

**Community Facilities Task Force  
Final Report and Recommendations**

**Walla Walla Public Schools**

**February 1996**



*I. Task Force Membership*

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Chairpersons:

**Jim Howard**, Co-Chairperson - Walla Walla Public Schools

**Jim Johnson**, Co-Chairperson - Garrison/WaHi parent and Jim Johnson and Company

Members:

**Fernando Aguilar** - Prospect Point/Garrison parent and Army Corps of Engineers

**Sylvia Arroyo** - Family Medical Center

**Sue Chestnut** - Lorenzo's

**Kathy Covey** - Pioneer parent and Job Training

**Darcey Fugman-Small** - Prospect Point/Garrison parent and County Planning Department

**Lyle Hansen** - Sharpstein/Pioneer parent and Bank of the West

**Richard Jacobs** - Walla Walla Emergency Physicians

**Lynn Junke** - Sharpstein/Edison/Pioneer and WaHi parent

**Mary Koch** - Retired educator

**Mary Meeker** - Community member

**Paul Meier** - State Farm Insurance

**Tana Park** - Green Park parent and Automatic Flagman

**Richard Perry** - Retired higher education administrator

**Jim Peterson** - Walla Walla Community College

**Dan Reid** - Preschool/Prospect Point parent and Opp and Seibold Construction

**Lowell Schneider** - Walla Walla Public Schools

**Len Taruscio** - Walla Walla Public Schools

**Kelati Weldegaber** - Garrison/WaHi parent and Walla Walla Community College

## II. Introduction

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### Charge

The Walla Walla Public Schools Board of Directors established a Community Facilities Task Force in the spring of 1995. The charge to the task force was to assess the needs of each of the facilities within the district and make recommendations to the board of directors for a long-range facilities management plan, without primary concern for funding or curriculum.

### Process

Each task force member had the opportunity to visit the district's twelve facilities during June and July of 1995. During the site visits, each school district facility administrator prepared a facilities needs assessment from their perspective (Appendix A) and provided a site tour. Task force members completed their own facility needs assessment to use for future reference (Appendix B) during site visitations. District staff also provided a building component reference sheet (Appendix C).

In August of 1995, the task force began meeting every two to three weeks in four hour sessions to complete their charge. City, county, and school district personnel provided the task force with presentations and information on city/county growth, debt and bond status, technology planning, Americans with Disabilities Act building requirements, student growth projections, national curriculum trends, and facility needs for students with disabilities (Appendix D). The task force then began the process of discussing and synthesizing the data and working toward consensus as to the ways district facilities should reflect the community attitudes and future trends.

### Planning Assumptions

The following planning assumptions and related goals were considered in assessing needs for Walla Walla schools over the next five to twenty years and provided a foundation for the final recommendations:

The citizens of this community care about facilities and children. They want to be considered partners with the school district in providing good schools and are able to understand and respond thoughtfully to important school issues.

District professionals provide information openly, fully, and without over simplification regarding school finances, policies, and programs, so that citizens can make informed decisions while they fulfill committee membership roles.

Community input is sought before facility decisions become final.

The School District will attempt to increase the public's awareness of family and community issues as they relate to schools.

The future is guaranteed to hold change for school buildings and school programs. It is unlikely that the direction of these changes can be accurately predicted.

School facilities need to be designed with as much flexibility as possible to accommodate changes in programs, technology, ages and numbers of students.

Economy of scale in larger schools is recognized and endorsed, but there should be options of smaller units to increase parent/student choices in an era of change (e.g., competing in an era that might include voucher systems).

Neighborhood schools serve as a focus for community spirit and parental involvement, characteristics which should be encouraged by the school district.

The likelihood of being able to involve families fully in the schools should be considered seriously when the issue of new vs. older facilities is debated.

Local interest for historical restoration and renovation of older facilities will be considered whenever possible and cost-effective.

Major maintenance of existing facilities is responsible business practice as well as evidence of good stewardship for citizens who have supported and helped finance schools in the past, and who will continue this support in the future. Routine maintenance also reflects attitudes about facilities and the people who use them daily. Facilities should reflect a caring attitude toward students and staff.

Area planners and demographers are correct in predicting modest population growth over the next 10-20 years.

### III. General Recommendations

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Four of the district's twelve facilities have been upgraded, remodeled, replaced, and/or maintained to the extent that no further consideration is given in this report. These facilities are Berney Elementary School, Central Administration Office, Garrison Middle School, and Green Park Elementary School.

