



Facilities & Long-Range Planning Committee

COMMISSIONING DOCUMENT

2026 – 2027

Summary

Mead School District stands at an inflection point. The community values public education, schools are well-maintained, and two successful construction bonds in the last decade have served to continue the community's ongoing commitment to modern educational facilities that serve students well. However, a set of new circumstances and converging realities demand deliberate, thoughtful, community-informed long-range planning.

- The district has experienced three consecutive years of kindergarten enrollment below (already conservative) projections despite significant new residential construction; and
- Mead Learning Options (MLO) alternative learning program has experienced rapid growth to approximately 1,000 students, and the Pittsburg Learning Center, which houses about 650 of those MLO students is deteriorating and its long-term use is limited; and
- The district has a cluster of four elementary schools, all originally constructed over 50 years ago, with varying levels of deficiencies and challenges - but all in need of attention.

This document establishes the framework for a community-based Facilities and Long-Range Planning Committee. Drawing on the structure of Mead's prior Facilities Planning Committee processes (2016-2017 and 2022-2023), and the district's October 2025 State Study & Survey (prepared in compliance with WAC 392-341-025) this framework proposes a structured process culminating in an advisory Final Report to the Board of Directors - one intended to inform the prospect of a ballot initiative in the 2030 to 2032 timeframe.

The District's history with community-based facilities planning is genuinely strong. Successful bond measures in recent years - and the schools/facilities they produced - stand as evidence that when the district invests in a thorough, inclusive planning process, the community responds. The district must continue to earn community trust by asking the right questions, showing its work, engaging skeptics, and making a credible case for responsible investment.

This planning cycle is more complex than those in recent memory. The enrollment picture is less clear. The MLO/ALE question is complex and has no easy answer. Deciding if (or which) aging elementary schools need modernization represents a substantial financial commitment in a period of enrollment uncertainty. And the voters that will consider any eventual ballot measure are older, more diverse in its schooling preferences, and (seemingly) more attentive to tax burden than in the past.

The factors, considered in the aggregate, make the work of the Facilities and Long-Range Planning Committee vitally important and particularly consequential. The district needs a process with the credibility to produce a recommendation the Board can act on with confidence, and a community engaged and equipped to support that action.

Five Critical Realities for This Planning Cycle

1. **KINDERGARTEN SIGNAL:** Kindergarten enrollment has come in below district projections for three consecutive years - even as more than 1,000 new apartment units have been constructed within district boundaries. The expected relationship between housing growth and student yield has not materialized, raising important questions about the district's long-term enrollment trajectory.
2. **MLO GROWTH:** The Mead Learning Options (MLO) program has grown to approximately 1,000 students (~10% of district enrollment), making it one of the larger Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs in Eastern Washington. This growth is ongoing and shows no signs of reversal.
3. **PITTSBURG LEARNING CENTER - URGENT:** The Pittsburg Learning Center, which houses approximately 650 MLO students, has an ICOS (Washington's "Information/**C**ondition **O**f **S**chools" database) building score of 53.75% (Fair/Poor) - the lowest of any district facility - with serious deficiencies in exterior windows, wall finishes, flooring, and HVAC. The district accepted state funds to replace the building, so it is a non-recognized facility for State Assistance purposes, compounding funding challenges.
4. **FOUR AGING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:** Brentwood, Evergreen, Farwell, and Colbert elementary schools are age-eligible for State-assisted modernization or replacement. The October 2025 Study & Survey estimates their combined replacement/modernization cost at approximately \$223.6 million in 2030 dollars.
5. **BOND CAPACITY:** MSD has remaining voted debt capacity of approximately \$443 million. Current bond service costs \$1.122 per \$1,000 assessed value, with voted debt maturing in December 2037 - providing a potential opportunity for a bond at a manageable tax rate overlay in the 2030-2032 timeframe.

Part I: Background and Context

1.1 District Overview

Mead School District serves a large geographic area in north Spokane County, Washington. With approximately 10,500 students, 10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and several non-traditional program facilities, MSD is one of the larger districts in Eastern Washington. The district has invested significantly in its physical plant - the 2015 bond resulted in Shiloh Hills and Midway ES modernizations, Northwood MS replacement, and other projects; the 2018 bond delivered Skyline ES, Creekside ES, Highland MS, a new Transportation Cooperative, and a new Maintenance Building. These investments show the overall average ICOS condition score for MSD schools is Good/Good (89.50 buildings, 89.92 sites).

