla Walla High School for approximately 1,500 students; and
- Renovation and enlarging Lincoln High School vs. building a new Lincoln High School (either for approximately 300 students).

Architects West, the architectural firm for the Walla Public Schools, provided some very preliminary cost estimates for the Task Force’s consideration as detailed in Figure 4.

**FIGURE 4  
PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATES**

Date	Scenario	Enrollment	Area						Total Area	Cost		
			Matchable			Non-Matchable				Local Cost	State Match	Total Cost
			Unhoused	New In-Lieu	Modernization	New Construction	Modernization	No Work				
1/24/2008	1A WAHI	900	-	126,036	31,835	-	-	49,129	207,000	33,606,143	21,454,754	55,060,897
1/24/2008	1B New HS	900	20,361	13,025	-	146,614	-	-	180,000	64,540,505	4,691,484	69,231,989
2/28/2008	2A WAHI	1,800	20,361	152,677	31,835	62,798	-	49,129	316,800	62,337,649	27,574,089	89,911,738
2/28/2008	2B Skills Center	300	20,361	152,677	31,835	9,998	-	49,129	264,000	1,650,000	39,881,125	41,531,125
2/28/2008	2B WAHI	1,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45,616,855	27,529,686	73,146,541
2/28/2008	3A Lincoln	300	-	20,000	-	23,000	-	-	43,000	11,091,000	2,697,000	13,788,000

After hours of study, committee discussion, subcommittee discussion, and consultation with experts from a variety of related fields, the Task Force concluded its work. Some of the Task Force’s conclusions and recommendations were developed through the subcommittee process. Others were developed through surveys (see Appendices B and C), and some were simply from a show of hands. A few items dealing with operations, personnel issues, curriculum, and a future bond committee were deemed outside the charge of the Task Force. These were set aside for future work. The following chapter details the conclusions and recommendations of the Citizen’s Task Force.

### ***3.0 TASK FORCE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

#### ***3.1 Conclusions and Recommendations***

The recommendations and conclusions contained in this chapter are based on the data contained in the previous chapters and are divided into three sections: conclusions, recommendations, and matters for the future.

##### ***3.1.1 Conclusions***

- Walla Walla High School should not be split into two high schools of equal size because the “split” lacks educational benefits (see subcommittee report on smaller learning communities) and the costs would be prohibitive.
- The current Lincoln Alternative High School facility is not an acceptable home base for the important alternative education programs in Walla Walla.
- The Walla Walla Public Schools should continue to accept College Place high school students because Walla Walla Public Schools legally cannot unilaterally exclude College Place students from attending Walla Walla schools and the likelihood of College Place building its own high school in the foreseeable future is remote.
- Walla Walla Public Schools maintains its physical facilities as they were built and with “superb professionalism.”
- Walla Walla High School, despite some physical building limitations, has an active and effective safety and security program.
- The current condition of the two high schools in Walla Walla indicates a need for renovation and perhaps replacement of some buildings.
- Walla Walla High School enrollment currently is over its design capacity.
- Although not a primary factor, current scientific research shows a connection between student achievement and the physical condition (air quality, acoustics, lighting) of school buildings.
- Career technical education brings relevancy to students’ education and helps develop a framework for cross-training or re-tooling the workforce.

### **3.1.2 Recommendations**

- The Board of Directors should embark on a sequence of school facility improvement projects that address the facility deficiencies and meet student learning needs over time.
- The Board of Directors should design this sequence of improvement projects so that each 9-12 school receives some improvements in each phase.
- The Board of Directors should pursue a Skills Center for Walla Walla Public Schools to the extent that state funding is available. A Skills Center would:
  - a. Increase the relevancy of current programs and improve the educational offerings at both Walla Walla high schools.
  - b. Provide relief to the overcrowding at Walla Walla High School.
  - c. Allow some increase in enrollment at the Lincoln High School.
- At Walla Walla High School, the Board of Directors should pursue a renovation program. The Board may pursue new construction if a cost-benefit analysis shows renovation is not a cost effective solution to housing the programs the community supports.
- The Board of Directors should consider the historical significance of buildings as they move forward on facility improvement plans.
- At Lincoln Alternative High School, the Board of Directors should pursue a large project that provides new space and not renovation of existing space because renovation is not a cost effective solution to housing the program the community supports.
- The Board of Directors should continue to work toward acquisition of land for future school sites.
- When the time comes, the Board of Directors should seek assistance from members of this Citizen's Task Force to promote necessary funding for school facility improvements.
- The Board of Directors should report the work of the Facilities Task Force and the Board's response to the public through a variety of ways (i.e. workshops, media, websites, email, etc.) and receive additional information for future planning through community discussion.

- The Board of Directors should consider all construction approaches to meet facility needs.

***3.1.3 Matters for the Future***

- At an appropriate time in the future, the Board of Directors should utilize a citizen's committee to promote the necessary funding for school facility improvements.

## **4.0 APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **High School Facilities Task Force June 20, 2007 Minutes**

Guests: Maria Gonzales, Linda Newcomb, Toni Rudnick, Mark Higgins, Rich Carter, Anne Golden, Dave Teater

Absent: Nanqi You, James Payne, Dick Cook, Jim Sanders and Clint Gabbard. Lynette Rowley attended in place of her husband.

Anne Golden – We put a bond issue in front of the voters and it failed. Afterwards, we conducted surveys, talked to people, and listened to what they were saying. As a result, we put Edison as a single issue on a bond – and it passed. Now, we need to focus on high school education. Thus – the Task Force!

#### **Results from the Table Session**

#### **Question: What are the issues facing 9-12 education in Walla Walla?**

**Bluebirds** (they talked individually, so here is what each one said/thought)

**Scott Krivoshein**

Build a 9<sup>th</sup> grade wing – pretty cramped

New administration building – could make it into 9<sup>th</sup> wing and admin offices, then add other grade level wings

Help with CP bond – impact on our high school

Several bonds are needed

**Ruth Russo**

Maintain and expand arts

Don't simply focus on WASL – don't drop electives

**Jim Sporleder**

Opportunities for a wide range of student served

- Funding is dropped for good programs that work
- Smaller high school
- More electives
- Technology advances needed

**Mike Pettyjohn**

WASL curriculum is issue

Highly capable teacher endorsements – strain on teaching staff

Deficient in math area – need more classes, but not enough qualified teachers

**John Butenhoff**

Vision of what students are prepared for when they leave our doors. Need to prepare all students.

Connect kids more to trades – the majority are not going to 4 year schools

What does a high school look like in the future?

**Goldfinch – Dave Warkentin, Carina Stillman and LaDessa Smelcer**

Voter confidence in school dist. – failed bond and passed Edison bond by 1% - disengaged voters

Strategic plan for academic excellence is not known generally by the voter

- Quality of education?
- Graduation rates?
- Test scores (need direct correlation between these and the new facilities)
- Influence of facilities – research based?
- Class sizes, school sizes, school numbers?

Safety was big part of the plan for the failed bond – read John Stossel who says schools really aren't that unsafe. Is the safety issue a myth?

Facility deficiencies

HVAC

Outside passing between classes

Science facilities

Windows

Technology and networking

Classrooms

Lunchroom (multiuse)

Space constraints

Why not remodel?

Community outreach

Community confidence in school – related decisions need rebuilt (that's what was on the paper)

Academics – should money be spent on facilities when we could be spending money increasing graduation rates (i.e.: training, curriculum, after school program, counseling)

Quality staff – professional development

Resolve issues” 2<sup>nd</sup> high school

**Cardinals – Jim McCarthy, Jody Schneidmiller, Rob Ahrens and Linda Newcomb**

*Here is what the group reported:*

Regain credibility in the community so that we can pass a bond issues that allows for:

- No portables
- Appropriate class size (Commons, science, athletics, music, special needs)
- Green construction – particularly in the science building
- Paine as a separate issue
- When we build, do it right (gave example of auditorium)
- Improve parking and drop offs
- Safety and ADA issues

*They also had another list on the wall:*

-Don't mix high school bond with other building issues – simplify bond issue –Safety and security

-How do we develop roots in the school system for newcomers?

