



News release

Feb. 1, 2018

Bond and Levy meeting draws residents seeking information

Approximately 50 came to Jan. 30 Penny Creek Elementary meeting

The Penny Creek Elementary cafeteria on Tuesday night was full of adults with an appetite for more details about the Feb. 13 [Capital Bond and Replacement Levy](#).

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Joyce Stewart opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for their interest in the ballot issues and what the Bond and Levy mean for students now and in the future. She led the informational [presentation](#) and subsequent discussion.

Although the topics of interest for those who came were varied, some topics seemed of most importance to the majority – 1.) the cost of the proposed new high school 2.) what might happen if the bond fails, and 3.) the tax implications if one or both ballot measures are approved.

High school no. 4 per square foot cost compared to other recently built high schools

Some in the audience questioned the district's proposed cost for high school no. 4, asserting it seems high compared to other recently opened high schools.

Construction cost consultants from [Robinson Company](#) and an architect from [Dykeman](#) helped unravel what it costs to build schools today and how that compares to schools neighboring districts have opened recently.

Sharon Kennedy oversees Cost Estimating Services at Robinson. She clarified how a good deal of the proposed school cost is caused by the region's construction boom.

The strong construction market has created a shortage of contractors, a scarcity of subcontractors and skyrocketing costs for public and private construction.

Last summer Robinson advised its school district clients to add 18.5 percent to the cost of current and future school construction projects to reflect the full cost of building schools. The company's advice to add this recent inflation factor to school costs is on top of this region's annual construction inflation of four to five percent.

The Robinson Company analyzed the per square foot costs of high schools opened between 2008 and 2017 and calculated what it would cost to build those schools today – with today's higher inflation and construction costs. The comparison puts high school no. 4 square foot costs on par with the others.

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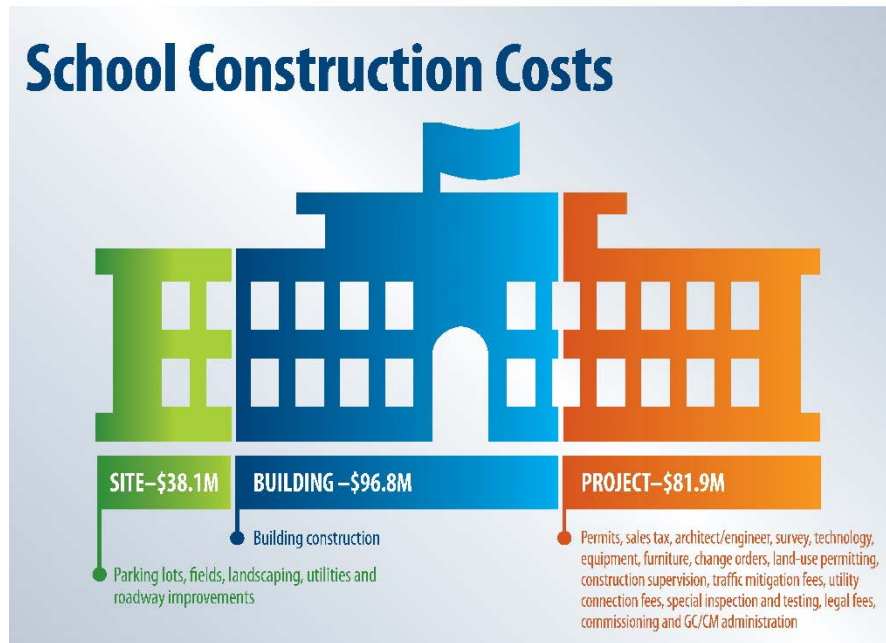
2018 Capital Bond Planning High School Cost Comparison

H.S. Cost per Square Foot Range		H.S. Cost per Square Foot Range		H.S. Cost per Square Foot Range	
\$290 sf — \$350 sf		\$350 sf — \$400 sf		\$400 sf — \$460 sf	
Federal Way School District	Lakewood School District	Woodland School District	Bellingham School District	Marysville School District	Northshore School District
YEAR 2014	YEAR 2016	YEAR 2013	YEAR 2017	YEAR 2008	YEAR 2014
					Comprehensive Everett High School No. 4
					YEAR 2021

- All costs escalated to 2021 with a one-time market increase adjustment, per estimator's recommendation.
- Reflects building cost only. No site costs are included.
- Does not include design and engineering fees, permits, furniture, sales tax, survey, etc.
- Does not include change orders.

Kelli Smith, principal of Dykeman, explained school construction cost categories – site costs, construction costs and “project” costs.

As Smith noted, the “project” costs are often invisible to those who don’t work with school construction. They include architects, engineers, state sales tax, construction and engineering surveys and studies, permits, environmental processes, inspections, for example. Project costs also include furniture, equipment and technology necessary to open and operate a school from day one. These project costs can add as much as 50 percent to a school’s total cost.



