

Viola Gibson Alternative Feasibility Analysis

This handout outlines the alternative options explored to allow **Viola Gibson (VG)** to remain a PK–4 building. Each option was evaluated based on logistical feasibility, fiscal responsibility, and community impact. Following an extensive review, the following alternatives were deemed **infeasible** due to the structural, financial, and educational challenges detailed below.

Option 1: Repurpose the Educational Leadership Support Center (ELSC)

Proposal: Repurpose the ELSC into an Intermediate School for the Kennedy feeder pattern.

Rationale for Rejection:

- **Increased Costs:** We asked Shive-Hattery Architects to assess the required renovations and associated costs to transform the ELSC into an Intermediate School. They determined that approximately 100,000 square feet would be needed for essential areas, including a gym, cafeteria, kitchen, and additional bathrooms. In addition, the HVAC system would require a complete overhaul to meet airflow requirements for school buildings. Existing office layouts would also require renovation into functional classroom spaces.
 - The total project cost is projected between **\$20 to \$30 million**. Since financing such a massive undertaking would necessitate a voter-approved bond, it is not a feasible solution for the district’s immediate needs. Shive-Hattery assessed the ELSC as a potential intermediate school and determined it lacks sufficient space without displacing key functions (print shop, warehouse, TV studio, board room). They also concluded it would not convert well to a school environment, regardless of space.
 - **New District Office Space:** This would also require the district to renovate a former school building to be a new site for administrative offices. Large meeting spaces for district staff will also need to be rented or renovated.
 - If Wright was used, **\$8.3 million to \$12.4 million** for renovations, including office spaces, Board Room, group meeting spaces, print shop, TV studio, and updating bathroom fixtures. (approximately \$200-\$300 per square foot)
- **Total Cost:** Between renovations of the existing building and relocating the ELSC, the full cost is **\$30 to \$43 million**
- **Timeline:** This would be a multi-year construction project that does not meet immediate capacity needs.

Board Resolution Priorities				Viability Criteria		
Feeder	Geographic Proximity	Existing High School Boundaries	Enrollment Ballance	Operational Feasibility	Fiscal Stewardship	Programmatic Access

Option 2: Consolidate Grades 5–8 at Harding

Proposal: Make Harding a 5-8 school.

Rationale for Rejection:

- **Feasibility:** We had RSP analyze this opinion for feasibility.
 - All Area 3 students go to Harding as 5-8, and this would push Harding MS enrollment to 1,280 students, exceeding capacity (123% utilization). Current capacity is 1,038. This would require the use of portable classrooms or a building addition to add ~300 seats, to reach ~95% utilization.
 - **Portable classrooms cost around \$1 million to install and \$12,000 a month to rent.** However, we would also need to get “special exemptions” from the city to have portables for more than one year. At this time, the city doesn’t allow portable buildings to be a long-term solution.
 - If we add additional square feet to the building footprint, we would also be required to add a storm shelter per the new codes.
- **Feeder System:** This would mean abandoning the "true feeder" model, forcing Kennedy-area students to attend schools outside their boundary area.
- **Elementary Impact:** Returning Viola Gibson to K–4 would require redrawing all Kennedy feeder elementary boundaries, likely resulting in under-utilization at Maple Grove, Pierce, and Hiawatha
- **Facility Upgrades:** The Harding shared spaces, such as the cafeteria, auditorium, and gym, are not currently sized to accommodate a 5–8 population and require upgrades, **costing at least \$2 million.**
- **Total Cost:** Between renovations of the existing building and adding portables = **\$3 million plus \$12,000 per month in rent.**

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Option 3: Phased approach to new configuration - Area 3 remains PK-5, 6-8, 9-12 until 2030. All 6-8 grades go to one Area 3 middle school. This is based on Scenario 2 boundaries.

Rationale for Rejection:

- Inconsistent student experience across the district.
- Inconsistent staffing across the district.
- Transportation based on start and end times
- Delay in realizing advantages of new model for Area 3 students and families:
 - Access to fine arts for 5th graders.
 - Access to consistent extracurricular athletics in grades 5 and 6
 - Developmentally appropriate daily experience
 - Increased transition support
 - Preschool access in every elementary school

NOTE: RSP is studying the impact of this option.

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			Harding would be significantly bigger than	Different bell schedules. Impact on transportation. Staffing concerns for shared buildings.		

Critical Impact of Maintaining VG as an Elementary School

Should the district move to keep Viola Gibson as an elementary building, the following consequences must be considered:

- **Closure of Pierce Elementary:** To balance the footprint, Pierce would likely face closure. The Pierce community has already engaged in the process; reversing course now would create significant instability for those families without a secondary window for feedback.
- **Equity of Impact:** While Viola Gibson's families would see a change in grade structure (moving to a new building after two years), Pierce's families would lose their school entirely.

