

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SPECIAL MEETING
March 28, 2024

**Board
Members:**

Mari Taylor, President
Nina Hanson
David Iseminger
Vildan Kirby
Paul Lund
Ken D. Collins, Superintendent/Board Secretary

The Lake Stevens School District Board of Directors met in a Special Session at the Educational Service Center.

ROLL CALL

Director Hanson was unable to attend.

REPORTS OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PROGRAMS

President Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:02 and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Superintendent Collins thanked everyone for coming and gave an overview of the day. Superintendent Collins stated by the end of the day they should be able to say which projects they want to accomplish.

Executive Director of Communications gave a presentation on the Public Perceptions of the Lake Stevens High School District survey. She talked about Survey Methodology. Strategies 360 conducted a mixed-mode survey of 300 residents in the Lake Stevens School district. Interviews were conducted February 26 – March 4, 2024, using a combination of landline phones, cell phones, and online interviews via text message. The margin of error for a survey of 300 interviews is +5.7% at the 95% confidence level for each sample. The Executive Summary is that a majority of residents both have a positive opinion of the district and are satisfied with the quality of education. Residents rated the district on several other metrics – receiving top marks on maintaining school buildings and facilities, keeping students safe, and attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. Just over a third of residents recognized the need for additional funding.

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Tax sensitivity is relatively high in the district. When it comes to funding priorities, residents place the highest priority on security features and spaces for Special Education Programs.

Messaging is effective in moving residents in a more supportive direction. All messages resonate with a majority of residents to modernize schools, but top messages focus on population growth and the need to expand capacity, how the elementary schools are outdated, and updating buildings to meet current health and safety standards. Residents prefer renovating elementary schools rather than rebuilding them. Executive Director Taylor stated providing additional context about the alternative high school does not shift residents' opinions.

Executive Director Taylor presented information on aging, safety, and capacity. Some of the elementary schools were built over 30 years ago and are past their intended lifespans – despite excellent maintenance, they have outdated features that can't be easily fixed, such as antiquated heating and ventilation systems, failing roofs and plumbing, and insufficient space for new programs. The population of the area is growing and there is simply not enough space at the existing elementary schools for the number of classrooms needed for Special Education, playgrounds, parking, and so on. Residents generally have a positive view of the district, and a majority are satisfied with the quality of education children receive. Parents with students in LSSD schools tend to be more satisfied than residents overall, including nearly one-third who are very satisfied. Despite high satisfaction ratings overall, satisfaction has declined since 2021 both overall and in intensity. Residents rate LSSD most highly on maintaining school buildings and facilities, keeping students safe, and staffing high-quality teachers. LSSD parents rate the district's job performance higher on all metrics than residents overall, particularly on communicating with the community and keeping class sizes to an acceptable level. While there has been a drop among some performance metrics since 2021, most are within the margin of error or relatively minor. The district's performance in keeping students safe has seen the biggest decline.

Executive Director Taylor talked about funding and priorities. A plurality of residents believe the district currently has sufficient funding, while just over a third think the district needs additional funding. She said parents, women, and younger residents are most likely to recognize the district's funding needs. The trend in funding needs has reversed since 2021, and now a plurality of residents think the district has sufficient funding. However, tax sensitivity is likely a large contributing factor. Sixty-four percent of residents think taxes are too high, a substantial increase since 2021.

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Security features are the top priority among residents, followed by spaces for Special Education programs, modernizing and expanding aging schools, and building a new elementary school.

There are a few notable demographic trends in how residents are prioritizing projects. Executive Director Taylor spoke about communicating needs. A series of messages were presented to participants. All reasons to modernize LSSD schools resonate with a majority of the population; however, describing the age of schools, the need to expand capacity, and improving building safety are seen as the best reasons. Looking deeper at demographic differences, in general, women residents ages 18-49, and parents are more receptive to messaging. Parents' top messages focus on the age of schools and addressing safety features, while non-parents top message focuses on addressing capacity. In addition to "aging" a top message among women, younger residents, residents of color, and high-income residents is "Safety." For residents who shift towards recognizing a greater need for funding, their top messages are "capacity" and "aging." Across the board, all groups move towards greater recognition of funding needs – most notably women, low-income residents, and those who think property taxes are about right. A majority of residents prefer modernizing elementary schools by updating and renovating them. A majority of residents prefer modernizing elementary schools by updating and renovating rather than demolishing and rebuilding. Giving residents additional information about the alternative high school does not shift opinions. District residents receive information about LSSD from a range of sources, but residents tend to rely on the district directly via the newsletter and emails. Compared to 2021, residents rely on emails from the district or a school at similar rates, while are most likely to rely on the mailed newsletter. Older residents rely more heavily on mailed materials, while younger residents are more likely to receive their news through virtual correspondence. Tax-sensitive residents rely on the newsletter and emails from the district for the bulk of their information about the district; however, they have less contact with the district than those who think taxes are about right. Director Lund stated what a great presentation. President Taylor said this speaks to what an amazing job Executive Director of Communications Jayme Taylor is doing with district communications. This is something to be proud of. Director Iseminger stated the district is consistent and constant with communication.