Where does the thinking about new schools come into play?

-Demonstrate need

-Attract good teachers

-Get rid of portables

-Lack of space in Commons

-Size of classrooms

-Special needs issues/space

-Athletic facilities – upgrade

-Improved Parking and drop-offs

-What role does a College Place high school play?

-Wide program offerings in music/arts

-Upgrade Paine – don't get issues confused

-Green construction particularly in sciences

**Sparrow – Everett Knudson, Cindy Widmer, Mindy Meyer, Max Carrera**

More student space, esp. in classrooms

Safety from without and within – knowing who is there

Facilities – especially Paine, but for Wa-Hi, too – are they adequate? Appropriate?

Is location correct?

Availability of adequate classroom resources/materials

Ninth grade “resources” – at least discuss placement of ninth graders. How do we connect them to big school

Ask parents – a broad group and not just people who show up to PTA meetings

Ask high school students – find a way to seek input from a diverse group of students

Athletic and PE options

Connections for all students – continuum – know every student has a place to land – right programs available

Sustained ability to attract quality staff

Excellent, timely professional development (esp. with change)

Alternative programs – how designed

TWO HIGH SCHOOLS – topic needs to be addressed

Fifth year seniors and failing students – dropouts: How do we intervene when shy of credits?

The rub between Preparing everyone for a four year college when not all are headed there (vocational education and connection with colleges, community)

**Quail Group (Ruth Ladderud, Lawson Knight, John (Lynette) Rowley, Jim Hayner, Darcy Weisner)**

Meeting WASL regs/No Child Left Behind – state and federal mandates to meet standards

The mandate! Mastery and Proficiency

Proximity – size

- physical size of rooms to change styles
- opportunity to group differently
- distance between rooms

Expanded opportunity – size of physical plant, size of student body

Teacher/student/staff relationships

- method of instruction
- closeness to teachers also teacher same groups
- class size (ratios)

(in list order): Language Skills, Technology Infrastructure, Course Offerings, Safety, Alternatives, Special Ed., Travel Times, Transportation, Mastery-Proficiency, Electives, Attendance

Physical Plant not large enough for current student population – seems okay for 1400 to 1500 kids

Change options

- pre-WASL and post-WASL buildings (ie: 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>)
- Magnet alternative high school
- 10/11/12 at high school

Plusses and minuses of smaller student body size

Positives Negatives

More options/student to participate	Fewer specialty classes (AP, Guitar)
More control	Less opportunity to go to big name college
Some kids able to connect easier	Fringe kids can find a place to belong
Cross responsibilities of staff, connect staff w/ student	Higher cost of admin/student
Better counselor/student ratio	Two HS community - division
Research-based size	Athletic divisions

Both: Great Staff

Issue – First to resolve is configuration of students (current and projected) and the bricks and mortar options to accomplish this

Other notes from the meeting

### **Survey Discussion**

Quail group – if you do a survey, you get responses based on the questions asked

Think you can get more responses with web survey – suggest that you will get a greater response from people with young children. Worried about people with no computers in households

Last time, we had lot of misconceptions

With surveys – how many of you are going to give a survey to Vernon Filan or Robin Peterson? (Note: Scott Krivoshein said that he planned to do that)

Question on surveys from Cindy – hard to come up with questions that were accurate, but not loaded

Other groups struggled with survey – to get a sense for where the voter is

Everett Knudson said he does not want to table the survey. Suggested question: Do you feel that the leadership of WWPS listens to you?

Everett – one reason school bond issues fail is often timing. Steering committee needs to work with other gov. bodies to coordinate bond issues. Sales program has to take place – what do you have going on?

Can't be a leading question – needs to be dialog, interactive, not yes/no or multiple choice

How about if steering committee comes up with several questions and and e-mails them to everyone. John B liked questions about 9-12 meeting

**Next Meeting**

Thurs, Sept. 27 - 5 p.m. District Board Room

**Election of co-chair**

Cindy explained duties. Asked for volunteers or nominations, saying that it should not be a school employee or another board member

John Rowley was nominated by his wife. No one else volunteered, so John was elected by default.

**Summary**

Co-chairs will e-mail survey questions generated by group – 10 copies per person

Steering committee will meet this summer to summarize tonight's work and bring ideas back to group.

Tours next fall – will send schedule with surveys. Will hold them during the day.

**High School Facilities Task Force  
Minutes from September 27, 2007**

Members present: Nanqi You, Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Jodi Schneidmiller, Jim Hayner, Cindy Widmer, Clint Gabbard, Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, John Butenhoff, Jim Sporleder, Dave Warkentin, Ruth Russo, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, Carina Stillman, John Rowley, James Payne, Dick Cook, Jim Sanders, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer

Members absent: Jim McCarthy, Everett Knudson, Max Carrera

Guests: Maria Gonzales (U-B), Dave Teater, John Evans, Rich Carter, Mark Higgins

**Introductions** – Everyone told a little about themselves, since not everyone had attended the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting

**Building Tour Comments** (by table)

**Bluebirds**

Essentially, we still have to remember that people see the Wa-Hi campus as beautiful buildings. It's difficult to communicate other needs. Challenge is to communicate how inefficient things might be and how improvements need to be based on curriculum.

**Quails**

Wa-Hi Comments

- Green Space at Wa-Hi is good– can yield to expansion
- Brick is nice quality look – but is it wonderful inside and out?
- Site is good – community growth is moving to the south and west areas of town
- Fire egress is appalling
- Efficiency is lacking
- Construction quality is uncertain. Area can be swampy
- Air and sound quality is bad
- Chem lab should be shut down now
- Student drop-off is lacking
- New track/athletic area needed
- Teachers and students have to walk outdoors between classes

Lincoln Comments

- Tall ceilings good
- Tear down and start again.
- Not ADA compliant

**Bluefinch Group**

Lincoln Comments

- Space very small

- Bathrooms not ADA compliant
- Difficult place to teach and learn
- Building seems solid

Wa-Hi Comments

- Ventilation is terrible
- Campus is too spread out
- Three lunches make things difficult for students
- Undersized for four large classes – perhaps ninth grade wing
- Complaints about students having to carry heavy backpacks

**Sparrows**

Lincoln Comments

- Food service is poor – not on-site, brought in from Berney
- Science facilities and technology are deplorable

Wa-Hi Comments

- Buildings at Wa-Hi are tired
- Staff innovation is apparent - they get a lot out of current buildings
- Good thinking around limitations

**Cardinals**

Wa-Hi Comments

- HVAC not adequate – Air conditioning not functional
- Classes are too small
- Single pane windows
- Science classes are scary
- Three shifts of lunches?
- Students must go outdoors between classes
- Nice campus but there is a lot of outside space

Lincoln Comments

- Building was originally for elementary students
- Last remodel in 1957
- Has window air conditioning
- Hand-me-down school - example is bathrooms designed for small children

**Questions on construction and facility**

**Q - What exactly is the structural nature of the academic buildings at Wa-Hi?**

**A -** Best guess is low bearing wood frame structure. Discussion on nationwide building scoring - data shows it's more economical to rebuild than remodel. Need to address suitability issues

**Q - Comment received after tour – even if we build two buildings, can we hire more teachers so that we have smaller class sizes?**

A – Even though the community thinks we would have smaller classes with two buildings, the state funds at rate of 27 students to one teacher. Even if we had space, we don't have money to run smaller classes than that. District can't raise enough money in levies to hire more teachers.

**Q - Why can't you run a bond with a levy component?**

A - We are at levy capacity. By law, we can raise 24% of the amount we receive from the state based on our student enrollment and that's what we currently do.

Regarding running a levy with a bond in an election, it's important for community to know that we are limited in how much we can raise in levies to support district programs/teachers.

Understand concern about class sizes, however the single biggest factor in achievement is not class size, but poverty level. We are above the state average in all WASL areas with the larger classes we now have. By shrinking classes, you won't necessarily see achievement going up.