Renovation Requirements for Viola Gibson

To successfully transition Viola Gibson to an **Intermediate School**, a series of strategic facility updates would be needed to ensure the building is age-appropriate, functional, and supportive of a middle-level curriculum. These include:

- All main-level, in-classroom bathrooms will be reconfigured to open directly into the hallway, not the classroom. Updates to existing fixtures will also be required.
- Three existing rooms will be fully renovated to create specialized spaces for band, orchestra, and choir.
- Minor aesthetic updates throughout the facility to provide a fresh, updated environment

Total cost estimate: \$250,000 - \$400,000

Area One Alternatives

This handout outlines the alternative Area 1 options explored to create even greater enrollment balance across the area, including opportunities to increase enrollment at Washington High School. Each option was developed by RSP & Associates and includes their recommendation regarding feasibility.

Option 4: Add ALL of Kenwood to the Washington feeder pattern

Proposal: Shift Kenwood Elementary School's boundary into the Washington feeder pattern to increase enrollment at Washington HS.

Rationale for Rejection (from RSP):

- Year 5 Impact: Does not meet balance targets at intermediate and middle schools.
 - Intermediate: Franklin ↑ 100% | Viola Gibson ↓ 68%
 - Middle School: McKinley ↑ 94% | Harding ↓ 43%
 - High School: Washington ↑ 84% | Kennedy ↓ 51%

Option 5: Add 75% of Kenwood to the Washington feeder pattern

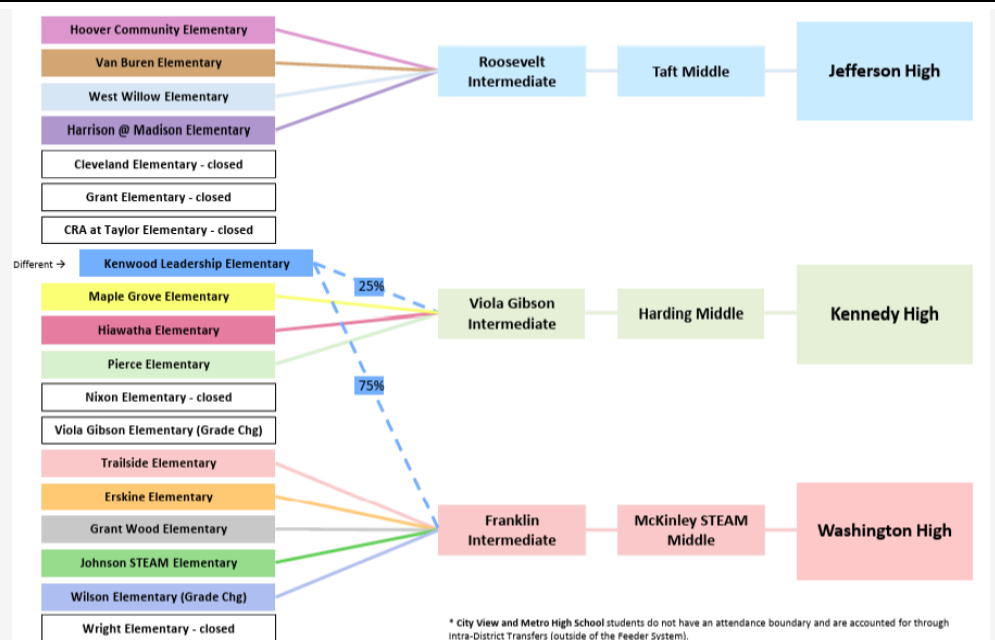
Proposal: Shift Kenwood Elementary School's boundary into the Washington feeder pattern to increase enrollment at Washington HS. There are two possible scenarios for this option that RSP analyzed:

- All of Kenwood is not feasible. An alternative is to split Kenwood students, starting in 5th grade, between the Washington and Kennedy feeders to better balance HS enrollment.

Rationale for Rejection (from RSP):

- While a split feeder model improves overall balance, it conflicts with the Board's priorities and the committee's commitment to creating a complete feeder system.

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Feeder	Geographic Proximity	Existing HS Boundaries	Enrollment Ballance	Operational Feasibility	Fiscal Stewardship	Programmatic Access



Option 6: Add all of Kenwood to the Washington feeder pattern, but split at the IS/MS level, return at HS level back to Washington

Proposal: Increase Enrollment at Washington HS

If full reassignment is not feasible, split Kenwood ES using student clusters to balance enrollment between Washington and Kennedy feeders, bringing them all back to Washington for HS.

Rationale for Rejection (from RSP):

- The request to shift all of Kenwood ES to WHS **can be accommodated to increase enrollment**. However, a full reassignment of Kenwood ES to the Washington HS feeder pattern is **not viable**, as it would create significant imbalance at the intermediate and middle school levels.
- To maintain balanced utilization, some Kenwood students must remain assigned to Viola Gibson IS and Harding MS rather than Franklin IS and McKinley MS.
- With all of Kenwood students being assigned to Washington HS, **Kennedy drops below 1,000 students in 2029/2030**.

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