

News Release

Everett Public Schools

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Everett School District takes another step to centralized administrative facility

Everett Public Schools has been exploring opportunities to centralize its administrative and support services departments into one facility for over 22 years. Since 1986, the district has been looking for the right solution for a central administration facility and, just as importantly, the right time to move forward with a plan.

At their regular meeting Tuesday, the school board reviewed a new feasibility study begun in January 2007. Facilities and Planning Director Mike Gunn explained what was learned during the last year in what he described as a "thorough and systematic study of options available for centralizing the district's administrative departments."

Superintendent Carol Whitehead emphasized, "The options presented tonight all have one thing in common. Each can be financed without using bond or levy dollars. We will honor the promises made to voters in 2006 by completing all of the school projects we outlined in that bond. Funding for consolidated administrative services will come from interest on investments, lease revenues, state matching funds and the potential sale of property."

"The timing for making this decision is perfect now," noted Gunn. "Today, our administrative services operate from three separate buildings. Each of those locations needs major work to bring them up to code. The Colby Educational Service Center is 42 years old, and Longfellow is 95 years old. View Ridge Elementary, as part of the 2006 bond, is scheduled for modernization in 2011, and the decision about whether some administrative services will remain at View Ridge must be made soon. Our study of the last year shows that we can meet all of our 2006 bond obligations and confidently and thoughtfully make the right decision about centralizing district administrative services."

With that introduction and background, Gunn outlined a proposal for an administrative facility on property the district now owns at the south end of Everett Memorial Stadium on Broadway Avenue near 41st Street.

"The City of Everett recently designated the zoning of land along Broadway Avenue in this area as 'Broadway Mixed Use,' " said Gunn. "They did so to encourage pedestrian-friendly developments, increased housing opportunities and to promote the preservation of historic sites and structures that will help produce attractive developments. A new central administration office is within the spirit of the city's vision for this part of Broadway."

Gunn indicated that modernizing three separate facilities would cost approximately \$22 million; building new would cost approximately \$28 million.

Sue Cooper, who has been a board member since 1984 and has been part of all previous centralized administration discussions said, "The Broadway location is more than just a good solution for an on going challenge. Because the site is large enough for flexible use many years from now, consolidating administrative services there is a permanent solution."

"In this district we are strategic," agreed Whitehead. "We proactively plan for the future so that we do not have to react to emergencies. If we stay where we are and do nothing with these administrative facilities, we are at risk of having to respond to system or structural failures that will cost much more to fix. Under those circumstances, we would not be making good decisions for the long term. It is our intention that we proceed now with the process to hire an architect to begin work on the design for a new, consolidated and centralized administrative center at the south end of Memorial Stadium that could be open for business as early as the summer of 2010."