

# SCHOOL CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION TASK FORCE REPORT

JUNE 2024



[PUYALLUPSD.ORG/SCUT](https://puyallupsd.org/scut)



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School Capacity and Utilization  
Task Force (SCUT) Recommendations

Puyallup School District #3  
302 2nd Street SE  
Puyallup, Washington 98372

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June 3, 2024

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## Executive Summary

This report is a comprehensive overview of the School Capacity Utilization Task Force (SCUT) presented to the board of directors. Initiated in Spring 2023, SCUT was tasked with addressing pressing enrollment challenges within the district until new school construction could be facilitated via a future bond measure. The task force composition is diverse, comprising representatives from students, staff, families, and community members, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives.



Over multiple meetings, SCUT examined various facets influencing capacity, including building conditions, enrollment forecasts, and potential solutions. Notably, the report underscores the significance of managing waivers, exploring boundary adjustments, and optimizing program management as crucial strategies to alleviate capacity strains across different schools.

Each school's capacity challenges are carefully assessed, and solutions are tailored to their unique circumstances. The report also delineates a timeline for the board's consideration and action on the final recommendations, set for June 3 and June 17, 2024, respectively. This comprehensive examination underscores the commitment to effectively addressing the district's enrollment challenges.

There are five priorities outlined in our district's strategic plan and they include Academic Excellence; Social Emotional Supports; Family and Community Engagement; Staff Development Culture, and Satisfaction; and Facilities, Safety, and Security.



While this report falls under the priority of Facilities, Safety, and Security, it is important to note that school capacity utilization plans are intertwined and impact all five strategic directions.



## Task Force Charter

**The Board of Directors approved the following charter in Spring 2023:**

The School Capacity and Utilization Task Force is commissioned by the Board of Directors for the purpose of developing and evaluating recommendations to support the interim housing of students in the PreK-12th grade settings of the Puyallup School District until a future capital levy and/or bond program is funded and constructed.

This mandate is squarely on developing and evaluating strategies to manage the district's enrollment challenges in the interim period before new construction can commence through the passage of a future bond measure.



SCUT's efforts to address the immediate housing needs of students represent just one facet of a broader initiative. This initiative entails the Board of Directors contemplating the formation of a Bond Advisory Committee and the eventual crafting of a bond package for future action.

### Membership

The task force membership includes 15 community representatives and 15 district staff representatives. Community representation includes: four high school student members two Puyallup PTA Council representative members nine community members from each region of the district

**A comprehensive membership list is included below:**

- Sarah Aunspach (ERHS student)
- Daniel Martinez (ERHS student)
- Jacob Gavre (RHS Student)
- Ayden Berg (PHS student)
- Christopher Harris (Region 1)
- Michael McCanna (Region 1)
- Wendy Wright (Region 1)
- Greg Farias (Region 2)
- Maria Finley (Region 2)
- Nicole Helgeson (Region 2)
- Amy Schweim (Region 3)
- Jiquanda Nelson (Region 3)
- Vidal Rojas (Region 3)
- David Ham (Puyallup PTA)
- Victoria Treffry (Puyallup PTA)
- Bob Horton (PEA representative)
- Michele Jangula (PEA representative)
- Ed Crow (High School Principal)
- Brian Fosnick (Junior High Principal)
- John Huson (Elementary Principal)
- Lauralee Chamberlain (Elementary Principal)
- Myra Josey (Elementary Asst. Principal)
- Richard Lasso, Assist. Super. of Equity & Instr. Leadership
- Vince Pecchia, Assist. Super. of Operations & School Support
- Rebecca Williams, Ex. Director of Equity & Elementary Education
- LaShawnda Baldwin, Ex. Director of Equity & Elementary Education
- Julie Hunter, Ex. Director of Equity and Secondary Education
- Karen Mool, Ex. Director of Equity and Special Education
- Brady Martin, Director of Capital Projects
- Brian Devereux, Director of Facilities Planning

## Meetings

SCUT has met regularly over the past year, spanning 14 meetings. The first meeting was held on June 8, 2023, and the final meeting was held on May 22, 2024. Each meeting was typically 2 hours in the evening. We express our gratitude to each task force member for their dedicated participation in discussions and activities, often extending late into the evening following their workday or class commitments.

