

# Issue Paper 2: Educational Program

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The following information summarizes District educational programs that could require and/or benefit from modification of existing facilities within the 10-year time frame of the Long-Range Facility Plan. Not all of the District’s educational programs are included. Of those shown, it is yet to be determined what, if any, changes may be made. Some programs were determined to not require action as part of the Long-Range Facility Plan, and are included for informational purposes only.

## ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

#### Existing Conditions

The District currently serves students with identified disabilities using a continuum of special education services. This spectrum of supports is distributed across the schools. Northwood remains the site serving adaptive and more intensive intervention. All existing elementary schools also have a dedicated resource classroom. The functionality of these spaces could be significantly improved in the three older elementary schools to support inclusive practices.

#### 10-Year Program Approach

The long-term vision is to embrace

an inclusion model in all schools and encourage access to the general education setting rather than creating dedicated “special education” learning spaces or classrooms.

This approach, commonly referred to as the “push in” model, provides services in general education environments rather than pulling students out of their regular education program to receive services and interventions. Northwood’s model, with a dedicated resource room and many services moving into shared learning areas or classrooms, illustrates a configuration that serves students in this way. The expectation is that this can be replicated more consistently in other schools through capital and bond projects.

While other support functions, such as sensory rooms, are currently provided in existing schools, the District will redistribute these functions throughout school buildings (rather than consolidated), thereby facilitating rapid and natural access for students and staff. The District’s overall goal is to continue working toward an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

#### Program & Services Requirements

For schools being considered for modernization, existing special

education resource rooms, classrooms, and support facilities should be assessed against target program areas established by the latest elementary education specification. Northwood Elementary represents the latest program of educational space developed for MISD Special Services. This area, including one classroom, one resource room, one occupational / physical therapy room, and associated support areas, requires approximately 1,600 net square feet.

### MULTIPURPOSE SPACE

#### Existing Conditions

Island Park, Lakeridge, and West Mercer elementary schools currently have a “multipurpose” space that serves as the auditorium, cafeteria, and physical education (PE) program space.

This functional configuration must accommodate two lunch periods, with associated set-up and clean-up time.

Daily use of the multipurpose space for both PE and lunch is less than optimal from the standpoint of scheduling conflicts. The primary impact to scheduling is on the ability to personalize learning. Interventions, special services, and regrouping are limited by the PE and lunch schedules. This conflict also extends to kitchen / food service operations, with food serving carts at



IMAGE:  
Shared Learning  
Northwood Elementary School

one elementary being stored outside while PE classes are being taught. The configuration of the Island Park multipurpose space also requires that students exit the main building in order to access the space, which is less than desirable from a safety / supervision standpoint.

The District provides community access to all school gymnasiums and multipurpose rooms outside of school use hours, and plans to continue to do so. The high school, middle school, and Northwood Elementary School gymnasiums are generally used by the community well into many evenings on weeknights and on weekends. A number of requests are not able to be accommodated due to demand. Additional gymnasiums would also be an asset that could be utilized by the community during non-school hours much like the South Mercer Playfields.

**10-Year Program Approach**

The District’s latest elementary education specification provides for separate food service and gymnasium (PE) functions. Ideally, all elementary schools would align with programmatic spaces identified in this District document. This could be accommodated by adding a physical education space or a cafeteria / dining

space to existing schools, or could be added during the future replacement of an existing school. However, the age of the District’s three older elementary schools (between 56 and 66 years old) should also be considered when determining if adding new permanent square footage is the best option.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Ideally, all elementary schools would have a dedicated elementary-sized gymnasium and a separate cafeteria / dining area that could seat 250 students.

The area required for an elementary-sized gymnasium can range from approximately 3,400 to 5,500 net square feet, and may also need to include associated support areas such as office, storage, and restrooms. The District’s elementary education specification allocates 3,400 net square feet for this function, and 4,600 net square feet for a cafeteria/commons seating area for 250.

**SHARED LEARNING**

**Existing Conditions**

Island Park, Lakeridge, and West Mercer elementary schools were all constructed over 50 years ago and renovated in the early 1990s. Consequently, they do not reflect current thinking around teaching and learning. One critical element is flexible shared learning space, such as

learning areas outside of the classroom and varying types of spaces for different learning styles and group sizes. Volunteers and support staff must use crowded hallways, with their associated distractions, to work with individuals and small groups of students.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Ideally, educational adequacy would be improved at all elementary schools by adding shared learning spaces. This would provide parity among schools and align with the District’s latest elementary education specification.

**Program & Services Requirements**

The three older elementary schools contain approximately 18 to 20 general education classrooms. In order to improve educational adequacy, four shared instructional areas of approximately 400 net square feet each would be added per school, creating clusters of four to six classrooms.