The aggregate masks important variation, however, and it is that variation - particularly at the lower end of the ICOS condition score spectrum - that the committee must squarely address. **The district's task is not to build more where building is not needed, but to modernize what is aging and failing, right-size what enrollment data demands, and define the district's commitment to the future of Alternative Learning Experience offerings (i.e. - MLO programs), which is the one segment of the district seeing growth.**

1.2 Enrollment History and the Kindergarten “Signal”

MSD's enrollment history over the past two decades can be summarized in four phases. From 2006 to 2014, the district grew modestly at 0.4% annually. From 2014 to 2019, growth accelerated to 1.5% annually, reaching a peak of 10,243 students. The pandemic brought a 2.1% contraction from 2019 to 2024, settling enrollment at 10,500. Since 2021, K-5 enrollment has been essentially flat, 6-8 has grown modestly, and 9-12 has declined slightly.

The most important leading indicator is kindergarten enrollment. For three consecutive years, actual kindergarten headcounts have fallen short of district projections (current kindergarten enrollment – as this document is being finalized in May 2026 – is also *concerningly* low). Kindergartners today are the 6th graders of 2030 and the high school seniors of 2037. These smaller-than-projected cohorts will ripple through every grade level for more than a decade.

What makes this particularly challenging is that the shortfall has occurred simultaneously with substantial new residential construction - more than 1,000 new apartment units within district boundaries, alongside a modest number of new single-family homes. The traditional assumption that housing growth drives student enrollment growth has not held. The committee must investigate why: **Are new multi-family units attracting families/individuals without school-age children? Are home prices driving families keeping families (that is, families with young children) from settling within district boundaries? Is the growth in MLO drawing students from outside the district, or mostly intra-district transfers? Are birth rates in the area declining faster than previously projected? Are families making different schooling choices (private, home-based, virtual)?**

Enrollment Projection Scenarios — October 2025 Study & Survey

LOW-END (Most Likely): Enrollment declines modestly through 2026-2027 (~0.27% annually), stabilizes in 2027, then grows at ~0.33% annually through 2030 and ~0.5% annually through 2036. Total 2036 enrollment: ~10,384 (+351 from today). Under this scenario, no new school construction is necessary, but the four aging elementary schools remain top priorities.

HIGH-END (Optimistic): Enrollment declines slightly through 2026, then grows at 0.6% annually through 2030 and 1.0% through 2036. Total 2036 enrollment: ~10,859 (+826 from today). This scenario would generate need for new facilities at each grade span.

STUDY & SURVEY CONCLUSION: The low-end scenario is the most likely near-term outcome. The committee may choose to develop capital program options for both scenarios, explicitly identifying which investments are sound under the low scenario and those which depend on the higher scenario materializing.

1.3 The Mead Learning Options (MLO) Program

MLO is Mead's Alternative Learning Experience (ALE), governed by WAC 392-550. ALE programs provide a certificated teacher-supported written student learning plan (WSLP) for each enrolled student, often with a significant home-based or hybrid learning component. MLO has grown to approximately 1,000 students just shy of 10% of the district's total enrollment - and represents one of the larger ALE programs in Eastern Washington.

ALE growth is a statewide trend that accelerated during the pandemic and has not reversed. Families who discovered flexible or home-based learning during school closures have in many cases remained enrolled. Other families were always looking for alternatives to traditional schools and are finding them as ALE programs mature and gain academic credibility. The committee must understand this program is not simply a peripheral offering but an important educational option in Mead that a significant and growing portion of the district's families are actively choosing.

1.4 The Pittsburg Learning Center: The District's Most Pressing Capital Issue

The Pittsburg Learning Center occupies the old Northwood Middle School, a building with roots back to 1958 and piecemeal additions through 2005. At present, it is classified as a “non-recognized” facility, meaning it generates no OSPI matching fund eligibility - a significant financial constraint that makes any investment *entirely* a local responsibility. There are also (statutory) limitations on building use that preclude the building from ever being used for traditional K-12 academic programs; this is another significant limitation that must be taken into consideration.

