

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

Long-term Facilities Planning Committee  
Snoqualmie Valley School District  
3/3/2010

### **1. General Questions**

#### **1.1 What is the Long-term Facilities Committee's recommendation to the Board?**

- After more in-depth study of the two remaining solutions; the Satellite Campus Model and the Remodel/Re-modernization-Expansion Model, the Committee recommended to the Board of Directors the Satellite Campus Model.
- The Satellite Campus Model recommends annexing the Snoqualmie Middle School campus in the fall of 2013. The recommendation also included building a replacement middle school located on the 40-acre parcel that the district owns on Snoqualmie Ridge.

#### **1.2 What criteria did the committee use to make their recommendation**

The committee used the following criteria to assist them in making their recommendation:

- Best for Kids at all Grade Levels
  - (Does the model serve the best interest of ALL students in the district?)
- Political, Financial and Geographical Realities
  - (Will the community support the recommendations? What impact will the recommendation have on district operating costs? Does the model align with current demographics, related to transportation and school attendance boundaries?)
- Aligns with Enrollment Projections
  - (Does the recommendation address the immediate and long-term (ten years) enrollment needs related to potential overcrowding?)
- Long-term Sustainability
  - (Does the recommendation stand the test of time related to future enrollment growth and associated needs?)

#### **1.3 How did the committee receive feedback from the community?**

The committee used a variety of strategies to inform and receive input from the community which included the following:

- Focus Group activities
- Live E-Meeting
- Public meetings
- District newsletters, E-news, Website with feedback link
- Staff presentations
- Scientific Community Survey
- Citizen comments during regularly scheduled School Board meetings
- School Board LTFP work sessions

#### **1.4 Why did the committee recommend building a replacement middle school?**

Feedback from the community was not supportive of moving from our existing three middle school populations back to two schools primarily because the result would mean an increase in the enrollments in those two schools.

#### **1.5 Why were the other models rejected?**

##### **1.5.1 Junior High School Model (K-6, 7-9, 10-12)**

- Changes the district's current grade level configuration at all three levels – elementary from K-5 to K-6; middle school from 6-8 to 7-9; and high school from 9-12 to 10-12 – would disrupt students and programming in every school across the district.
- This model pushes the high school overcrowding problem down to the lower levels.
- This model would make it more difficult for 9<sup>th</sup> graders to participate in advanced courses, athletics and other high-school-level activities.
- There would be transportation costs to shuttle 9<sup>th</sup> grade students from all three middle schools to and from the main campus to access high school opportunities.
- Common areas (lunch or multipurpose rooms) at the elementary schools would be impacted as the result of increasing their enrollment by adding sixth grade students.
- This model represents a major philosophy and educational program change from the Middle Schools configuration back to an older-style Junior High School configuration, from which most districts in our state have moved away.
- Teacher certification would become an issue with the need to reassign high school and middle school staff.
- This option received little support from the community.

##### **1.5.2 K-6, 7-8, 9-12 Model**

- This model changes the grade level configuration at the elementary level from K-5 to K-6, and middle school level from grades 6-8 in three middle schools to 7-8 in two schools – disrupting all elementary and middle school students across the district.
- This model “pushes” the high school overcrowding problem down to the lower grades.
- This model would annex Snoqualmie Middle School for additional capacity at Mount Si High School.
- Increased transportation costs would result from shuttling students to and from Snoqualmie Middle School to the main high school campus.
- Common areas at the elementary schools would be negatively impacted from the increased enrollment by adding sixth grade students to each elementary school campus.
- This model would require a school attendance boundary adjustment and, at the same time, require additional modular classrooms to the existing elementary school campuses to address the increased enrollment.
- Staff would need to be reassigned from the middle schools to elementary schools.
- This model received little support from the community.

##### **1.5.3 Modular Classroom Model**

- This model results in having the 9<sup>th</sup> graders to be housed at the three existing middle schools.