Implementation would require both modernization of existing space and adding new building area, as some existing classrooms would be displaced, and therefore need to be replaced. Specific space requirements need to be determined on a school-by-school basis, however given a school’s age and condition, this may not be the recommended approach.



**IMAGE:**  
Commons  
Islander Middle School (New Building)

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

**Existing Conditions**

Currently, the District provides two pre-kindergarten classrooms, located at Northwood Elementary, with no pre-kindergarten options offered at other District sites. Historically, private prekindergarten programs have served the majority of Island residents, however, there has been some discussion regarding a limited expansion of the public-school pre-kindergarten option as a school-based and community-based service.

**10-Year Program Approach**

For purposes of this Plan, the District recommends that expanding current pre-kindergarten offerings not be considered.

**BEFORE AND AFTER CARE**

**Existing Conditions**

Before and after school care is both desired, and needed, for many families within the Mercer Island community. Students are currently served by a third-party provider that is licensed to offer before and after care. Historically, this third-party vendor has used unassigned classrooms, portable classrooms, gymnasiums, and the library. There are no dedicated spaces available for the sole function of childcare.

Before and after care is provided at all four District elementary schools. Capacity

constraints have impacted the full capabilities of these offerings. In addition to this on-site before and after care, approximately 200 students are bused to off-site programs at the Boys and Girls Club and the Jewish Community Center.

**10-Year Program Approach**

There are currently no plans to change the before and after care delivery model or provide dedicated space for this program within the District.

**PORTABLE CLASSROOMS**

**Existing Conditions**

The District currently has two double-classroom modular buildings located at Island Park, Lakeridge, and West Mercer elementary schools, providing four “portable” classrooms at each site. The District owns these buildings, which are relatively new and in good condition. Two new modular classrooms were recently constructed on the Northwood Elementary School site.

Following the construction of Northwood Elementary, many of the older modular buildings were removed. When used as classrooms, these portables create challenges, both for students and staff, including truncation of playground areas and interruption of sightlines (visual supervision) at some sites, limitations on class size, access to technology, safety/

security concerns, and isolation from other students and support services.

In addition, direct student traffic via the exterior doors of other classrooms (to access restroom facilities and other school functions) impacts the learning environment of those classrooms. Other operational issues include conflicts with stipulations made in staff contract language and difficulty managing “lock down” or other types of emergency drills.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Ideally, portables classrooms would be eliminated from all District sites. All the existing modular buildings are in good condition and provide additional space for schools.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Existing Conditions**

Special education programs at Islander Middle School are currently distributed into two separate buildings.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Ideally, all special education programs would be accessible throughout the learning spaces to allow for an inclusive educational experience for all students. The spaces should be flexible in their use



IMAGE:  
STEM Classroom  
Mercer Island High School

to allow for all related special education services to be delivered.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Further evaluation is needed to determine the specific program requirements for combining middle school special education spaces, however it is likely that this can be accommodated through modernization of existing space as well as new construction.

**THEATER AND PERFORMING ARTS**

**Existing Conditions**

The middle school does not have a dedicated space for drama and performing arts.

**10-Year Program Approach**

The middle school would benefit from a dedicated black box theater or dedicated performance space. This would build greater interest in the middle school and strengthen the Mercer Island High School theater program as well.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with an additional performance space have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Black box theater

**HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

**COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS (CCR)**

**Existing Conditions**

College and Career Readiness, sometimes referred to as Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, offer the opportunity to explore and prepare for post-secondary education through real-world learning experiences that develop leadership, professionalism, and project management skills. Although the District offers a number of CCR courses at the high school and middle school levels, the lack of appropriate space has limited the type of CCR classes that can be offered in the District.

Many of the programs that currently exist are held in makeshift spaces that do not provide adequate learning space, accommodate equipment, and/or limit participation. Currently, the District sends a number of students out of the District to access certain CCR courses, creating issues related to both travel time and cost.

Students are required to earn two CCR credits to graduate high school and completing a CCR pathway is one way students can meet the English Language Arts and Mathematics proficiency requirement. Students who

struggle on standardized tests may be disadvantaged by limited CCR offerings.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Improve and/or expand existing CCR spaces at the high school, create space for new programs, and create a stronger connection between all communications programs, to create a “multimedia” pathway (radio, journalism, marketing, newspaper, yearbook, and video production).