Pittsburg Learning Center - ICOS Condition Summary (September 2025)

Building Score: 53.75% (Fair - approaching Poor). **Site Score:** 59.44% (Poor-to-Fair).

Specific deficiencies flagged at Poor or Unsatisfactory: exterior windows (30%), roofing (30%), wall finishes (30%), flooring (0% - Unsatisfactory), HVAC heating and cooling, electrical systems, interior partitions and finishes.

Current occupancy: ~650 MLO students (the additional ~300 students enrolled virtually do not attend on site).

State Assistance eligibility: NONE - non-recognized facility status.

Status relative to other district facilities: Lowest-scoring building in the district by a significant margin. The next-lowest recognized school is Mead Senior High (78.78%), a 25-point gap.

The PLC challenge is multi-dimensional. The building generates increasing maintenance costs while offering limited long-term viability. The program it houses is growing, not declining. And the students enrolled (families who have chosen a non-traditional educational model) deserve a facility that reflects the district's investment in their program.

Apart from the most pressing issue (MLO/PLC), Brentwood, Evergreen, Farwell, and Colbert (and to a lesser degree, Meadow Ridge) elementary schools share a common challenge: they are old, they carry the physical and programmatic liabilities of their age, and they are now eligible for State-assisted modernization or replacement. The committee must evaluate the need to address the limitations of these buildings, assess the viability of the district's current support for 10 separate elementary schools in light of recent enrollment trends, and consider the possibility of repurposing an existing elementary for use as an ALE facility – especially if current enrollment trends persist.

School	Bldg Score	Site Score	Original Construction	Est. Cost (2030\$)
Brentwood ES	87.90% (Good)	90.00% (Good)	1968 (mod. 1993, add. 2002)	\$55.9M mod/replace
Evergreen ES	87.97% (Good)	90.00% (Good)	1961 (adds 1991–2002)	\$55.9M mod/replace
Farwell ES	82.32% (Good/Fair)	80.45% (Good/Fair)	Pre-1979 core (adds through 2002)	\$55.9M mod/replace
Colbert ES	75.66% (Good/Fair)	82.82% (Good)	1970 (adds 2000)	\$55.9M mod/addition
Total (4 schools)	—	—	—	~\$223.6M combined

Note: Evergreen's 1961 building section carries a moderate seismic risk designation under the 2025 EPAT assessment – an additional urgency factor. Mead High School (78.78% building score) and Mount Spokane HS (88.96%) are also worth monitoring; Mead's 1972 sections carry moderate seismic risk.

Five broad options are explored below (with acknowledgement that other options may surface), and the committee must not only explore the community's values regarding these options, but the operational viability of each:

- Option A: Construct a new purpose-built MLO facility; this would be a building designed for the ALE programs, potentially at a new site. Represents a higher upfront cost, but with a better long-term outcome. Offers a path to State Assistance recognition (long-term) if the facility is classified appropriately.
- Option B: Distributed model: MLO students served across multiple existing or even leased facilities. Reduces single-facility concentration risk but may fragment program culture, is contrary to current program planning, and significantly increases staffing costs.
- Option C: Hybrid/phased approach: Start with targeted maintenance (capital levy?) and improvements at the PLC, while planning a longer-term replacement.
- Option D: Modernization of the four aging elementary schools (minor improvements/updates at Meadow Ridge?)
- Option E: Engage in a comprehensive boundary review with intent to repurpose an existing elementary school, exploring the possibility of repurposing an existing facility to house ALE programs.
- Option F: ??

