



Walla Walla Public Schools - High School Facilities Task Force Minutes from 10.25.07

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

The Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all requirements of the ADA.

- 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.