



Frequently Asked Questions

What have your neighbors been asking about the options for addressing overcrowding in schools?

Version 1 November 5, 2012

What is the projected number of future students?

The district currently has a total of 4,213 students (723 students above capacity). By 2023, total enrollment is projected at 4,569 (1,079 students above capacity).

What will happen if the school district takes no action?

Approximately 900 students are currently learning out of temporary portable classrooms, taking up valuable space designed for outdoor play. The school district does not have enough electric power in the grid to add more temporary classrooms. In theory, it could buy more portables and rebuild infrastructure to allow for more electricity and water, but the School Board does not feel that would be a good use of public money.

What impact will School Six have on operational/maintenance costs and transportation costs?

The anticipated operational overhead on a sixth building is approximately \$450,000 per year. Enrollment is projected to increase by approximately 462 students between October 2008 and October 2017. Since the District receives some state and levy funding for each enrolled student, when enrollment reaches 462 students over 2008 enrollment, the yearly operational cost of School Six will be fully offset by these moneys.

The only significant difference in transportation costs among the options is a projected savings in Option 2 of approximately \$100,000 per year in general fund expenditures.

Of the 3 options, is there consensus among the Board about their favorite?

At this point, the Board has not reached consensus on a favorite option. They will use feedback provided by the public at meetings and online to inform their decision.

Did current teachers have a say in developing the 3 options?

Yes. Representatives came to the Board meetings and provided input.

What issues have other school districts faced with a grade 5-8 configuration?

Little research has been done on which school configurations are best. Research has been conducted on which configuration is the worst—schools with grades 7-9.

Benefits of a 5-8 configuration include: offering students 4 years of stability at one school; providing 5th graders access to middle school facilities (science, music, art, etc.); and providing recess to all middle school students; separating the four grades can occur by having a 2-story configuration in a new facility and a separation of grades by 'wings' in the existing IMS facility.

How many students are currently attending Mercer Island Schools from outside the district?

No new non-residents are being enrolled, but 91 existing students are attending Mercer Island Schools from outside the district.

Many new students will enroll because of condos being built. As the City grants permits to build condos, is it charging developers more to help with the overcrowding issues they are causing?

Yes. The mitigation fee on developers has been increased as requested by the Mercer Island School District, but the fee alone will not pay for a new school. The fee, assessed by the City of Mercer Island, is presently \$2,322 per 2+ bedroom units.

Do the 3 options merely propose building permanent classroom space to replace the portables?

No. While permanent classrooms are important, space for “core facilities” is equally important (i.e. library, lunch room, gym, etc.) These facilities are not designed to fit the current school populations.

Will the pool, tennis courts, or theatre be removed with any of the three options?

All 3 current options preserve the tennis courts and pool, but the theatre will be replaced by a new school.

How are you reaching out to citizens not connected to the schools (residents with no children, senior citizens, etc.)?

The Mercer Island School District Newsletter and a postcard were mailed to every resident on the Island, which included information on the project and ways to provide feedback. Project information is posted to our website, www.engagemerцерislandschools.com, and Facebook and Twitter pages. We are hosting meetings with existing community groups, such as the Rotary Club, and we are reaching out to identify community leaders to offer meetings. We are also conducting outreach (calls, visits, informational materials, and informal “coffee klatches”) to Aljoia, Sunrise, Island House, Covenant Shores, Shorewood Heights, the Lions Club, and Kiwanis Club.

How can I provide input?

- ❖ Visit our website: <http://www.engagemerцерislandschools.com/>
- ❖ Come to a Community Town Hall meeting
 - Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1:00–3:00 pm, PEAK Facility (4120 86th Ave SE)
 - Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7:00–9:00 pm, Islander Middle School (8225 SE 72nd Ave)
 - Thursday, Nov. 15, 7:00–9:00 pm, Crest Learning Center (4150 86th Ave SE)
- ❖ Come to a smaller “Coffee Klatch” meeting
 - Friday, Nov. 9, 1:00–3:00 pm, School District Board Room (4160 86th Ave SE)
 - Monday, Nov. 12, 1:00–3:00 pm, Mercer Island Library (4400 88th Ave SE)
- ❖ “Like” us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/engagemerцерislandschools>
- ❖ Mail written comments to:
 - Engage Mercer Island Schools
 - ATTN: Chris Page
 - 811 First Ave, Suite 255
 - Seattle, WA, 98104