1.5 Potential 2030 Bond Scope (from October 2025 Study & Survey)

The Study & Survey identifies the following as potential bond projects (costs in 2030 dollars, with no State Assistance assumed pending eligibility review):

- Brentwood ES Modernization/Expansion or Replacement: ~66,000 sq. ft. - \$55.9M
- Evergreen ES Modernization/Expansion or Replacement: ~66,000 sq. ft. - \$55.9M
- Farwell ES Modernization/Expansion or Replacement: ~66,000 sq. ft. - \$55.9M
- Colbert ES Modernization/Addition: ~66,000 sq. ft. - \$55.9M
- MLO/Pittsburg facility resolution (not included in Study & Survey - must be added to committee scope)

The committee's task is to test these projects against enrollment data/trends, community priorities, and financial realities - and to determine if/when a bond makes sense, which belong in a bond package, which could/should wait, and how to address MLO facilities in a way that is equitable and financially sound.

Part II: Committee Purpose, Structure, and Charge

2.1 Purpose and Charge

The Facilities and Long-Range Planning Committee would serve as an advisory body, authorized by Board Resolution, charged with studying enrollment data/trends alongside the district's long-range capital facility needs and making recommendations to the Board of Directors. The committee's specific charge includes:

- Reviewing and interpreting the district's enrollment trends and projections, with particular attention to the kindergarten signal and MLO/ALE growth.
- Reviewing the physical condition of all district facilities, prioritizing those with the most pressing needs.
- Studying the MLO/PLC question in depth, including hearing directly from MLO families and staff and understanding the district's commitment to these educational offerings.
- Understanding the district's financial capacity, including bond capacity, State Assistance eligibility, and probable tax rate impacts alongside the larger tax reality (historical and current).
- Developing a prioritized list of capital projects for Board consideration.
- Explore the possibility of proposing a bond package scenario (or scenarios) with respective projected tax rate impact.
- Conducting community forums and reporting community input as part of the final report.

The Facilities and Long-Range Planning Committee does **not** have decision-making authority. All decisions regarding capital projects, bond initiatives, and facility changes (and to some extent, boundary changes) rest with the Board of Directors. The role of the committee is to inform and equip the Board to make the best possible decision.

2.2 Recommended Composition

Effective facilities planning committees reflect the full range of community stakeholders.

Potential Stakeholder Group	Notes / Rationale
Parents — Traditional Schools (K-12)	Proportional representation across elementary, middle, and high school; geographic diversity across attendance areas is essential.
Parents — MLO Program	Dedicated MLO parent seats are critical given MLO's scale and the pressing Pittsburgh question.
Community Members at Large	Voters without children in MSD; brings taxpayer perspective.
Business Community	Local business owners or leaders; economic growth perspective and bond tax rate realism.
Senior / Retired Residents	Fixed-income taxpayer perspective; important counterbalance to growth-focused voices.
MSD Staff	Facilitators (Supt., Asst. Supt., Director of Facilities & Maintenance), financial analyst, instructional representative.
Board Liaison	One Board member attends to ensure alignment (no more than two at any time, to avoid OPMA issues); should avoid unduly influencing committee deliberations, as the committee will make recommendations for the board's consideration.

Recommended total committee size: 20–25 members. A Chair and Co-Chair should be elected from among members at the first meeting. The application process will be open to the full community; district leadership team selects final members after reviewing applications.

2.3 Member Expectations and Commitment

Membership represents a significant volunteer commitment. Members agree to:

- Prioritize attendance at scheduled meetings (approximately 10-15 sessions, typically 2 hours each, one evening per month during active phases).
- Review distributed materials before each meeting.
- Approach the work with an open mind, prioritizing district-wide needs over advocacy for any single school or program.
- Maintain confidentiality during deliberations and acknowledge that the committee is advisory only.
- Actively participate in community forums as representatives of the committee's work.

Part III: Meeting Plan (2026–2027)

3.1 Phase Overview

The process is organized into five phases, each building on the previous and moving from orientation and information-gathering toward analysis, prioritization, community engagement, and a final report. The schedule below assumes a September 2026 launch, contingent on action by the Board of Directors to commission the work of the committee.

Five-Phase Structure at a Glance

PHASE 1 - ORIENTATION & FOUNDATION: Committee formation, bylaws, orientation. Build a shared factual foundation. Introduce the Study & Survey. Deep introduction to the MLO program.

PHASE 2 - FACILITY DEEP DIVES: Systematic site visits and condition briefings for every district facility. Extended attention to Pittsburg and the four aging elementary schools.