The new high school will relieve overcrowding – if voters say “yes”

In answer to questions about why the new high school is needed, the district shared evidence of how fast it is growing. Everett Public Schools is [growing faster](#) than any other school district in Snohomish County. Another 1,600 students are expected in the district in 10 years. Students in the district’s 26 schools are attending classes in 115 portable classrooms. Twenty-two of the 26 schools are over capacity and closed to students seeking transfers.

What happens if voters say “no” to the Bond?

In particular, parents who attended the Penny Creek meeting were very interested in what might happen if voters say no to the Construction Bond on Feb. 13.

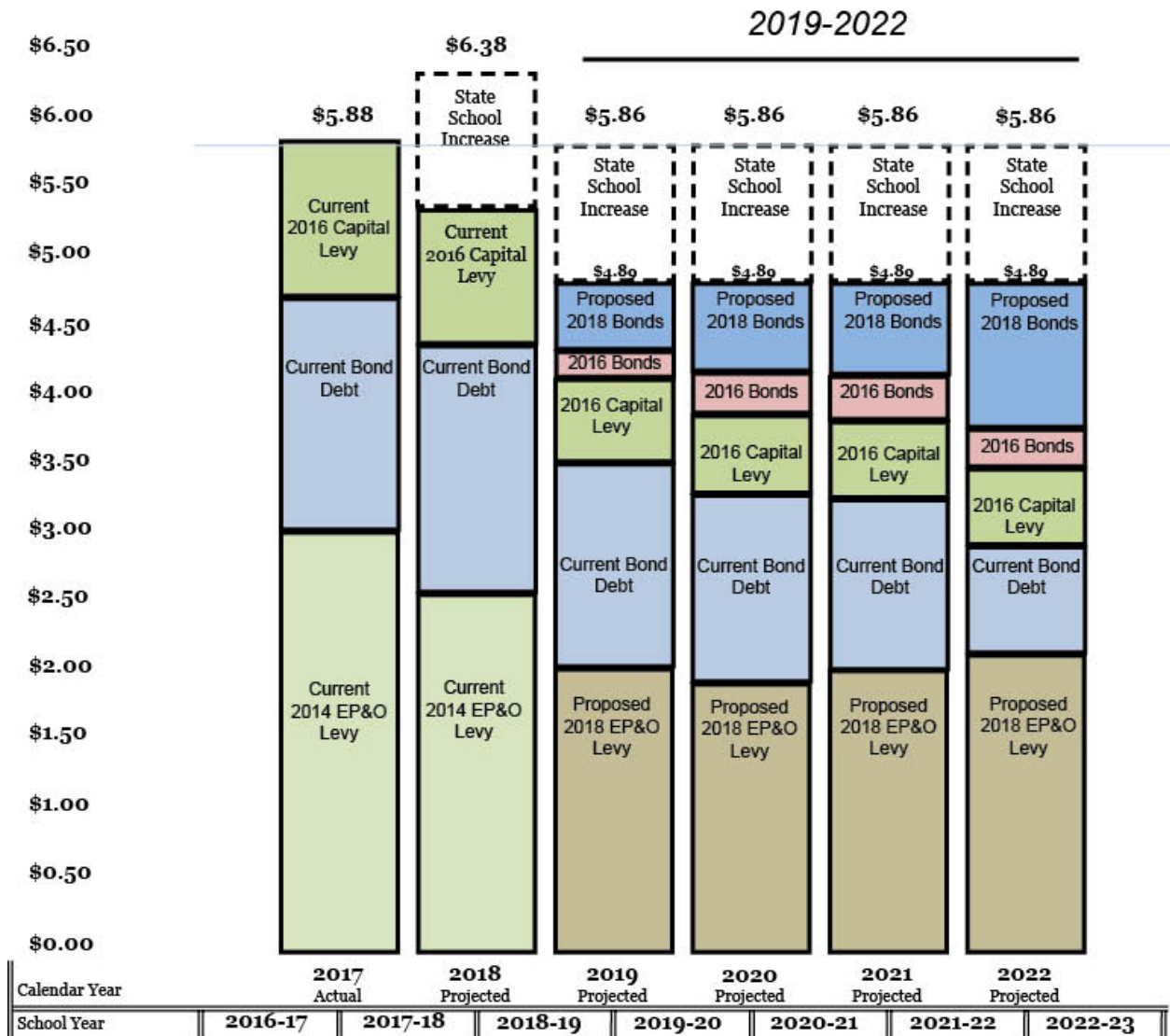
Executive Director of Facilities and Planning, Mike Gunn, referred to a March 2017 meeting at Jackson High School with parents and community during which a number of possibilities were discussed. “Nothing is decided, but other districts have handled overcrowding various ways.” Gunn went on to list what other districts have done and what might be considered to ease crowding across the district and at Jackson High – a school built for 1,500 students with more than 2,000 today. Those include:

- Adding more portables at Jackson High, which already has 17. By 2023, without a new high school, Jackson will have 30 portables on campus, possibly on tennis courts, parking lots and/or fields.
- Adding more portables to Cascade High, which has one portable now. Without a new high school, Cascade will have eight more portables in the next five years – by 2023.
- Balancing enrollment at the existing three comprehensive high schools by shifting boundaries so some students now attending Jackson move to Cascade; some from Cascade move to Everett High. Such boundary shifts would involve more student busing – a cost that comes from the same fund which pays for instruction.
- Double shifting – one group of students attends school early in the day; others go later in the afternoon.
- Staggering shifts – For example, nine periods a day with students starting and ending at different times to reduce the number who are in the school at one time.
- Enacting year round school, with a variety of schedule possibilities.

