

2022-23 FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE

School Board Study Session Report

January 26, 2023



FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair: Superintendent, David VanderYacht

Participating Members:

Khushdip Brar	John Grubbs	Mike McKee	Duane Vis
Mike Brown	Trevor Holman	Josh Neff	Cory White
Kevin Burke	Steve Jilk	Nicholas Sawka	Roseanne Wiesen
Ian Freeman	Jennifer Kuelz	Sarah Stewart	Tammy Yoder
Trevor Galligan	Nicole Medcalf	Cabe VanderYacht	

Additional Participants:

Tim Faber, Architect, King Architecture
Ashley McClaran, Consultant, OAC Services

GOALS OF THE FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Facilities Planning Committee was established as an advisory to the superintendent to prepare recommendations to the Lynden School Board toward a proposal for the next bond election. Through the analysis of historical information, enrollment projections, building condition assessments, and informed by discussions around educational programs in the District, this committee will begin the process to identify priorities for capital needs and opportunities for further analysis.

The outcome provides for consideration a methodology for prioritizing projects that make the highest impact on the educational environments to support Lynden’s students, teachers, staff, and community. The topics for consideration and recommended next steps provide a framework for future committee work as the School Board moves forward in deciding its ultimate Resolution for bond initiatives.

PROCESS

On November 3, 2022, the Facilities Planning Committee met for a series of meetings to better understand capital project needs for a potential 2024 bond measure. Nineteen volunteers signed up to take part in the effort with active participation of roughly 14 to 17 members attending each session. The group included parents, community members, and staff.

Superintendent, David VanderYacht summarized the history of the bond planning process dating back to 2013 and outlined the current state of District enrollment projections, facility conditions, and aspirational goals in support of the *Lynden Strategic Priorities for 2021-2024*. Presentations from District personnel and long-time consultants were given describing building conditions through review of the most recent State Study and Survey. Preliminary cost models for potential new projects were developed and the team gained a basic understanding of the tax rate implications for bonds of various values. Feedback from the group taken at each meeting informed recommendations included in this document.

FINDINGS

Facility Capacity to Support Enrollment

Overcrowding occurs when the number of students enrolled in the school is larger than the number of students the school is designed to accommodate. Studies show that when there is not enough space for students to learn their ability to pay attention is reduced. Students achieve less and their tendency to exhibit negative behaviors is increased. Rates of teacher and student absenteeism are higher than at schools with ample, well-configured space.

Enrollment projections compared to the design capacity of a building show where additional classrooms and programmed space are needed now and into the future to prevent overcrowding. Comparisons of building capacity to current enrollment indicate a burgeoning concern at the high school growing into future needs at all grade levels.

PERMANENT CAPACITY vs ENROLLMENT ANALYSIS BY SCHOOL

School	Designed Capacity (excludes portables)	2022-23 Enrollment	2022-23 Delta	2030-31 Projected Enrollment	Projected 2030-31 Delta
Fisher ES	580	533	47	536	44
Isom ES	440	432	8	535	-95
Vossbeck ES	440	489	-49	514	-74
Lynden MS	840 (124,000 SF)	656	184	831	9
Lynden HS	740 (122,000 SF)	870	-130	1,199	-459

Dr. Mike Stromme and FLO Analytics, February 2022

Building Condition Assessments

Poor school conditions have an impact on student performance and learning as well. Research directly links children's ability to learn to the condition of their school environment. These findings highlight the importance of prioritizing repair and replacement in all facilities.

The age of each facility has a direct link to its condition. Older schools are more difficult to maintain due to the number of systems that exceed their useful life and the inability to address concerns quickly because of outdated materials and obsolete systems. Postponing major system replacements due to lack of funds also advances building system failure creating exponential deterioration of building components that make it difficult to catch up on repairs once systems start to fail.

Building condition assessments recorded through the "Asset Preservation Program" and State Study and Survey identify specific needs for building system upgrades and replacements to maintain building safety, security, and performance. Scores given in the following areas were combined and averaged to identify replacement needs at each facility:

Building foundations and slabs
Water and Gas Systems
Exterior "envelope" (roofs, walls, windows)
Interior walls and partitions
Interior finishes and flooring
Plumbing systems

Sanitary sewer systems
Heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC)
Fire Protection and life safety
Electrical systems
Communications and automated Controls
Furnishings and fixtures

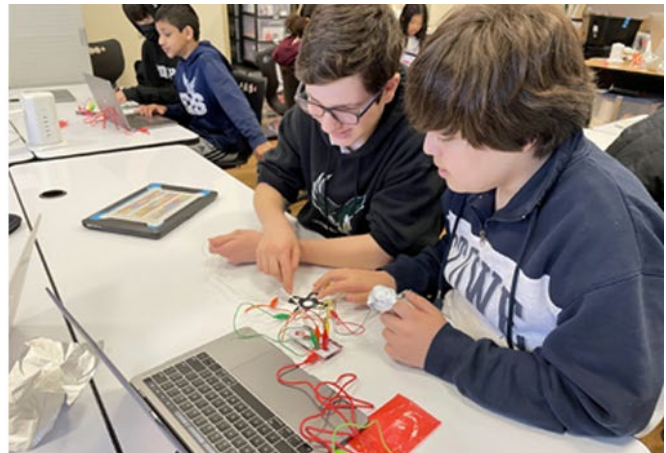
BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENT SCORES

School	Year Built	Score
Lynden HS – Main Bldg	1980	60.76
Lynden HS – 300 Bldg	1980	61.98
Isom ES	1989	72.27
Lynden HS – 200 Bldg	1993	61.73
Vossbeck ES	1997	78.83
Fisher ES	2017	98.87
Lynden MS	2018	98.13

Building condition scores organized by age of facility show a correlation between building age and condition. Ratings for 2021-2022 reveal Lynden High School buildings have the highest number of concerns to address. Vossbeck and Isom Elementary score lower due to needed mechanical upgrades for air circulation.

