Dear Westfield Community,

Happy New Year! I hope 2026 is off to a great start for you and your family.

On Wednesday, January 7, 2026, the Westfield City Council and the Westfield Washington Schools Board of School Trustees held a Joint Work Session at Westfield High School. The purpose of this meeting was to strengthen coordination between the City and the School District, to share accurate information about enrollment growth, and to address a growing misconception that Westfield Washington Schools is "overcrowded" or that growth is "crushing our schools."

The session was intentionally aligned with the City's long-range framework, *Looking to the Horizon: A Comprehensive Plan for Westfield*, which guides land use, housing, infrastructure, and community development through 2045. City decisions regarding residential development and transportation directly affect school enrollment and facilities. Proactive coordination between the City and the School District is not optional—it is essential for responsible, long-term planning.

If you'd like to view the session recording, see the press release we sent out with the City, or see answers to questions we received from the community post-session, please visit our information page here.

Also important to this work is Westfield's 2025 Special Census, currently underway to ensure that our official population count accurately reflects recent growth. An accurate census is critical to securing appropriate funding and resources and allows both the City and the School District to plan staffing, facilities, and services responsibly.

Since spring 2022, Westfield Washington Schools has been engaged in strategic facilities planning to manage growth responsibly. We are nearing completion of Phases One and Two of *Destination Westfield – Making Room to Welcome More Rocks,* a multi-phase planning process. Phase Three, a comprehensive 10- to 15-year facilities plan, was approved by the Board of School Trustees in December.

This plan is grounded in professional demographic forecasting and developed by our architect and reflects what the data clearly shows:

- Westfield continues to grow, driven primarily by family in-migration and housing turnover, not birth rates alone.
- Enrollment growth varies across the school district, requiring thoughtful, targeted solutions rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.
- Larger student cohorts are moving through the system, particularly toward middle and high school, even as some elementary areas stabilize or experience modest declines.

The demographic study projects continued enrollment growth over the next decade, with the most significant increases occurring at the middle and high school levels. Importantly, much of this growth reflects students who already live in our community and are progressing through our schools. This is how continued new-home construction helps keep our enrollment stable over the long term.

In any growing district, there is a critical balance point in facilities planning:

- Build too early, and enrollment and state funding are insufficient to support operations.
- Build too late, and overcrowding increases, requiring temporary solutions such as portable classrooms.

Responsible planning means anticipating growth, not reacting after the fact. Destination Westfield is designed to keep our district within this balance point, aligning enrollment, facilities, and funding in a way that is fiscally responsible and educationally sound.

As Westfield continues to grow, strong collaboration between the City and the School District remains essential. This joint work session reflects a shared commitment to transparent, data-informed decision-making that supports students, families, and residents, not just today, but for decades to come.

Thank you for your continued engagement, trust, and partnership as we plan for Westfield's future.

Yours in Shamrock Pride and appreciation,

John