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Local school tax rate to be stable 2019-2022; state school rate spikes for one year in 2018

Executive Director of Finance and Business Services, Jeff Moore, reminded the audience of last summer's late Legislative session during which, "legislators responded to the Supreme Court's order to fully and amply fund K-12 schools with a 'levy swap' which increased state school tax starting in 2018 and lowered how much school districts can collect in 2019 and beyond."



This caught school districts by surprise because unlike other levy swap conversations, "the Legislature tossed school districts a curve ball by starting the state tax increase in 2018 and creating a one-year rate spike. While we have no control over the 2018 spike, we have lowered our total local rate for 2019, including passage of the Feb. 13 Capital Bond and Replacement Levy, to offset the state increase."

He explained the district's history of planning bond and levy requests with a stable local school tax rate. "We made a 'stable local school tax rate' commitment to our voters when we presented the 2016 bond. The resulting 2017 local school tax rate was \$5.88. Beginning in 2019, the year collections begin for the Feb. 13 bond and levy, we have committed to a long range stable local school tax rate of \$4.89."

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The Capital Bond adds hands-on, vocational career programs at district high schools

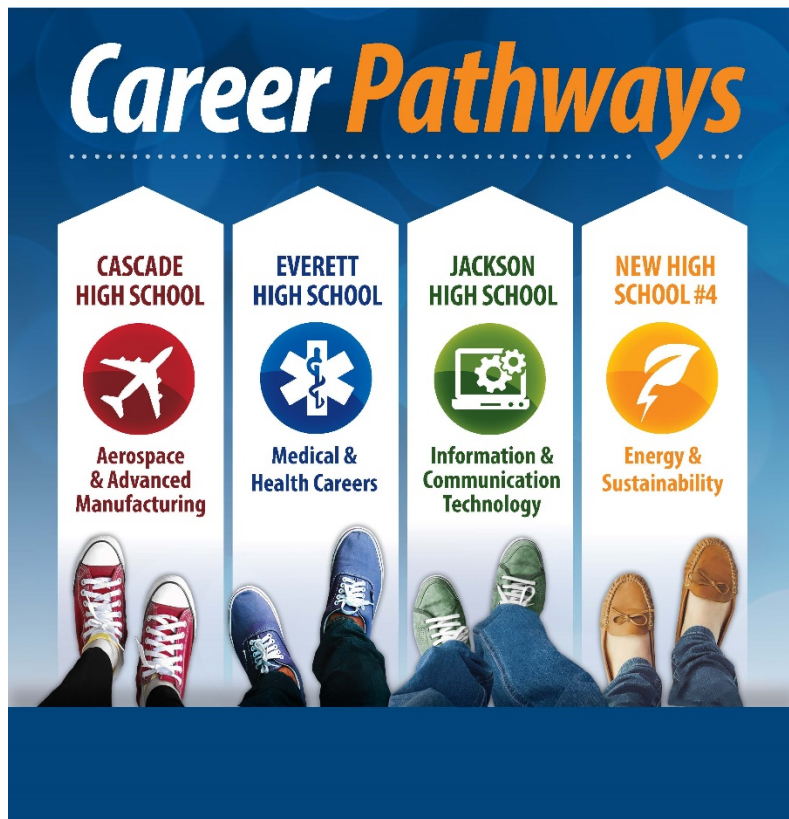
Although not the hottest topic at Tuesday evening's meeting, some parents and students were

interested in and excited about the "Career Pathways" programs the bond will fund.

One parent asked, "Can my child attend a pathway program at a high school other than the school we are assigned to?"

Dr. Stewart answered, "It is our intent to make it possible for students to take part in programs regardless of their home school. Equity is one of our district's core values, and that value will play large in any final program plans we put in place for the Career Pathway offerings."

Expressing enthusiasm for the vocational focus of the Pathway programs, another parent said, "This will make it possible for my kids to graduate from high school and get good jobs right here."



about Capital Bond funding for hands-on, high tech vocational programs planned for each high school – programs giving students options for certifications and advantages for internships, careers and further education.

If the Bond is approved, the vocational building at Everett High will be retrofitted for medical and health career learning areas. Cascade High School's science building will be modernized and expanded to include areas for aerospace and advanced manufacturing. Portions of Jackson High School will be retrofitted for information and communications technology. The new high school will include learning and training space for energy and sustainability careers.

Experiences in these career pathway programs will give students options to move directly into the world of work or to choose further education, making it possible for local graduates to live and work in area neighborhoods.

More information, including questions and answers, videos and options to ask more questions are available on the [district website](#) or by emailing communications@everettsd.org or calling 425-385-4040.

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For more information:

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