

## **SUMMARY**

### **Charter and Purpose**

Following two unsuccessful bond measures in 2024, the Lynden School District established the Community Solutions Committee (CSC) to provide a fresh perspective on facility needs and funding priorities. The CSC's official charter included:

- Validating facility needs
- Identifying barriers to community consensus
- Recommending a prioritized scope for capital improvements
- Supporting transparency and fiscal responsibility throughout the process

The committee included local business owners, civic leaders, and residents—many of whom were not involved in prior bond development efforts. Their work was grounded in transparency, open dialogue, and shared responsibility to both students and taxpayers.

### **PROCESS**

Over the course of five meetings held from March through April 2025, the CSC engaged in a process to examine available data, evaluate scope options, project costs, tax implications, and listen to community feedback. Each session built upon the last, culminating in a recommendation to the Board outlining next steps to address the fiscal challenges of meeting the District's most urgent facility needs necessary to provide safe, supportive, and future-ready learning environments for all Lynden students.

Throughout this process, the CSC consistently heard and acknowledged the financial pressures facing local families, businesses, and property owners. We recognize that many residents feel overburdened by property taxes. As committee members, we took this sentiment seriously and share the desire to keep costs manageable, to spend wisely, and to make smart long-term decisions that respect the community's financial realities.

### **Meeting 1 – Facility History and Key Concerns**

- Described the character of our District
- Established our charter
- Provided history of the bond planning process
- Examined the State Study & Survey to identify highest facility condition needs
- Reviewed enrollment trends and demographic data
- Identified key community concerns from past bond efforts to frame our thoughts throughout the life of this process:
  - Tax burden
  - District stewardship
  - Clarity in bond proposal cost and scope

### **Meeting 2 – Funding Mechanisms**

- Detailed overview of (School Construction Assistance Program) SCAP
  - Funding gaps due to outdated state cost assumptions
  - Differences in funding eligibility for enrollment vs. modernization
- Presentation on school funding mechanisms – levy, capital levy, capital bond
- Reviewed tax impact scenarios and election timelines
- School Impact Fees
- Discussed historical election success rates and how Lynden compares to peer districts

**Meeting 3 – Conceptual Design and Cost Estimates**

- Reviewed Isom and Bernice Vossbeck classroom additions and preliminary cost estimates
- Described process of developing conceptual designs for Lynden High School replacement
  1. Sized to meet current enrollment and forecasted growth. Classroom space for 1100 designed to be expandable with common spaces including cafeteria, library, restrooms, and hallways sized for 1240 students
  2. Developed five concept options that were then prioritized to a top two which included further design detail for more accurate cost estimating
  3. Best solution based on site and budget constraints was a two-phase replacement that preserves the gym and minimizes impact to students for the life of construction
- Described the process of reaching budget estimates
  1. Estimates are based on price/square foot in relation to the conceptual design
  2. Escalated actual costs of Sehome HS and Ferndale HS (local and recent) were used to inform these preliminary estimates
  3. Allowances for new Energy Code Upgrades were included
  4. The costs were escalated to 2026 as a starting point for evaluation and will need to be escalated for final evaluation to align with the timing of a funding measure

**Meeting 4 – Prioritization and Tax Impact**

- Discussed priorities and assessed cost breakdowns to determine project priority based on the tax burden of various scenarios including multiple combinations of the following:
  - Isom Elementary classroom addition, modernization, and systems upgrades
  - Bernice Vossbeck Elementary classroom addition, modernization, and systems upgrades
  - Lynden High School replacement
  - Performing Arts Center
  - Stadium expansion and outdoor field upgrades
- Reviewed tax impacts and total costs of capital levy & capital bond funding options across multiple dollar amounts
- Discussed the impacts of escalation and the need to revisit the estimates based on timing of funding initiatives

**Meeting 5 – Synthesis and Final Recommendation**

- Reviewed escalation impacts to the cost of each project
- Compared steady vs. variable bond repayment structures
- Confirmed the need for a simplified bond proposal to only include the high school
- Discussed follow-up needs for the Performing Arts Center and Judson Hall.
- Advised on further information needed to define current scope for systems upgrades given the recommendation not to add capacity at the elementary schools at this time

**SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS**

**LYNDEN HS - Escalated to 2026**

Replacement Facility		\$78,876,243
Performing Arts Center (PAC)		\$10,888,634
Energy Code Upgrade (Allowance)		\$1,249,213
Gym Renovation		\$5,400,000
Sitework		\$13,000,000
Synthetic Football Field & New Track		\$3,500,000
Grandstand extension & upgrade		\$750,000
Field Upgrades (Allowance)		\$1,000,000
	<b>Subtotal Lynden HS</b>	<b>\$114,664,090</b>
Design/Estimate Contingency (5%)		\$5,733,205
	<b>Subtotal Lynden HS</b>	<b>\$120,397,295</b>
Soft Cost Allowance (32.5%)		\$39,129,121
	<b>Subtotal Lynden HS</b>	<b>\$159,526,415</b>
	<b>SCAP Funding 9-12</b>	<b>(\$30,520,137)</b>
	<b>TOTAL Lynden HS</b>	<b>\$129,006,278</b>

**ISOM ES - Escalated to 2026**

New Classrooms (Growth)		\$5,580,952
Expand Multi-Use (Growth)		\$2,857,143
Expand Gym		\$2,523,810
Add Fire Suppression System (Growth)		\$721,905
Replace HVAC		\$4,088,571
Replace Flooring		\$554,286
Replace Roof		\$1,292,381
Subtotal		\$17,619,048
Soft Cost Allowance (32.5%)		\$5,726,190
	<b>Subtotal Isom ES</b>	<b>\$23,345,238</b>

**VOSSBECK ES - Escalated to 2026**

New Classrooms (Growth)		\$5,580,952
Expand Multi-Use (Growth)		\$2,857,143
Upgrade HVAC		\$2,419,048
Replace Flooring		\$478,095
Replace Roof		\$1,448,571
Added Parking (Growth)		\$1,243,810
Subtotal		\$14,027,619
Soft Cost Allowance (32.5%)		\$4,558,976
	<b>Subtotal Vossbeck ES</b>	<b>\$18,586,595</b>
	<b>Subtotal Elementaries</b>	<b>\$41,931,833</b>
	<b>SCAP Funding K-8</b>	<b>(\$7,133,218)</b>
	<b>TOTAL Elementaries</b>	<b>\$34,798,615</b>

**TOTAL ALL PROJECTS \$163,804,893**

**Exclusions and Clarifications**

1. Assumes Sales tax covered by Soft Costs allowance
2. Tariff Cost or other Future escalation not included
3. Assumes Builders Risk is covered in Soft Costs
4. Excludes Storm infiltration vault systems

5. Excludes Over Excavation and Rock Excavation
6. "Soft cost" includes permitting, design fees, furnishings, and equipment

## **CONSENSUS STATEMENT**

The Community Solutions Committee (CSC) was convened following two unsuccessful bond measures in 2024. As a group of local business owners, civic leaders, and engaged residents - most of which are not affiliated with the previous work involving facilities - we were asked to offer a fresh perspective on how the Lynden community might move forward together.

Our conversations have been thoughtful and wide-ranging. We share a commitment to supporting students while being mindful of the financial realities families and businesses are facing. With that in mind, our recommendation reflects a measured approach that focuses on the district's most pressing facility needs while prioritizing student needs.

### **Bond Scope Recommendation:**

The group supports a simplified, high school-only bond. This helps the community clearly understand what is being funded and addresses only the absolute most urgent concerns for the District in terms of facility condition, educational environments, and enrollment growth.

With the need for a new high school widely recognized, cost escalation becomes a primary concern. The need for a new high school will not go away with time. The growth is not a future problem, but one that Lynden School District has been contending with for almost a decade. The state's School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) partial funding mechanism does not escalate to keep pace with rising construction costs. This growing gap increases the community's financial burden over time and further reinforces the urgency of moving forward with a bond as soon as possible. With each year of delay adding 5% or more to the total project costs, the CSC strongly recommends prioritizing a bond and construction timeline that minimizes the impact of this escalation. Replacing Lynden High School is the greatest need and highest cost.

A November bond could offer meaningful savings through earlier procurement. However, all factors—including voter readiness—should be weighed to support the earliest possible passage.

Other needs—including elementary system replacement and growth at the elementary and middle levels—still need to be addressed, but this group hopes to find solutions from separate funding sources or at a future time in order to address the single top priority- the high school.

