

FAQ Bond 2017/18 Response to Bond Survey Questions

KINDERGARTNERS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- I don't think kindergarten should be with high school students ... I know there are benefits, but I know kids - and I think it'd be too scary doing it!
- I am fine with bond but don't want kindergartners moved to the high school
- Very concerned about the temporary solution of placing kindergartners at the high school. They belong at the elementary school for social and educational experiences that they would no longer have at the HS. Please consider other alternatives and keep them at the elementary school.
- I am really against putting the kindergartners at the high school next year. We want our incoming kindergartener at the same school as her older elementary aged siblings so they can walk her to class and get on and off the bus together. It would terrify her to be at a campus with high school students. Can we please try to come up with another solution?
- Why would you consider placing kindergartners with high school students? Please tell me how this is developmentally appropriate
- There is talk about moving kindy to the hs because we have no room! That is not ok!
- PLEASE DO NOT MOVE KINDERGARTEN FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOW OR EVER!!!!!!
- Please don't put the kindergarten at the high school next year. It would create a hardship on our family.
- Don't have kindy at the high school?

RESPONSE:

The decision to move kindergarten to the high school campus has not been made. This is just one of a number of options that the board must consider to alleviate overcrowding on the K-8 campus. The Superintendent, with input from a variety of sources, will develop a list of options for the board to consider in solving the overcrowding issue. The board will then gather input from parents, staff and community around all of the possible options and make a decision, likely in the spring.

STATUS OF THE CURRENT CAMPUS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- I think classroom count for dollars spent while minimizing dollars for outdoor facilities and administrative functions may be the key to passing the bond but have a few questions:
 - can the current pk-8 campus serve 4-8 well or is it deficient in some significant way?

- will a full size gym and library need to be built on a new pk-3 campus?
- can the new campus be designed to have a pk-3 building as the first phase and as a later phase when state matching dollars are available build a separate 3-6 building on the same site?

RESPONSE:

The current PK-8 campus could serve 4-8 well with some modifications to classrooms and educational areas that are currently designed for PK-2.

A PK-3 or PK-4 elementary building would only require an elementary sized gym and library.

While we have no way of projecting when and how many state matching dollars might become available, a first stage featuring a PK-3 could be followed by planning and designing another building.

LOCATION

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Location. The currently owned property isn't suitable for any type of school.

RESPONSE:

This was input that the board heard last year during community meetings from the stakeholders. In response, the district has an agreement to purchase a flat 23-acre property just to the east of the post office on the south side of 4th st./Lockwood. The property on Bolen Rd. is not currently being considered.

SCHOOL FEES

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Will this cause school fees to go up at all?

RESPONSE:

School fees should not be tied to any school building construction.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If you can't build an elementary school PK-5, then I would prefer you build a middle school 6-8. Do it right or don't do it at all. Why are you not getting US government money to help fund your public school? Seems like you are placing all the tax burden on locals, who by the time it is done, may or may not even use it.

RESPONSE:

Unfortunately, there are not federal dollars or grants available for school construction. Public school construction is only funded by state and local dollars. Regrettably, we do not currently qualify for any significant state match as we took advantage of "our place in line" when we remodeled and expanded the K-8 and high school in the early 2000's.

TRAFFIC & EXISTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Since the proposed property is located east of the post office which means all school age traffic (vehicle/students) will be on that end of town, is there anything included in the bond to help with the traffic situation in front of the current elementary/middle school and students crossing intersections. (Concern is the exposure of students when crossing streets and the amount of traffic that was stopped/blocked during the recent unfortunate injury/accident at the intersection to the high school.)
- Can the bond include both a new school and improvements to existing school?

RESPONSE:

A bond could include dollars to address issues at current schools. This would be a decision the board would have to consider based on perceived need and dollars available. The traffic situation in front of the current K-8 campus should be positively impacted by a future school by spreading the traffic between two locations. The city is responsible for current road and traffic capacity, but the District continues to have discussions with them about possible future solutions.

PORTABLES & CHOICE TRANSFERS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Will any of the portables be moved/added with any of the campuses current or proposed? How will the decision be made for which children go to which school? How many kids are in our district on choice transfers (excluding the home school program)? How many kids can the current middle school accommodate if it is converted to be part current elementary school? Are there expansion plans, or a need for them at the high school campus? Do you foresee a bond needing to be passed for the high school, or are portables going to be utilized, how long before another bond is needed? Thank you for your dedication!