## MEETING ROADMAP



# Building Capacity and Enrollment

*To understand our space challenges, the task force reviewed current and projected enrollment together with student capacity at each of our school buildings.*

## School Building Capacity

For capital facilities planning, the district has adopted a Level of Service Standard (LOS) based on the total classroom count for each building. For elementary schools with 6th grade, a 22-student per classroom average is applied for each General Education classroom space. For Mt. View and Northwood Elementary, which currently operate on a K-5th grade model, 21 students per classroom is the adopted LOS. Sixth grade classes district-wide are generally larger than the schoolwide class size average. By removing the higher-than-average 6th grade class from the equation, the classroom average at our K-5 elementary schools is slightly less.

### BALANCING ACT: NAVIGATING K12 SCHOOL CAPACITY AND ENROLLMENT DEMANDS



### Demand = Students



For junior high and high schools, the LOS is 30 students per classroom. Secondary schools operate on a six-period day. The LOS uses an 83% utilization factor at the secondary level, based on each classroom being used for classroom instruction five of six periods a day ( $5/6 = 83\%$ ). This utilization factor recognizes the use of classrooms for teacher planning periods, unbalanced course schedules, and staffing availability.

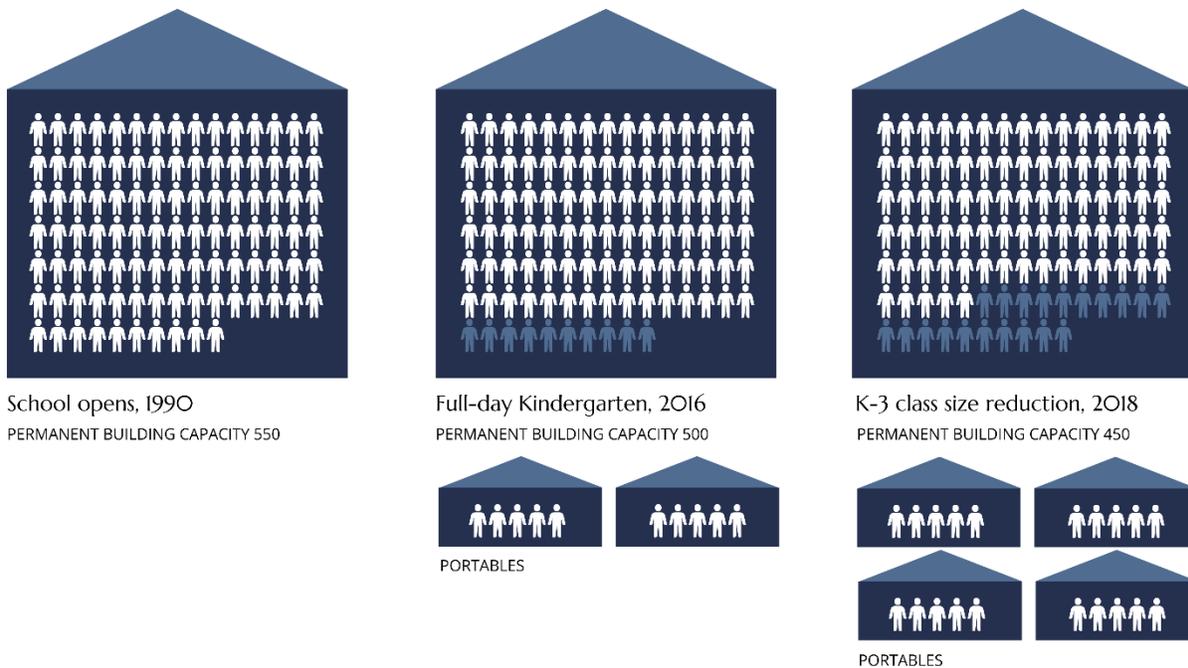
The task force recognizes the disadvantage of having over 200 portable classrooms throughout the district for student instruction. District long-range capital facility plans consider portables as temporary and are excluded from “right-sizing” future school bond projects. Yet, the task force also recognizes the important role that portables will play in the interim, which is the focus of the task force. Thus, capacity from portables has been included in our work.

## BROUILLET ELEMENTARY: A CASE STUDY IN SHIFTING CAPACITY

During [Meeting #4](#), Brouillet Elementary was featured to highlight the fluid nature of calculating school building capacity. Brouillet opened as a 550-student capacity school without portables. Fast forward to 2016, full-day Kindergarten replaced the former half-day Kindergarten program. This program change resulted in a reduction in building capacity due to the fact that the two Kindergarten classrooms served two full-day Kindergarten classes. Before the change, the two Kindergarten classrooms served four half-day Kindergarten classes, or approximately double the number of students.

In 2018, district-wide K-3 class sizes were reduced, partly to comply with state funding criteria. This reduction, while necessary, led to a lower building capacity calculation. Over a two-year span (2016-2018), Brouillet's building capacity was reduced by approximately 100-students. In order to continue to serve an enrollment of 550 students, portable classrooms were utilized.

