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To: HVE Everyone; JR Everyone; Midway Everyone; Old Mill Everyone; RMMS ...
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Subject: Wasatch High School Construction

CC: schoolboard 06-07

Over the last few weeks, there have been many rumors concerning the Wasatch High School Construction project. The purpose of this email is to give all of our employees the facts concerning the High School Construction project before you may hear or read about them somewhere else.

First of all, it is true that construction costs have dramatically increased the past few months, and these construction increases have affected us too. All school districts who are building at this time are affected by this construction inflation and have three options available to them. They can cancel projects and rebid them later. They can value engineer projects and reduce costs by exploring other building material options, or thirdly, they can reduce the amount of square footage that they are finishing to keep the costs in line with their budgets.

We have no intention of canceling our high school project. It has never been seriously considered. We are then left with the other two options and we have exercised those options to keep the costs of building this high school in check. We have been working with the architects, Layton Construction, and the subcontractors to value engineer and keep the scope of the project in line.

Value engineering means looking at using different materials that may reduce costs, yet still be of sufficient quality to meet the architect's specifications. We have found substantial savings in using block instead of brick, in slightly adjusting some of the building's exterior features, being careful about finish materials, and making sure that we are not building in excess capacity in our mechanical and electrical systems. Many other value engineering options have been, and still are being considered to reduce costs.

The building that is being built is 304,000 square feet. This size is what we told the public in November 2006 we would build. Since November, some additional square footage was considered and planned for in the hopes that we could add it into the building and still be within budget. However, current construction costs will not allow us to expand the building any further.

The 304,000 square feet that we are building is exciting to think about. We have forty five classrooms in our academic wings. We have twenty three classrooms in our CTE, athletic, and performing arts areas. That is a total of 68 classrooms in our new facility, and a student capacity of over 2000 students. The classroom wings are each over a football field long. Our competition gym will be sunken fifteen feet below the surface, our science and arts classrooms will have attached labs and visual arts production areas. Our auditorium will hold 1200 seats, and our CTE classrooms are spacious and well-designed, and there are technology labs conveniently placed throughout the facility.

We did decide not to build a third gym since the county is considering a new recreation center at the old Bear Creek Kitchen facility. We also won't be building the little theatre that was a practice classroom for theatre arts productions. There are a few other classrooms that had been considered, but now have been removed from the plan.

Let me make it abundantly clear that it is our intention to finish this project using existing revenues, and without raising additional taxes for this purpose. As you watch the project proceed through the summer and fall, know that we have done all we can to give our high school students and teachers the very best building, at the very best price we could negotiate. We believe you will be very proud of the end result. We intend to keep you fully informed of its progress.