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#### Recommendations

**Survey the community regarding district facilities.**

**Appoint a facilities advisory committee.**

**Maintain and repair existing facilities by designating 2% of annual budget for facility maintenance**

**Adopt a long range maintenance plan.**

**Purchase land for construction of an additional school to accommodate future student growth.**

#### Rationale

The members of this task force invested considerable time and effort to educate themselves about the current status of Walla Walla Public School's facilities, as well as their history and future trends in an effort to reflect a broad community perspective. It is essential that the whole community become aware of these recommendations and the basis for making them, as well as have an opportunity to give the Board of Directors input on these issues before decisions are made that will ultimately have to be funded by the community. It is strongly recommended that some form of community survey be administered to inform and solicit input and thereby develop ownership of any future decisions in this important area of district facilities. It is further recommended that an ongoing building advisory committee be appointed by the board to monitor progress in implementing these recommendations.

It is recommended that the Walla Walla School District's highest priority be maintenance and repair of existing facilities. The 21st Century and its accompanying technology is fast approaching, and the district's 19th Century buildings must be updated, code, secure and safe, and equipped with necessary technical support. To avoid putting facility administrators in conflict or competition for needed repairs and maintenance with the needs of students, it is recommended that 2% of the yearly budget be designated for facility repairs and projects.

The task force has reviewed a draft of the Long Range Facilities Plan recently developed by the plant facilities department and recommends that the board adopt, implement, and fully fund this plan within the next year. This plan should be adopted to set up scheduled maintenance for each of the school district's current twelve facilities to establish a lifespan for every building component so that a replacement schedule can be determined. Cost can then be projected with adjustments for inflation. *Funding for this long range plan must become one of the district's highest priorities.* The task force members agree that well-maintained buildings help to provide the best possible learning environment for students. If buildings reflect an attitude of excellence, then students are more likely to reflect a similar attitude.

The task force suggests that the school district needs to apply this long range plan to potential new buildings during the planning stages. Preconstruction analysis will help determine the long term costs of maintaining the structure(s) and the resources necessary to keep new buildings operating at peak performance for many years.

Local area demographers predict that area growth will be modest during the next several decades. However, based on current school building capacities, and the rising cost of land in the area, it is recommended that the board procure a site to accommodate an educational facility in the south or southeast portion of the district.

#### ***IV. Urgent Major Facility Maintenance Projects***

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Resources are always inadequate for the needs of a school district. Money for maintaining existing facilities has often been diverted to the urgent needs of staffing and students. This may be very desirable from a short-range view, but responsible facilities management requires a longer-range view, and the means to maintain them on a scheduled basis, rather than as demanded by a crisis--usually a much more expensive solution.

The condition of many of the district's older facilities makes it difficult for faculty and students to perform to the best of their abilities.

Lack of funding for adequate maintenance has caused many of the buildings to need major repairs, upgrades and improvements. The cost of this delayed maintenance throughout the district is approximately equal to the cost of one new facility.

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The following recommendations have equal value and are not prioritized.

##### **WALLA WALLA HIGH SCHOOL**

###### **Recommendations**

**Replace science and art room ventilation.**

**Install adequate HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system) in the computer lab.**

**Repair the roof structure and replace the shingles on the science building.**

**Replace and repair roofing material on academic and music buildings, and gymnasiums.**

###### **Rationale**

Health and safety issues are a high priority. Ventilation is needed for the chemistry labs and art room to meet safety standards. Air conditioning is necessary for the computer lab to prevent equipment failure as well as to give students a tolerable temperature in the classroom. Roofs on many buildings will need major repairs or replacement within the next five years.

##### **PROSPECT POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

###### **Recommendations**

**Replace HVAC.**

**Replace roof.**

###### **Rationale**

Prospect Point Elementary School is a 25 year old facility; consequently, the roof is in need of replacement. The current HVAC system is also in need of significant repair and or replacement to meet current interior ventilation standards and accommodate year round use.



## BLUE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### Recommendations

**Eliminate water leakage problems and correct damage to structure.**

**Improve parking lot, entrance and exit traffic patterns by acquiring property or obtaining an easement.**

### Rationale

Blue Ridge Elementary School was constructed in 1982 with innovative, energy-saving designs. Portions of the exterior water sealant have failed and are causing water damage to the interior. It is recommended that the district seek expert engineering advice on available options to solve the water leakage problem.