### **Performing Arts Center (PAC):**

We recommend further community engagement on whether to include construction of a PAC within the high-school-only bond. As a result of the group's focus on reducing tax burden, we decided not to include the estimated \$11M cost of a PAC within the recommendation. The academic program at a new high school would include the necessary spaces to maintain and even strengthen our theater, music, and performing arts curriculum. Additionally, it is a strong recommendation that any high school design accommodate plans to include a PAC on site.

We see the renovation of Judson Hall as a separate issue and not a priority for a bond focused on needs impacting the highest number of students and programs.

### **Elementary School Heating and Ventilation Scope:**

The previous bond recommendation assumed a need for full system replacement at Isom Elementary based on plans to expand classroom capacity and common areas. If expanding Isom is not included in the

bond, the recommendation is to take a “repair and maintain” approach. Future upgrades may be pursued through grants and other funding sources, including general operating funds.

**Tax Strategy:**

The committee reviewed both fixed and variable tax rate approaches. While we did not reach a formal recommendation given the complexity of the issue, we strongly recommend that any proposed tax increase remain as close to \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value as possible and total bond amount be significantly lower than the previous bond’s \$157.5 million amount.

*Additionally, any informational materials shared with the public should clearly and simply communicate total estimated cost (include interest) and the long-term tax impact. This includes demonstrating how tax burdens typically decrease over time with population growth and assessed value increases—using the district’s prior middle school bond as a relatable example. Comparing Lynden’s total tax rate to other communities was also identified as an important communication.*

**TIMELINE**

	<b>2025 - NOVEMBER ELECTION</b>		<b>2026 - FEBRUARY ELECTION</b>	
<b>WK #</b>	<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>Event</b>
1	5/2		5/2	
2	5/9		5/9	
3	5/16		5/16	
4	5/23		5/23	
5	5/30		5/30	
6	6/6		6/6	
7	6/13	06/12: Board Workshop	6/13	06/12: Board Workshop
8	6/20		6/20	
9	6/27		6/27	
10	7/4	Fourth Of July	7/4	Fourth Of July
11	7/11		7/11	
12	7/18		7/18	
13	7/25		7/25	
14	8/1		8/1	
15	8/8	8/5: File Resolution	8/8	
16	8/15		8/15	
17	8/22		8/22	
18	8/29	8/28: First Day of School	8/29	
19	9/5	CM on Board to Support Procurement	9/5	
20	9/12		9/12	
21	9/19		9/19	
22	9/26		9/26	
23	10/3	RFQ Architect	10/3	
24	10/10		10/10	
25	10/17		10/17	
26	10/24		10/24	
27	10/31		10/31	
28	11/7	11/4: Election	11/7	
29	11/14	Architect contracted	11/14	
30	11/21		11/21	
31	11/28	Thanksgiving	11/28	Thanksgiving
32	12/5		12/5	
33	12/12		12/12	12/12: File Resolution
34	12/19	12/15: PRC Application	12/19	
35	12/26	Christmas	12/26	Christmas
36	1/2	New Year	1/2	New Year

37	1/9		1/9	
38	1/16		1/16	
39	1/23	01/22: PRC Approval	1/23	
40	1/30	RFQ for GC/CM	1/30	
41	2/6		2/6	
42	2/13		2/13	02/10: Election
43	2/20		2/20	CM on Board to Support Procurement
44	2/27		2/27	
45	3/6	GC/CM Letter of Intent	3/6	
46	3/13		3/13	
47	3/20		3/20	
48	3/27		3/27	RFQ Architect
49	4/3	GC/CM Contracted	4/3	
50	4/10		4/10	
51	4/17		4/17	
52	4/24		4/24	
53	5/1		5/1	
54	5/8		5/8	
55	5/15		5/15	
56	5/22		5/22	
57	5/29		5/29	
58	6/5		6/5	
59	6/12		6/12	
60	6/19		6/19	06/23: PRC Application
61	6/26		6/26	
62	7/3		7/3	
63	7/10		7/10	
64	7/17		7/17	
65	7/24		7/24	07/23: PRC Approval
66	7/31		7/31	RFQ for GC/CM
67	8/7		8/7	
68	8/14		8/14	
69	8/21		8/21	
70	8/28		8/28	
71	9/4		9/4	GC/CM Letter of Intent
72	9/11		9/11	
73	9/18		9/18	
74	9/25		9/25	
75	10/2		10/2	GC/CM Contracted