Create a stronger connection to the alternative high school and look at the potential for shared use between CCR, alternative education, and a professional learning space.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with CCR improvements have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Robotics lab expansion
- > Broadcast studio expansion
- > New journalism classroom
- > Radio classroom connection to studio
- > New hands-on (STEM/ maker space / life skills) lab(s) and support (further evaluation of CCR pathways is needed to determine which specific programs and spaces would be the best fit for the District)

**SCIENCE**

**Existing Conditions**

The high school currently has a total of 12 science labs, including eight science labs in their original 1997 configuration. These rooms need to be modernized, equipped, and sized to accommodate current programs.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Modernize the older science labs at the high school to be equivalent to the new science labs that were recently added in 2014.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with science improvements have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Science lab improvements

**PE / ATHLETICS**

**Existing Conditions**

Mercer Island High School has a robust athletic program with nine fall sports, six winter sports, and 11 spring sports. The existing high school facility does not have enough space to accommodate all of the athletic teams, including practice space and locker / team room space. Currently, some teams are using the PEAK facility or the Northwood gymnasium for practices.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Improvements at high school PE and athletic areas as needed to accommodate PE instruction and provide equitable practice and locker / team room space for all high school teams.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with PE and athletics improvements have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Locker rooms and team rooms renovation
- > PE and athletic storage
- > JV field improvements

**PERFORMING ARTS**

**Existing Conditions**

The existing MIHS Performing Arts Center seats up to 650 people and the existing stage accommodates an

80-piece band. In addition to a robust high school drama program, the existing PAC is used as a venue for all grades (choir concerts, showcases, middle school drama performances), as well as for districtwide professional development. The current space does not support these needs adequately. The existing theater also has outdated stagecraft technology and is in need of acoustic improvements.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Provide a black box theater, to accommodate smaller performances and provide teaching space for drama and dance classes.

Improve the existing theater to create a state-of-the-art facility with modern stagecraft technology and improved acoustics that is flexible for different types of performances and districtwide uses.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with performing arts improvements have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Dedicated teaching space for drama, dance, and performance (black box theater)
- > Improve / replace theater technology, including sound, lighting, projection, and curtains (in progress)
- > Theater acoustic improvements (in progress)

**GENERAL EDUCATION**

**Existing Conditions**

Many classrooms at the high school haven't been updated since 1997. They do not accommodate new technology well, in terms of space or infrastructure, and many are not configured to support modern teaching and learning. There are also very limited areas for flexible or shared learning outside of the classroom.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Improve general classrooms to be more flexible and better accommodate collaboration (furniture, storage, and

size). Existing classrooms should be brought up to the same level as the classrooms in the most recent modernization.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with general education improvements have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Shared learning / study areas to increase flexibility and opportunities for collaboration
- > Improvements to existing general classrooms

**SHARED SUPPORT**

**Existing Conditions**

The existing MIHS facility has a number of support areas in which improvements would benefit the learning environment. The existing counseling, administration and health area is poorly configured, and does not provide optimal space to support students. There is also a need for improved teacher offices and support space, as well as a lack of gender-inclusive restrooms throughout the facility.

These areas, and others, while not directly used as teaching spaces, help support District values such as creating inclusive and equitable learning settings, and ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Improve support areas throughout the existing facility, to provide safe, inclusive, and supportive environments.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Further evaluation is required to determine specific program requirements, however shared support improvements may include:

- > Renovate and reconfigure principal offices, counseling offices, and nurse office
- > Teacher offices and support
- > Additional distributed gender-inclusive restrooms

**CREST LEARNING CENTER:  
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION & MORE**  
**Existing Conditions**

The District has an alternative high school program, located in the Crest Learning Center. This program primarily accommodates District students on a flexible, part-time basis, with a small number of full-time students. The program serves students that need additional support or an alternative learning setting to the comprehensive high school environment. Crest is also home to the District’s online learning program.

Currently, enrollment in this program is limited by the amount of existing physical space. It is estimated that the current enrollment demand is as much as double what current facilities can accommodate.

**10-Year Program Approach**

In order to accommodate the growing demand for this type of education enrichment and an alternative learning environment, an increase in the amount of facility space for the alternative high school is needed. In addition to providing more adequate space for current functions, additional space is needed to accommodate increased capacity, online learning, and shared learning areas. There is no plan to expand alternative education programming to the middle or elementary levels.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Specific requirements associated with alternative education improvements at Crest have yet to be developed, but may include:

- > Renovate science classroom to support high school science
- > Renovate art room
- > Add a second greenhouse (in progress)

**OTHER DISTRICT  
PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

The following program needs were identified during the 2020 long-range planning process, however they were not identified as priorities to be included in the 2020 plan recommendations. They have been included in this document to recognize and track the original identification of these need areas.

**ADULT TRANSITION PROGRAM (ATP)**  
**Existing Conditions**

The Pathways program, formerly known as the Adult Transition Program (ATP) serves any student with a disability (typically medically fragile students) who would like to stay in school until they are 21. The program focuses on independent living and employment, with most students traveling to jobs off site daily. Currently there are approximately 14 students in the program.

The Pathways program is currently located in a new facility on the Northwood Elementary School site and no additional improvements are needed at this time.