RESPONSE:

There would not be a need or a plan to move current portables to a new school location. It is possible that portables on the current K-8 campus could be moved to the high school if the 9th grade remains on that campus when a new school is built. Another issue related to this are choice transfer students. We have closed choice transfers for the last two years. We are required by law to allow employee's students to choice transfer in. We currently have 153 choice transfers in and 118 out. Last year we had 187 students in and 136 out.

SPORTS AND ARTS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Will the new school have space for sports and arts?

RESPONSE:

These are specific design decisions that the board will need to determine in conjunction with the grade band. As art is a curricular requirement, it is safe to assume that this would be addressed in some manner. PE space and playground areas would need to be designed. Athletic fields and/or sports facilities would be strictly based on grade band and the board's view of current capacity at the other two campuses.

BUILDING OPTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Why aren't you considering a new high school instead?

RESPONSE:

Because high schools are so expensive to build, the district does not currently have the bonding capacity to raise the required funds.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If a middle school is built, will there be money allocated to remodel the current middle school to accommodate preschool and elementary aged students?

RESPONSE:

This is a consideration the board will weigh. If a middle school is built the likely solution to this issue would be to move the upper elementary grades into the former middle school which would accommodate them well. Generally it would be furniture and related items that might need to be replaced with more appropriate sizing but the buildings and structures themselves would be acceptable.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If the bond doesn't pass, what will the options even be for the schools? The next 3 years are going to be worse with all the growth.

RESPONSE:

If a new school is not built, there really aren't any feasible options that wouldn't cause concern from parents and community. Three possible options, but by no means an exhaustive list, would include: Placing portables on the high school campus and moving either the kindergarten or the 8th grade to the high school. Double shifting, where one group of students attends from early morning to early afternoon and another group from early afternoon to early evening. Year round school where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students are attending at any one time and the 4th quarter is conducted during the summer. All of these solutions bring many concerns, but may become necessary should our current capacity not be increased.

GROWTH AND CONSTRUCTION

Public Comment:

- Are there development experts involved in the decision-making regarding growth and how to accommodate future needs now? Wouldn't it make the most financial sense to build more now then have to pass another bond in the next 5-10 years? We don't even have room for any more growth and yet we are allowing housing developments to start building?! Why can't we build a second story to the current Middle School?

RESPONSE:

The district has done a demographic study and the final summary will be posted and available before the October 10th community meeting. The board is considering building the largest school, irrespective of grade band, that we have bonding capacity for, although they have made no decisions as to whether or not this is the best option at this time. The city and county control the approval of the developments and the district has no control over those determinations. The district continues to voice our concern to the city in this regard. The current middle school was not designed to have a second story built and is occupied by students except for July and most of August. Even if the substructure of the school would allow for vertical development, there is not a construction window that would allow for such an undertaking.

NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- What is the next step if it doesn't pass?

RESPONSE:

This would be something that the board would have to determine. Certainly a plan to handle our immediate student needs regarding space on existing campuses would be the first order of business.

EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- I would like to hear more about how new early learning opportunities, including Pre-K, might be included in building a new PK-3 building.

RESPONSE:

We currently have one classroom that serves pre-school special needs students. The board would need to determine if they want to offer additional pre-school services in spaces that might be available after construction.

VARIOUS SCHOOL OPTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- I think building the most rooms possible will help maximize the use and the length of time before we need to build again, but I believe the newer rooms need to be tech capable and go to the older children i.e. Middle school

RESPONSE:

Any new rooms would definitely be engineered to be technologically up-to-date.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- No, but I do think it is important to build a 7-9 middle school. This will relieve the High school and elementary school along with giving our kids field space for sports.

RESPONSE:

This is one of the possible options that the board must choose between.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If you build a new middle school there will be plenty of elementary classrooms left in the current buildings, in addition to available classrooms when the new high school is complete.

RESPONSE:

There are no current plans to build a new high school. The current high school was designed in a manner to allow for another additional two-story wing to be built off of the north/west entrance by the library. This may be an option for the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Don't build a school that will be full the day it opens.

RESPONSE:

This is always a challenge. In the past, voters have been reluctant to vote for over-capacity building and state law prohibits building past current "un-housed" student counts when accepting state matching funds. In our current situation, we won't be restricted by matching funds laws, but, we will be restricted by our bonding capacity and how much we can legally raise in bond proceeds.