PHASE 3 - ENROLLMENT, DEMOGRAPHICS & FINANCE: Enrollment projection analysis, growth trend investigations (including the kindergarten shortfall question), bond capacity, tax rate modeling, State Assistance rules.

PHASE 4 - PRIORITIZATION & SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT: Scoring system application, preliminary prioritization, bond option development, Interim Report, Board work/study session.

PHASE 5 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FINAL REPORT: Public forums, committee refinement of recommendations, Final Report to the Board.

3.2 Detailed Meeting Schedule

#	Approx. Date	Meeting Topic	Key Work / Outcomes
PHASE 1 — ORIENTATION & FOUNDATION (Months 1–2)			
1	Sept. 2026	Organizational Meeting: Welcome & Orientation	Board Resolution review; intro to 18-month process; roles and responsibilities; election of Chair/Co-Chair; review of expectations and meeting norms.

		Prior Bond History: What Was Built & What Was Deferred	Review of 2015 and 2018 bond measures and outcomes. What was promised, delivered, and deferred. District's track record on bond stewardship – build credibility for the process.
		Facilities Overview: The October 2025 Study & Survey	Introduction to the State Study & Survey (guest – NAC Architecture?). What it is, how ICOS scoring works, what it tells us. Overall district condition profile. Identify the outliers – high and low.
		Role of Portables & Non-Recognized Facilities	Inventory of portable classrooms district wide. How portables affect State Assistance eligibility. Overview of non-recognized facilities and why that status matters for funding.
2	Oct. 2026	District Educational Programs & Space Standards	How buildings support instructional programs. Space standards for modern educational facilities. Overview of each program type: traditional, CTE, special education, ALE, athletics.
		Deep Dive: Mead Learning Options (MLO) Program	MLO program overview by program leadership. Enrollment history and current size. Growth drivers. WAC 392-550 requirements. Current facility situation. Q&A with MLO staff and parents.

PHASE 2 — FACILITY DEEP DIVES (Months 3–6)

3	Nov. 2026	Elementary Schools	Condition overview for next-tier elementary schools.
		Middle Schools	Middle school capacity and enrollment context. Discussion of whether New Middle School #4 need is real (see Study & Survey document).
		High Schools	Mead High (78.78% - lowest recognized school; 1972 structure with moderate seismic risk). Mt. Spokane (88.96%). CTE program space adequacy. Long-range secondary planning implications.
	Feb. 2027	★ SITE VISIT: Brentwood & Farwell Elementary Schools??	Site tour and condition presentation for both age-eligible schools. History of prior modernizations. Current ICOS deficiencies. Enrollment context for surrounding neighborhoods.
		★ SITE VISIT: Evergreen & Colbert Elementary Schools??	Site tour and condition presentations. Evergreen's 1961 structure carries moderate seismic risk.
	Mar. 2027	★ SITE VISIT: Pittsburg Learning Center	Extended site tour and condition briefing – the district's most challenged facility. MLO staff present. Direct observation of building deficiencies.
		MLO / ALE Deep Dive	What purpose-built ALE facilities look like in comparable districts (Issaquah, Bethel). What MLO families say they need. Formal options analysis for Pittsburg.

PHASE 3 — ENROLLMENT, DEMOGRAPHICS & FINANCE

	April 2027	Enrollment History & OSPI Cohort Projections	Grade-by-grade enrollment trends. The kindergarten shortfall – formal presentation of three years of
--	------------	--	--