The fluid capacity calculations at Brouillet represent building capacity changes in all district elementary schools over the past decade.

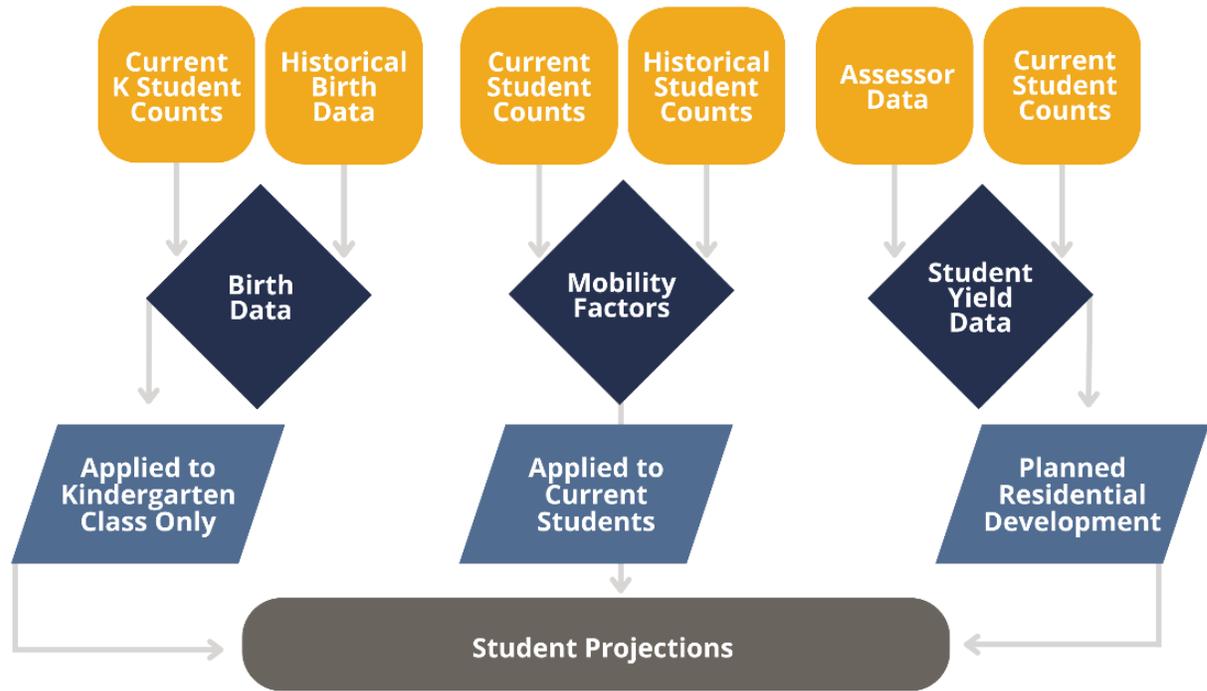


*Note: Capacity numbers are rounded for simplicity. Portable information is a representation for illustration purposes. Brouillet Elementary has 10 portable classrooms in 2023-24.*

### Enrollment

A long-range [Capital Planning Enrollment Projection](#) (“CPEP”) was prepared in January 2024 and presented to the task force in Meeting 8. The CPEP aims to ensure the district is planning for enough space for future enrollment. It assumes higher growth variables compared to the projection utilized for staffing purposes. October enrollment is typically one of the highest enrollment months each year and is used in our planning to meet the peak demand of enrollment throughout the year.

## ENROLLMENT PROJECTION INPUT



The CPEP forecasts a 1,000-student increase through 2034-35, an average annual increase of approximately 90 students district-wide. In 2024-25, enrollment is projected to increase 233 students, with the highest gain projected at the high school level.

While the CPEP forecasts beyond the next decade, the task force has focused on the initial four-year period as the most reliable data for decision-making. The report and recommendations developed by the task force should be a living document that can be revisited and updated annually to incorporate the most recent enrollment and building capacity information. The district-wide CPEP is the basis for all school-level enrollment projections.

Building capacity and enrollment projection data for each school have been combined into a graph to help identify what schools are expected to have capacity challenges over the next four years. [See School Reports Appendix – to view these graphs.](#)

## Interim Solutions to Overcrowding

The following list of interim solutions are identified in the task force charter for consideration, except for one, hybrid learning, which was added following a group exercise discussion during Meeting 4. A summary of each interim solution is provided below. Although all tools were available for consideration, not all tools are implemented at each location.