If we are at levy maximum, we can direct more of the money to classrooms with improved efficiency in buildings.

**Q –Addressed to John Evans (architect) and Date Teater (facilities consultant)**

**How many new high schools have you built? How are they set up? What are sources of funding?**

The overall direction in high school construction is less departmentalized and more career pathway/work force focused. Dave said that no school he works with wants separate buildings. Almost all high schools operate on public funding. John explained that different learning strategies require more work space and different configurations. Rich said elementary schools are finding creative uses for various work spaces. Wa-Hi has space limitations for more creative use of buildings.

**Q – What will enrollment look like 10 years from now?**

A – Data shows it will be slow and steady. Studies show 1% growth over 10-15 years. Even though there is a lot of new housing, families aren't moving in.

**Q – What is happening with alternative education enrollment?**

A – With a new alternative program principal, balancing and shifting enrollment is the current goal; nothing is being added at this point. Next, both high school principals will be looking at programs that might be different than what we now offer.

Aside – The free/reduced lunch population was 38% of district students eight years ago and now it is 55%. If you see nature of society, we have growing poverty level in our area. Greater disparity exists in our schools. We need different programs to meet student needs.

**Q - Are you going to present ideas to us to help us think outside the box?**

A – John and Dave said we need to keep that on the back burner until we get further down the road

**Q - Is there any school our size that has two campuses, but one administration?**

A – There is one in Wyoming that is larger in square footage, but smaller in student population. Other schools have been broken down into different buildings/spaces with one principal and then assistant principals in charge of various areas.

**Q – What about key and lock systems?**

A – There are a whole host of them: pin key, eye retina, cards, etc. All come with costs.

**Q – Do a majority of districts our size have one high school or several smaller ones?**

A – The trend is toward smaller schools. Many don't have the capability to get smaller. Example given was Florida mandating maximum school size of 900 students, then backing down because it was too difficult for districts to do.

**Q - Do we have to accept College Place students at Wa-Hi?**

A – College Place has designated Walla Walla High School for their students. College Place residents must pay fair share of any high school costs.

**Q - If we have a bond issue for high school construction, do College Place residents vote on it?**

A – Following a successful bond election in Walla Walla School District, College Place resident would then have two chances to approve paying for their share of bond costs relating to the high school. If they were to vote against it twice, College Place School District could be dissolved and become part of Walla Walla's.

**Q – What about three grade high schools?**

A – There are some, but the trend is toward four grade comprehensive high schools. Darcy explained what our children are facing with state and federal assessments and how they need to be successful to move ahead in life. He explained there are many different types of students in classes and there is a need to be comprehensive in the approach to teaching them.

**Q - When the facility study was done, did it address safety, earthquake preparedness at Lincoln?**

A – Dave said he is sure it does not meet current seismic standards.

**Sub-Committee Assignments**

Following the question/answer time, John Rowley asked the group if they felt they wanted to move on to subcommittee work or wanted to wait until the October meeting. The consensus was to begin subcommittee work today.

Task Force member Nanqi You said she is designing a website the committee can use to download information, view minutes, have subcommittee blogs, and request information/make comments.

Task Force members then met in their designated subcommittee teams to organize, plan, and schedule meeting times. Subcommittees are researching: 1) Facility Impact on Student Achievement; 2) College Place Issues; 3) Safety and Security Issues; and 4) Deferred Maintenance Issues.

**The next meeting** will be Thursday, October 25, 2007 at 5 p.m. in the Administration Building, Mill Creek Room.

**High School Facilities Task Force  
Minutes from October 25, 2007**

Members present: Nanqi You, Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Jodi Schneidmiller, Jim Hayner, Clint Gabbard, Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, John Butenhoff, Jim Sporleder, Ruth Russo, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, Carina Stillman, John Rowley, James Payne, Dick Cook, Jim Sanders, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer, Max Carrera, Everett Knudson

Members absent: Cindy Widmer, Dave Warkentin

Guests: Dave Teater, Mark Higgins

**Review of Agenda/Introduction of High School Condition Report**

Cindy Meyer shared the agenda and asked everyone to read their copy of the High School Condition Report so that there can be discussion and possible adoption at the next meeting.

**Motions:**

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to accept the following documents.

Task Force Ground Rules (no discussion)

Scope of Work (question asking if we are locked into specifics – answer was no)

Minutes from the 9.27.07 meeting (question on explanation of College Place vote in regard to our bond elections – answer was that the College Place subcommittee would clarify the issue)

**Subcommittee Reports**

*(Note: Everyone received handouts, so only the side comments and questions will be reported here)*

**College Place Issues (Lawson Knight)**

- State and federal apportionment dollars follow the student. Approximately 15-20% of the high school operating budget comes from College Place students, but those same students represent 25% of the student body.
- Detailed explanation of how College Place voters are required to support any successful Walla Walla bond involving Walla Walla High School, because it is that district's designated high school. CP voters would have two attempts to pass their own bond in support of the Walla Walla bond and, if both attempts failed, the state would intervene and initiate an annexation proposal for CP to meet its obligation
- The subcommittee feels CP has strong aspirations for a high school since K-20 education is strongly inherent in that district, but the last bond issue was soundly defeated.
- The CP superintendent said he feels his district was not in the loop with the last bond issue presented by WW School District.
- The subcommittee says increases in the College Place bonding capacity could support a high school in the year 2020.
- In response to the Critical Questions posed to the group:

- Does the Walla Walla Public Schools have the authority to force the College Place students to return to their home district? : **No**
- Does the College Place Public Schools have the construction of a 9-12 facility in their long range school facility master plan? : **Not really**
- Based on your discussions with the College Place District, is there any reasonable expectation that they will build a 9-12 facility in the near future given the current efforts to correct deficiencies in their K-8 buildings?: **No Reason**

### **Facility Impact on Student Achievement (Rob Ahrens)**

- No research that small (400-800 students) is better than large student body size
- Had trouble finding direct numbers regarding size vs. performance, but there was direct correlation with lighting, hearing, etc. and student achievement
- Perhaps need for impartial group (i.e. WAVE) to look at the facilities
- Tried to get studies on noise levels, etc. in classrooms to help give voters more data for elections
- Concerns expressed about air quality and space, particularly at Wa-Hi; reference made to students who have to take a break in the middle of a class to eat lunch, then return to their classrooms for the remainder of the period
- Darcy Weisner explained there are 11 portables, with 11 teachers, at Wa-Hi. He said there also are three teachers who travel from classroom to classroom, with one working in four different rooms in a five-period day
- Need to see how space impacts results
- Last page of the High School Condition Report addresses most of these issues

### **Safety and Security Issues (various presenters)**

#### Walla Walla High School (Scott Krivoshein)

- Many changes made to help safety and security issues since the last bond election
- Some solutions to safety/security problems (i.e. removing lockers) can cause other problems, such as students carrying very heavy backpacks. Suggestion that classes have two sets of books: one to stay in the classroom and one to go home with students.
- Sheriff presence on campus is co-sponsored by the district and the county. This doesn't happen very often.
- Elaboration on the "welcome center" idea – location in the Commons area with an expanded parking lot west of the gyms would give campus one entrance and multiple exits, as well as a parent/bus pick up area
- Many of the improvements on campus have occurred because of Darcy's vision and were not in place during the failed bond election

#### Lincoln Alternative High School (Clint Gabbard)

- Some improvements have been made at Lincoln, but new security cameras are not always supervised
- Only a part time security officer – but that person was present to help with an incident last week
- Whole building is not ADA accessible

- Building evacuation plan is in place, but needs to be updated

**Interview with Walla Walla Police Department (Carina Stillman)**

- Feeling that campus shooting is a remote possibility
- Capt. Bainter agreed it's hard to secure Wa-Hi, but doesn't think that's a reason to rebuild the school
- Question on number of exits at both Wa-Hi and Lincoln – “more would be better in an emergency”
- Wa-Hi doors are lockable, but the windows are not
- Lincoln is a security nightmare

**Deferred Maintenance (Jim McCarthy)**

- Wa-Hi is clean and functional, but maintained as a 1960's building
- Clarification that 8.2% of the total district budget goes to maintenance, compared to 8.7% in other districts our size
- Question on how much of that amount comes from Maintenance and Operation levies
- Difficult to get the numbers from the (district) business office
- Question on what happens with any extra dollars when a bond-funded project comes in under budget; (answer from Mark Higgins) those funds can be rolled back to taxpayers or the board can request that they be used for capital improvements, including major maintenance projects, elsewhere in the district
- Need transparency with what (the district) is doing and spending in maintenance; is money being well spent?
- Criticism heard from community about not getting answers – makes people really mad
- Are we wrong to say we are building for the next 50 years?
- Not a clear vision for the last bond issue – now there are visions at both high school locations

**New Subcommittee Assignments**

The four subcommittees are: Alternative Education, Career/Technology Issues, Small Schools/Learning Communities, and Quality Schools.