			below-projection data. What the data (both local and national) is telling us.
		Growth Trends: Housing, Demographics & Student Yield	Guest: Spokane County Planning Department. New residential development within the district. Multi-family housing and student yield rates. Why new apartments haven't produced expected enrollment. Birth rate trends in Spokane County.
		MLO Enrollment Trends & the ALE Landscape Statewide	MLO enrollment growth curve and projections. Why families choose ALE. Is MLO's growth likely to continue, plateau, or eventually decline? What does each scenario mean for facilities?
	May 2027	Enrollment Scenarios & Capacity Analysis	Formal presentation of low-end and high-end scenarios. District-wide capacity review by grade span. Which schools are over/under-enrolled relative to capacity? Review school boundaries.
		School Attendance Boundaries	Understanding school enrollment/attendance boundaries – feeder patterns, inter/intra-district procedures. Implications (ramifications) of shifting boundaries based on population changes.
		Bond Financing & Probable Tax Rates	Guest: Public finance specialists (e.g. - DA Davidson or Piper Sandler). Current bond capacity (~\$443M voted remaining). Existing debt service schedule (voted debt matures 12/2037). How bond size translates to tax rate. Community tax threshold discussion.
		State School Construction Assistance (SCAP); Construction Cost Estimating & Escalation	Understanding SCAP; Consultant presentation: how project costs are estimated. 2030 escalation factors. Construction market conditions in Eastern WA. Cost per square foot benchmarks. How delay costs money.
PHASE 4 — PRIORITIZATION & SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT			
	June 2027	Committee Work Session: Questions & Information Gaps. Facility Priorities Discussion	Open session for unresolved questions, additional data requests, and emerging concerns before the prioritization phase begins. Ensure all committee members feel prepared to score and prioritize. Review goals and expectations in relation to the process and information received.
		Review Straw Poll Results & Develop First Cut List	Presentation of results. What rose to the top? Qualitative discussion: Does the committee agree with the mathematical rankings, or are there factors that should adjust them?
		Develop Option Scenarios	Present and discuss scenarios
		Options for voted debt (bond or capital levy): Community Threshold & Taxpayer Reality	Diligent and thorough examination of tax burden. Comparable levy/bond rates in Spokane County. Equity considerations: fixed-income residents, renters vs. property owners. What is realistic for Mead taxpayers?

	Sept. 2027	Refine Options: Preliminary Package	Committee selects a preferred option and identifies conditional items. What must be in bond or capital levy package? What can wait?
		Draft Interim Report: Working Session	Committee drafts the Interim Report: summary of findings, preliminary project list, preliminary bond or capital levy option, questions remaining for Board input.
	Oct. 2027	★ INTERIM REPORT: Work/Study Session with Board of Directors	Formal presentation of Interim Report to the Board. Board provides feedback and direction. Committee reconvenes to incorporate Board input before community forums.
	Nov. 2027	Incorporate Board Feedback & Adjust Scenarios	Review Board's response to Interim Report. Adjust bond options or project prioritization as warranted. Finalize recommendation to take to community forums.
		Prepare for Community Forums: Materials & Messaging	Develop plain-language community forum materials. Practice presentations. Prepare for likely community questions. Designate committee members as forum leads.
PHASE 5 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FINAL REPORT			
		★ COMMUNITY FORUM #1	Open public forum. Committee presents findings and preliminary recommendation. Structured Q&A. Written comment collection. All community members welcome.
		★ COMMUNITY FORUM #2	Second public forum in a different geographic area. Same format as Forum #1.
		Review Community Forum Feedback	Committee reviews all three forums' input. What did community affirm? What was surprising? Were there concerns requiring adjustment to the recommendation?
		Finalize Project List & Recommendation	Committee finalizes recommended project list, bond package, and rationale. Note any dissenting views for inclusion in final report.
		Draft Final Report to the Board	Formal drafting: executive summary, process overview, findings, prioritized project list, option recommendation, community forum summary, minority views.
		Review & Finalize Final Report	Committee reviews and approves final report language. Chair and Co-Chair designated to present to the Board.
	Feb./Mar. 2028	★ FINAL REPORT PRESENTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS	Formal presentation of committee's Final Report. Board deliberates and takes action on bond election date and scope. Committee's work is complete.

Part IV: Critical Questions the Committee Must Address

4.1 The Enrollment Question

The fundamental issue: What is Mead's realistic enrollment trajectory over the next 10 - 15 years? The committee must honestly engage with a couple critical - and competing - narratives: (1) Current dips in enrollment are a hangover from Pandemic-related issues; some of the issues are wrapped up in complex, but temporary political frustration causing families to seek educational alternatives; (2) demographic change has structurally altered enrollment trajectories; single-family home prices are not attainable for many young families which has contributed to lower than expected enrollment – we must plan for managed stability or even an extended period of decline; and (2) MLO is genuine growth, just not traditional-school growth, and should be treated as a driver of capital investment in the same way as traditional enrollment.