**TECHNOLOGY**

**Existing Conditions**

Currently the District has limited space to repair mobile technology and store it securely in the summertime.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Provide a dedicated space in every school facility to repair mobile technology and store securely in the summertime.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Dedicated space should accommodate 12 carts of laptops and a repair / work area. Specific technology space needs will be determined on a site-by-site basis, however it is estimated that approximately 200 net square feet will accommodate this function. Consider the potential to repurpose underutilized existing space in each school to address this space need.

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

**Existing Conditions**

With the increased emphasis on professional learning, there is currently not enough space available to accommodate the need for large meeting spaces for teachers and staff during the school day. Each school has professional learning at least three times per month, with the largest meetings having between 60-70 attendees.

Currently, smaller meetings are held at the Administration Building, with larger ones having to utilize rented space at a nearby church or the Mercer Island Community Center. The PEAK facility is used only occasionally due to schedule conflicts with PEAK programs, as well as suitability of the facility.

**10-Year Program Approach**

Provide a “learning hub” for teachers and staff that is a robust virtual classroom environment for adult learning, as well as a permanent resource and “think tank” area. This space can also function as community-use space in the evenings, and may also be able to be used for some additional educational functions during the day.

**Program & Services Requirements**

Provide a new multipurpose space that seats 70 people, with associated support space (break out spaces and storage). The multipurpose space should be dividable into three smaller areas, for greater flexibility of use, and have appropriate technology for remote learning and large group presentations.

The professional learning space could be part of the administration complex rather than at a specific school, or it could be part of a reconfigured Crest Learning Center facility.



IMAGE:  
Seating Area  
Mercer Island High School

## APPROACH TO ADDRESS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM NEED

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: ISLAND PARK, LAKERIDGE, & WEST MERCER

The 2020 LRFP committee determined that facility replacement is the best approach for addressing educational program need at the three older elementary schools.

In addition, a number of educational program related needs have been determined by the District as priorities to be addressed with potential Cap/Tech Levy funds prior to replacement, if facility replacement is not included in the initial phase of the Long-Range Plan:

- > Limited and/or poorly configured special education spaces
- > Two disconnected buildings (Island Park only)
- > Poorly configured and/or undersized administration area (Lakeridge only)

### ISLANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL (100/200/300)

The 2020 LRFP committee determined that facility replacement of the existing older buildings is the best approach for

addressing educational program need at Islander Middle School.

In addition, the following educational program related need has been determined by the District as a priority to be addressed in a potential capital measure prior to replacement, if facility replacement is not included in the initial phase of the Long-Range Plan:

- > Multiple detached buildings create a lack of connection between both students and program and are a security concern

### MERCER ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL

The 2020 LRFP committee determined that facility renovation is the best approach for addressing educational program need at Mercer Island High School.

The following improvements have been identified to be addressed in potential future capital measure(s). The prioritization of these projects will be determined by MIHS stakeholders and the District at a future date.

- > CCR: Robotics lab expansion
- > CCR: Broadcast studio expansion
- > CCR: New journalism classroom
- > CCR: Radio classroom connection to studio

- > CCR: New hands-on (STEM / maker space / life skills) lab(s) and support
- > Science: Science lab improvements
- > Art: Art studio improvements
- > PE/Athletics: Locker rooms and team rooms renovation
- > PE/Athletics: PE and athletic storage
- > PE/Athletics: JV field improvements
- > Performing Arts: Dedicated teaching space for drama, dance, and performance (black box theater)
- > General Education: Shared learning / study areas to increase flexibility and opportunities for collaboration
- > General Education: Improvements to existing general classrooms
- > Shared Support: Renovate and reconfigure principal offices, counseling offices, and nurse office
- > Shared Support: Teacher offices and support
- > Shared Support: Additional distributed gender-inclusive restrooms

In addition, the following improvements have been determined by the District as priorities to be addressed with potential Cap/Tech Levy funds:

- > Performing Arts: Improve theater technology, including sound, lighting, projection, and curtains (in progress)
- > Performing Arts: Theater acoustic improvements (in progress)

### **CREST LEARNING CENTER**

Although the 2020 LRFPP proposed replacement and expansion of the Crest Learning Center, changes that have occurred since then have caused the District to determine that facility renovation is the best approach for addressing educational program need at Crest. These changes include:

- > The Pathways program was removed from Crest into its own facility, providing an additional large classroom in the existing building for Crest to use (resulting in an approximately 30 percent increase in existing facility capacity)
- > Reduced current and projected enrollment at the high school level reduces the need for additional capacity at Crest

The following improvements have been identified to potentially be addressed in future capital measure(s):

- > Renovate science classroom to support high school science
- > Renovate art room (former Pathways classroom)

In addition, the following improvements have been determined by the District as priorities to be addressed with potential Cap/Tech Levy funds:

- > Add a second greenhouse (in progress)