

SCHOOL CLOSURE RECOMMENDATION TECHNICAL GUIDE: LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4871 Liberty Road S, Salem, OR 97306

INFORMATION ¹	DETAILS
2026 - 2027 ENROLLMENT	359 STUDENTS
BUILDING CAPACITY	588 STUDENTS
SITE ACREAGE	6.02 ACRES
ENROLLMENT TREND	DECLINING
YEAR OF ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION	1908



Why is Liberty being recommended for closure?

Within the Sprague feeder, elementary enrollment is low enough that the district should close at least one elementary school. Liberty’s building and campus present significant limitations relative to access, transportation, safety, and security. Liberty is under-enrolled and is located in close proximity to other elementary schools with extra capacity, presenting an opportunity to consolidate resources, improve operational efficiencies, and invest more strategically in educational programs and student supports across fewer sites.

Capital Investment Needs

The cost of replacing all assets and/or systems nearing the end of their useful life at this school (with escalation) is approximately \$2.9 M within the next five (5) years.

Cost estimates reflect like-for-like replacement of existing systems only. They exclude necessary educational adequacy improvements, seismic upgrades, most ADA improvements, interior finishes, and the addition of new systems to bring the building to modern standards.

Upcoming capital needs include:

- Many HVAC units are past their expected service life and due for replacement.
- Water heater and heating water pump replacements will soon be necessary.
- Exterior wood siding, metal panel siding, and concrete blocking is deteriorating and/or damaged, and requires assessment and repair.
- Exterior doors are in poor condition and due for replacement.

- The covered play structure is actively rusting with a plywood ceiling in poor condition.
- Cracks are present in the concrete masonry units of the boiler room.
- The gym floor requires refinishing.
- Sidewalks around the school require repaving.
- Single-pane windows are present throughout the building resulting in reduced thermal insulation and lower energy efficiency.

School Site Limitations

Disconnected buildings on the campus create access, inclusion, and safety challenges. Fifth grade classrooms are in a detached building with no restroom facilities, cut off from the rest of the school. Students must cross in front of the school daily to reach the detached gym and music building with no visibility from the main office.



Students walk in front of building to reach gym / music

¹ Enrollment and capacity figures reflect the most current data available and may differ from figures included in the 2025-26 Long-Range Facilities Plan. Enrollment changes over time, and capacity figures may be updated as facility use, programs and other factors change.



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Transportation and Access

Transportation challenges include loading zone hazards and other limitations. The bus loop at the front of the school is undersized; overflow buses queue along Liberty Road, causing congestion. The loading zone is not sized to accommodate all of the buses currently assigned to it, leaving some buses to wait in the left-turn refuge lane until space opens up. A breezeway cover extends into the bus overhang (within three feet of the bus path) creating a hazard during loading and unloading. Additionally, more than 60% of students live in a transportation zone either because of distance or hazards to reach the campus on foot. These same factors may also impact families' ability to access the school.

Educational Adequacy

- The building's design and layout do not include open pods or extended learning areas by design, limiting the ability for students to collaborate or engage in small group work outside of general classrooms.
- Disconnected buildings on the campus create access, inclusion, and security challenges.
- Nearly all classrooms lack cooling, leading to uncomfortable thermal conditions on warm days.
- Acoustical challenges are present in areas, such as offices, the cafeteria, and the speech room.
- The library is dated in appearance and has fixed mid-floor shelving that limits the flexibility of the space. Additionally, a portion of the library is used for storing large items that cannot be moved between floors due to the lack of elevator and non-functioning lift.

Equity and Demographics

School Demographics

Student demographic factors at Liberty relative to district-wide averages for elementary schools are listed below:

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	LIBERTY ELEMENTARY	DISTRICT AVE - ELEM SCHOOLS
STUDENTS OF COLOR	50%	65%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	19%	20%
ENGLISH LEARNERS	7%	28%
EXPERIENCING POVERTY	45%	60%

Barriers to Access and Inclusion

- Disconnected buildings on the campus create access and inclusion challenges.
- Multiple areas are not wheelchair accessible, including part of the cafeteria and the library. The cafeteria's serving line requires the use of steep ramps. There is not a student health room with a dedicated ADA restroom.

Enrollment and Utilization

Liberty is under-enrolled, with a current utilization rate of 61%. Enrollment is projected to continue to decline through 2032.

Operational Efficiency and Financial Stability

Liberty has lower than average operating costs per student, compared to other district elementary schools.



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Ramp to enter servery area is not wheelchair accessible

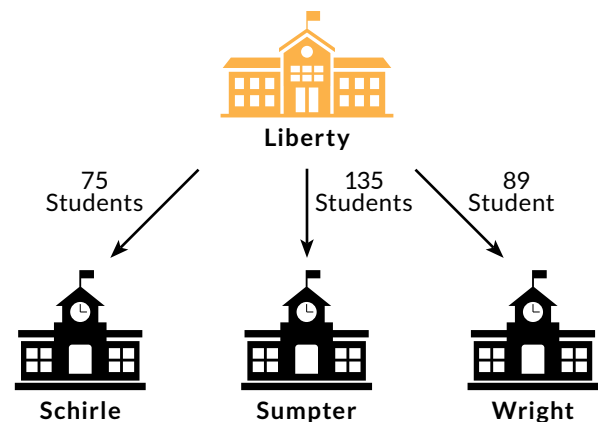
Program Relocations

If closed, Liberty's Educational Resource Center (ERC) special education class for grades 3-5 is tentatively planned to move to Battle Creek Elementary. Battle Creek Elementary is one of the district's newest elementary schools with accessible features and air conditioning throughout the building for year-round thermal comfort.

School Boundary Adjustment Considerations

As a starting point for the public process, an initial boundary adjustment concept has been developed. In this concept, the boundary for Liberty would be divided geographically between Sumpter, Schirle, and Wright. All students within the new Wright boundary will attend Judson. High school boundaries are not affected by this change. This boundary concept better aligns the geographic proximity of students to their school and balances enrollment in this area. A map illustrating this concept may be viewed at <https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/schools/closure-consolidation>; more information will be provided in the boundary process.

The school boundary adjustment process will include multiple listening and learning sessions with affected families and the community. A stakeholder-based committee will provide school boundary recommendations designed to keep receiving schools appropriately utilized while maintaining flexibility for future enrollment fluctuations, minimizing the need for blended classrooms. Per the School Board's direction, boundary adjustments will prioritize equitable proximity to schools across the district, avoiding excessive travel distances for students. Effective transition planning will help ensure the school community's culture carries over into students' newly assigned elementary schools.



Exterior only access to/from 5th grade classrooms



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