

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE ISSUES – QUESTION & ANSWERS – AUGUST 2006**

In response to the volume of community input and at the conclusion of the board's discussion session with the task force members, a number of issues were identified for staff analysis. These issues have been framed as questions for research and response by district administrative staff. Many questions were collected during the forum process. This report includes a synthesis of questions and answers that can be provided at this time; additional questions will need to be answered during transition processes. The answers are supplemental to the information contained in the Facilities Efficiency Task Force Report.

1. How will moving 6th grade to the elementary school impact self-contained programs serving K-5 students?

*The transition teams will determine specific needs and additional resources at each school.*

2. Where will students in the preschool, infant toddler, special needs, and middle school self-contained programs be served?

*The transition teams will make this determination based on site availability and program coherence.*

3. Will band continue in 6th grade elementary schools?

*Our intentions and expectations are to continue to maintain existing programs. The transition teams will develop plans to optimize the schedules of the music specialists in the five elementary schools.*

4. Will consideration be given to add counselors to the elementary programs?

*Yes. The Counseling and Student Support Services Task Force studied program needs of students and staff. The board of directors asked the superintendent to form a successor committee to develop and present a recommendation to the board during 2006-07.*

5. Will consideration be given to adding assistant principals to the larger elementary schools?

*The number of students needed to generate a second building administrator will not be met with the projected number of students anticipated under the current options. The estimated savings counts on reduction of the full administrative team at one of the middle schools, and no additions to the administrative structure of the district.*

6. What electives will be provided to 6th grade students?

*This will be determined by the elementary transition team and building site teams.*

7. Will there be a Seminar Program at Stevens?

*Our intention and expectation is to maintain existing programs. Curriculum adjustment decisions will be made at the middle school consistent with past practices and the approval of the school board.*

8. What will the length of the school day be for K-3 and 4-6 students?

*The district will continue to comply with the Washington State Basic Education Requirements at each school. The specific start and ending time will be determined for each school to respond to program needs and maximize the efficiency of the transportation schedules.*

9. Will there be adequate playground supervision at the elementary schools?

*Yes, playground supervision will continue to be allocated based on the district's personnel assignment model.*

10. Why can't the school board wait longer to make a decision about closing a school?

*In order to provide the statutory 90-day period, which must include two hearings on a proposed closure, the board must make a preliminary decision no later than August 28, 2006 for a November 27, 2006 final decision. The task force recommends making a decision as soon as possible to give the staff adequate time to plan transitions. This helps keep focus on the district's primary goal: providing the best education for students K-12. This also is respectful of the district staff who are critical to school success, and gives parents ample time to prepare to transition their students.*

11. How will the length of time elementary and middle school children ride the school bus be impacted by a school closure?

*The plan is to continue to keep the time students ride buses to an hour or less regardless of which plan the school board selects. There will continue to be a few exceptions for students who live in some of the more remote areas in the district.*

12. How will facility accommodations be provided to ensure classroom space meets the requirements of special needs students?

*Program and student needs will determine the optimal space necessary to deliver a quality educational experience.*

13. Will school boundaries be redrawn and if so, when will this be completed?

*Yes, it will be necessary to redraw elementary school attendance boundaries. Boundary changes should be finalized by June 2007. The district's Parent Leadership Group has been designated by the superintendent to serve as a boundary review committee.*

14. When will bus routes be made available that reflect the school closure and boundary changes?

*The bus routes will be established and parents notified in the third week of August 2007 as usual.*

15. Has the district considered the economic impact of students currently attending Fairview deciding to go to the Sequim School District?

*The task force elected not to calculate the potential revenue loss from the departure of Sequim School District's students attending Fairview Elementary School, nor to estimate the possible out-migration of Port Angeles School District students to the Sequim School District. The task force did calculate that the distance from Fairview to Roosevelt Middle School is over four miles less than to Greywolf Elementary School in Sequim. Prior surveys attempting to determine the likelihood of parent decisions subsequent to a school closure were not considered reliable estimates of actual family decisions the following year.*

16. Does changing Roosevelt Middle School to an elementary school meet the needs of younger students?

*Roosevelt Middle School will provide greater opportunities and serve more students from currently overcrowded schools. The drinking fountains and bathroom facilities in Roosevelt Middle School will meet the needs of our students.*

17. How can the closed facilities be used by the community?

*Community and district needs will be considered in the future use of buildings. The district is committed to maintaining the integrity of the community's buildings while keeping the future needs and potential growth of the district in mind. The grounds and exterior will be maintained to keep the school from deteriorating. Enough heat will be maintained to prevent moisture damage. Damage will be repaired quickly as is the case at schools that are occupied. If enrollment continues downward as expected and remains lower, the school board likely will consider sale of properties in the future.*

18. Have alternatives for facility use been considered so that closed facilities are not left vacant?

*Not at this time.*

19. Will current elementary facilities accommodate the increase in music programs (e.g., band and elementary strings programs)?

