Facilities Planning Task Force *Recommendation*

We have many outstanding school facilities, thanks to past community support. However, some of our schools need attention to provide every child a safe, healthy and highly effective neighborhood community school. After spending the past four months analyzing and discussing facilities data, our Facilities Planning Task Force wants to share our recommendation to the superintendent.

Task Force Background and Process

In fall 2012, Bellingham Public Schools convened a Facilities Planning Task Force representing numerous staff, students, community members, parents and alumni from across our school district. Our task was to identify and prioritize major facility improvement projects for Bellingham Public Schools for the next 10 years and to identify specific projects for a future bond issue to put before voters.

We began with a consultants' evaluation of the condition of the district's buildings, and we toured the facilities. Our work focused on the facilities that have not been newly built or renovated in recent years. While some of our facilities are in great shape, many need critical attention. We shared ideas with the community on November 30, 2012, and hosted public meetings. We collected and carefully considered community input received through online and telephone surveys. As a result of this additional input, we made some modifications to the original ideas we shared on Nov. 30, which are now part of this recommendation.

Task Force meeting minutes, presentations and data from our process as well as full details of the recommendation are posted at **http://bellinghamschools.org/facilities-planning-task-force**.

BELOW: *Sehome High School was built in 1966 and is in very poor condition.*

Bellingham Public School

...where *every* student learns

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Happy Valley

Happy Valley Elementary School

Parkview Elementary School

Options High School

Recommended Projects

Our Task Force recommends the following projects in priority order:

Rebuild Sehome High School on its current 40-acre site along Bill McDonald Parkway

COST ESTIMATE: $73 million with centralized kitchen, plus $5 million for synthetic turf fields at Bellingham, Sehome and Squalicum.

The structure and all major systems of the 46-year old Sehome building need replacing. The building does not comply with current energy codes, it is not fully handicap accessible, and its sprawling layout creates potential safety issues. The size of the site provides for construction without displacing students and adds the possibility of a centralized district kitchen. The centralized kitchen could provide healthier, made-from-scratch meals for all schools in our district and potentially create a new hands-on culinary arts opportunity for high school students. In addition to including spaces for career and technical education, the arts, theatre, music and other electives, our Task Force heard from our community the importance of addressing outdoor education needs. This proposal also sets aside funds for new multi-use synthetic fields at Sehome, Squalicum and Bellingham high schools.

Build a fourth, innovative high school to serve Options and other students

COST ESTIMATE: $17 million

For the past 20 years, Options High School has provided a place for students who need more flexibility than is available in a traditional school environment. While Options has been successful in serving students' needs with their current facility of seven portables, it has done so without science labs, common meeting areas, a gym or a lunchroom. The community strongly supports building a new facility to serve the current alternative educational needs of our students and to provide room for growth for future innovative programs. The site for the new Options/Innovations High School has not yet been designated and is potentially connected to the decision on the location for the Learning Support Center/District Office.

Build a Learning Support Center/District Office

COST ESTIMATE: $10 million

District leaders and support staff are currently housed in the 1908 Roeder Building on Dupont Street, the oldest facility in the district. The building has significant earthquake safety issues, all major systems are inadequate, and it is inaccessible for visitors with disabilities. The facility is not energy efficient, and flooding has occurred in the basement where the district technology center is located. It is estimated to cost $17 million to renovate the Roeder Building, whether it be redesigned as a central staff building or a new Options/Innovations High School. Building a District Office elsewhere on existing district property may cost approximately $10 million. The site for the Learning Support Center has not yet been designated and is potentially connected to the decision on the location for the new Options/Innovations High School.

Elementary School Package (New school at Happy Valley, upgrades to Lowell and Parkview elementary schools, retirement of Larrabee)

COST ESTIMATE: $29 million

On the northside, **Parkview**, is the only school with a combined gym and cafeteria, creating scheduling conflicts as well as health issues. A few of the main issues to address with renovation are a separate gym and cafeteria, adequate bathrooms, meeting spaces and outdoor traffic flow.

