

**Facilitators:** David VanderYacht, Superintendent and Ashley McClaran, OAC Services

**Attendance:** 18 attendees present

**Meeting Objectives:**

- Review tax rate increase for various bond measure scenarios.
- Validate BPTF guiding principles against community survey input.
- Develop a recommendation for a total bond measure amount and recommended date for inclusion in a special election.
- Gauge desire for those who want to stay active in the effort.

**1. Review of tax evaluation**

- To start the meeting, we reminded all participants of the estimated tax rate increases over 2024 tax rate (per \$1,000 assessed value).
  - \$80M = \$1.05
  - \$120M = \$1.48
  - \$150M = \$1.83
  - \$160M = \$1.89

**2. Community survey input**

- On behalf of Lynden School District, a third party conducted an online survey of 901 community members in Lynden School District to assess residents' perceptions of the district, news sources, priorities for education funding, and reactions to information about the district and its approach. Interviews were conducted April 11-24, 2023.
- Notably, the sample of residents who participated in the survey is *not* demographically reflective or representative of the full population of the district. While survey respondents included district residents unaffiliated with the district, the 901 participants disproportionately included those affiliated with the district, including parents and staff. This data is therefore most valuable in assessing relative priorities, needs, and messaging frameworks among community residents; it should not be considered a proxy for overall support for a potential funding measure.
- Notable results are as follows:
  - 70% of responses rated LHS as being in "fair or poor" condition.
  - Before any information about the condition of the building was stated, there was almost an exact split in the respondents saying that the school should be rebuilt/modernized vs. simply maintained.
  - After additional information was given about the condition of the school, the number of those recommending replacement jumped by almost 30%.
  - Safety and security were the highest priority for the community and the BPTF.
  - The remaining priorities from the community are as follows:
    - Health supports and counselling spaces = 58%
    - HVAC = 57%
    - Career and Technical Education = 54%
    - Added elementary classrooms = 51%
    - Performing Arts = 34%
    - Athletic Fields = 25%
  - Most compelling messages:
    - Space – LHS was originally designed for far fewer students than it is expected to house today. Many students are learning in portable classrooms and cramped spaces. The

existing school lacks sufficient restrooms and cafeteria space to meet our students' needs.

- Safety – LHS was built with classrooms that have exterior doors, an outdated style that makes it a challenge to maintain building security.
- Efficiency – Rebuilding LHS entirely would be more efficient than renovations which could stretch on for years and fail to address fundamental flaws in the school's safety and design. A full demolition and rebuild would cost about the same as renovating but would allow the district the opportunity to more efficiently construct a modern, safe, and larger school.
- Least compelling messages:
  - Aging – LHS was built in 1980 and increasingly fails to provide a modern learning environment for our students. From obsolete HVAC systems to outdated career and technical education classrooms, it is an old school which fails to serve our students' needs.
  - Input – Lynden School District's decision to pursue a new high school is being driven by a community-led process which has evaluated the needs of students, staff, and residents across the district to balance fiscal responsibility with the goal of providing students with a modern and safe learning environment.

### **3. Recap of the previous meeting**

- We reviewed the list circulated in the meeting minutes on where we feel consensus was achieved and where we still have room for further conversation.
- Project priorities were reviewed with the original consensus in mind and a *Comment, Question, and Answer* session was opened.
- Initially, some items that were previously removed from priority were brought back into the fold and the ultimate realization came that **all projects** originally listed were warranted for some of the following reasons:
  - Isom and Vossbeck projects are essential to this measure:
    - The capacity for enrollment needs to be addressed now.
    - If we do not make the cafeteria and gyms bigger with added classrooms, we will only create more problems.
    - We are saving money by doing this now.
    - Portables are not safe.
  - Updated playground spaces provide access for all our students and improve safety overall.
  - We do not want to look back like we did on the LMS HVAC and regret not doing it at the right time.
- The general thought of the group was that efficiencies in design should be investigated during design and to determine if the full scope of each project was necessary to achieve success.

### **4. Safety and security**

- From the conversation above it was suggested that ongoing safety upgrades and standardization should be reviewed by a group of experts more regularly. Funds for continuing upgrades will be sought after in separate grants and levies that are meant to handle such needs.

### **5. Final survey of the room**

- A Long-Range Planning representative was present and confirmed that the project list was developed over a series of workshops. He confirmed the importance of these projects in the success of the facilities over the next 5-6 years.

- Each member was asked to give the bond measure amount and any comments on how they made that determination.
  - \$160M was the overwhelming decision with 11 of the 13 votes stating that amount as their preference. 2 of the participants thought that \$165M was more appropriate but could understand why others were going lower.
- The following is a snapshot of comments that were given:
  - Many mentioned the need to fully capitalize on SCAP funding as a baseline understanding.
  - Many agreed that anything less than \$160M would be “irresponsible” and did not see how we could “rationally ask for anything less.”
  - Two participants specifically recognized the indicators of financial struggles for the families of Lynden but saw “no other way” to meet the needs of students in the district. Further citing that the costs will only go up with escalation as the years go on. All agreed.
  - All participants wanted to get started quickly to reduce costs so that we could start to look for creative ways to meet the budget through economies of scale.
  - It was requested that we review opportunities for increased access for non-district community (Lynden Christian and those without school-aged children.)
  - There was an interest by a few to move forward quickly in order to capitalize on informational outreach opportunities over the summer.

#### **6. Additional Notes**

- There was a reference to the Ferndale School District process which included ongoing “oversight,” through the life of the design and construction process. This was seen as a model for Lynden School District to investigate to continually build trust in the process and allow interested community members to have added insight.
- Overall, the participants saw a lot of benefit to this process and are willing to participate in future efforts for informational outreach.

#### **6. Final recommendation**

- \$160M.
- February 2024.
- List of projects attached.

Proposed Projects:

<b>Student Safety &amp; Experience</b>	
Fire Sprinkling	Isom ES
Security Cameras	Isom ES
Playground to Meet Standards	Isom ES
Air Circulation	Isom ES
Parking Lot Crack Renovations	Isom ES
Modernize purpose-built spaces for TK, SpEd and Spec Svcs	Isom ES
Security Cameras	Vossbeck ES
Playground to Meet Standards	Vossbeck ES
Air Circulation	Vossbeck ES
Parking Lot Crack Renovations	Vossbeck ES
Modernize purpose-built spaces for TK, SpEd and Spec Svcs	Vossbeck ES
Security Cameras	Fisher ES
Playground to Meet Standards	Fisher ES
Air Conditioning & Circulation	Lynden MS
High School Replacement	Lynden HS
<b>Facility Stewardship</b>	
Flooring in Classrooms, Halls, Gym	Isom ES
Replace Roof	Isom ES
Flooring in Classrooms, Halls, Gym	Vossbeck ES
Replace Roof	Vossbeck ES
Decommission	Judson Hall
<b>Districtwide Program Growth</b>	
Add 6 New Classrooms	Isom ES
Expand Multipurpose/Cafeteria	Isom ES
Expand Existing Gym	Isom ES
Add 6 New Classrooms	Vossbeck ES
Additional Parking	Vossbeck ES
Convert Gym to Dist. Warehouse	Fisher ES