*The district has determined that there is adequate space at each of the buildings. The site and transition teams will determine the best location for the programs.*

20. Will athletic programs be available to 6th grade elementary students?

*Currently there are no 6th grade athletic programs offered by the school district and no changes are anticipated as a result of the transition of 6th grade back to elementary schools.*

21. Where will self-contained students be served?

*Each option takes into consideration the needs of special education students. The location varies with each option. Board members have expressed a desire to examine best options for special education students irrespective of which task force option they might select.*

22. Will there be a 6th grade MAC located at Franklin Elementary School?

*The answer to that question is not known at this time. Specific curriculum decisions and program transition decisions will be made at the school level with staff and community input, and with board oversight and approval for significant program changes.*

23. Will there be an alternative program for students in grades 7-8.

*The task force did not entertain discussions concerning an alternative program for students in grades 7 and 8. The school board has asked the superintendent to consider an alternative for middle school students. That consideration will occur during the transition process.*

24. Will athletic programs be added to the remaining middle school for grades 7-8?

*Making these necessary adjustments in facilities is expected to provide enough savings that the district could consider enhancing extra-curricular opportunities in the future.*

25. Will the autism and pre-school programs at Jefferson Elementary School be moved to a facility that can provide more space and opportunities for the students?

*The placement of pre-school programs likely will be determined by the task force option selected by the board of directors. The school board may decide to adjust program locations irrespective of the assumptions contained within any particular task force option. Special education program coherence is a priority for grade level transitions and mainstreaming.*

26. Where will self-contained students be served?

*The task force assumed that if the school board selects Option D from the Facilities Efficiency Task Force recommendations, all of the special education students now served at Franklin Elementary School will be moved to the Roosevelt building which is well-prepared for them. However, the school board could review alternatives to a special education move that would adequately balance facility use across elementary schools.*

27. What happens to students who want to attend schools outside their neighborhood?

*The current policies and procedures for attendance outside neighborhood boundaries will still apply. Consideration for students that have been attending schools outside their neighborhood will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Students attending the neighborhood school will be given first priority.*

28. Is there enough classroom space to house all 7th and 8th grade students at Stevens Middle School?

*According to the Facilities Efficiency Task Force Report, the facility, along with existing portables, can accommodate the estimated 577 students. Task force members walked through every school with the principal of the school to determine the number of classrooms to consider in their deliberations. They did not assume availability from district documents.*

29. Why does the task force estimate it would take \$1.2 million to re-open Monroe Elementary School when the district allocated only \$400,000 of bond money to repair it?

*This is a complex item. The essence of answer is that the original estimate for Monroe Elementary School's major repairs was set at approximately \$1.2 million. After the "Jefferson bond" failed twice, the amount was reduced to the point that the Monroe Elementary School allocation fell to \$415,000. This was the amount necessary to replace controllers and other "modular" components of the HVAC system, but not to acquire heat pumps to replace the portion supplied heat by the old boiler and heat exchangers. Subsequently, the in-slab radiant heat piping has deteriorated, making the older wing of the school uninhabitable for lack of heating. Students can not be relocated to Monroe Elementary School if the facility can not provide heat. This is the core of the code compliance notion. Had these pipes deteriorated while students were in place, it would have been very, very difficult and expensive. That would have necessitated moving children and doing the HVAC replacement immediately (without adequate funds allocated to complete the task). The district is not facing a major code compliance situation with Monroe Elementary School, at least of the sort apparently envisioned by folks who believe it means everything from door openers to curb cuts, to lighting, to fire sprinkler and water fountain replacements. The district was earlier advised that the costs associated with replacing the heating, plumbing and electrical systems at Monroe would, in all likelihood, exceed the remodel percentage threshold under County permitting rules. This would require the whole building to be brought up to current code. This was*

*recently confirmed verbally with county's Department of Community Development staff.  
It really depends on the extent of the work that is undertaken.*