Functional Performance

A functional performance analysis underscores the need to create modern, flexible learning environments that support the specialized education needed for today's, and tomorrow's, college and career ready graduates. Naturally, older schools designed with outdated teaching methodologies in mind lack the qualities of a modern learning environment. For instance, adequately sized and configured learning environments give students the opportunity to gain experience through collaboration and exploration. Purpose-built programmed spaces such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) allow students to experience first-hand the tools and equipment needed in preparation for technology-based employment opportunities in the future.



How has school changed since you attended?

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a system goal of Lynden Schools designed to meet the needs of all students. Flexible learning spaces like those at Fisher Elementary School and Lynden Middle School support the use of targeted interventions and evidence-based strategies to sustain student growth academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally. Learning spaces like those pictured on the next page are often cited by school staff as an essential tool of today's learning environments.



Flexible and collaborative learning spaces adjacent to classrooms at Lynden Middle School and Fisher Elementary

SQUARE FOOTAGE ANALYSIS BY SCHOOL

School	Avg SF per Student	State Median Avg SF/ student	Difference from State avg SF	National Median Avg SF per student	Difference from State avg SF
Fisher ES	118	115	3	135	-17
Isom ES	108	115	-7	135	-27
Vossbeck ES	121	115	6	135	-14
Lynden MS	148	148	0	176	-28
Lynden HS	164	173	-9	179	-15

The square footage comparison between Lynden School District schools and the State and National averages above indicate where Lynden schools have smaller classroom sizes. These same locations lack flexible shared spaces which combined with smaller class sizes reduce student collaboration and limit exploratory learning.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The data above in addition to Lynden School District's mission, vision, and strategic priorities drove the decisions of this committee. There was consensus in the group that well-maintained buildings and grounds comparable to neighboring districts are the necessary tools for teachers and staff to continue to create safe and supportive learning environments. A review of each criteria reveals the need for a bond measure to obtain enough funds to address the issues facing Lynden School District facilities.

- **Student and Staff safety and security along with health and wellness improvements should be made across all schools.** Continued modernization of safety and security measures helps to protect our students, teachers, and staff. With every capital improvement Lynden should continue to build upon the best health, safety, and security practices to standardize safety and security measures across the District.
- **The committee supports the recommendations of the Study and Survey and the need to make building condition improvements and added learning spaces throughout the district.** Renovations are needed to replace aging infrastructure, add value and extend the life of our facilities, and provide necessary improvements that will keep our students safe, warm, and dry. The use of portable classroom spaces is not preferred.
- **Facilities with flexible, collaborative spaces and technology necessary for building skills for the future are needed to ensure graduates have a competitive edge in an ever-changing global market after graduation.** Because of this, the committee identified the complete replacement of Lynden High School as a priority for the next bond measure. Renovation was reviewed as an option but ruled out due to the negative impact on student learning during construction and the limited effect these types of renovations could actually have on improving the facility. The committee did acknowledge that further review is needed to determine the program components and phasing that will provide the best value for funds available and a schedule that prioritizes a student-centered approach to construction. The group has identified the inclusion of a performing arts center as an essential part of any future projects.
- **The Committee understands that it is important that each community member sees value for themselves in any potential bond proposal.** Committee members emphasized the importance of ensuring our decisions are frugal and that dollars spent add value for the broader community. This committee encourages further development of community-use procedures that promote the use of District facilities such as performing arts center, gymnasiums, and athletic fields.
- **Every effort should be made to distribute the resources of this and all future bonds in ways that make the most impact on the learning environments that support the students, teachers, and staff of Lynden School District.** Projects that maximize access to educational programs and high-quality instruction should be prioritized.

NEXT STEPS

This committee feels the following next steps are necessary to present a well-informed final recommendation to the board later in the year.

1. **The Facilities Planning Committee recognizes the need to confirm and communicate a Long-Range Capital Facilities Plan that clearly outlines current and future capital projects.** In addition to more urgent needs, this plan should supply timelines for addressing among other things: existing building conditions, performing arts space, provisions for career and technical skills, elementary school capacity, options to support a growing parent partnership program (Lynden Academy), playgrounds and fields, and a plan to make decisions related to Judson Hall.
2. **This committee understands the importance of continual community engagement.** Members recommend that the District expand its informational outreach efforts through a series of surveys and open houses that share information and get community feedback.
3. **Finally, this committee recognizes the need for further investigation to determine a prioritized list of capital facility projects and the tax rate implications of a bond measure at various amounts to make a final recommendation for a Board Resolution in the future.** The Facilities Planning Committee recommends that a separate Bond Planning Task Force made up of a broader community of stakeholders be assembled to build on the study and recommendations of this committee.

It is the recommendation that this task force review assumptions made to date and analyze additional information on continually developing District needs. This group should review cost modeling scenarios for proposed projects and be provided with updated tax rate implications for the Lynden community. Presentations from District experts will outline the needs of safety and security, student services, technology, post-secondary college and career support, and playgrounds and fields that support outdoor learning programs. Through this series of meetings, the Task Force will gain full understanding of priorities and thoughtfully plan for capital spending to address current needs and those necessary to support continually improving educational practices and student services in Lynden School District.

This Bond Planning Task Force will be asked to provide the School Board with a final recommendation in fall of 2023 in preparation for the development of a bond resolution and potential ballot initiative in February 2024.