



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Walla Walla Public Schools laying groundwork for November 2018 bond proposal

WALLA WALLA - Superintendent Wade Smith reported the district is looking at November 2018 as a potential date for a bond measure during his September 19 update to the school board on the progress of the Community Facilities Task Force. Renovation of Walla Walla High School, Pioneer Middle School and Lincoln High School rest at the top of the needs list. The Community Facilities Task Force has determined renovation of these three facilities rather than tearing them down and building new is the best solution for Walla Walla. Other critical facilities needs identified at the other district schools include roofing, HVAC, life safety improvements and communications systems. These are also are being carefully studied for possible inclusion in a bond proposal.

“This has been a long journey thus far, beginning last September with the development of our 18-member Community Facilities Task Force,” said Smith. “Last year we focused on technical analysis, information gathering and research and this year we will shift our attention to stakeholder engagement to ensure we develop the best proposal possible to meet the needs of the district and community.”

Superintendent Smith reported the district’s existing bond debt is paid off in December 2018. Options being considered for a potential bond proposal by the Community Facilities Task Force include no increases to local bond rates by replacing the existing bond rate with new projects, to options which include minimal increases to current bond rates. The district is also in a position to receive nearly a dollar-for-dollar state match on the three priority projects identified to further ease the impact on local costs. All state match funding will be applied to the projects identified in the bond proposal.

“The stars have truly aligned for us as for the first-time in recent history we will have completely paid off all outstanding debt,” said Smith. “With our bond debt completely paid off, we have the capability to raise more than \$65 million dollars locally by replacing our current bond rate, keeping bond property tax rates flat.”

The Community Facilities Task Force will release a survey next week to help determine if it is going in the right direction regarding its needs priority list. In December, the Community Facilities Task Force will propose options to the school board for further review and community engagement.

“We need everyone to carefully scrutinize the proposed solutions and be sure to complete the survey,” Smith said. “It will take all of our thinking, ideas, and teamwork in order to identify the best solution; a solution that balances the needs to support quality and lasting instructional learning environments, with the desires of our community.”

School board members are expected to make a final decision on a bond proposal option in May for the November 2018 General Election ballot. For more information and to view the proposed rough draft concepts, click here: <http://www.wwps.org/fp/facilities-planning>

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