

## Walla Walla Public Schools

# High School Facilities Task Force urges public discussion on recommendations

After meeting for nearly one year and studying numerous issues, the High School Facilities Task Force has formed conclusions on their study and are close to presenting their recommendations to the school board.

The High School Facilities Task Force believes their recommendations and conclusions are based on thoughtful study of the facts and issues surrounding our high school facilities. They are anxious to share their work and respectfully request the school board use this report as a springboard for more public discussion.

Please take time to review the report and weigh in on what you see. This group fully understands solving these challenges will take the entire community. Thanks for your time and thoughtful consideration as we strive to support Walla Walla children.

Cindy Meyer and John Rowley, Co-Chairs

### High School Task Force Members

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

**Report Online** - [www.wwps.org](http://www.wwps.org)

## Task Force Recommendations *(Summarized -- for a complete report visit the district website)*

### Phase in projects over time

- Board of Directors should phase in high school improvement projects over time. Do not ask for one large proposal.

### Include improvements for both schools

- The Board of Directors should include improvement projects for both Wa-Hi and Lincoln in each phase.

### Think “outside of the box” when designing improvements

- Consider strategies to keep costs for improvements to a minimum. Study modular designs, community funding partnerships and other construction and design options to limit expenses to taxpayers while still meeting educational needs. The historical significance of buildings should be considered.

### Consider developing a Skills Center

- The Board of Directors should first pursue state funding of a Skills Center for Walla Walla Public Schools.

### 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 Alternative High School.

### Blend new construction with existing buildings at Walla Walla High School

- The Board of Directors should pursue a combination of renovating existing buildings and new construction at Wa-Hi.

### Limit costs when improving Lincoln Alternative High School

- The Board of Directors should not invest in renovating the current Lincoln Alternative High School building. This building has outlived its usefulness. Educational limitations and cost are at the core of this recommendation. The school board should look at creative building techniques, including modular designs, different materials and configurations to keep costs to a minimum while still meeting educational needs.

### Keep eye on future school sites

- The Board of Directors should continue to study land acquisition needs for future school sites.

### Collaborate with Citizens for Schools

- When the time comes, the Board of Directors should seek assistance of Citizens for Schools to promote educational needs and the funding requirements for these school facility improvements.

## Task Force Conclusions *(Summarized -- for a complete report visit the district website)*

### Two High School issue

- The Task Force believes Walla Walla is not ready for two comprehensive high schools due to compromised educational offerings and cost. Instead, this group feels Walla Walla High School’s overcrowding issues could be relieved through enhanced offerings for more students at Lincoln Alternative High School. They also feel a dynamic Vocational Skills Center could offer relief to Wa-Hi by enrolling a significant number of students.

### Lincoln facility not meeting needs

- The Lincoln Alternative High School facility is not meeting the needs of the district’s alternative education programs.

### College Place not planning for a high school

- Walla Walla Public Schools will continue accepting College Place high school students per state legal requirements. College Place leaders have indicated they are focusing on improving their K-8 facilities and are not planning for a high school.

### District facilities have been maintained

- Walla Walla Public Schools maintains its physical facilities as they were built and with “superb professionalism.”

### Safety and security issues not at core of Wa-Hi improvement needs

- Walla Walla High School, despite some physical building limitations, has an effective safety and security program.

### Both district High School facilities are over capacity and need improvement

- The current condition of the two high schools in Walla Walla indicates a need for improvement. Both Wa-Hi and Lincoln are over enrollment capacities for educational offerings.

### Quality facilities linked to academic improvement

- Although not the number one factor leading to academic improvement, research shows there is a connection between student achievement and the physical condition of school buildings (most notably -- lighting, acoustics and air quality).

### Career Technical Education (CTE) remains a priority

- Career technical education brings relevancy to students’ education and district facilities should support these programs.

### Your comments are needed

Send or phone your comments to District Communications Director Mark Higgins.

- E-mail: [mhiggins@wwps.org](mailto:mhiggins@wwps.org)
- Telephone: 509.526.6716

### How will you discuss the report?

- E-mail and postal mail comments
- Face-to-face meetings
- Staff and community forums
- Community surveys
- Media

