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ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS



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FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS

ON TIME, ON BUDGET: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF 2012 BOND PROJECTS HAS BENEFITED STUDENTS DISTRICTWIDE

In September, the Issaquah School District celebrated a major construction opening ... and one hard-earned closure; as the newly rebuilt Clark Elementary opened its doors to cheering students, it brought to successful completion all major building projects in the \$219-million bond measure voters passed in 2012.

“The 2012 bond has been absolutely crucial in allowing us to manage significant student growth across the district,” said Issaquah School District Superintendent Ron Thiele. “Those funds also ensured that our schools are safe, modern, welcoming places where students can learn at their best. As always, my gratitude goes to our voters who continue to make education a top priority.”



Clark Elementary, October 2017 (2012 Bond)

The new Clark campus was a cornerstone of the 2012 bond; the last step of a resourceful three-school rebuild that reoriented the Olde Town Issaquah corridor. While planning the bond measure, it became evident that three aging schools in close proximity to one another—Issaquah Middle, Clark Elementary, and the former Tiger Mountain campus—each needed renovated facilities. Our Capital Projects team looked at the land and buildings available among the three campuses and designed a plan to maximize these assets. In a tightly orchestrated timeline, they first rebuilt Issaquah Middle School behind the Clark campus; they then closed Tiger Mountain and opened Gibson Ek and Clark on the former Issaquah Middle property by modernizing the existing core facilities and adding new classroom wings. The former Clark building was demolished this summer to make way for the Issaquah Middle School turf field, track, and covered play area.

Clark Principal Dr. Tod Wood said just the extra space at his new campus has given students “room to breathe” and better focus on learning.

“...students are more relaxed...I see pride in their faces, looks of confidence, smiles, and more joy...”

In what has become a hallmark of construction in the Issaquah School District, these campuses feature collaborative, project-based learning areas and bright, technology-integrated classrooms. They also have many green-sustainable features like rain gardens to infiltrate storm water, increased insulation values, daylight-

maximization to reduce electric lighting, highly efficient heating and cooling systems supported by heat-recovery systems and ceiling fans, low-water consumption faucets/fixtures, and sensor-controlled lights.

“I am so thankful for the new Clark campus,” said teacher Stefani Terry. “Our kindergarten team’s classrooms are much closer together, making it easier to collaborate on finding the best ways to help our students succeed. Our students have much more room to play and learn ... I can already see a positive impact on our learning environment.”

In addition to critical infrastructure repairs throughout the district, other major projects funded by the 2012 bond included:

- Sunny Hills Elementary
- Liberty High School modernization and expansion (Phase II and III)
- Maywood Middle School modernization and expansion
- Apollo Elementary modernization and expansion
- Issaquah Valley Elementary modernization and expansion
- Stadium improvements at Issaquah High, Liberty High and Skyline High
- Turf field and track improvements at all middle schools

Phew! On time and on budget, our construction team did not even pause to celebrate the major accomplishment closing out the 2012 bond. They were already off and running on 2016 bond projects!

For complete information about all of recent bond projects, visit the Construction Projects page at www.issaquah.wednet.edu.



Liberty High School Addition and Modernizaation Phase II and III (2012 Bond)

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FAST FACTS

- **One of the fastest growing districts in the state.**
In 1990, the Issaquah School District had about 8,600 students and 13 schools. Today, we have about 20,500 students and 24 schools.
- **Fiscal responsibility.**
Moody’s rating service has recognized the district for strong fiscal management with its highest Aaa rating. Only 0.45% of school districts nationwide share this distinction, which helps keep tax rates as low as possible for residents.
- **Strong track record.**
Including the 2016 bond measure, our Capital Projects team will have managed more than a billion dollars worth of school construction since 2000.

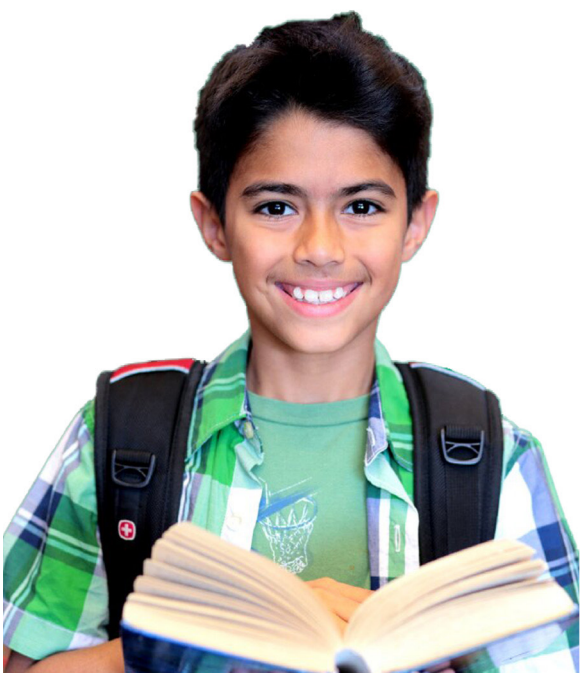


20,500
STUDENT POPULATION
(OCTOBER 2017)

ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION — ALL IN FOR KIDS



Are YOU In?



