

FAQ's - Community Meetings regarding Survey

1. Where will the kids go during construction or remodeling?

There would be no disruption to students during construction at South. A new building would not be constructed on the same site. At North with Option 1, new construction would be completed to the east of the current North site. When the new construction is finished, students would move from the area to renovated into the newly constructed area. Once renovation is complete, the west wing classrooms would be demolished and converted to off-street parking or green space for playground.

2. Is the space required by MDE?

MDE provides guidelines and recommendations. There is some flexibility.

3. How much is matched at a state level?

The State contribution is equal to the amount of the Agricultural Land tax credit. For taxes payable in 2020 the credit is equal to 50%, 55% in 2021, 60% in 2022 and 70% in 2023 and thereafter.

4. Are there options that are less expensive?

After extensive discussion, the Board has determined the two options provided are the most fiscally responsible to address educational and facility needs. Less expensive options fall short of desired goals.

5. Is the Interest rate different for new construction vs. renovation?

There will be no difference on the rate.

6. How will the bus routes be shorter?

Routes will still cover a similar number of miles but time on a bus for many students will be reduced because of the elimination of shuttles for morning and afternoon routes.

7. Where do we find bus drivers?

The District contracts with Palmer Bus Service. Palmer is responsible for advertising and recruitment.

8. Can we build up on the current Kensington Building?

A second story on the current South building is not practical and not likely possible. The current Kensington facility would need extensive renovation to meet current academic requirements. The District owned property at the Kensington site is insufficient to accommodate additional space, playground and greenspace and off-street parking. Acquiring adjacent properties will add additional costs to the project.

9. Why do we need 70,000 sq ft at each elementary site if three sites are retained?

Current education practices require additional space for collaboration and group activities, STEAM rooms, expanded Library/Media Center space and Special Education. There are additional spaces for support and special services that do not exist in the current buildings. More restrooms, rooms for potential growth, and a larger gymnasium with locker rooms are included. There is additional space for food service, maintenance, storage.

10. What is the top capacity of a new South site?

Based on a plan of 15 general education classrooms at 20 students per room, the capacity is 300 students.

11. Why can't we use the hallways?

Hallways do not provide an appropriate setting for instruction.

12. What if both options are declined?

If survey results do not support either Option 1 or Option 2, the Board will discuss alternatives and determine how to proceed.

13. If the Kensington school is demolished where would the school be?

No site has been selected.

14. Is the 20 acre site space a guideline?

Yes, MDE uses 20 acres as a guideline for site size, but there is flexibility.

15. How many acres are at the Kensington site?

Including the adjacent lots with houses and a shop on the block, it is estimated to be approximately 4 acres.

16. Can't construction be done in the summer months?

A typical construction project will take 15 to 18 months.

17. If you don't listen here why would you listen on a survey?

The Board is interested in responses from all survey respondents and will use that information to determine direction.

18. How many sq ft are being rented out in Elbow Lake?

Head Start space is 1,250 SF. Head Start provides instruction to pre-school children.

19. Is there any guarantee that the school won't leave Kensington?

If there is a successful vote for Option 1, a South site will be constructed. There has been no site sought.

20. I have 120 tillable acres, it is going to cost me \$1500 more per year.

Based upon the Tax Impact information provided by Baker-Tilly and 120 acres valued at \$5,000 per acre; annual tax is projected to be \$600 per year.

21. What if we choose to do nothing?

Nothing is not an option. North and South need extensive repair work and appropriate sized spaces for current academic practices.

22. What would it cost to renovate & add on?

This is the option proposed for North and the cost is projected to be \$15.1 million. The South site is not conducive to renovation and expansion.

23. Where is the \$7.8 million option?

In 2013 there was a \$7.3 million option to "maintain" all 3 sites. The other part of that option was to increase the Operating Levy from \$1,851 per student to \$2,415 per student. At that time the annual Tax Impact was projected to be \$272.03 for the Facility Referendum and Operating Levy on a \$75,000 residence.

24. How much have you explored other districts?

Our specific focus has been on the needs of WCA students and facilities while considering current educational practices.

25. Will a new South site need access to waste & sewer?

Yes. It would be advantageous to build on an area adjacent to City property.

26. If we move forward with building a new school in Kensington are we bringing 5 & 6 grades back?

There has been no Board discussion related to grade level locations.

27. Why are we talking about savings?

The District's cost of operation has been escalating faster than State Revenue has been increasing. The District's fund balance will be depleted if cost saving steps are not implemented.

28. Is there another survey going out?

No other survey is planned.

29. How long will it take to fill South?

Demographic data is not available to make that projection.

30. What does closing a school do to the town?

Closing a school in a town will certainly cause concern. Town residents still have the opportunity to choose where they do business.

31. What does it do to our taxes?

Tax impact is projected by the District's financial advisors, BakerTilly. Their projections are provided within the survey and on the District's website.

32. What is the cost of fixing and what does that look like?

"Revitalization" projections prepared by Unesco listed \$11,596,800 for North and \$8,063,050 for South. These projections did not include any expansion or room modifications for room size adjustments.