Task Force members divided into their new subcommittee groups and worked on plans for research, meetings, and other efforts to help them develop and publish finding reports by the next meeting.

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 29, 2007 at 5 p.m. in the Administration Building Board Room.

**Walla Walla Public Schools - High School Facilities Task Force  
Minutes from 11.29.07**

Members present: , Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Jody Schneidmiller, Jim Hayner, Cindy Widmer, , Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, John Butenhoff, Jim Sporleder, , Ruth Russo, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, Carina Stillman, John Rowley, James Payne, Dick Cook, Jim Sanders, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer, Jim McCarthy, Everett Knudson

Members absent: Clint Gabbard, Dave Warkentin, Nanqi You  
Guests: Dave Teater, Rich Carter, Mark Higgins

A. Overview of agenda

Cindy Meyer presented an overview of the evening's agenda, which includes motions to adopt the October 25, 2007 minutes, the four subcommittee reports presented at the October meeting, and the High School Condition Report.

B. Motions for Adoption/Approval

John Rowley confirmed that everyone had received copies of the documents via e-mail and asked for separate motions for each of the items.

- ◆ The High School Condition Report was unanimously adopted.
- ◆ A motion was made to adopt the College Place Issues report. One question: What is the purpose for adoption? John said we need to make sure we all agree that the contents of the reports are accurate so that we can share them with the community. The adoption was approved.
- ◆ A motion was made to adopt the remaining three subcommittee reports" Deferred Maintenance, Facility Impact, and Safety/Security Issues. There was a question on Deferred Maintenance report, second paragraph regarding upgrades on lighting. It was decided that the report should say that some upgrades have been made and the report will be edited to reflect that. The three reports were then approved for adoption.

There was discussion on whether the original reports, not just the summaries, will be available for public viewing. It is legitimate that we show exactly what the committees reported. Some questions/comments did not make the summary reports. We don't want to lose good comments from each report about what was discovered or what questions were asked. The committee feels it is important to include all information in an index (referenced from reports).

C. Subcommittee Reports

Alternative Education

(Cindy Widmer, Clint Gabbard, Mindy Meyer, Max Carrera, Dave Warkentin and Dick Cook)

The report was distributed and is attached to these minutes. Group representatives explained that they had met four times, listened and talked a lot. They contended with questions. They explained that the three guiding questions were difficult to answer without a comprehensive plan. Attached to the report was an article that served as a good resource for their work.

It was explained that this committee looked at everything across the board, researched different areas, and talked to Darcy Weisner. They said they continued to have underlying feeling that Lincoln is becoming our second high school, we need to embrace that and we really need to have a plan. They said the community really doesn't understand alternative education: "those kids."

Some comments/questions from the discussion session:

- ◆ What is the ideal size of a school? When a student shows up, you identify needs and try to meet them. We're talking about 450 kids who have been in alternative programs over the course of a year.
- ◆ Four year high school completion rates were studied and the group found that most who do not graduate are in the alternative programs. There are some pretty significant dropout rates at Lincoln and Opportunity. 85% of those students under poverty umbrella. One resource said they are just kids who need to find a place to fit in.
- ◆ The size of classes is an issue; a teacher/student ratio of 1:10 or 1:15 is best.
- ◆ When an alter school gets too large, it becomes a second high school, not an alternative program
- ◆ Even if we get two other schools, we will still need an alternative school.
- ◆ What does it mean to have a successful alternative program? These students also need additional support and committment from the district and community. More than just leadership is necessary.
- ◆ How do we get to level of care that the students need with a fixed budget? These students belong to their parents, the community, and school system. If we are going to solve this problem, we need to find outside money (ie: community, government). The community will pay the price, one way or another.
- ◆ Do we have a feel for how much a program could grow if it was designed to meet more of student needs, aside from discipline. Dick Cook gave a history of alternative education in WW – even how it's grown just this year under Jim's leadership. Mindy Meyer said we have a vision to offer many possibilities and to meet student needs.

### **Quality High School**

(Scott Krivoshein, Jody Schneidmiller, John Butenhoff, Ruth Russo, LaDessa Smelcer, Linda Newcomb)

The report was distributed and is attached to these minutes. It was explained that everyone on the committee did a lot of research and reading on the topic. A continual theme in research is that students are bored

Members of the committee spent time on findings from the report which answered the three study questions. These focused on the critical and essential components of a quality high school and facility requirements that would help either of the two high schools improve the quality of their programs.

Some comments/questions from the discussion session:

- ◆ What is the impact of a good high school science experience as a means for further study (in college, etc.)
- ◆ The program of instruction should determine building design
- ◆ Community support is essential. Committee members interviewed community leaders to begin gauging voter sentiment about high school education in the district.
- ◆ We need to convince community leaders that we need changes.
- ◆ Data should determine what/any changes can be made. It's important to determine how to both change and then manage change.
- ◆ One committee member said she feels the task force might be moving too quickly with its work and that more time should be spent in research, interviews, etc.
- ◆ Robin Peterson was contacted as a resource for the committee work and he provided some valuable insights.
- ◆ Students need to be included in discussion and planning.
- ◆ There are several state initiatives that promote high school reform through public and private partnerships. The district should pursue this type of funding.
- ◆ It's important to have flexible spaces for testing - since schools do a lot of testing each year. Much larger spaces are required and the infrastructure needs to support them.

### **Career Issues**

(Jim McCarthy, Jim Hayner, Rob Ahrens, Everett Knudson, Ruth Ladderud, Nanqi You)

Jim Hayner distributed copies of the committee report and a document on Career Clusters. Career Clusters reference a method/curriculum based on designing student courses of study around something they are interested in. Jim explained that there is a good, but lengthy, PowerPoint from the state of Missouri on Career Clusters. He said that he would send the e-mail address to task force members.

It was explained that clusters are designed around a foundation of academic skills that lead to a career pathway. The 16 identified clusters are commonly recognized throughout the educational system.

Some comments/questions from the discussion session:

- ◆ The economy is changing – more global. What does it mean in the workforce?
- ◆ Only one in five jobs will require bachelor degrees, so that means that 80% will not.
- ◆ About 40% of students start some sort of career program once they are out of high school.
- ◆ Career used to be “in lieu of,” and now they are not.
- ◆ Missouri has program of study for career pathways/clusters
- ◆ Currently, alternative high schools are based on lifestyle, education and behavior. They are separate, but don't have to be

- ◆ There is a move toward alternative education based on career cluster vocational education
- ◆ Regarding the Academy idea: Why not take out the students who do want to go on to college and have them in a separate program. It's done all over the world, but not much in the United States.
- ◆ These ideas need a lot more study and thought. When we look at career education, the relationship between rigor and teaching is most important. Our high school has adopted some, but not all, of these ideas.
- ◆ Question: How does this work in a state in which so much rests on assessment? There are basic levels of requirements regardless of what career cluster/path you take.
- ◆ Rob Ahrens visited a school in St. Louis that was very impressive. He said he saw lots of movement in programs. The students are out working in various career fields. The school's physics classroom was even on the vocational side.
- ◆ Question: Can you get enough highly qualified people into high school to teach really diversified stuff? Would they also meet state requirements? It is a bit difficult to find someone to teach math and then maybe something different.
- ◆ Question: Can we hire guest teachers? At Tri Tech in the Tri Cities area, a fireman is teaching firefighter courses, and there are chefs, nurses, etc. who are teaching students in their fields of expertise. Someone would typically have to have spent a certain number of hours in a field in order to teach vocational classes.
- ◆ The district could have grade 11-14 career education outside of the high school, with core classes on campus.

