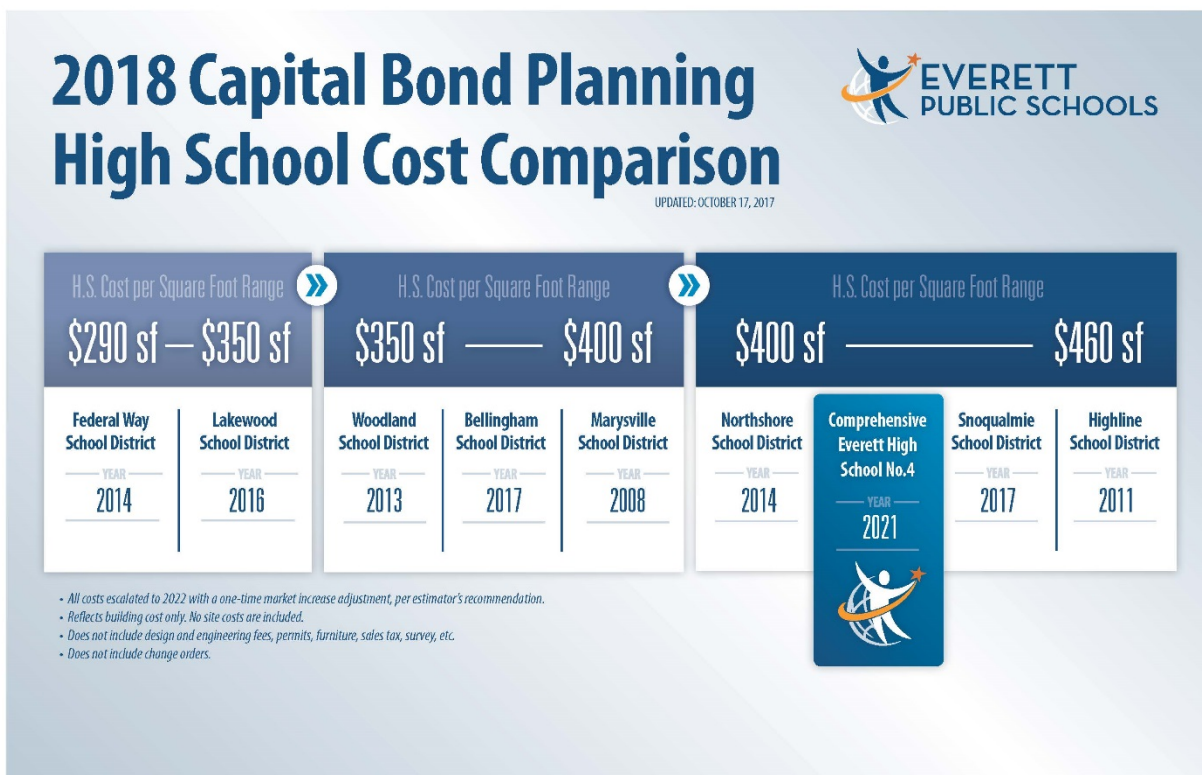




News release January 22, 2018

How does cost of district's future high school compare to others?

High school no. 4 will open in 2022. Its square foot costs are on par with other districts' high schools when taking into construction market cost increases, school size and all project costs.



When construction supplies and labor are in high demand, the costs for those supplies and services go up. Construction costs in the Puget Sound region are so high and rising so fast, they surprise even the most seasoned construction industry veterans.

The [Robinson Company](#) analyzes costs for public projects. In June 2017 they advised schools to expect an 18.5 percent increase on all current and future school construction. That cost increase is on top of annual increases of as much as 4.5 percent on all construction in the Puget Sound area.

These escalating cost factors impact those looking for home improvements and those trying to buy homes. These are the realities of estimating costs for schools which must be planned in time for voter approval of a Capital Bond and then can take three to five years to build and open.

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Concerns about the cost of delaying projects were highlighted recently following the state legislature's failure to pass a Capital Budget in 2017. Although agencies welcomed last week's delayed-by-one-year Capital Budget authorization, some are worried how the year's delay and escalating costs will impact the final projects. See [Daily Herald article of Jan. 20, 2018](#), in which Edmonds Mayor Dave Earling was among those saying he was "excited to finally have the capital budget passed." And ... "certainly we're concerned and we don't know all of the answers yet," Earling said. "The cost of materials and labor may have gone up. We'll simply have to test the market and find out. It's critical to get the work done."

Total school construction costs can vary from district to district for a number of reasons. One reason is final school size – some are built for more students so are larger schools; some have fewer students and are smaller. Another cost factor is site work required before the school is built. Wetland remediation, road construction, leveling or clearing vary from site to site, for example.

So, to compare "apples to apples," the district analyzed "square foot" costs for schools in our region and adjusted those costs to reflect 2021's estimated construction costs. Why the year 2021 as a construction cost comparison? Much of the construction work for high school no. 4 will be in process in 2021. Construction costs of schools built before then are lower because they were completed before costs reached today's and tomorrow's escalated levels.

Information about this chart:

- The chart's square foot costs *do not include* site work (earthwork, wetlands mitigation, athletic fields, etc.) or off-site work (road improvements, traffic mitigation, traffic signals, etc.) because those costs can vary widely from project to project and municipality to municipality.
- The chart's *square foot costs do not include* "project costs" such as sales tax, architect and engineering fees, furniture and equipment, permits and fees, and change orders. These can also vary widely from project to project. Such "project costs" can easily add up to 50 percent on top of the estimated construction costs for a project.
- High school no. 4 is estimated to cost \$216,800,000. This estimate *DOES INCLUDE all of the "project costs"* expected for high school no. 4, including the expected cost of designing, permitting, building, and equipping a full-size high school in this region and to open it in 2022. It also accounts for recent changes in storm water management and energy code requirements that were not in place when many of the other high school projects were built, and make them more expensive to build.
- Cost estimates and data for this chart were provided by two companies who worked on North Creek High School – the Robinson Company and [Dykeman Architects](#).
- Taking this information into [consideration](#) and using 2021 construction cost estimates, the chart shows the square foot cost of high school no. 4 and North Creek High are virtually identical.

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For more information:

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