QUALITY OF CONSTRUCTION

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- School location, transition between schools, time frame with current construction and populace growth, impact fees for new housing
- If passed please do not accept the cheapest offer but rather look for a quality contractor. Doesn't have to be the highest it's just we need to do our homework and get a reputable source.

RESPONSE:

If the bond passes in February, the school would be projected to open in the fall of 2020. State law requires the district to accept the lowest bid from a “qualified” bidder. It is the job of construction management and oversight to ensure a quality product is delivered. This concern over a reputable contractor is shared by the district!

OLD VS. NEW

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If a middle school is built and the elementary takes over the current PK-8 campus, will upgrades be made here or will we be left with the "left-overs"? I think it would be a horrible mistake to not put some investment into the PK-8 campus to make sure it is suitable for elementary age children and possible make a few improvements. This may include drinking fountains in classrooms, new carpet, paint, etc. Families need to feel that their child's elementary campus is just as valuable as the middle and high schools even though it is the oldest. Even though the community built the stadium I know there are some that wonder why the elementary isn't as "nice" as the high school or why another play shed hasn't been built to accommodate more students on rainy days over on the field/track side.

RESPONSE:

This is a concern that is shared by the district and one that will be considered by the board. Certainly older buildings will always “feel” older and may be not as nice. A new school should at least temporarily ease the concern for outside covered play space.

GYMS

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- If we are to build another school it is MOST IMPORTANT to us that the school that is added will have MULTIPLE GYMS. As a parent of student athletes in La Center we have been so disappointed in the access to gyms in our town. Community Ed needs gym time as well as LA Center athletics and building up our sports programs in LA center has proven to be impossible without going outside our town to practice.

RESPONSE:

Unfortunately the feedback the board received the last two times the district failed bonds was that the voters wouldn't support upgrades or additions to athletic facilities (both the failed 2002 and 2008 bonds featured athletic facility upgrades/additions). The community clearly prioritized classroom capacity. The board will have to decide if our community still shares this perspective or if it has changed over time.

BUILDING CAPACITY & THE FUTURE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- What are projected numbers for the additional building that will happen in the near future. Will the new school be maxed out by the time it is built and the new homes/apartments are built and have families in them.

RESPONSE:

See the response above concerning bonding capacity and classroom space. Unfortunately, the district has to balance growth and enrollment against being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. We would hate to see a building open that is overcrowded with growth still to come and, at the same time, we wouldn't want to see classrooms sit empty for years if growth stops. Everyone thought that our town and district was about to explode with growth in 2008 when the last bond failed and then the recession hit and growth stopped. The board will listen to stakeholders and then make the best decision possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- How far in the future are you planning for this school to "work" for La Center? 20 year school, 50 years before it needs to be replaced or is outdated?

RESPONSE:

Schools are built with a 50+ year life span with most internal systems built to last for at least 20 years (think heating/cooling systems, flooring, ceiling tiles etc.). In terms of enrollment capacity, we currently have 29% of our K-8 campus being served in portables. Without a crystal ball, the district assumes the need for another building in the near future based on the extensive developments going on across our district.

COST ISSUES & CONSTRUCTION APPROACHES

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Anyway to possibly apply difference in household cost due to number of children in household. More kids=more cost/use

RESPONSE:

No, this is not legal under current state law and funding.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- What is the cost per \$1,000 of home valuation?

RESPONSE:

Based on the current district wide valuation and estimates based on the current options being considered by the board, the cost to the tax payer would be between 42 and 48 cents per thousand (.42/1000 - .48/1000) This can change as the overall district property valuation grows over time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- The school type should be recommended by the district based on projected student volumes and projected growth. The impending bubble of students will travel through all three; elementary, middle and high, so we need to be planning for the long term, not just a new elementary. Please show us the numbers and logical voting public will be more likely to support the measure.

RESPONSE:

Past research indicates voters are more likely to support a school with older grade bands as more voter's students will have an opportunity to enjoy that school. Outside of that, the district has no way to currently project the types of families that will occupy the new developments being built across the district.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Would like the new school to be as eco-friendly as possible and think there need to be considerations for traffic and street safety.

RESPONSE:

All of these factors will be considered. Traffic and street safety is addressed during the permitting process with the city. The new school will be based on state-of-the-art construction and designed to be as eco-friendly as is feasible.

FLEX SPACES

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- How about some flex space where the classrooms could be used for either elementary or middle school students.

RESPONSE:

This is always a consideration. Outside of furniture and heights of things like drinking fountains and restroom facilities, most educational spaces can be designed to accommodate a wide range of grades.