- This model changes the grade level configuration at the high school from grades 9-12 to 10-12 and middle schools from 6-8 to 6-9.
- This model maximizes the use of modular classrooms to address the overcrowding at the three middle schools as needed.
- Middle school buildings are currently designed to accommodate three grade levels.
- Common areas at the three middle schools would be negatively impacted as the result of increased enrollment at each of the schools.
- This model would make it difficult for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in advanced courses, athletics and other high-school level activities.
- Transportation costs would be higher shuttling students from the three middle schools to and from the main high school campus.
- Staff would need to be reassigned from the high school to middle schools.
- This model received little community support. Many opposed combining 6<sup>th</sup> graders and 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **1.6 What were the results from the Community Scientific Survey?**

- The community survey was administered by the Social & Economics Sciences Research Center from Washington State University. A random sampling of residents living within the district boundaries were interviewed by phone.
- When asked what was most important: minimizing costs, maximizing capacity, and/or minimizing inconveniences to students, 41.9% of the parents who responded indicated they were all important.
- When the respondents were asked which of the two options they would support:
  - 46% of the survey respondents would support annexing SMS campus and building a replacement middle school at a cost of approximately \$50 million
  - 33.8% of the respondents indicated they would support the remodel/re-modernization of MSHS at a cost of approximately \$100 million
  - 20.2% indicated they did not support either model.
- Looking specifically at how parents who participated in the survey responded to the question of which of the two options they would support, nearly 60% favored a proposal to increase capacity of Mount Si High School by annexing Snoqualmie Middle School and building a replacement middle school on district owned land at a cost of approximately \$50 million.
  - 59.7% favor this proposal
    - 20.1% strongly favor this proposal and 39.6% somewhat favor the proposal
  - 40.4% oppose this proposal,
    - 21.4% somewhat oppose it and 19% strongly oppose this proposal
- Over 40% of survey respondents favored a proposal to increase capacity at Mount Si High School by remodeling/re-modernizing expanding the existing school at a cost of approximately \$100 million.
  - 46.9% favored this proposal
    - 17.1% strongly favor this proposal, and 29.8% somewhat favor the proposal
  - 53.1% oppose this proposal
    - 28.9% somewhat oppose it while 24.2% strongly oppose the proposal

### **1.7 How will the high school utilize the additional capacity located at the existing Snoqualmie Middle School campus?**

A 'Study Committee' will be convened with the charge to research a variety of options that will best address the learning and program needs for all students at Mount Si High School. The committee will make a recommendation to the Superintendent in early September 2010. This option provides a unique opportunity for the high school to consider how it might better support the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner

**1.8 What impact will this recommendation have on the District Operating Costs?**

- The current staff and operating/maintenance costs at Snoqualmie Middle School would be shifted to the new replacement middle school.
- The district would still experience some additional operating costs once the high school annexes the SMS campus which might include additional custodial and secretarial support. There may also be an impact to district transportation costs depending on the program model provided at the Snoqualmie Middle School location. .

**1.9 What would it cost to remodel Mount Si High School without additional expansion?**

In today's dollars, the cost to remodel/re-modernize Mount Si High School without adding any additional capacity is estimated to be approximately \$60 million. If additional capacity were added, it would cost approximately an additional \$40 million. You can't expand the facility with remodeling the facility at the same time.

**1.20 When was the last time Mount Si High School was remodeled?**

Mount Si High School was last remodeled during the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years. In the past when facilities reach a benchmark of 20 years, consideration is given for the need to remodel and/or upgrade the facility. Initially, based on the OSPI 20 year building design life requirement guidelines, the district could potentially qualify for state matching funds to offset the cost of the remodel/re-modernization project in 2012. The district most recently learned that they did not receive the final occupancy permit until 1994. During this time, OSP changed the 20 year building design life requirement to a 30 year building design life. This change means the Snoqualmie Valley School District would not qualify for state-matching funds to remodel/re-modernize Mount Si High School until 2024.