On the southside, tied with Sehome for the worst physical condition among all schools in the district, **Happy Valley** faces a number of problems. These include inadequate electrical, old plumbing, and poor heating/ventilation. The school also has some structural and energy efficiency issues. Happy Valley's property has the greatest potential for a rebuild because of its size.

While **Lowell** is in better physical condition, it too faces some challenges and cannot effectively accommodate families or students with disabilities. With the addition of a gym, cafeteria and elevator, Lowell could provide the necessary two classes per grade level to enhance teacher collaboration and provide a functional learning space for students.

Larrabee scored lowest in the district for functional adequacy to provide the educational programs students need. The small site limits what can be done even if significant funds were used to upgrade Larrabee to a functional level. Larrabee cannot consistently accommodate two classes per grade – which is increasingly important in addressing both academic and social/emotional development – nor does it offer adequate program space. Our Task Force recommends Larrabee be retired as a school, allowing students to attend either the new neighborhood school on the Happy Valley site, or the nearby renovated Lowell, depending on attendance areas.

We heard you — The community asked for a rationale for retiring Larrabee. Please see the full recommendation online.

Update the Transportation Facility

COST ESTIMATE: $4 million

The Transportation Facility, built in the 1950s, is in poor physical condition and is energy inefficient. The majority of work space has inadequate flooring and only one lift exists in the garage. Safety issues include exhaust ventilation concerns, poorly insulated walls, roof issues and inefficient heating. An upgrade and modernization of the facility, for the health and safety of employees that work there, is recommended.

Maintain and improve all schools, reduce energy use and upgrade safety

COST ESTIMATE: $8 million

As with any building, protecting our investment requires continual upkeep. Some of the identified school facility projects include, but are not limited to: new roofs at **Roosevelt** and **Sunnyland**; windows, doors, and wall replacement at **Alderwood**; exterior painting at **Parkview**, **Roosevelt**, **Silver Beach**, **Fairhaven**, **Kulshan**, **Bellingham** and **Squalicum**; and flooring improvements at **Carl Cozier**, **Silver Beach**, **Sunnyland** and **Fairhaven**. Energy efficiency upgrades are recommended in all schools. After the community input process, our Task Force decided to include an additional $2 million to this recommendation for safety upgrades. Examples include a standardized key system and/or door security systems that allows for a quicker lockdown in the event of an emergency.

We heard you

Second Tier Projects

COST ESTIMATE: $11.3 million

A second tier of projects in our 10-year recommended plan includes the following:

- Additional synthetic outdoor athletic fields at **Bellingham** and **Squalicum** high schools to include baseball and softball fields
- Office renovation and other minor modernization of **Sunnyland** Elementary
- Office renovation and other building finishes at **Carl Cozier** Elementary
- The addition of an elevator and gym improvements at **Columbia** Elementary

We heard you — This symbol shows some of the ways the community input process influenced our thinking.

We heard you

What is a centralized kitchen?

Currently, our schools serve reheated meals. A centralized kitchen would provide healthier food, including some made-from-scratch meals, to students at all 22 schools.

We heard you

Why are turf fields needed?

The wet Pacific Northwest climate for much of the school year limits the use of existing school fields by both students and our community. The current fields often flood making them unusable for physical education courses, athletics and community use.

Task Force Timeline

Sept. 2012 — Open call for task force applications

Oct./Nov. 2012 — Data, documents and facilities presentations shared publicly on website

Oct. 29, 2012 — Update from Facilities Planning Task Force

Nov. 15, 2012 — Update from Facilities Planning Task Force

Nov. 30-Dec. 14, 2012 — Task Force shares ideas and gathers input through meetings, video, online survey and print documents

January 2013 — Task Force meets, reviews community input and uses it to form a recommendation for the superintendent

Early February 2013 — Task Force submits recommendation to the superintendent

February – March 2013 — Superintendent reviews the recommendation, shares reflections and gathers additional input as needed.