Donate or Learn More
@ isfdn.org/isdfocus

A huge **THANK YOU** to all who have already given during our *All in for Kids* campaign – your donations will fuel success for every student at every school in the Issaquah School District! If you haven’t given, here are a few reasons why you should be ALL in!

The **Issaquah Schools Foundation** is a connector, transforming the passion of parents, businesses and community members into investments that help our students succeed and make Issaquah schools among the best in the state. **An investment in the Issaquah Schools Foundation is an investment in the future of your child, your neighbor, and our community.**

One of the Foundation’s 3 pillars is Building Academic Foundations, while the district is focused on the outside structures, we are focused on what happens inside the building.

Current HS Senior Mai-Linh has been positively impacted by Foundation programs since elementary school, building her academic foundation. She was part of the foundation funded highly capable program SAGE and is now on the foundation funded Robotics team in high school. “Robotics has taught me a lot more than just engineering. My years on the team have taught me how to problem solve, and leadership skills from my time as team treasurer and

president. It’s given me the courage to chase my dreams and the confidence to be proud of what I do. But, most importantly, it’s taught me the importance of inspiring others.”

This year, the community will invest over 1.1 million dollars in our students. From **leading-edge STEM curriculum to financial literacy, arts programs to after-school tutoring**, you ensure that all kids, like Mai-Linh – and yours, have the support they need to navigate their own unique paths to success while building a strong academic foundation. Think of the opportunities we could make available to our students if every person reading this newsletter made an investment in the Foundation’s ***All in for Kids* Annual Fund Campaign**.

If you want to learn more about how you can get involved or about the programs transforming students’ lives, please visit our website at isfdn.org.

Please give today! Our students, schools and community are counting on you!

Liz Swanson
Executive Director

FROM THE ISSAQUAH PTSA COUNCIL



Did you join your school’s PTA or PTSA this year?

If you did, be sure to check out the Member Benefits on the Washington State’s PTA website. Currently, there are special promotions and discounts from companies such as Sylvan Learning Center and Great Wolf Lodge. You would have received links to this information by email along with your PTA Membership Card. Your school’s PTA/PTSA membership chairperson can resend your card if it has been misplaced.

Look for your Welcome to Washington State PTA email to take advantage of these benefits. Your membership also provides benefits that are for our children. When the Washington State PTA advocates in Olympia, they are speaking on the behalf of their members and for all children in the state. Issaquah provided over 14,000 voices last year and we know we can provide more this year.

PTA members advocate for children every day. Helping your child communicate with their teacher is advocating. Partnering with the school administration to solve a problem is advocating. Lending your voice to the largest volunteer child advocacy association the state benefits the children across the Issaquah School District as well as those across the state.

In Issaquah, our PTSA leadership is working hard to make sure we can support all children in our community. Our Family and Community Engagement Chair serves on the District’s Equity Advisory group and the Family Partnership team. Our Outreach Chair works with the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank to provide Food for the Break and Power Packs, to help bridge the food gap when school is not in session.

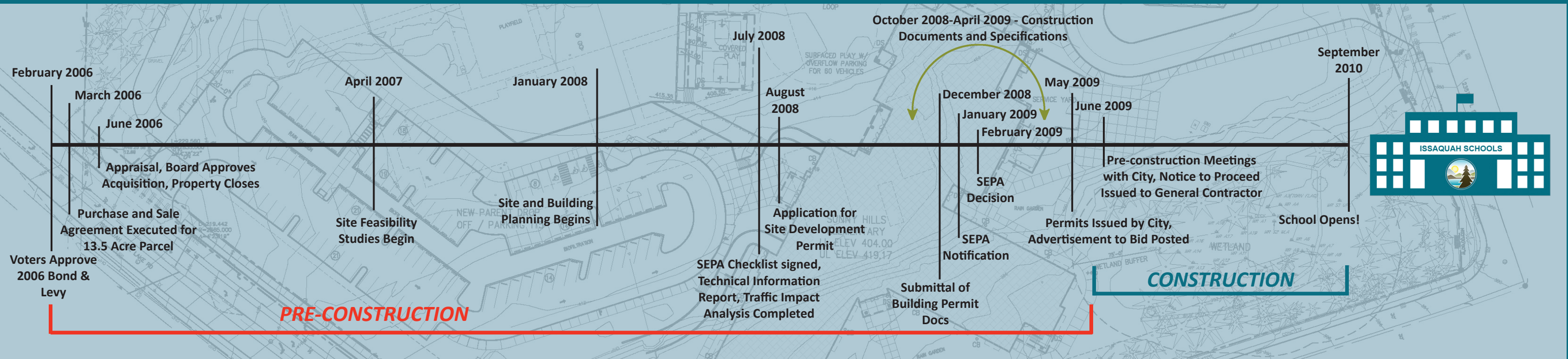
Please don’t forget to purchase your membership this year. Your voice and your support is necessary to ensure all children in our community realize their potential.