### **Small Learning Communities**

(Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Carina Stillman, James Payne, Jim Sanders)

The report was distributed and is attached to these minutes. The group met and researched Small Learning Communities (SLCs) in terms of size, scope, focus on student readiness, flexible scheduling, teacher teaming and other areas. Their consensus is that going to SLCs from a large school environment is hard partly because of teacher quality. Committee members agreed it is very expensive to make the transition.

Some comments/questions from the discussion session:

- ◆ In SLCs, peer to peer relationships can be strengthened.
- ◆ As career theme change, flexibility in space is important. Things don't always stay static (ie: pods at Prospect Point)
- ◆ Need to have eyes wide open when we think about SLCs. The perfect size should number about 400 students.
- ◆ One of the biggest issues is class size and poverty. It's bigger than just smaller class sizes. Doesn't know if SLCs are necessarily the answer.
- ◆ Several articles read by committee members showed that people jumped on the small school concept, funded it, and then stopped the funding. In short, big bucks were withdrawn.

- ◆ Ninth grade academies intrigued all committee members and deserve more research.
- ◆ Question: When you go to smaller classes, can the district fund more teachers?
- ◆ Flexible space is a big theme!!

#### D. What's Next?

A draft Phase III document was introduced to the group. There was discussion on next steps for the committee, as well as the need to bring the community on board with what the task force is doing. Some of that will be accomplished by getting Task Force minutes, subcommittee reports and other documents on the district website.

Darcy Weisner said it is important for the task force members to know that the high school has developed a mission statement that will help act as a filter for our work. Rob Ahrens explained that Wa-Hi has a goal of being the best high school in Washington state - even being a blue ribbon school. He said the mission is to prepare our students to be both career and college ready. Our students can move forward successfully. To do that, Wa-Hi teachers have reorganized to work in horizontal teams (professional learning communities) to focus on instruction. Driving questions are: What are goals?, How do we meet them?, What do we do when students don't meet them?, and What do we do when the kids do succeed?

Rob said structural issues still need to be addressed, but from his part, he is going to work every day to make sure his students succeed. In reference to the structural issues, he said, "If I had 150 kids crawling through my house every day, it would need some work!"

John Rowley explained that the entire time between today's meeting and the next one in January will not be idle for the group. He told everyone to check their e-mails for projects, etc.

Next Meeting: January 24, 2008 in the district office Mill Creek Room

## **High School Facilities Task Force Minutes from January 24, 2008**

Members present: Scott Krivoshein, Mike Pettyjohn, Jody Schneidmiller, Cindy Widmer, Rob Ahrens, Ruth Russo, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, John Rowley, James Payne, Dick Cook, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer, Jim McCarthy, Clint Gabbard, Nanqi You,

Members absent: Dave Warkentin, Lawson Knight, Jim Hayner, Mindy Meyer, John Butenhoff, Jim Sporleder, LaDessa Smelcer, Carina Stillman, Jim Sanders, Everett Knudson

Guests: Dave Teater, Rich Carter, Mark Higgins, Pat Johnston, John Evans

### A. Overview of agenda

Cindy Meyer presented an overview of the evening's agenda, which includes motions to adopt the November 29, 2007 minutes and three subcommittee reports presented at the November meeting.

### B. Motions for Adoption/Approval

John Rowley confirmed that everyone had received copies of the documents via e-mail and asked for separate motions for each of the items.

- ◆ The Career/Technical Education summary report was unanimously adopted.
- ◆ The Quality High School summary report was unanimously adopted.
- ◆ The Small Learning Communities summary report was unanimously adopted.

Note that the Alternative Education summary report adoption was postponed. However, the original Alternative Education Subcommittee report will be put on the High School Facilities Task Force web page along with the other subcommittee reports and summaries from the November meeting.

### C. Update on Advisory Committee Activity

John Rowley reported that the Task Force Advisory Team met in December and looked at all of the different high school options that have been noted as the Task Force has completed its work to date. It was decided to use the January meeting to discuss the following option: Renovate some of Walla Walla High School and Build a Second High School. Several people were asked to present information on costs associated with this option. Architect John Evans will present on the cost of the project, including site acquisition. Interim WWPS Business Manager Pat Johnson will present potential costs to taxpayers and estimated annual operating expenses, and Principal Darcy Weisner will lead a discussion on program implications of a possible split into two smaller high schools.

### Cost of Project

John Evans shared a document in which he calculated approximate remodelling/construction costs based on a grade 9-12 enrollment projection of 2,220 students for the 2012-13 school year. After presenting more background information on how his figures were developed, he

shared that the estimated cost of new construction or remodelling at Wa-Hi **and** construction of a new high school would be in the \$124 million range. There would be a possibility of Washington State matching funds to help offset project costs. But the overall expense would still be nearly \$110 million.

Questions and comments from the discussion that followed included:

- ◆ Would costs be less if you remodelled rather than demolished/built new at Wa-Hi? Answer: With the exception of the library, it would cost more to remodel than rebuild.
- ◆ If you built a new school and only remodelled/rebuilt the science building at Wa-Hi, what would happen to the costs? Answer: They would be less, but you use up most of your state matching dollars and future changes at Wa-Hi would cost more for taxpayers.
- ◆ How were costs calculated for a new high school? Answer: The total included land acquisition (30 acres at approximately \$110,000 per acre), construction cost of \$200 per square foot plus taxes and inflation, and soft costs which include inspections, site testing, technology, furnishings, fees, etc.
- ◆ Are we sure we should have two separate, but equal, high schools? The community wants us to come up with an option.
- ◆ Some people in the community believe that two high schools would create smaller class sizes, yet still have current course offerings at both locations.
- ◆ The reality is that Wa-Hi has a smaller student population today than it did 10 years ago.

#### Cost to Taxpayers and Annual Operating Expenses

Pat Johnston used John Evan's cost figures to determine the possible impact on taxpayers. Her projections, based on the \$124 million total, figured out to be approximately \$3.24 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation or a total of \$667 for a \$206,000 home. Currently, taxpayers pay \$1.19 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation or a total of \$245 for a \$206,000 home for school district levies and bonds.

Pat also presented information on estimated personnel and utility costs for two high schools. She said that annual costs for personnel would be \$1.6 million higher than our current high school expenses, primarily because of the need for new administrators, teaching support positions such as librarians, sports coaches and other personnel.

She estimated that two high schools would increase utility expenses by approximately \$101,000 per year.

#### Program Implications

Darcy Weisner said one of the most difficult decisions would be deciding which teachers would work at each school. That becomes particularly tricky, he said, when you realize that there are 44 singleton (only offered for one section) classes offered at Wa-Hi. In some cases, only one teacher is qualified to teach a particular class and it would be difficult to offer matching courses at both schools.

Darcy said he was involved with several new high school projects while he worked in Spokane. He said every school that split did so because of over enrollment. He said Wa-Hi's enrollment projects are not that high. Jim McCarthy agreed that there is space to expand at Wa-Hi. Pasco

High School enrolment went up to 3,000 students before a decision was made to build another high school in the district.

Questions and comments from the discussion that followed included:

- ◆ A split would gut some of our high school programs - good programs are just as important as enrollment concerns.
- ◆ From past experience, teachers and students seem to gravitate toward newer schools.
- ◆ Wa-Hi does a good job. Why are we looking at changing things? Students at Lincoln are the ones who need help.
- ◆ What can a 900-student (2-A) school offer? With current size of staff and configuration of the school, we can offer a lot of classes, options, challenges for students.
- ◆ Where does student choice fit in? How would you handle open enrollment?
- ◆ We need to expand our thinking by looking at ranges of student interest and capabilities.

