



## Walla Walla Public Schools - High School Facilities Task Force Minutes from 9.27.07

Members present: Nanqi You, Scott Krivoshein, Lawson Knight, Mike Pettyjohn, Jody 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.