Thank you!

CREATION OF A SCHOOL: THE COMPLEXITY OF CONSTRUCTION

By the time we turn over the first shovel-full of dirt on a school project, more than half the work is already done (perhaps even the most challenging part!).

Here is an example of the various pre-construction work, as illustrated by Creekside Elementary in Sammamish.



2016 BOND: WORK UNDERWAY AND THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING PROPERTY

Voters overwhelmingly passed our 2016 bond measure, providing a means and a mandate to add capacity and modernize schools throughout the Issaquah School District—and that’s just what we have been doing in the year since. The steel skeleton of a new, technology-integrated Pine Lake Middle School building has risen next to the current 1974 facility, which is slated for demolition next summer. Critical refurbishments expansions at several elementary schools—which will allow sufficient space for all kindergarteners to attend full-day—are underway at Sunset and Cougar Ridge, with similar projects to follow at Discovery, Endeavour and Maple Hills.

The 2016 bond also funded two new elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Our work may be less visible on these top-priority projects right now, but it’s perhaps even more challenging than the design and build phases—we are searching high and low for land.

“Because it’s often behind the scenes, I’m not sure community members realize the effort that goes into siting a new school,” said Superintendent Ron Thiele. “We have searched within our boundaries for more than a decade and there are simply fewer pieces of suitable property for school construction available.”



Cougar Ridge Elementary - Framing in New Office Underway as of September 2017 (2016 Bond)

The property challenge

As enrollment keeps growing, it’s frustrating to have the funds to immediately start building new schools but no property to do so. We must often rely on legislative and/or legal action as well as creativity to acquire property, which is the situation for each piece of land we’ve identified for the 2016 bond projects.

Why is land so scarce? First, the rules for school-construction changed. In 2012, King County decreed that all new school facilities must fall inside its urban-growth boundary, a line meant to curb city sprawl. Prior to that, we were able to build in more rural areas where undeveloped land is more abundant, a better value for taxpayers, and close to the students who would be served. In fact, we proactively purchased an ideal piece of property in the May Valley area in 2006 in anticipation of building several new schools; that piece of property was rendered off-limits to us when King County changed its land-use regulations.

Second, the urban-growth boundary is tightly drawn around existing developed areas, and available land is becoming even scarcer as growth is funneled there. In our highly desirable eastside neighborhoods, pieces of land large enough to site schools are almost non-existent and hard-fought for by developers. We usually must assemble a number of adjacent properties, which is a complex real estate negotiation. As a last resort, we might have to exercise the eminent-domain option, which allows us to take over private property for public use with fair-market compensation to the owner.

What’s next?

Specific to the four new schools funded by the 2016 bond, we have identified three preferred pieces of property that each have complex paths to acquisition:

- **Issaquah Highlands** property (new elementary): In partnership with City of Issaquah staff, we have identified a piece of property adjacent to Swedish Hospital in the Issaquah Highlands. The City Council in early October annexed the land from King County and rezoned a portion to allow for a school facility. Now comes negotiations to buy the land and permit the school.



Sunset Elementary excavation for addition, September 2017 (2016 Bond)

- **Providence Heights** property (new high school and elementary): We have begun the eminent-domain process to acquire this large piece of land in northern Issaquah from its current owner, the City Church of Kirkland. In the meantime, the City Church’s demolition permit was blocked by a successful petition to designate the entire site as a historic landmark. We are awaiting the final verdict as the City Church appeals.
- **ISD Administration Building** property (new middle school): We plan to move our administrative offices to a corporate building in order to build on this centrally located piece of land in Issaquah. We have worked with the city to secure land-use variances necessary to fit a middle school on the site. Design work will now begin, followed by permitting. The deal is also contingent on our completion of an eminent-domain action to acquire the corporate building for administrative space.

Growth management: Getting ahead of the curve, but not too far

With new facilities like Clark Elementary opening with multiple portables, we often are asked: Why don’t you plan ahead and build excess space in anticipation of growth?

