

Find out how elementary school consolidations would work at community forums

Feb. 27, 2011

Beginning this week, Tacoma Public Schools will host a series of community forums to present proposed school consolidations and answer questions about how the plan would affect schools and neighborhoods.

Facing a \$13.1 million budget shortfall next school year due in part to cuts in state funding for K-12 education, Superintendent Art Jarvis and Chief Operations Officer Sam Bell presented the School Board on Feb. 24 with a proposal to consolidate three elementary schools with low enrollment into surrounding schools and make a series of other program changes to save \$1.5 million.

Attend the outreach meeting that applies specifically to your school:

Date & Time	Location	Schools	Proposed Impacts
March 2 6-7:30 pm	Jason Lee Middle School Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bryant Montessori • Madison Site • Grant Elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bryant's K-8 Montessori program would relocate to the current Franklin Elementary School site • Programs currently at the Madison Site would relocate to the current Bryant building • Six students currently within the Bryant attendance area would shift to the Grant Elementary School attendance area
March 3 6-7:30 pm	Jason Lee Middle School Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franklin Elementary • Wainwright Elementary • DeLong Elementary • Stanley Elementary • Reed Elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franklin Elementary would close and the students reassigned to DeLong and Stanley elementary schools • Wainwright Elementary would close and the students reassigned primarily to DeLong and partially to Geiger elementary schools • Attendance area boundaries for DeLong Elementary would shift to accommodate new Wainwright & Franklin areas • A few current DeLong students would shift to Reed and Stanley elementary schools
March 7 6-7:30 pm	First Creek Middle School Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKinley Elementary • Blix Elementary • Lyon Elementary • Roosevelt Elementary • Park Avenue Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKinley Elementary would close and the students reassigned to Blix and Lyon elementary schools • Small section in the northeast of the current Blix Elementary attendance area would shift to Roosevelt Elementary • Programs currently at Park Avenue Center would shift to the McKinley building

Date & Time	Location	Schools	Proposed Impacts
March 7 6-7:30 pm Spanish Language-only meeting with translator	First Creek Middle School Art Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKinley Elementary • Blix Elementary • Lyon Elementary • Roosevelt Elementary • Park Avenue Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKinley Elementary would close and the students reassigned to Blix and Lyon elementary schools • Small section in the northeast of the current Blix Elementary attendance area would shift to Roosevelt Elementary • Programs currently at Park Avenue Center would shift to the McKinley building
March 15	Geiger Elementary/ Montessori Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geiger Elementary/ Montessori • Hunt Middle School • Foss High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed temporary relocation of Geiger to the former Hunt Middle School site during the construction of a new Geiger school • Consideration of new future option: Postpone construction of the new Geiger Elementary and consider building a preschool-through-eighth-grade Montessori school on the vacant Hunt Middle School site, which sits less than a mile from Geiger. • Consideration of new future option: Not build Hunt Middle School and, instead, expand Foss High School to serve grades six through 12

You can find a map of each school’s proposed new attendance area on the district’s Web site: www.tacomashools.org. Click on the big blue banner marked “District Budget Outlook.” Additional resources on that page include a PowerPoint presentation on the school consolidations shown during the Feb. 24 School Board meeting. Citizens who want to send messages to the superintendent and school board members can fill in an e-mail form on that same special Web site.

Board members indicated they want to hear from the communities around the affected schools about the proposals before the board meets again March 10. The school board, by district policy, also must host two future public hearings for any school closure.

The selection of McKinley, Wainwright and Franklin from a list of six low-enrollment schools involved several factors – the low enrollment, the age of McKinley and Wainwright and the space availability in surrounding schools to most easily accommodate larger enrollments.

Moving forward more work still needs to be done to identify new locations for special education programs at the three schools and the SAIL highly capable program currently at Wainwright.

The overarching goal is to devise an innovative approach that makes the least overall impact on students and the district as a whole, retains programs for students and still helps reduce the large budget shortfall for 2011-2012.

Based on current elementary enrollment, Tacoma has capacity for approximately 3,000 more elementary school students. If the school board follows through with the proposed consolidations and changes, the district would still have capacity for approximately 1,800 additional students.

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