#### Other Discussion/Comments

- ◆ Gates (grant) is going to high tech alternative school approach.
- ◆ Alternative schools are not second schools - need to look at programs that meet needs, then work backward to see how facilities fit.
- ◆ Look at where the community is growing - not significant high school growth. There is a greater likelihood that alternative is where growth is going to happen
- ◆ If we talk about technical high schools, does that include alternative?
- ◆ The state may be funding satellite skill centers, shared by multiple districts. The high school and a skill center could share students, based on a 1.6 FTE figure.

#### Next Steps?

The group decided to continue exploring other 9-12 facility options in the coming months, then perhaps have some community forums where information can be shared with the public. Many in the group felt that career/technical options (including satellite skill centers) could be the next meeting focus, in addition to seeing what can be done to renovate and enlarge Wa-Hi.

Next Meeting: February 28, 2008 - 5 p.m., Walla Walla High School Library

## **High School Facilities Task Force Minutes from February 28, 2008**

Members present: Jodi Schneidmiller, Jim Hayner, Clint Gabbard, Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, Jim Sporleder, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, Carina Stillman, John Rowley, James Payne, Jim Sanders, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer, Max Carrera

Members absent: Cindy Widmer, Dick Cook, Nanqi You, Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, John Butenhoff, Ruth Russo, Jim McCarthy, Everett Knudson

Guests: Dave Teater, Mark Higgins, Rich Carter, Anne Golden, Pat Johnston, Maria Gonzales

### **Motions:**

There was a motion to adopt the Quality Alternative High Schools summary report. A request was made to rework one sentence in the third paragraph of the document to clarify what was being stated and to add one word in the final paragraph. Those changes were approved and the document was unanimously adopted.

Minutes from the January 24, 2008 meet were approved and adopted.

**Topics: A: Walla Walla High School Expansion and Renovation  
B: Skills Center and Effect on Walla Walla high schools**

It was decided to review both topics together.

### **Costs**

Dave Teater presented approximate cost figures that had been developed by Jim Christensen of Architects West (who was ill this evening). In summary:

- ◆ **A:** The cost to replace the library, science building, music classrooms (not auditorium), the academic building, and the commons/cafeteria AND to remodel the older gym would be approximately \$89.9 million in today's dollars. State matching dollars would be approximately \$27.6 million. This estimate would be for 1,800 students and 316,800 square feet of buildings.
- ◆ **B:** The cost of similar new construction/remodeling for a student body of 1,500 and 264,000 square feet of building space would be \$73.1 million. The remaining (300 full time or 600 half time) students would be served by a 17,000 square foot Skills Center that would cost \$41.5 million, but might be funded at a rate of about 90% by the state. State matching dollars would be approximately \$67.3 million on a combined cost of \$114.6 million.

### **Tax Rates and Operating Expenses**

Interim Business Manager Pat Johnston presented two different scenarios on the two topics: 1) financing entire bonds, using state matching dollars for other projects throughout the district and 2) using matching dollars to complete the projects and reducing the district's direct costs. In summary:

- ◆ **A:** Financing the Wa-Hi replacement/remodeling would average approximately \$3.43 per \$1,000 in assessed valuation beginning in 2010, if the total cost (including state matching dollars) was funded; it would average approximately \$2.25 per \$1,000 in 2010 if the matching dollars were not included in the bond amount.
- ◆ **B:** Financing the Wa-Hi replacement/remodeling for a smaller student body AND the Skills Center would average approximately \$3.27 per \$1,000 in assessed valuation beginning in 2010, if the total cost (including state matching dollars) was funded; it would average approximately \$1.99 per \$1,000 in 2010 if the matching dollars were not included in the bond amount. This option could also add up to \$83,000 in annual staff costs and \$91,700 in utilities, based on current expenses. It was noted that utility costs would very likely be much less in new and updated buildings.

Group discussion included the following questions and comments:

- Would you have to link a Skills Center directly with renovation/new construction at Wa-Hi? Response: No.
- Why would we including matching dollars in the bond cost? Would we disclose that? Rich Carter responded that, historically, Walla Walla has financed bonds at the full amount, with the School Board deciding where to use the matching dollars for building maintenance and upgrades in the district.
- You can only run a bond for brick and mortar (building and related expenses), not staff.
- You can run a special levy for technology, busses, etc.
- Why was the recent levy vote so close? Dr. Carter explained that primaries tend to bring out more negative votes. "Yes" votes in the February election were similar to those of previous levies, but there were more "no" votes. There is a state bill pending that would de-link special levies from presidential primaries to help that situation.
- Would the Skills Center have a lunch program? Darcy Weisner explained that most students would attend both Wa-Hi and the Skills Center, so the current lunch situation might not change.
- Adding a Skills Center might increase bussing, depending upon its location.

### **Skills Center Overview**

Rich Carter announced that the state is planning to include \$100 million for Skills Centers in this year's budget. There is a push to pay for regional Skills Centers throughout the state and to provide up to 90% of the funding for them over a three year period. During the first year, there would be a feasibility study; in year two, design work would take place; and in year three, construction would begin.

Dr. Carter has been in touch with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and said he believes Walla Walla School District has an excellent chance for a feasibility study, as a satellite campus for the Tri Tech (Skills) Center in Kennewick. He is meeting with Tri Tech officials in the coming weeks to learn more about their program and possible partnership.

Dr. Carter said this is very preliminary and the district has not made any decisions regarding developing a Skills Center in Walla Walla. He said he believes the district owes it to our community, staff and students to look into this issue, and that a state-funded feasibility study would shed more light on the issue of Skills Centers and help determine if one would work in Walla Walla.

Group discussion included the following questions and comments:

- What would a Skills Center include? Offerings could include welding, automotive repair, culinary arts and cosmetology.
- Only juniors and seniors would participate. Students would still be subject to state assessment requirements for the K-12 system.
- There shouldn't be a duplication of services provided by the community college. Students could take basic offerings through a Skills Center and then move on to the community college to continue their studies in various areas.
- Are there any downsides to Skills Centers? No responses within the group
- What about Lincoln students? See the next section

### **Alternative Education/Lincoln**

Using some rough estimates, Dave Teater shared that rebuilding Lincoln Alternative School for a population of 300 students might cost approximately \$13.8 million, of which \$2.5 million could be state matched. It could be offered to voters, in combination with the Skills Center, for close to \$14 million.

Group discussion included the following questions and comments:

- Why would we look at 300 students when there is growth in Alternative Programs? The total population of alternative programs, including Lincoln and the Opportunity Program, is approximately 300 today.
- Need to look at other options first, then address Wa-Hi separately

- Lincoln, in combination with a Skills Center, might be a good bond issue. Wa-Hi might then be changed incrementally with smaller bond issues to address specific needs.
- Still need a clear sense from the community. We need to know what the community wants.
- There are lots of questions about Lincoln, some of them philosophical. There is the potential for community/agency partnerships
- Research shows that academic courses aren't necessarily the answer in alternative programs.
- As a committee and community, we need to develop a vision for Alternative Education in Walla Walla.
- A large percentage of students in Walla Walla do not go on to college. We need programs for them. Lincoln and a Skills Center might be part of the answer.

### **Final Discussions/Closing Statements**

Darcy explained that Wa-Hi and the district want great things for our students, but there are some sub-standard space issues at the high school. He said these have to be kept in conversations with the community. Several Task Force members agreed that bonds targeting smaller projects at Wa-Hi might pass, but there was concern about how the community gets involved in the discussion.

Task Force members suggesting looking at a vision for quality schools, getting ideas out into the community, and keeping citizens involved in the research phase of what to do with high school education in Walla Walla School District.

For the next meeting, committee members were charged with examining various high school scenarios for the district and then determining how high school issues can be brought out into the community. Darcy Weisner was asked to come up with a list of "needs" at Wa-Hi.