4.2 The MLO/Pittsburg Question

The Pittsburg Learning Center may be the committee's most urgent and most complex challenge. The status quo is not sustainable – both practically and in accordance with OSPI directives related to facility use.

Most importantly, the committee must apply an equity standard: Are MLO students being served in buildings comparable in quality to those used by traditional school students? The honest answer (at least, given the PLC facility's 53.75% ICOS score) is clearly no – a reality the committee should plainly acknowledge and seek to address in any final recommendation to the board.

4.3 The Aging Elementary School Question

Four elementary schools may be in need of modernization or replacement. But under the lower enrollment scenario, the district may not be able to demonstrate housing need for all four simultaneously under OSPI's State Assistance criteria. The committee must examine whether all four should be in the same bond cycle or phased, whether 'modernize' or 'replace' is the right answer for each, and whether any of these capital assets could be repurposed in recognition of continued enrollment decline.

4.4 The Bond Sizing Question (if a bond is the selected option)

Bond capacity is not the same as community willingness to support a tax increase (and, importantly, a capital levy has significant limitations). The committee must understand current tax rates in context, how a new bond overlays on existing debt service, what the realistic community threshold is, and how construction cost escalation changes the calculus of pushing necessary construction out into the future – construction costs are not decreasing, and rarely (if ever) have. The committee must consider the reality that a bond too large to pass is worse than no bond at all.

Part V: Lessons from Comparable Districts

5.1 ALE Program Facility Planning

Several Washington districts have navigated ALE growth challenges. Issaquah SD saw its ALE program grow past 1,200 students before investing in a purpose-built campus and found that years of students in substandard conditions were a lasting source of community dissatisfaction. Bethel SD's dedicated bond line item for ALE facilities was transparent and was important to a growing segment of their community (which helped pass the bond). The overarching lesson: in the modern era, many school districts are grappling with the reality of needing to treat ALE facility questions with the same strategic seriousness as

traditional school facilities. Decisions to invest must be made before the operational problems become a crisis.

5.2 Enrollment Projection Discipline

The most common failure mode in school capital planning is allowing optimistic enrollment projections to drive oversized capital programs. Several Eastern Washington school districts built facilities in the 2010s based on growth that didn't materialize. Districts around the state and nation are experiencing similar (declining) enrollment trends.

5.3 The Equity Lens

Modern school capital planning in Washington state requires explicit attention to equity - not only racial equity (addressed in the Study & Survey's demographic section) but equity in facility quality across programs, geographic equity in modernization investment across the district, and temporal equity for students/families who have waited longest for improved, modern school facilities. The committee should establish an explicit equity standard early: What does 'equitable' mean for Mead students, and will the committee's recommendations meet that standard?

Part VI: Deliverables

6.1 Interim Report to the Board (potentially in May 2027)

The Interim Report is the committee's midpoint checkpoint with the Board. It should include: a summary of information gathered to date; a preliminary prioritized list of capital needs; at least two preliminary option scenarios; identification of unresolved questions requiring Board guidance; and a summary of committee discussions reflecting the range of perspectives.

6.2 Final Report to the Board (February/March 2028?)

The Final Report is the committee's primary deliverable. It should be comprehensive yet accessible and written to adequately inform a Board that needs to make major capital decisions, and for a community that will most likely be presented with a ballot measure. Contents: executive summary suitable for public distribution; process overview; full findings on enrollment, facilities, and finance; prioritized project list with cost estimates and recommended timeline; recommended bond package with tax rate impact; community forum summary; minority views (if any); and appendices including meeting minutes and attendance records.

The Committee and the Bond Campaign: An Important Distinction

The Facilities and Long-Range Planning Committee is an advisory body, not a campaign organization. Its credibility - and therefore its usefulness - depends on being rigorous, balanced, and transparent. Individual members may choose to support or oppose a ballot measure on their own time, but the committee itself cannot advocate for a specific election outcome. The committee's greatest contribution is the legitimacy that comes from a process the community recognizes as transparent, honest, balanced, and inclusive.