

January 23, 2008

Long Range Facilities Use Planning Committee

Minority Report (Jill Engstrom & Donna Ertel Riley)

Thank you for this opportunity to present a “minority report” on behalf of the Long Range Facility Use Planning Committee. As parent/stakeholder members, we agree with the recommendation of the Committee, however we believe it does not go far enough in addressing the very real financial problems and declining enrollment issues of the South Whidbey School District. Therefore, we offer this minority report in conjunction with the majority report to address the comprehensive planning we feel is needed for future facilities use.

COMMITTEE’s CHARGE: To make recommendations to the Superintendent and the South Whidbey School Board for OPTIMUM CONFIGURATION and use of SWSD facilities to enable the HIGHEST QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES for all the STUDENTS.

STEP ONE:

- **Take South Whidbey Primary School (SWPS) “out of service”** and create an Elementary School (Grades 1-6) at South Whidbey Intermediate School (SWIS).
- 6th grade students move to SWIS from LMS.
- Kindergarten remains at SWPS = 4 teaching stations until space available at SWIS.
- Function under one administrator.
- SWIS stage returns to use as intended for school productions.
- Community Room becomes fine arts teaching station for music programs.

SUPPORTING DATA:

- Saves approximately \$133K in utilities/maintenance to SWSD immediately.
- Unoccupied Pods and portables (approximately 50% of campus) would be available for lease or use elsewhere within the District [WIA and/or Bayview] creating immediate income for SWSD.
- Projected enrollment for Grades 1 through 6 is approx. 656.
- SWIS + 2 portables = 31 stations. (21-22 students/teaching station.) 89% capacity (OSPI).
- Research strongly supports 6th grade students remain at the Elementary level.
- Decreases truancy and increases academic achievement.
- Playground at SWIS is age appropriate.
- Minimizing # of school transitions has greatest positive impact on student achievement.
- State funds 6th grade as Elementary level.
- Pods at SWPS would be available as needed if enrollment should warrant.

STEP TWO:

- **Take Langley Middle School (LMS) “out of service”** and create a Jr./Sr. HS at South Whidbey High School (SWHS).
- Utilize the northern wing (7 teaching stations + Art Room) for Jr. High students.
- Maintains separate/distinct Jr. HS within the High School campus.
- All materials and equipment at LMS can be distributed to other campuses.

SUPPORTING DATA:

- Saves approximately \$324K in utilities/maintenance to SWSD immediately.
- Unoccupied buildings now available for lease creating immediate income for SWSD
- Projected enrollment for Grades 7 – 8 is approximately 250.
- Projected enrollment for Grades 9-12 is approximately 594.
- SWHS = 50 teaching stations. (17 students/teaching station.) 72% capacity (OSPI).
- Research strongly supports keeping a Jr. HS identity (i.e. 7th/8th grade students together).
- Minimizing # of school transitions has greatest positive impact on student achievement.
- Decreases drop out and increases graduation rates.
- Continuity and consistency of curriculum on one campus.
- Increases elective opportunities for all students.
- Reduces duplication of courses, equipment, facilities and staff.
- Supports formation of long-term student/staff relationships.
- Increased opportunities for “highly capable” and “remedial” learners.
- Sports facilities at LMS are still available for SWSD and/or community use.

STEP THREE:

- **Take District Service Center (DSC) building “out of service”** and move personnel to SWPS.
- All SWSD-related family and support services would continue to be housed at SWPS (i.e., Developmental Preschool and all associated Special Services, Head Start, Family Resource Center, ECEAP, LACEP, Tutor/Mentor Program, Children’s Center, SW Co-op, etc.)
- SWPS Kitchen and Library would remain available for SD use.
- SWPS Gym would become Community Room.

SUPPORTING DATA:

- Centralizes ALL SWSD campuses in one location.
- Unoccupied DSC building would be available for lease creating income for SWSD.
- Larger parking availability at SWPS than current DSC location.

MINORITY REPORT CONCLUSIONS:

This recommendation OPTIMIZES the best use of the School District’s most modern and best facilities at EFFICIENT capacities.

The student population figures are at their peak, but are not unprecedented for any individual campus. For example, in 2002, SWHS [9-12] enrollment figures were 806; If our recommendation were implemented, the newly “created” SW Jr./Sr. HS would have a combined 844 students. 5 years after implementation, the capacity will again be at approximately 50%.

Implementation of this proposal offers immediate financial savings (over \$450K!) to SWSD without loss of staff or teachers. Additionally, it frees up needed funds for improving educational programs, new technology, and much needed capital expenditures.

Lastly, it enhances and improves the quality of student educational services while honoring our current alternative educational systems, utilizes well established student developmental levels and configurations, eliminates the need for any MAJOR changes in the future and is fiscally responsible to the community.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Engstrom

Donna Ertel Riley