

News Release

Everett Public Schools
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Board approves two schools' Educational Specifications; superintendent announces similar program analysis for support services

On Tuesday night Everett Public Schools board members approved the Educational Specifications for Silver Lake and Garfield elementary schools. Educational Specifications, conducted prior to architectural design work, clarify for designers how a school should be used by students, staff, and the public. Knowing how people interact and what they need to do their business efficiently and safely helps an architect design a school to meet those needs, said district Facilities and Planning Director Mike Gunn. Educational Specifications are a written description, a program for the architects to follow as they design a facility.

During the 'Ed Spec' process, a committee of Silver Lake and Garfield staff met with district planners and architects. The resulting documents, each more than 100 pages, are based upon district educational goals — To ensure each student learns to high standards. From that point, the increasingly detailed analyses identify what is necessary to achieve that goal. Every school space at each school is evaluated — health room, library, custodial areas, counseling, special education, play areas, offices, and, of course, classrooms.

These two projects are possible because voters said yes to construction bonds in February, said Superintendent Carol Whitehead. Now that the board has approved the Educational Specifications, architects will begin designing these projects to meet the specifications.

View Ridge Elementary is among the list of district schools scheduled for future such studies and resulting upgrades. Whitehead reminded the board, Our special education district staff are now housed at View Ridge. Before we study that school and draft a design for it, we should consider whether it is the best place for special education staff.

And that brings us to a long-standing question of whether all district services are positioned to most efficiently meet our school and public support needs. This is a good time to launch a program analysis to determine how all of our central administrative support services are operating and whether consolidation of those services into one location is the right thing for us to do.

Over the last 20 years, student enrollment in Everett Public Schools has grown by almost one-third. We have built seven new schools for students in that time and will open another new school next fall. The services and legal requirements necessary to support student and school needs across the district have also increased and become more complex.

We may find from this study that we can make more efficient use of time, equipment and resources and that we can reduce travel time and expense by having support services in one, yet-to-be-identified location. We may also make it easier for the public and our families to get the information and help they need in one location. We will not know that answer without a thorough analysis, she emphasized.

Today district central services are located in View Ridge Elementary, the Longfellow Building on Oakes Avenue, the Educational Service Center on Colby Avenue, and the newly constructed maintenance and operations center on Everett Avenue. The maintenance facility serves the schools well in that new location, said Whitehead.

Whitehead reminded the board that such a study has been a consideration for the last 20 years. Over the last two decades, the board and administration have made the right decision to put such a study aside until a better time and better circumstances. I believe we now have better circumstances, she noted, citing the upcoming study of View Ridge and careful management of non-bond funds, including interest income, rental fees and potential revenue from the sale of property.

While the time may be right for a study, I want to make it perfectly clear that we have not made a decision for any changes. We know that we cannot make a good decision without good information and solid data. This program analysis will do the same information- and data-gathering that we require before launching any school construction project, but we may decide that making changes is not a good idea.

The study phase could take up to a year, according to district facilities staff. Any potential changes would take another two to

three years. We will complete all school improvement projects we promised the voters, said Whitehead. If we do make a central and support services change at some point in the future, construction or remodeling will be funded from non-bond sources.

BACKGROUND

Central services history

1910, housed in the main building at Everett High School (the vault is still there)
1940-1959, housed in offices at south side of Everett High Civic Auditorium
1959-1964, housed in the old Jefferson Elementary at Pacific and Hoyt
1964-today, 4730 Colby Ave.
1971-today, some services moved to the Longfellow Building
1980's-today, some services moved into portions of View Ridge Elementary
2002 maintenance and operations facility opened at 2222 Everett Ave.

Longfellow Building, 3715 Oakes Ave.

- Built in 1911 (95 years old)
- Annex constructed in 1957 (49 years old)
- Used as elementary school until 1971

Educational Service Center, 4730 Colby Ave.

- Built in 1964 (42 years old)
- 1990's, portables moved onto the site

View Ridge

- Built in 1954 (52 years old)
- Special Services wing added in 1982 (24 years old)