



**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dr. Art Jarvis, Superintendent  
**DATE:** February 28, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Superintendent Update for February 28 Board Meeting

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The bond proposal submitted to the Board in October focused almost exclusively on the issue of elementary school overcrowding and shortages of classrooms. The proposed issue that emerged was to construct four new facilities, two of which would be additions to the current eight elementary schools, with the other two buildings being enlarged replacements for our two oldest facilities. In total, the proposed bond added over fifty per cent additional permanent classrooms to the district.

It was emphasized at the time that our situation was critical. We need more classrooms immediately and adding portable classrooms was no longer an option. The new schools would provide a long-term remedy by 2021 and 2022, but the fall of 2019 and 2020 would still be problematic.

The subsequent purchase of the Boys and Girls Club in January added a new element in planning for School #10. Because the facility contained nine classrooms already, we now had the option to immediately open School #10 as a smaller school in 2019, and grow it to full size in two years with a classroom addition. This thinking called for full mobilization upon the approval of the Bond and occupancy in the fall. In essence, that called for the quick action and the shaping of a school this spring.

A second element that emerged with the purchase of this facility was the question of how to best serve the district as a whole with School #10 in this location. We already knew that with boundary adjustments, School #9 would alleviate the significant overcrowding at Discovery Elementary School in particular. Additional relief would be experienced at Purdy and Harbor Heights, but to a lesser degree.

The need to relieve pressure more broadly throughout the district led to the determination that the solution of massive boundary adjustments from end to end in the school district was not the answer. Instead, the concept of adding a school of choice to the system and allowing parents to opt in or stay in their neighborhood school was seen as a viable option. That triggered a process to look at the options that could be best initiated in the short time available. Options considering a "STEAM" School, School of the Arts, or a Community based school were quickly mobilized to enable the next steps of leadership and staffing.

Harkening back to the beginning, however, the short-term housing shortage remains. Seven to ten additional classrooms are still needed to relieve the overcrowding, particularly at Discovery Elementary School. Utilizing the concept of a Pyramid of Interventions, the district had determined the specific locations in which more classrooms are needed, and also the possible remedies. The next level of solutions requires an examination of potential actions such as moving or eliminating programs to create space.

The district review of the placement of optional early childhood programs, highly capable programs, and others, resulted in the consideration of altering the use of some classrooms at Henderson Bay High School to serve elementary students. That would entail controlling the number of students entering HBHS for one or two years in order to ensure adequate space for currently enrolled students there. It would also provide the district an opportunity to review the HBHS service model and make any necessary adjustments.

Revising HBHS space for relief of elementary school overcrowding would take the form of dedicating the first floor space of eight classrooms to elementary students, while maintaining the six second floor rooms for HBHS.

The district reached out seeking to determine whether the STEAM, Arts, or Community themes were preferred. It is evident that there is in fact great interest in that question. It is also evident that there are others who feel they would benefit from more time and opportunity to consider the concepts and processes. The district similarly shared the potential plans for sharing HBHS.

There is an old saying to be careful when assisting someone across the street to make sure they want to go. Confusion and concern has been voiced by some parents and others regarding the plans and recommendations. Unfortunately, some of the concerns have even taken the form of personal attacks and allegations. This seems to be a reminder that change can be difficult, even when it is seemingly a well-founded search for solutions to vexing issues. The problems and solutions are too significant to become lost in rancor. In many ways, they represent the dreams and future for the district. There is probably no solution that will please everyone, but we can use the time and opportunity to ensure the actions truly represent our best thinking.

I am making the recommendation to slow the process and broaden the discussion about themes for School #10. That may well prevent the district from implementing a school of choice this fall or later. Regardless, I would recommend that Item 7.7 be tabled this evening and the broader discussion of options available to the district for School #10 be moved to our March 7 board session with no action requested at that meeting.

Likewise, I am recommending that Item 7.9 also be deferred in order to look at the full range of options available to us for short-term solutions to our overcrowding. I would state unequivocally that consideration of mixing younger children with older students does not negate the possible solution of HBHS classrooms, but I would again recommend broadening the conversation and solution set. March 7 will also be the target to discuss framing this issue and reviewing the alternatives. Any action would be considered at a later date.

Thank you for listening to my comments this evening. I would close with my thoughts that this community will have many chances to grapple with tough issues and issues of change. This is just one of those opportunities to test how well we can collaborate to ensure a great school district for our children. I have confidence the end product will be extraordinary. Thank you.