



WASHINGTON SCHOOLS EXPANSION PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q WHY IS IT NECESSARY FOR WASHINGTON SCHOOLS TO EXPAND WITH A BUILDING PROJECT?

The District has attempted to even out numbers in elementary classrooms for several years, but continue to struggle with this issue among the four K-6 buildings. In addition, space continues to be scarce due to a continued gradual increase in enrollment as well as an expansion of programming throughout the district.

To better understand the issues facing the district and gain perspective from stakeholders, the district hired a consulting firm, Administrator Assistance, to review the needs in 2017. This included a review of the existing facilities and IDOE district statistics. To gain a firsthand perspective, interviews involving building and district level staff, parents, and community members were conducted and surveys were sent to families within the district.

Administrator Assistance determined that the district's elementary, junior high, and high school facilities had reached occupational capacity. With continued growth and the community's access to I-69, Washington Community Schools would need to move forward with some type of building project in order to be able to prepare for the future.

Throughout the remainder of 2017 and 2018, the district held ten public meetings to further gather public input on the future direction of the schools. During this time several options for elementary building additions and reconfiguration of grade levels were reviewed. Ultimately, the focus shifted towards the construction of an intermediate/middle school.



WHY IS THE SCHOOL BOARD LOOKING AT AN INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE SCHOOL CONFIGURATION?

Following the discussion with the public, it became clear that a long-term plan for the district was needed. By beginning with a project that could provide a solution to the overcrowding at the middle school level, the high school and elementary buildings would also see an immediate benefit. The next phase in a long-range plan could then be directed at the elementary buildings.



WHAT GRADES WILL BE HELD IN THE NEW BUILDING?

While no decision has been made on an actual grade span or configuration, Washington Schools is considering either a 5th - 8th grade, or 6th-8th grade building. This would immediately alleviate overcrowding in the elementary schools, and would allow the high school the space to offer more classes and opportunities in technology, vocational, and career exploration.

Q WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN INTERMEDIATE/MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING?

The district would not put all students into a single educational setting but would divide the grades based upon the appropriate curriculum needs.

The Intermediate/Middle School would have a 5th and 6th Grade wing and a 7th and 8th grade wing, separated by common space, such as a cafeteria. Each wing would eat lunch separately from the other. This allows for a more gradual transition from an elementary to a high school setting.

Standards for each grade level will stay the same, however, having grade levels in one building would allow for more project- based learning, technology utilization, and collaboration.

We would anticipate more choices for student electives, such as choir, band, arts, athletics, and after school clubs.

Q WHAT IS THE LONG TERM VISION FOR THE DISTRICT?

The district is currently in the process of purchasing property for a school building project. However, the on-going discussion involves a focus for the future. Ultimately, this includes the development of a long-term plan for all students PK-12 that will allow for future campus expansion and can evolve with the needs of the school community for decades to come.

Q WHAT IS A BOND REFERENDUM?

A bond referendum allows school districts to borrow money to take care of issues that are beyond the scope of money received from the state for a district's day-to-day needs. Funds used for construction of a new school building exceeds money available in their capital projects funds. In Indiana, school districts must ask voters to approve any amount over \$10 million.

Q DO YOU HAVE TO BE A PROPERTY OWNER TO VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE BOND REFERENDUM?

No, any registered voter living within Washington Community Schools district is eligible to vote.

Q HOW COULD THIS BUILDING PROJECT AFFECT OUR COMMUNITY?

Strong schools are important for our community. Washington is ideally situated on I-69. New schools have the potential to attract new residents and economic development. Additional space would allow for more opportunities and programs offered to our students, which creates a talented future work force. Property values could increase due to economic growth in our community.