### Waiver Management

Waiver Management involves assessing and deciding on waiver applications while ensuring enough space in classrooms for students living in the school's attendance area and those assigned to the school due to specialized programs. Each school is unique, and we will implement this framework on a school-by-school basis as needed. To guide these decisions, we have identified a prioritized Waiver Enrollment Framework:

1. New in and out of district Kindergarten students
2. New in and out of district students in all grades
3. Existing non-resident students in all grades

When relevant, the following guidelines are implemented:

1. Priority is given to students with siblings already enrolled at the requested school.
2. Resident district waiver applications take precedence over non-resident applications.

*Reference: Board Policies 3131/3131R and 3141/3141R*

### Addition of Portables

School districts have historically relied on the addition of classroom portable buildings to address overcrowding. Puyallup SD currently has 204 classrooms within portables districtwide. While adding portables is a tool included in the task force charter, it has been discouraged. Portables provide additional classroom space but do not add capacity to commons areas such as parking lots, hallways, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. They can be difficult to access from the main building(s) within the short passing periods of our secondary schools. The cost to relocate a district owned portable ranges from \$300,000 to \$400,000 to install a dry (no water/sewer) portable classroom building. The addition of portables is not an option at certain school sites that have constraints due to limited site acreage or septic system capacity.

### Alternative Housing Locations

This option considers the temporary relocation of staff and students to another site other than the home school. Examples of an alternative housing location include:

- Use of the old Firgrove Elementary building to house Pope Elementary in 2019-20 during the school construction to modernize and expand Pope.
- Use of the old Firgrove Elementary building to house Karshner Elementary in 2020-21 during the construction to restore Karshner Elementary from a major fire event.
- The placement of elementary students from Pope/Firgrove into portable classroom buildings on the Emerald Ridge High School campus in the mid-2000's until the new elementary schools from the 2004 Bond (Edgerton and Carson) were completed.

The challenges of this option include displacing students and staff from their community and potential impacts to transportation.

## Alternative Schedules

This option includes Multi-Track Year-Round School scheduling, extended-day, and double-shifting scheduling options. While the alternative scheduling options would increase student capacity by utilizing school facilities for longer periods of the day and/or extending the school calendar throughout the year, this option would be highly impactful to students, staff, and families and not recommended at this time.

## Boundary Change

This solution considers modifying a school boundary between two or more schools. Such a boundary change would reassign an appropriately sized area from a school with capacity challenges to a neighboring school with capacity availability. Major boundary changes, involving more than several land parcels and impacting more than one or two property owners, are typically processed by a Boundary Review Committee commissioned by the Board of Directors. A Boundary Review Committee identifies, evaluates, and recommends school boundary changes in line with Board Policy 3130. The most recent Boundary Review Committee was commissioned in 2016 through 2018 to recommend boundary changes needed for the opening of a new elementary school (Dessie Evans) and other replacement and expansion projects.

## Building Utilization Rate (> 83% for Secondary)

The district's adopted Level of Service (LOS) standard for calculating capacity for secondary schools (junior high schools and high schools) includes an 83% utilization factor for each classroom. The 83% utilization rate represents, on average, a classroom will be utilized for large classroom instruction five of the six periods in a school day. The calculation recognizes the typical planning period for the teacher assigned to the classroom space.

Increasing the building utilization rate is possible by using a classroom(s) for instruction during all six periods. Classroom(s) that can be utilized 100% of the day for large classroom instruction will increase the building's capacity to instruct students. However, task force members have voiced concerns about the impact on teachers by not having their classroom available during a planning period or the need for teachers to travel during the day from classroom to classroom. Student representatives from the task force have also commented on the difficulty of connecting with a teacher that is asked to travel to classrooms throughout the day.

## Grade Reconfiguration

Puyallup School District's grade configuration model includes:

- Elementary: Pre-Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Junior High: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- High School: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

An exception to the district model exists in the north end of the district where Northwood and Mt. View Elementary schools serve PreK – 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Edgemont Junior High serves 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Other exceptions exist due to programs within buildings with unique grade cohort models.

Grade reconfiguration is a potential interim solution to shift a grade from an overcrowded school to a feeder school with capacity. The most recent example of this in the district is the placement of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students

from selected capacity-challenged elementary schools to their feeder junior high school, preceding the opening of Dessie Evans Elementary and other elementary school bond projects part of the 2015 bond program. The task force studied this option in detail but has determined the current and projected capacity challenges at the high school buildings eliminate this tool from consideration.

