

## 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