Our top fiscal concern is carefully predicting enrollment numbers and planning for right-sized resources like staffing and class space—but we can’t get too far ahead. As one of the fastest growing districts in the state (gaining more than 500 students annually, the equivalent of a good-sized elementary), our goal is to build space to keep pace with

Continued on next page

enrollment. While it makes good sense to secure bond authorization for anticipated construction needs, we do not build surplus capacity for several reasons. Foremost, our revenue model is structured around students we currently serve. Because our operations budget is funded on a per-child basis, we funnel money away from classroom learning if we pay overhead for excess building space. It’s the same reason airlines can’t stay solvent flying planes with empty seats.

Growth is the triggering factor for us to collect developer impact fees and sell bonds for construction. As our student-growth predictions crystalize into actual enrollment numbers, we are able to plan specific facilities to match the need. In the past, attempts to buy land or build facilities ahead of time have proved unfruitful or even detrimental. For instance, land-use regulations have changed, rendering proactively purchased property unusable, or a swell of student enrollment shifted to a

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Issaquah School District Community,

A new school year always brings excitement. This year it also brings a change to our school start and end times. The entire ISD operations team has been working hard since we made the decision to adjust bell times to make the transition as smooth as possible. With the growing body of scientific data informing us about the sleep patterns of adolescents, we are hopeful that these new school start times will allow our middle and high school students to get some of the sleep they need. We do have some challenges in front of us this year, including hiring enough bus drivers to adequately staff our transportation system and adjust routes to account for the increase in traffic congestion and longer travel times.

However, there is much to celebrate and we are thankful for the support of the public in approving the 2016 school bond allowing us to expand and build new schools for our growing community. The search for suitable property to build our schools has been quite a challenge, but we are making headway. This issue of Focus on Issaquah Schools is full of information about our work to increase capacity to meet current enrollment needs—from the opening of Clark Elementary this fall to the construction

different neighborhood than expected, causing us to likewise shift bond-funding for expansion with them. It’s also worth noting that our Capital Projects team has been working at a frenetic pace—with an almost 100-percent on-time and on-budget record—for more than a decade to complete bond projects to keep up with growth.



Pine Lake Middle School Drone Aerial with Site Overlay, May 2017 (2016 Bond)

underway with the Pine Lake Middle School rebuild and expansions at Sunset and Cougar Ridge Elementary schools. We encourage you to keep track of our progress by visiting the Construction Projects page on our website. You will find up to date reports, photos, schematics, and so much more there.

Inside our buildings, we continue to work toward creating a culture of kindness through our Positive Behavioral, Social Emotional Support (PBSES) initiatives and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. You will also be hearing more about our ongoing work with regard to secondary grading practices. We want our grading practices to be an accurate measure of academic progress. A student’s behavior in the classroom is important, but should not be included in a measure of how well that student has learned the material. Our cultural competency work is moving forward as well. Having spent considerable time working with administrators over the past two years, we introduced cultural competency as professional development for teachers during our non-student work day last January 2017 and will continue to do so with all of our certificated and classified staff moving forward.

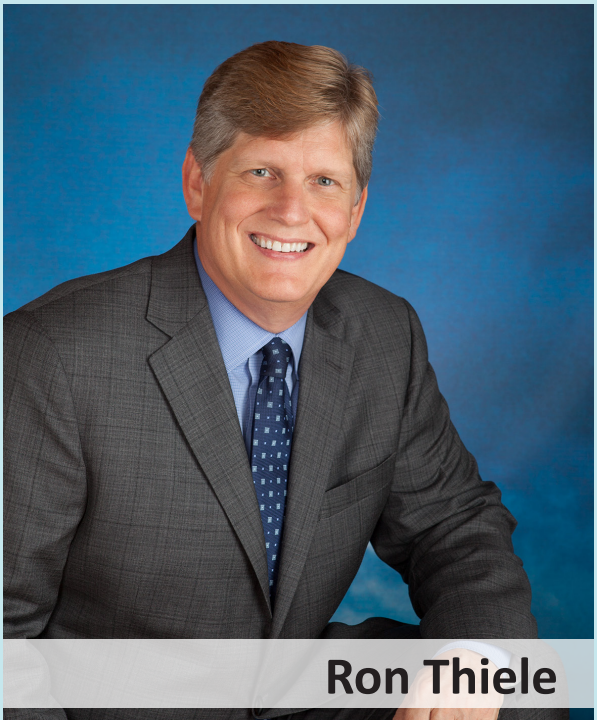
I have been involved in public education for 30 years now and I have to say, even with the challenges we face, I find myself continually energized by the quality of professionals that choose to work at the Issaquah School District.

Like the schools they build, they are also operating at full capacity!

Keep updated on our search for property and all of the 2016 bond projects by visiting the Construction Projects page at www.issaquah.wednet.edu.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Ron Thiele



Ron Thiele