Executive Director of Operations Robb Stanton presented information on Facilities Improvements and 2024 Replacement Bond Scenarios.

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Executive Director Stanton provided information about necessary facilities improvements, their scope, cost, and impacts to the community. He wanted to get everyone's thoughts on different scenarios for addressing facilities' needs in the district. Executive Director Stanton wanted feedback on the direction toward preparing a resolution for a capital bond to submit to voters in November. They want to continue the work to make the schools and support facilities safer, healthier, and more secure for the students, staff, and community. They also want to continue to provide permanent, appropriate spaces for teaching and learning as the community and programs grow. The district wants to continue to care for and extend the life of the community, schools, and facilities.

The plan is to develop a story to share with the community that includes three components:

- Improvements – a list of projects that address essential facility needs that, if constructed, would most benefit students, staff, and the community
- Bond Amount – a local share cost for these projects, considering other sources of funds
- Tax Rate – an amount that acknowledges the impact on taxpayers and works to minimize it

All that the community can understand and support. Executive Director of Operations Stanton presented information on their starting point, guiding principles, focused list, and deferred list. He then talked about refinement measures including cost levers and funding levers.

Cost levers include scope, area (square footage and acreage), cost factors, escalation, and time. Funding levers include a source of funds and tax rate factors.

Executive Director Stanton presented information and pictures on project scopes. Secure perimeters are needed at Glenwood, Highland, Hillcrest, Mt. Pilchuck, Skyline, Sunnycrest, Lake Stevens Middle School, North Lake Middle School, and Cavelero Mid High School. Secure receptions are needed at Glenwood, Highland, Hillcrest, Mt. Pilchuck, Skyline, Sunnycrest, Lake Stevens Middle School, North Lake Middle School, and Cavelero Mid High School which also includes securing portables.

He presented information on a scenario on the central kitchen and maintenance and grounds. They began with an operations center that would combine Facilities (Maintenance, Grounds, Custodial, Warehouse) with a production kitchen for efficiency. It would be difficult to find a site where the needs of both departments could be met. Maintenance and Grounds could be 10,000 sq. ft.

pre-engineered building with room for work bays, high-capacity storage, vehicle storage, offices, and staff spaces. Executive Director Stanton presented pictures and diagrams for each scenario. The central kitchen would need between 5,000 and 8,000 sq. ft. space with utilities and ventilation for the kitchen, dry, refrigerated, and frozen product storage, loading dock with access for delivering vehicles from box trucks to semis. This could be potentially on the current Transition program at Mt. Pilchuck.

Executive Director of Operations Robb Stanton presented scenarios and what is needed for Alternative Learning and spaces for Special Education Services at Glenwood, Highland, Hillcrest, Mt. Pilchuck, Skyline, LSMS, NLMS, and Cavelero. Mr. Stanton also presented diagrams and information for spaces for Elementary Physical Education at Glenwood, Hillcrest, Mt. Pilchuck, and Skyline. Executive Director of Operations talked about Middle School Athletic Improvements including field lighting, artificial turf fields, and gates to allow community access.

Executive Director Stanton spoke about modernizations on Glenwood, Skyline, and Lake Stevens, Middle Schools, and district standards at elementary and secondary education spaces. He presented information on modernization considerations, levels, and goals. He also gave some scenarios on modernization and temporary housing during modernization. Director Stanton presented several options for modernization.

Executive Director Stanton presented information on funding including Capital Bonds, School Construction Assistance, and School Mitigation Fees. He explained the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) or state match and School Mitigation, or Impact Fees. He finished by talking about a bond amount target using a balanced scope (project costs – balanced) and scope comparison (budgeted scopes). He stated financial advisors craft a way to keep the tax rate stable so as not to place a burden on the taxpayers.

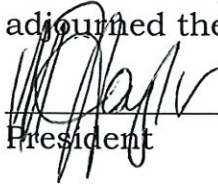
Assistant Superintendent Teresa Main presented bond financing scenarios and the history of current bonds to the board. She stated that at the first board meeting of May, they would present a Bond Resolution to the school board. After that, they will send out a voter's pamphlet. On October 18, 2024 ballots will be mailed out to voters to prepare for the November 5, 2024 election.

Superintendent Collins asked if there were any other questions. Director Iseminger wanted to know if they were going to have continuity in the architecture if there was a new school built.

He wants a cohesive sense of familiarity. It makes for a sense of belonging. Director Lund thanked everyone for putting it all together and making it logical. The Community Advisory Needs Committee did a great job. Executive Director Stanton said administrators and principals have been instrumental in helping with this.

ADJOURNMENT

With no objections by the other directors, President Taylor adjourned the Regular Session at 1:30 p.m.



President



Secretary