**1.21 Why did the LTFP Committee reject the Remodel and-Expansion of Mount Si High Model?**

- The cost of this model including the remodel and expansion of the facility to add the needed capacity would cost approximately \$100 million.
- During the construction window, there would be significant disruption to students for two to three years.
- It would require additional costs to add modular classrooms to provide classroom space for displaced core academic programs as well as a 12,000 square foot commercial building to accommodate Career Technical Education programs during construction Both buildings would be located on the Snoqualmie Middle School campus.
- It would require shuttling several hundreds of students from one campus to the other every period throughout the day during construction.
- The cost of shuttling students from one campus to the other is estimated to approximately \$500,000 per year during construction.

- The community survey was not supportive of this model
- The cost to taxpayers would be double what the cost to build a replacement middle school.
- It would create a “Mega-High School” with the capacity to house approximately 2500 students. Based on community feedback, this was expressed as a concern.

### **1.22 Why did the committee recommend the Satellite Campus Model?**

- The estimated cost of this model is \$50 million which is ½ the cost of the remodel/re-modernization-Expansion model
- Received strong support from the community survey and online feedback
- Minimal impact to the district operating costs
- Cost to the taxpayer would be less than the Remodel/re-modernization-expansion model
- Would provide additional gymnasium and field space for high school extracurricular programs located on the SMS campus.
- LTFP committee unanimously recommended this model
- Will provide timely additional capacity to Mount Si High School
- Maintains three middle schools

### **1.23 Will this plan take care of all of the district’s facility needs for the next ten years?**

No. The LTFP Committee’s recommendation was to address the capacity needs within the district specifically at Mount Si High School. The district will always have ongoing facility needs as current buildings age including the need for system upgrades to address current code requirements, roof replacements, upgrade lighting, replacing worn carpets, painting, HVAC systems, etc. As the result of the 2009 Bond, all of our older facilities received upgrades which may delay the district’s need to remodel/re-modernize those buildings that would fall within the OSPI 20 year building design life guidelines.

### **1.24 Why didn’t the LTFP committee consider a second high school as one of options?**

After a long and very comprehensive review of the district’s projected enrollment and long-term facility needs by the Facilities Task Force (2006-07), the Task Force believed building a second high school was the best solution to address the quickly expanding school district. At that time, our student population was growing 6-7% annually, and the enrollment at the high school level was projected to reach approximately 3500 students by the year 2019. Consequently, a bond measure to build another high school was presented to the community three times and each time the measure failed by a small number.

Today, however, several important factors have changed since 2006 which has lead the Long-term Facilities Committee to explore other solutions both in terms of construction costs, economics, impact to the district operating costs, enrollment projections, etc. Specifically:

- **Enrollment projections show slower growth.** We no longer need as much space as previously anticipated, nor with the same urgency. We do not foresee having enough high school students, in the next 5-10 years, to adequately fill two high schools to a cost-effective capacity.

- **Costs – to build and operate.** We are sensitive, in these difficult economic times, to the financial impact on the community. The district also is acutely aware of the ongoing costs required to operate new schools that impact its General Fund each year. At this time when our state’s financial crisis is continuing to reduce education funding, any increase in operating costs is a serious concern and potentially an insurmountable obstacle.
- **Lack of sufficient voter support.** We clearly heard from local voters three times that our community was not ready to support a second high school.
- **Property.** The district does not currently own a plot of land large enough to build a high school, so purchasing more land would be an additional cost to build a second high school. (The district does, however, own land that would be appropriate for a middle school or elementary school.)

**1.25 Is a new elementary school on Snoqualmie Ridge currently part of the district’s long-term facilities plan?**

It is on the list of future considerations, but not part of the current recommendation before the School Board that focuses on expanding Mount Si High School. Student enrollment is carefully monitored and re-assessed each year against school capacities. If warranted by enrollment growth, another elementary school could be included in a future proposition. At this time, however, demographic data reveals that an attendance boundary review and re-alignment can accommodate all elementary students for the next 3-5 years.

*(More information about the district’s long-term facilities planning is on the website.)*