33. What do our teachers say/want/need?

Input has not been directly solicited. WCA teachers are very dedicated to the students and their profession. Board members want an environment that enhances the positive things teachers and staff do.

34. Are there more options?

The Board examined multiple options. The two options provided in the survey were determined by the Board to be the best to address educational adequacy while being fiscally responsible.

35. Do you want 25 to 28 kids in classes?

In grades K-4, no. Decreasing the number of classrooms by one room for current grades K-4 would result in classroom sizes of 18-19 in K, 22 in 1st, 24-25 in 2nd, 20-21 in 3rd, and 21 in 4th.

36. Is SPED going to expand?

Over the last several years, WCA has seen an increase in the Special Education population. It is expected this trend will continue and expanded spaces are planned for both options.

37. Will we accommodate extra outside services?

With both Option 1 and Option 2, the plans provide space for outside services.

38. There has been indications of business growth that may draw workers and families of other nationalities. Will the District be able to manage the growth?

If that happens, either option will accommodate increased enrollment. Additional staff to serve non-English speaking students would need to be added.

39. Have you found a direction we should be looking at?

Based upon the age of facilities, lack of space available to meet academic and program needs within current sites, and financial efficiency; it appears a one-site option is the best.

40. Are we supposed to fill out surveys together?

Survey responses are to reflect your views. Every household resident may complete a survey. Contact Nikki Hanson @ 320-528-7300 or nhanson@isd2342.org a code to complete the survey online.

41. Would gyms be adequate?

The gym spaces for Option 1 and Option 2 provide more gym space than we currently have in the elementary buildings.

42. Why are we predicting increasing enrollment now when 5 years ago it was decreasing?

Demographic information from a study completed in February of 2019 indicates an enrollment increase between 2018 and 2029.

43. Are there any grant money available to help with the cost?

There are no grants known that are available for construction or renovation.

44. Was the \$35M a Unesco figure or did it come from someone else?

No these were figures that Superintendent Hogie used based on his past experiences with building referendums and advice from Zerr Berg Architects.

45. With Option 2, what will happen with buildings in Elbow Lake & Kensington?

This has not been discussed but there are options for these buildings to be sold and used for community centers, apartment or businesses.

46. In Kensington, will the new building be on the same site as current school or will there need to be land acquisition?

With a new build MDE requires that there be at least 20 acres of land to build a new building. The current site does not afford us that luxury. So we will need to look at land to build a new school.

47. Do we already have a new spot to build Kensington?

Not at this time.

48. Do the numbers include purchasing land or an infrastructure that would be needed to build a new building?

No, the estimates do not include purchasing land or any infrastructure that would need to be added.

49. With Option 1, what is the age range for new buildings verses renovation?

New buildings are expected to last 50 years or more with regular maintenance. With renovations, the integrity of the building becomes a concern much sooner.

50. For elementary repairs are we looking at doing them now or over a 20 year span?

These repairs would be done now if a bond was passed.

51. The MDE recommendation of 60% for renovation costs, is that a requirement or suggestion?

This is strongly suggested by MDE.

52. What is the price per square footage for new building or renovation?

The projected cost per square footage for new is \$220 opposed to \$130 for renovation.

53. With Option 2, what are we doing about parking?

Expanded parking has not been discussed, but with concerts and events at different times than the secondary school this may not be a problem.

54. Would there be a kitchen in option 2?

There may be a small kitchen that can be used for prep but the cooking could be done in the secondary kitchen.

55. Would there be a gym at secondary with option 2?

Yes, there would be a gym at the secondary facility similar in size to the current Barrett gym.

56. Would playgrounds need to be moved or new for Option 2?

Playground options will need to be looked at.

57. Would class sizes change with Option 2?

The number of students in classrooms would likely increase but not beyond an appropriate number for the grade level.

58. Any concern of losing students because of Option 2?

There is always going to be attrition.

59. How would the vote go? Would there be 3 options listed on ballot?

With the survey the board is looking at narrowing down what options the community thinks is best. There would be only 1 option on the ballot either for or against but there would be additional items that you could vote on separately....ie: fitness CTE Course renovation, fitness area, media center upgrade and athletic/track field renovations.

60. Would you be able to vote neither?

You would be able to vote yes or no. There will only be one elementary option on the ballot.

61. What is the capacity of Secondary, North & South Elementary?

This is different than a standard business. This is calculated by number of students/ number of sections/

62. With the \$500K annual savings, how many teachers would this be?

Projected at 4 teachers. Staffing will make up 90-95% of the projection.

63. What else are we doing to get the word out?

Articles in the Grant County Herald, Facebook, and our website. The best way to get information out is by word of mouth. Encourage family and friends to attend a meeting.

64. What if the survey comes back non-supportive, then what?

The board will go back to the drawing board to see what our next step is.

65. Will parents that open enroll their students get a survey?

Parents that have students enrolled should have received an email with an invite to take the survey. To obtain a copy of the survey or online access code contact Nicole Hanson in the district office a call at 320-528-7305.