

BOARD BRIEFING.....February 6, 2009

Yakima Public Schools District Number 7

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Yakima Public Schools met February 6, 2009, in the Central Services Professional Library, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance. A brief summary of the meeting follows.

Yakima Valley Technical Skills Center (YV-TECH) Update - Scott Izutsu, Assistant Superintendent of Business Support Services, introduced KDF Architecture Inc. representatives to present a Phase II progress report. Designs are on a fast track and should be complete by the end of March. Detailed drawings and color boards were shared. The facility will include a large conference center which will be available to the community.

Facilities Discussion –Superintendent Soria opened the discussion, referring to the board’s request at the January 16 meeting that he bring a bond recommendation to them by the end of January if there were changes from the 16th. He walked the board through the past bond process which began in 2005, noting there have been continuing discussions with the board to emphasize the need to replace failing facilities which take dollars away from instruction. John Vornbrock referred to the comprehensive community survey conducted through ‘For a Better Tomorrow’ which indicated 65% of the voters would favor a bond if there was no tax increase. Superintendent Soria asked Davis and Eisenhower high school administrators to share their perspective, adding they were asked for input because staff commitment to help educate the community on a bond is crucial. Ben Ramirez, Davis Principal, and Stacey Locke, Eisenhower Principal, both reported their facilities are not meeting the needs of the students or the student population size. They lower the ability to compete academically and athletically with other 4A schools and take time and resources away from instruction. Davis administrators reported they are ready to proceed with work on a facilities bond. Staff have questions that need to be addressed; however, after seeing a rendering of what a remodel could look like, staff support is increasing. Eisenhower presented a support list signed by staff and a list of facilities deficiencies which are a detriment to learning. They encouraged the board to consider the two high schools as the flagships of the community, to move forward as soon as possible, and to consider a combined high school staff meeting. Superintendent Soria recommended moving ahead to address both high schools, taking the state matching dollars available to replace Eisenhower.

President Ybarra explained the board’s intent was not to take a vote at this meeting. She asked for board input regarding a bond. Several points were expressed for consideration. The state of the high schools does define a community, and a bond does bring economic development from construction. Time is running out on the tax rate and facilities, but also on time to work toward a spring bond. Staff support and community education are key, and there must not be opposition regarding the two schools. President Ybarra asked that the superintendent bring a recommendation for discussion with all five board members, with a possible approval for a bond for Spring 2009. It must be within limitations that would not raise or lose the current tax rate and it should focus on the high schools. A Friday morning meeting on February 13 was added for the requested agenda item.