

**Facilities Planning Task Force**  
**October 12, 2012**

**Attending Members:** Leslie Adamson, Pam Behee, Alex Brede, Patrick Brown, Paul Clement, Ron Cowan, Marilyn Grams, Tim Hall, Hale Hanaway, Laura Johanson, Jay Jordan, Mary LeDonne, Rob McElroy, Teri McIntyre, Lisa McKay, James Pai, Mark Peterson, Rick Qualls, Vicky Reardon, Zoe Roberts, Evan Schmitt, Phyllis Textor, Tom Venable, Rachel Williams, Doug Nichols and Dave Teater

**Co-Chairs:** Jim and Linden Darling

**Ex-Officio:** Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Tanya Rowe

**Union Representatives:** Kris Craker, Peggy Shepherd, BASE; Bill Stuckrath, BAO; Matt Read, SEIU; Dave Vanderyacht, Teamsters

**Introduction:** Co-Chair Jim Darling welcomed the task force and introduced a few members who missed the first meeting, Zoe Roberts, a student from Squalicum High School; Rob McElroy, Executive Administrator and former Wade King Elementary principal; and Peggy Shepherd, BASE representative and secretary at Fairhaven Middle School.

Jim reviewed the previous meeting and reminded the task force that they are planning facilities for students who are not born yet. He asked the task force to “Stay in the Future.” Jim introduced Doug Nichols and Dave Teater who are on the consulting team from Educational Service District (ESD) 112. The ESD provides independent, third party services for school districts.

Assistant Superintendent Ron Cowan reviewed handouts that have been prepared for the task force including an overview of facilities and a copy of tax rates by school districts in Whatcom County.

**Overview of facilities:** Ron Cowan presented a [Current Facilities PowerPoint](#) with information about each Bellingham Public Schools facility, including original construction date, additions, property acreage and facility square feet.

- After the presentation, Bill Stuckrath asked if the task force would talk about additional properties owned by Bellingham Public Schools that were not represented.
- Teri McIntyre asked that the task force receive information about how many schools have portables and how many portables each school has.
- Ron Cowan said part of the task force’s work will be looking at capacity and future enrollment projections.
- Marilyn Grams asked if the District Office has the same safety concerns about walls not being attached to ceilings as other schools that required seismic upgrades. Ron Cowan said yes and explained that district staff participated in a process and decided to postpone

seismic retrofitting for District Office in order to put that money toward Birchwood Elementary.

**Information Sharing:** Ron Cowan introduced ESD employees, Doug Nichols and Dave Teater. He explained that ESD's support school districts in a variety of ways including financial consultation and some assistance with school facilities.

Dave Teater began the presentation. He and Doug Nichols both have 42 years of experience in education. Dave's experience is focused on facility master planning, educational specifications and pre-design studies. He thanked district staff for all they have done.

- Purpose of the Study
  - Provide Bellingham Public Schools with an independent, third-party professional study to develop a facility master plan, with an emphasis on schools that qualify for State construction assistance.
- Methodology for the study: Dave explained that every district is a little different in what they want to provide.
  - Project initiation
  - Understanding of community
  - Review programs and services
  - Educational space analysis
  - Capacity analysis
  - Enrollment projections
  - Present suggested projects based on initial data
  - Support task force in exploration of options
  - Prepare written facility improvement plan
- Data Sources
  - Dave said they've had many good discussions with Buildings and Grounds and principals regarding facilities.
  - Dave and Doug have been to all of the elementary schools and focus schools, including Sehome and Options.
- Capacity – Program Factors
  - The biggest factor for capacity is the programs the district delivers in those spaces. Some programs include music, PT/OT, Life Skills, ELL and Head Start.
    - a. Jim asked what PT/OT meant – Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy

b. Jim asked what ELL meant – English Language Learners, which can also be called English as a Second Language (ESL)