**The next meeting** will be Thursday, March 24, 2008 at 5 p.m. in the Administration Building Board Room.

## **High School Facilities Task Force Minutes from April 10, 2008**

Members present: Jodi Schneidmiller, Jim Hayner, Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, Jim Sporleder, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, James Payne, Jim Sanders, Linda Newcomb, Cindy Meyer, Cindy Widmer, Dick Cook, Nanqi You, John Butenhoff, Mike Pettyjohn, Dave Warkentin, Jim McCarthy

Members absent: Carina Stillman, John Rowley, Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Max Carrera, Clint Gabbard,

Guests: Dave Teater, Mark Higgins, Rich Carter, Anne Golden,

### **Motions**

There was a motion to adopt minutes from the February 28, 2008 meeting. It was suggested that one word be added to one of the sections for clarification purposes. The motion passed.

### **Review of Task Force Charge**

Cindy Meyer said the idea for the High School Facilities Task Force came directly from results of the "We're Listening" campaign following the failed bond election in 2006. She said Board members identified community members who could bring a diversity of opinions and backgrounds to the committee and asked them to participate. She reviewed some key points from the group's Ground Rules document: 1) That there should be no pre-conceived conclusions for the Task Force's work, and 2) That ideas from different members may have to be combined, modified or sometimes abandoned in order to craft the best recommendations for the community as a whole.

Cindy reviewed the various phases of group work that has taken place since June of 2007, including subcommittee research and reports. The goal now, she said is to close the gap and figure out the best fit for the community.

### **Remote Response Group Survey**

Cindy introduced Janis Barton and Bill Calhoun, who created a remote response survey based on questions generated from Task Force members and others. All Task Force members could instantly chose their response to each question and then see the results as an on-screen graph. Dave Teater, a consultant for the group, kept track of results and said he would summarize the information in order to formulate a draft committee recommendation that could be presented to School Board members. He said the draft document would be ready by the next Task Force meeting on April 24, 2008.

### **Group Discussion**

Following the survey, Task Force members discussed some of the topics that had been broached in the survey. Below is a brief recap of that discussion:

- Cost-effectiveness may not always be the driving force of a facilities project. The community might still want something even if it is not cost effective (i.e., Sharpstein and Green Park projects).
- Consensus of the group was that the Board should probably pursue parallel facility projects (some at each high school, then additional projects at each high school). The group could see four to five phases of work at Wa-Hi, but there might be a sense of urgency for Lincoln that would necessitate a single phase project. The size/cost of the project would be a prime factor for phasing. For example, a Skills Center might cost several million, Lincoln could cost around \$20 million and various phases at Wa-Hi could total \$60 million.
- Several Task Force members liked a draft vision document for Wa-Hi that was shared by Darcy Weisner. Rich Carter explained that Darcy's idea could be explored by an architect as part of a phase-in program.
- Several group members expressed interest in a Skills Center for the Walla Walla Valley. Rich said he had visited the Tri Tech Skills Center in Kennewick and urged Task Force members to take a tour. It has 800 students from around the Columbia Valley and offers 22 certified, high-level programs. Tri Tech and Columbia Basin College have a great partnership, he said. Students often complete coursework at Tri Tech and go on to CBC for more advanced training. Rich has been in touch with legislators, who are behind a Skills Center for the Walla Walla area. He also has written a letter to the Tri City Superintendent Council for their support in phase one: a feasibility study. "We are being encouraged to go for it," he said. When asked how many students a local Skills Center could serve, Rich said the feasibility study would nail down numbers, but he expected it might be around 300 full time students.
- Several people said they could see the Skills Center and Lincoln as a combined facilities project. Rich said he has heard that Walla Walla is a one issue town and that if too many issues appear on a ballot, the community might not vote in favor of them.
- Richland High School has recently gone through a series of facility bond projects. People thought it might be interesting to talk to someone in Richland and see how the various projects worked out and how the high school operated during construction.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 24, from 5 to 7 p.m. It is tentatively scheduled to take place in the library at Lincoln Alternative High School.

**High School Facilities Task Force  
Minutes from April 24, 2008**

Members present: Nanqi You, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Clint Gabbard, Mindy Meyer, Rob Ahrens, John Butenhoff, Jim Sporleder, Ruth Russo, Darcy Weisner, Ruth Ladderud, LaDessa Smelcer, John Rowley, James Payne, Dick Cook, Jim Sanders, Cindy Widmer, Cindy Meyer

Members absent: Max Carrera, Jodi Schneidmiller, Dave Warkentin, Jim Hayner, Carina Stillman, Linda Newcomb, Scott Krivoshein

Guests: Dave Teater, Mark Higgins, Anne Golden, Rich Carter

**Review of April 10 Minutes/Electronic Survey Results**

John Rowley asked for a motion to approve draft minutes from the April 10 meeting. The group voted to approve. He also shared that final results from the electronic survey taken at the meeting were complete and included responses from committee members who had missed the meeting.

**Final Survey**

John distributed a Walla Walla High School Facilities Priorities survey. He asked committee members to rank selections on the survey in order of their importance: high, medium, or low. He said information gathered from committee input might be able to guide future work on high school facilities projects. Results of the survey will be tabulated and e-mailed to all Task Force members.

**Review of Task Force Summary Report**

Copies of a Task Force Summary Report, written by consultant Dave Teater, were at each table. Committee members were thanked for reading the document prior to the meeting, even though it was only sent to them a few days ahead of time. Several committee members had requested changes in the document to correct a few grammatical errors and to help clarify statements. These were noted and edits, agreed to by committee, members, will be made by Dave Teater.

Following a motion to approve it, there was a great deal of discussion on the contents, or lack thereof, in the draft summary document. Key points made by committee members included:

- Community input is needed before this report is finalized. Anne Golden explained that community input is vital – it needs to be stated right up front in the summary document.
- Scope of facility projects is what drives a bond. The use of buildings drives a bond. Do we have the right components in our summary report?
- Can summary report recommendations be compared to those presented to voters during the last bond issue? Would the community perceive phased facility projects (as recommended in the summary report) as a group bond issue again?

- This committee's charge from the Board of Directors was to look at facilities, but not programming. Programming issues occur in a phase of bond work known as Educational Specifications (Ed Specs). Dave Teater had a copy of another district's Ed Specs document with him and showed the group how lengthy and well-developed it was.
- A suggestion was made to include the following statement in the summary: "The Board of Directors should consider a project or projects that meet student needs."
- One committee member shared a rough illustration of how Lincoln Alternative High School might be reconfigured, using modular buildings at a lower overall cost. Rivers Edge Alternative High School in Richland does use modular buildings similar to those in the illustration. A suggestion was made to include "explore alternative construction approaches" to the "Next Steps" portion of the summary document.
- Are we comfortable with a report that is still a "community conversation?"
- Committee members have spent a year exploring more issues and information than many in the community would be able to study on their own. It's important for committee members to find ways to share their findings with others.
- In summary, the report addresses the two high school issue, a College Place high school, and the need to merge more vocational trainings with both Wa-Hi and Lincoln.
- A project priority summary created by Wa-Hi Principal Darcy Weisner should be in the appendix of the summary report.
- The report is great – let's get on with it.
- Would committee members feel comfortable having groups of 20-25 friends and neighbors in their homes for discussions of high school facilities issues?
- The report should, perhaps, include what committee members have discovered over the year as "findings rather than conclusions."

At the conclusion of discussion time, committee members requested that Cindy and John write an introductory letter as part of the summary document. This letter would talk about the charge of the task force and progress made during the past year, then it would state that the community should now be asked for input on what is in the summary document. Dave Teater will make changes in the document to reflect discussion from tonight's meeting. Then, a new draft summary and introductory letter will be e-mailed to all committee members.

### **Next Steps**

Rich Carter shared that the district has decided to apply for the feasibility study to look into a branch campus of the Tri Tech Skills Center in Walla Walla. A decision will be made at the state level in May and the district will be notified if funding is available for the study.

He also shared that the city of Walla Walla has approached the district with the idea of swapping land owned by the city near the Community College for the land currently occupied by Lincoln Alternative High School. The idea behind this very new suggestion is that the city could build a new Police Department building on the more centralized site and that the alternative programs could be built near and have better access to community college programs. This idea requires a great deal of research and in-depth conversations before anything firm is proposed.