## Hybrid Learning

This tool was introduced by a task force member and added to the list of solution tools identified in the task force charter. Hybrid learning is an instructional model where students receive a portion of their instruction outside of the brick-and-mortar school building by incorporating online classes taken from home together with in-school classes. Hybrid learning was implemented temporarily in the district in 2021 as students returned to school buildings at assigned days of the week.

## Program Management

The district offers a breadth of programs and services. Some programs are built on a regional model and not offered at everyone school. This tool includes the evaluation of program placement throughout the district, and particularly within our capacity-challenged schools. By relocating a regional program from a school with a capacity deficit to a school with available capacity, this tool can help alleviate overcrowding in one school and better utilize pockets of underutilized space elsewhere.

There are many layers when considering the benefits and challenges of a program relocation, such as where do the program students reside, and what facility requirements are needed to support the project. A recent example of Program Management was implemented in 2023-24 when the QUEST program at Dessie Evans was relocated to Brouillet Elementary, primarily due the expansion of the Dual Language program at Dessie Evans together with an increasing overall student population.

# Recommendations

## Site Recommendations

To address potential capacity challenges at targeted schools over the next four-year period and beyond, the School Capacity and Utilization Task Force recommends the following actions for consideration by the School Board and Superintendent:

Recommended Action Within the Next Four Years		Schools
	Waiver management should be considered to ensure sufficient capacity for resident students and programs	Dessie Evans Elementary (Region 2)
		Edgerton Elementary (Region 1)
		Fruitland Elementary (Region 3)
		Meeker Elementary (Region 3)
		Pope Elementary (Region 1)
		Puyallup High School (Region 3)
	Requires further consideration by Task Force to mitigate forecasted capacity deficit	Emerald Ridge High School (Region 1)
		Glacier View Junior High (Region 1)
		Northwood Elementary (Region 3)
		Rogers High School (Region 2)
	Impacted School	Ferrucci Junior High (Region 1)
		Mt. View Elementary (Region 3)

Schools identified with a Blue Diamond (*see chart above*) should have student waiver applications managed to ensure sufficient capacity for resident and program students.

Additional recommendations have been proposed for the following:

### Northwood Elementary

- Waiver Management at Northwood Elementary and Mt. View Elementary beginning in 2024-25, and
- Relocate QUEST (3 classrooms) from Northwood Elementary to Mt. View Elementary in 2025-2026 with the following option:
  - Relocate Kindergarten Academy (TTK) from Mt. View Elementary to Northwood Elementary when relocating QUEST.

## Glacier View Junior High

- Waiver Management beginning as early as 2024-25, and
- Commission a boundary review committee in 2025-26 to recommend a boundary change between Glacier View Junior High and Ferrucci Junior High for implementation in 2026-27.

## Emerald Ridge High School

- Waiver Management beginning as early as 2024-25, and
- Convert Project Areas to classrooms as early as 2026-27.

## Rogers High School

- Waiver Management beginning as early as 2024-2025, and
- Add up to three portable classrooms for the 2025-26 school year.

## General Recommendations

- Continuance of the School Capacity and Utilization Task Force as a standing committee with the following charter:
  - The School Capacity and Utilization Task Force is re-commissioned by the Board of Directors to provide continuous review and planning to make the most efficient use of existing sites and maximize educational opportunities for all students. It will consider updates to enrollment, demographic trends, and utilization and capacity of schools to maintain and update recommendations to the Board.
  - Meet three times annually (October, January, April/May) and as needed.
- Establish a Bond Advisory Committee (BAC) in continuation to the School Capacity Utilization Task Force work to facilitate the Puyallup School District's efforts in enhancing its infrastructure, through a potential 2025 Bond Program. The BAC focus would be on constructing new buildings to accommodate growth and modernize facilities. The BAC would provide valuable insights into assessing needs, reviewing master plans and associated construction costs estimates while aligning the work to the district strategic plan.

To ensure a comprehensive approach, we recommend the formation of this committee by June 24th, 2024, with an initial meeting kickoff slated for June 27th, 2024. By holding bi-monthly meetings from September 12th to November 7th, 2024, the BAC can delve into detailed planning discussions and provide the board with a recommended bond package by November 18th.

*Additional information regarding recommendations identified by the task force and member voting is available in our [Meeting #13 Minutes](#).*

## Appendix

School Thumbnail Reports

Enrollment History & Forecasts

Student Waiver History

School Program Information

Maps

Puyallup and Orting School District Boundary

2021 Citizens Facility Advisory Committee Report

2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan Report

School Capacity and Utilization Task Force Charter Update

Bond Advisory Committee Charter