- School Designs
  - Dave explained there are a number of changes between older models of schools and current day schools. He said many spaces were not envisioned in previous properties. He explained current schools have breakout rooms and pods for students, counseling offices, library media centers, food services and computer labs. Dave explained that these spaces have developed over time.
  - Ron Cowan commented that our newer schools are represented by these models.
- Instructional Space Model
  - Dave explained as older builders are trying to establish newer programs that classroom space can be lost. Some classrooms in older schools have been made into a resource room or computer lab, which reduces capacity for that school.
  - Jim Darling asked the local and state standards are for safety and class sizes.
  - Dave said the number of students in a class is normally a local decision made by the district based upon state and local funding.
  - Dave said that classroom sizes in Bellingham Public Schools are good. Classrooms generally range about 850-900 square feet.
- Facility Assessment
  - Three categories
    - a. Physical Condition
    - b. Functional Adequacy
    - c. Site Condition
  - Functional Adequacy - How well does this facility support district programs? Does the school have enough space for those programs? Do they have noisy spaces isolated from quiet places?
- Physical Conditions scores.
  - A score of 62 means that about 38 percent of the value of that building needs to be reinvested in order for that building to be brought up to a high standard. If there is a building that scores below 50, more than half of the value needs to be reinvested. Is that worth it to reinvest?

- Ron added they are using a study from 2007, with the exception of Lowell, Larrabee and Columbia which have had seismic retrofitting since 2007. The building scoring was completed by architects and engineers who are trained to assess those systems.
  - Ron explained this is a state form for the scoring system and there is a rubric to help judge each item.
  - District Office has no score because the state only scores instructional spaces. Options High School has no score because the state does not score portables.
- Functional Adequacy
  - Fair correlation between age of buildings and functional adequacy scores
    - Linden asked if the score is specific to programs offered at that site or is it districtwide? Dave said generally districtwide but for example world language is only taught at only a few elementary schools.
- Site Condition scoring sheet
  - Dave reviewed site condition scores, generally the site condition scores had less variety.
- Summary of Scores
  - Weighted scores are 60 percent for physical condition, 30 percent for functional adequacy and 10 percent for site condition.
  - The summary of scores includes age of construction, capacity, enrollment, utilization and square feet.
- Questions and Discussion
  - Bill Stuckrath asked if the scores of the other high schools had been done and if the task force could see the scores for comparison.
  - Jim Darling asked how far out of whack do capacity and enrollment have to get before the district begins changing boundaries? Ron Cowan answered that redistricting happens when new facilities are built. Ron said the district hasn't fully implemented the 2007 boundary changes which explains why Sunnyland and Northern Heights have high enrollments. These adjustments will be implemented once Birchwood reopens.

- Dave said one example they have deduced from the scores is that Columbia would be a good candidate for renovation and an addition. Because the site is so small, the facility would probably have to build up or acquire new property.
- Kris Craker wanted to know if the scoring data had been shared with the schools/principals.
- Mark Peterson asked if there is there a column that discusses school boundaries or how many students live in this boundary? How many students are going to their school or are on a transfer? Tom Venable said with the exception of one elementary school the difference is only +/- 5 students for projected enrollment and in-district transfers.
- Jim Darling – Are there schools we know we want to go visit already by this point?
  - The task force initially suggested the following schools: Sehome, Sunnyland, Larrabee, Lowell, Options and Columbia.
- Rob McElroy suggested the task force not only look at schools in need of remodeling but also look at schools in good condition to get an idea of what we want to provide.

### **Parking Lot Questions:**

- It would be nice to get a range for a total replacement – reality check on what it costs.
- I haven't found a description of the Roeder Building, Options High, Buildings and Grounds Facility, will we get one?
- Was there a construction boom in the 1950s? Why?
- Were teachers and students consulted along with principals when site visits were made and in what depth?
- Is there any weighting for heavily impacted schools i.e. Title I Schools?
- Need to also look at how kids get to school – walk, bike, bus, drives, routes, etc.
- What was the reason the newer schools have such large acreage in comparison?

### **Next Meeting**

3 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 16, Sehome High School (exact location and directions will be sent in meeting reminder.)