**Conclusion**

Cindy and John thanked committee members for their hard work during the past year. This will be the last official Task Force meeting, but members will stay involved until a final (draft) summary document is approved by everyone. Rich Carter said the group's work and summary document will be key to his community presentations during the coming year.

A date to present Task Force findings to the School Board has been tentatively set for Tuesday, June 17, 2008. Committee members are encouraged to attend a special Board work session that evening.

APPENDIX B

WWPS High School Facilities Task Force Questionnaire Results

#	Question Text	# Responding	% Responding
1)	How would you recommend the Board address the 9-12 facility needs?		
a.	The Board should not address the needs.	0	0%
b.	The Board should pursue one large project that encompasses all needs at all schools.	1	4%
c.	The Board should pursue improvement projects spread out over a number of years.	23	92%
d.	Other	1	4%
2)	Should the Board decide to spread the projects out over a series of years, how would you recommend the Board proceed?		
a.	The Board should pursue improvements at one school until it's done, then another school until it's done, etc. (Series)	3	12%
b.	The Board should pursue some projects at each school, then some additional projects at each school, etc. until all are done. (Parallel)	20	80%
c.	Other	2	8%
3)	If the Board decides to pursue improvements at one school until it's done, then another school until it's done, etc. (series), which school should come first?		
a.	Walla Walla High School	6	24%
b.	Lincoln Alternative High School	10	40%
c.	New Skills Center	9	36%
4)	If the Board decides to pursue improvements at one school until it's done, then another school until it's done, etc. (series), which school should come second (One of these will be excluded because of the answer above.)?		
a.	Walla Walla High School	14	56%
b.	Lincoln Alternative High School	7	28%
c.	New Skills Center	3	12%

**Walla Walla Citizens Task Force for 9-12 Facilities**

5)	Should the Board of Directors continue to work toward acquisition of land for future high school sites?		
a.	Yes	11	44%
b.	No	10	40%
c.	Unsure	4	16%

6)	How would you recommend the Board address the overcrowding issues at Walla Walla High School?		
a.	The Board should not address the overcrowding issues at WaHi.	0	0%
b.	The Board should pursue a new, equal, second high school of approximately 900 students.	0	0%
c.	The Board should add more portable classrooms at WaHi.	1	4%
d.	The Board should build a Skills Center.	15	60%
e.	The Board should expand the number of classrooms at WaHi.	4	16%
f.	Other	5	20%

7)	How would you recommend the Board address the Walla Walla High School facility needs?		
a.	The Board should not address the WaHi needs.	0	0%
b.	The Board should pursue one large project that encompasses all WaHi needs.	1	4%
c.	The Board should pursue a series of projects at WaHi spread out over a number of years.	22	88%
d.	Other	2	8%

8)	If the Board chooses to improve the Walla Walla High School facility, how would you recommend the Board address improvement?		
a.	The Board should build all new.	0	0%
b.	The Board should renovate existing spaces.	3	12%
c.	The Board should pursue a combination of renovated space and new space if a cost-benefit analysis shows renovation is not a cost effective solution.	22	88%
d.	Other	0	0%

9)	How would you recommend the Board address the Lincoln High School facility needs?		
a.	The Board should not address the Lincoln needs.	1	4%
b.	The Board should pursue one large project that encompasses all Lincoln needs.	17	68%
c.	The Board should pursue a series of projects at Lincoln spread out over a number of years.	5	20%
d.	Other	2	8%

**Walla Walla Citizens Task Force for 9-12 Facilities**

10)	If the Board chooses to improve the Lincoln Alternative High School facility, how would you recommend the Board address improvement?		
a.	The Board should build all new.	11	44%
b.	The Board should renovate existing spaces.	5	20%
c.	The Board should pursue a combination of renovated space and new space if a cost-benefit analysis shows renovation is not a cost effective solution.	7	28%
d.	Other	2	8%

11)	If the Board chooses to improve the Lincoln Alternative High School facility, how would you recommend the Board address improvement?		
a.	The Board should build all new.	17	68%
b.	The Board should renovate existing spaces.	6	24%

12)	How would you recommend the Board report the work of the Facilities Task Force to the public?		
a.	Workshops	0	0%
b.	Media	0	0%
c.	Web and email	0	0%
d.	Workshops and media (a & b)	1	4%
e.	Workshops and web and email (a & c)	0	0%
f.	Media and web and email (b & c)	0	0%
g.	Workshops, media, and web and email (a, b, & c)	24	96%

13)	Would you be willing to work on a Bond Task Force sometime in the future if the Board asked you?		
a.	Yes	15	60%
b.	No	4	16%
c.	Undecided	6	24%

APPENDIX C

Walla Walla High School  
Facility Priorities

8-High; 3-Med.; 1-Low	1. Replace portables with permanently built classroom space.
6-High; 1-Med.	2. Remodel or rebuild all classrooms to include air conditioning/improved ventilation.
3-High; 3-Med.	3. Remodel or rebuild all classrooms to include new lighting and windows.
1-High; 3-Med.; 2-Low	4. Replace doors, floor coverings, and ceilings in most or all classrooms.
12-High; 2-Med.; 1-Low	5. #2, 3, and 4 are of equal importance and should be done in the same phase.
18-High	6. Remodel or rebuild science classroom space
2-High; 8-Med.; 3-Low	7. Remodel, and expand practice/changing rooms for the music and drama department.
7-High; 4-Med.; 2-Low	8. Expand and remodel lunch serving areas
1-High; 2-Med.;9-Low	9. Upgrade track and practice fields to accommodate track practice at the Wa-Hi campus
7-High; 3-Med.; 2-Low	10. Build new and additional classroom space.
3-Med.; 9-Low	11. Remodel or change parking facilities
6-High; 5-Med.; 2-Low	12. Build or add new teacher and staff work areas
1-High; 5-Med.; 6-Low	13. Build or add new storage areas for books and etc.
4-High; 6-Med.; 2-Low	14. Remodel or rebuild academic building
6-High; 1-Med.; 3-Low	15. Remodel or rebuild commons building (suggestion made that this is similar to #8)
7-Med.; 5-Low	16. Remodel P.E. locker rooms
<b>See below</b>	17.Other
<p>Technology (2); Skills Center (1); Darcy’s Plan (7); Phases: science, academic          There needs to be a phasing plan for improvements with a logical progression to take the steps to achieve the final goal. It makes no sense to do it piecemeal with no plan.</p>	

APPENDIX D

Walla Walla High School Principal Darcy Weisner's Facilities Improvement Plan

Wa-Hi Facilities Priority Rankings:

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Science classrooms | 5. Lighting            |
| 2. Commons            | 6. Heating and cooling |
| 3. Library            | 7. ADA compliance      |
| 4. Students services  | 8. Classroom furniture |

**Phase 1:** A new commons on the south end of campus that would have a welcome center with student services (counseling, admin., business office, testing center, records). The commons would have two levels with the top level having science classrooms, foreign language, additional classrooms to eliminate the need for portables, and the library.

**Phase 2:** Remodel the academic building and the math and science building to bring up to code and address HVAC and lighting issues.

**Phase 3:** The skill center concept should be located at the high school. I would use pasture land and the land to the south of the pasture to build a skill center.

Darcy's Vision

The vision of Wa-Hi encompasses a mission to reach all students and give all the skills to be college and career ready. To accomplish this vision we need science classrooms that will give our students the ability to engage in rigorous lessons that are designed with out limitations based on the facility.

Our students need to have a central location to access student services. We want to make our campus feel smaller by placing classrooms in closer proximity to core content areas. The center of campus needs to be our information center for student information and success. Our students deserve a quality student center to eat lunch and access vital information that will allow them to meet the challenges of college and career ready.

A safe and secure campus is the most important issue facing any high school campus. Educational initiatives will not succeed if our campus is not safe or secure. We need to redesign our exit and entry points to limit access to our campus. This can be accomplished by moving our main entry point of campus to the south end and making our entry points originate from the center of campus. All other doors can become exit doors only.

