



Elementary School Air Conditioning FAQ

Why aren't all the elementary schools air conditioned?

The initial decision to not have air-conditioning in most elementary schools dates back to 1979 when the board of education made the decision to not include it in the referendum to build Clow Elementary School. From that time until 2001, there was no formal support to include the cost of air conditioning as the district built prototype elementary schools to handle the rapid increase in enrollment. The 2001 Citizens Referendum Committee recommended including air conditioning in the last two elementary schools to be built, Owen and Peterson.

How much would it cost to add air conditioning to the 19 elementary schools that are not air conditioned?

In 2009, the district worked with an engineering consultant to examine the cost to retrofit the 19 schools with a central air conditioning system. At that time several options were reviewed, with the least expensive option being an estimated \$1.9 million per school, for a total cost of \$36,100,000. Because the work would primarily need to be done over the summer when school is out, and the number of schools that would be retrofitted, the project would take multiple years to complete all 19 schools.

Why doesn't the district add window air conditioning units to classrooms?

In 2008, the district worked with an engineering consultant to examine the feasibility of adding window units to classrooms. It also worked with an environmental consultant to determine if there would be any impact to the air quality by adding portable units. The engineers recommended the typical classroom would require between three and six tons of cooling. The majority of classrooms are served by unit ventilators that bring in outside air as required by code. As the unit ventilator is required to bring in outside air, it will contrast with the work the window unit is trying to do to cool the classroom. The environmental consultants reported that window units are very rarely found in classrooms because these types of systems decrease the air quality by not being able to supply sufficient outside air. They also expressed concern about the lack of proper air filtration. In addition, there would be extra cost to provide the proper electrical service to each classroom and ongoing utility cost. Acoustics in the classrooms could also be an issue. Portable units have a compressor that can be very loud and distracting to students. Buildings with central air condition have compressors located in mechanical rooms or outside the building to eliminate this issue. Window air conditioners would only provide cooling to areas with exterior walls. Other interior spaces (LMC, rooms at the end of the LMC, offices, etc.) would not be cooled with this option. Window air conditioners would also not be appropriate in large spaces such as the multi-purpose room and gym. This is why the central air conditioning system described above is more efficient.

What does the district do on excessively warm days?

In 2008, district administrators drafted a High Temperature Plan to provide a plan of action for elementary schools. It includes monitoring the temperatures and dismissal procedures. The plan also calls for principals to establish a routine to provide relief for students, which includes rotating classes through existing air conditioned rooms in the school, utilizing the gym for second floor classes and moving outside when appropriate. A copy of the Plan is available on the district's website at <http://ipsdweb.ipsd.org/Subpage.aspx/HighTemperaturePlan>