Lowell Elementary School

Frequently Asked Questions

Our Task Force received these most frequently asked questions. Find more online at **www.bellinghamschools.org**

Q: How quickly could these projects begin?

A: Many of the projects may not be completed while the current group of students is in a particular school. This is planning for future generations. Once voters approve a bond, students, families and staff will be involved in the planning and design process, followed by attendance adjustments if needed, then construction and finally, opening.

Q: How will these facility projects impact where my child attends school?

A: Two models have been used in the past for students during new facility construction or renovation:

- Based on the design and project, students could attend their school while the new building is being constructed adjacent to property.
- Students may attend nearby schools during construction.

Q: How would we fund these projects?

A: The state supplies limited funds (less than 30 percent of the total cost for qualifying projects). School facility projects are mostly paid for by a voter-approved bond, a loan similar to a home mortgage. Interest rates are at a record low and construction costs are currently favorable.

Physical Condition and Functionality of our Facilities

In fall 2012, an independent consultant team of facility experts evaluated our facilities, both for physical condition and functional adequacy — how they meet the learning needs of students.

	School	Built	Sq. Feet	Acres	Current Enrollment	Current Capacity	Physical Condition Score	Functional Adequacy Score	Site Condition Score	Combined Weighted Score
POOR	Larrabee ES	1920	18,260	1.30	187	122%	**53**	**44**	87.5	53.8
	Sehome High	1966	175,623	40.5	1,003	79%	**50**	**68**	90.0	59.4
	Sunnyland ES**	1954	32,607	2.90	315	125%	**52**	**67**	95.5	60.9
	Lowell ES	1914	35,427	2.20	243	83%	**62**	**49**	91.0	61.0
	Happy Valley ES	1956	38,967	7.46	294	89%	**50**	**75**	85.5	61.1
	Parkview ES**	1957	33,882	4.10	269	84%	**56**	**67**	75.5	61.3
FAIR	Columbia ES	1925	35,041	3.00	280	111%	**62**	**67**	91.5	66.5
	Carl Cozier ES	1951	45,390	4.00	339	95%	**61**	**73**	89.5	67.5
	Alderwood ES	1956	49,106	10.68	306	92%	**64**	**75**	75.0	68.4
	Roosevelt ES	1972	50,140	14.20	419	97%	**66**	**77**	81.5	70.9
GOOD	Silver Beach ES	1977	48,364	10.00	416	102%	**77**	**84**	85.5	80.0
	Geneva ES	1982	52,014	8.80	385	84%	**85**	**76**	87.5	82.6
	Northern Heights ES	2002	50,108	16.00	427	98%	**94**	**96**	100.0	95.2
	Cordata ES	2011	54,000	20.00	466	98%	**100**	**97**	100.0	99.1
	Wade King ES	2008	50,640	16.00	463	97%	**100**	**97**	100.0	99.1
	Birchwood ES	1928	40,000	5.06	Under construction					
	Totals w/o Portables		809,569	166.20	5,812					
POOR	* Options High	NA	NA	2.9	89	NA	**NA**	**NA**	86	NA
	* District Office	1908	47,715	1.41			**NA**	**80**	99.5	NA

Note: Bellingham and Squalicum high schools, our four middle schools, and our recently built elementary schools were not evaluated because they are all relatively new.

* Options High School and the District Office were scored separately from our elementary schools and Sehome High due to the differences in these facilities. Options could not be rated in many categories because it is a collection of portables, not a facility.

** Although Sunnyland scored slightly lower than Parkview, the Task Force toured both facilities and determined Parkview had more urgent needs due to a shared gym and cafeteria.

Current Capacity = Classroom space without portables based on current enrollment.

Functional Adequacy Score = How the facilities support students' learning needs.