



March 25, 2024

Superintendent's Opening Comments Regarding Resolution 2365

Tonight, the Board is receiving Resolution 2365 with proposed action at the April 15, 2024 meeting. This resolution is specific to two bodies of responsibility. One component of action which is to authorize the redirecting of levy funds for Eastside High School Capacity, as referenced in the 2022 Capital Construction Levy, away from Site 59 to classroom additions and core space modifications at Eastlake and Redmond High Schools. The presentation this evening will provide more detail and context for this recommendation. The 2nd component of action is related to the long-term planning for high school enrollment in Lake Washington School District.

The Board has responsibility for students attending school today, but also is charged with considerations of future students, the long-term viability of the Lake Washington School District from all aspects. The Board is also the fiduciary of the community's Bond and Levy funds which they entrust us with and expect us to spend in the most effective ways to meet our goals for student learning, student experience and community benefit.

Since 2010, LWSD has grown by 25%, or 6,016 students or 460 students annually. During this time, the district has passed one Bond measure and three capital construction levies to manage this significant and rapid growth. As the Board knows, the failure of multiple Bond measures put our district behind schedule in providing appropriate classroom capacity which led to a number of responses, (1) 162 portable classrooms, (2) reduction of the standard of service and (3) micro/macro reboundary processes to use ALL available classroom space.

Additionally, during this time period, the district employed two distinct strategies to manage high school enrollment:

1. High School Additions – Eastlake and Redmond in 2012 and LWHS in 2021
2. Choice Schools and Programs – Cambridge (2010) and Tesla STEM HS (2012)

There was a distinct choice not to add a 5th comprehensive high school, primarily, due to the lack of appropriate available land in a location that made sense for the proximity of students.

In 2021, the District purchased 25 acres in East Redmond, at the base of Union Hill. This location would allow the district to offer a 5th comprehensive high school in a location that makes sense for the proximity of students.

The District has been in a “Capacity-Deficit” mindset of for over a decade. Given the current projections, we have the time to evaluate educational programs and expected comprehensive high school size in order to make a long-term decision for future generations.

What we know is that the additions we are proposing tonight are desperately needed to support today’s students. We also know that any additional space we add at our high schools, even if we were to open a 5th comprehensive high school, would only cause these schools to operate within the enrollment to capacity ratio we expect for our schools. These additions only help to mask a significant challenge they face today while educational programming for students requires a longer-term plan.

Part of the action the Board will be asked to take at the April 15 School Board meeting is to commission a study of a 5th comprehensive high school as well as the other available options such as adding choice schools, district wide reboundary of high school enrollment or, status-quo/do nothing.

Our community expects and deserves excellence for the students and youth of this community.

- Dr. Jon Holmen, Superintendent
Lake Washington School District