The design of Blue Ridge's traffic flow creates safety problems and deters efficient flow of cars, buses, and people. A new design should include both separate entrances and exits.

## PIONEER MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Recommendations

**Complete the HVAC system.**

**Correct the dust extractor noise problem outside of the shop area.**

### Rationale

Pioneer Middle School burned in 1990 and was reconstructed with insurance money that was sufficient for only part (approximately 1/2 of the building) of a new HVAC system. A complete HVAC system will also allow potential year round use of this facility.

The operation of the dust extractor system outside of the shop area causes noise that is distracting to students in adjacent classrooms.

## V. Remodel/Replacement Projects

The following facilities have long been in need of attention and were addressed by a Building Facilities Study Committee in 1982 (Appendix E). Now is the time to solve the problems of these four facilities. The following school projects are prioritized by need.

### SHARPSTEIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

#### Recommendations

**Seek technical advice and community input before making a decision.**

**Purchase the property along Park Street that borders the Sharpstein playground.**

**Remove the 1955 addition except for the gymnasium.**

**Renovate the 1898 building and the 1906 addition that maximizes the number of students who can be accommodated.**

#### Rationale

The comparative costs of remodeling vs. new construction are not available at this time. Therefore, the task force urges the district to seek both technical advice and community input before making a decision on Sharpstein Elementary School.

Sharpstein has a good, central location for an elementary neighborhood school. Recent roof replacement and structural reinforcement (\$475,000.00) required for structural and safety needs has already been completed. It is a 100 year old facility with major concerns that need immediate attention such as plumbing, HVAC, more efficient use of space and increased capability for technology. The current property is well below recommended acreage for current enrollment, and can be only minimally expanded within the confines of its block. The 1955 addition is in poor condition.

Given the best information currently available, including the money that has already been put into upgrading the roof, the task force recommends that the District purchase the property along Park Street that borders the Sharpstein playground (as per the 1982 report) and remove the 1955 addition, with the exception of the gym, in order to comply with state guidelines and to maximize playground areas so that different age groups can have their own play areas.

It is also recommended that a total renovation of the 1898 building and the 1906 addition be undertaken as soon as possible in order to give Sharpstein students a safe, clean, and effective learning environment. Renovation should be planned to maximize the number of students who can be accommodated in this structure while still serving the neighborhood school concept.

#### Alternate Recommendation

**Dispose of the Sharpstein building and sell the property.**

#### Rationale

The Sharpstein Elementary facility is located on 3.5 acres. To rebuild on the current site, the district would be required to meet the conditions of WAC 180-26-020 Site conditions - Acceptance criteria (Appendix F). This requirement states, "The minimum acreage of the site shall

be five usable acres and one additional usable acre for each one hundred students or portion thereof of projected maximum enrollment..." A waiver of this provision would still require a minimum of 7 acres to build a new school on the existing site.

The sale of the building and property might provide proceeds sufficient to purchase land in the southeast portion of the district to build a new and larger elementary facility that could accommodate future student growth. The recommended engineering study would help determine relative costs of renovation vs. new construction.

### EDISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

#### Recommendations

**Purchase adjacent property to allow for expansion of existing facility.**

**Remodel or provide a new facility.**

#### Rationale

This facility is in a desirable location for a smaller neighborhood school, but is in need further upgrading and maintenance (as per the 1982 report). The District should purchase adjacent property to allow for expansion of existing facilities, possibly to include the current Paine preschool program. Due to the severe inadequacies of this building as an educational site, a major remodeling or new facility is needed on the existing property.

### PAINÉ CAMPUS

#### Recommendations

These recommendations address short term program needs at Paine Campus within the next 5 years.

**Relocate the preschool program in another facility.**

**Remove the existing portables.**

**Upgrade the grounds to encourage additional community recreation use.**

**Study the feasibility of remodeling or replacing this facility to meet long term needs.**

#### Rationale

Paine is inadequate to meet the needs of preschool students in a multi-story building. The appearance of the portables and the need for a middle school alternative program are also of concern.

It is recommended that the preschool program be relocated in another facility. Paine should continue to house the alternative learning programs of the district. It is recommended that the existing building be updated to allow for flexibility and expansion, such as housing a middle school alternative program. It is further recommended that the portables be removed as soon as possible. Play field areas and grounds should be upgraded to encourage additional community use.

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