



SAN JUAN ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Press Release

School Board Highlights – September 24, 2008

School Board Acts to Join Lawsuit to Compel State to Fully Fund Public Education Crumb Rubber Underlayment is Retained for "Big Toy" Safety Legislative Advocacy Effort Underway

Board Approves Action to Join Lawsuit to Compel the State to Fully Fund Basic Education

Jerry Painter, former General Counsel of the Washington Education Association presented information regarding the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS) lawsuit to compel the legislature to fully fund basic education. Currently over 50 organizations have joined the lawsuit. The expected court date is June 9th and the hearing is scheduled for 4 weeks. It is anticipated that the judge will render a decision by November 2009. Verne Howard and Valmark Inc. have offered to donate the fee of \$5,000 to join the lawsuit. By unanimous vote, the Board approved the recommendation to join the lawsuit. SJEA, the District's teachers association, will also be joining the lawsuit.

Board Votes to Retain Crumb Rubber Underlayment for FHES "Big Toy" Citing Student Safety as Priority

The FHES PTA worked for the past two years to raise \$50,000 to replace the "Big Toy" and completed the installation in early August just prior to fair week. Crumb rubber (from recycled tires) was chosen as the protective underlayment due to its high rating for "fall protection." Some parents raised concerns about potential toxicity of the product, concerns about asthmatic reactions, and concerns about ADA accessibility for disabled students.

Over the past several weeks the PTA, administration and board members have researched these concerns. State regulatory agencies and the District's insurance carrier, Canfield and Associates, have provided assurance that the use of crumb rubber underlayment provides a high level of "fall protection", that the product is used widely in the State, and the product continues to be approved for use.

Toxicity studies reviewed by the District stated that there was no proof of harmful health effects. A number of studies recommended additional research to determine any potential for long term health effects including effects of trace level elements for which little data are available. However, the State and County Health Departments, and Canfield and Associates, report no ill health effects associated with crumb rubber, and continue to recommend its use.

The District will make accommodations necessary to provide access to disabled students. However, the District's legal counsel's opinion is that "there is no basis to conclude the new installation violates specific ADA accessibility standards." Rod



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Turnbull, Maintenance and Operations Director, will develop a plan for any necessary accommodations, and will also develop the maintenance plan to assure the crumb rubber maintains the prescribed depth.

In considering its decision the Board recognized that 80% of the injuries on playground equipment result from falling. Any potential underlayment product has advantages and disadvantages, however, the crumb rubber provides the highest margin of safety of any product currently available. The Board found no compelling reasons to replace the crumb rubber in consideration of the guidance given above and the excellent margin of safety that the product provides for "fall protection." The Board voted unanimously to retain the crumb rubber underlayment.

Financial Task Force and Legislative Advocacy Efforts Underway

The financial task force has been formed to develop a 5 year financial projection/plan for the District. It is expected that initial projections will be available for the October board meeting. Deb Nolan has volunteered to lead the legislative advocacy initiative to compel the legislature to fully fund basic education. Please contact Deb Nolan, deb Nolan@rockisland.com, if you would like to join this effort.