



This document was initially prepared for the School Board Finance Committee meeting on November 14, 2007. It is intended to be a brief look at the final enrollment numbers for the schools impacted by closure, as well as the capital and general fund budgets—costs and savings. Since the November 14 meeting this document has been updated, including principal suggestions on how to improve the closure process.

Enrollment

During the school closure process each closed elementary school's students were merged into another elementary school. We expected that not all students would enroll in the new school; however, transition activities were geared towards encouraging students to attend the new school. In addition, students were automatically re-assigned to the new school—families did not have to act unless they wanted their children to attend a different school. As of October 1, 2007, students from the closed schools were enrolled as follows:

- **62 of the 122 Fairmount Park** students are enrolled in West Seattle Elementary (there were 125 students at Fairmount Park, but 1 program [with three students] was moved to a different school). 18 Fairmount Park students left Seattle Public Schools. The 122 total *excludes* students who were in the fifth grade during 2006-07 as they were not eligible to move to their new school.
- **113 of the 200 Rainier View** students are enrolled in Emerson Elementary. 46 Rainier View students left Seattle Public Schools. The 200 total *excludes* students who were in the fifth grade during 2006-07 as they were not eligible to move to their new school.
- **53 of the 116 Whitworth** students are enrolled at Dearborn Park Elementary (there were 119 students at Whitworth, but one program [with 3 students] was moved to a different school). Whitworth students were given a space-available priority to transfer to the Orca program (which moved into the Whitworth building); 15 students took advantage of that opportunity. 20 Whitworth students left Seattle Public Schools. The 116 total *excludes* students who were in the fifth grade during 2006-07 as they were not eligible to move to their new school.
- **112 of the 192 Viewlands** students are enrolled at Broadview-Thomson K-8. 37 Viewlands students left Seattle Public Schools. The 192 total *includes* Viewlands 5th graders as they were eligible to roll up into Broadview-Thomson's new 6th grade.
- **37 of the 102 Martin Luther King** students were, as of October 1, 2006, enrolled at T.T. Minor (there were 107 students at Martin Luther King, but one program [with 5 students] was moved to a different school—two of those students chose to leave the District). 33 Martin Luther King students left Seattle Public Schools. The 107 total *excludes* students who were in the fifth grade during 2006-07 as they were not

eligible to move to their new school. (Note that this merger was in 2006, not 2007, so the enrollment numbers are from 2006.)

Enrollment Conclusion:

Overall there were 743 students in the closed buildings who were eligible to move into their receiving school. Our enrollment projections anticipated that approximately 80% of the students in the closed building would enroll in their expected receiving school. This number was based in part on the average annual retention in these schools and on telephone calls that were made to each family in the closed buildings during the open enrollment process. The purpose of the telephone calls was to alert families to the fact that, should they wish to attend their expected receiving school they did not have to act and to inquire whether families were planning on attending their expected receiving school.

In the end, only 377 (50.7%) of eligible students actually were enrolled in the expected receiving school on October 1. Of the 366 students who are not attending their expected receiving school, 154 chose to leave Seattle Public Schools. While we do not have student-specific information about why those families chose to leave the district, 41 (26.6%) were not residents of Seattle and may have taken this opportunity to return to their home districts.

If the percentage of students who enrolled in the expected receiving school is a reasonable indication of the success of the planned merger, the Viewlands/Broadview-Thomson merger was the most successful, with 58.3% of Viewlands students enrolling in Broadview-Thomson. Conversely, the Martin Luther King merger was the least successful, with only 36.2% of Martin Luther King students choosing to enroll in T.T. Minor.

The idea to merge Martin Luther King and T.T. Minor came from the principals but was not strongly supported by the Martin Luther King community. In addition, the merger of students was off-cycle from the other mergers, as these students merged in 2006, not 2007. The Viewlands/Broadview-Thomson merger, on the other hand, was initially proposed by the District as a Viewlands/Greenwood merger. When the School Board voted to close Viewlands it rejected the merger with Greenwood and directed staff to work with the schools to identify another merger possibility. After discussions with area principals, the idea was proposed to merge with Broadview-Thomson and grow into a K-8. Many Viewlands families had proposed keeping Viewlands open and growing into a K-8. The District rejected that proposal because the Viewlands building was too small to accommodate a K-8; however, the merger with Broadview-Thomson allowed the Viewlands community to stay together *and* grow into a K-8.

The difference between these two mergers shows the positive impact that the communities themselves can have on the outcome of school closures. Should closures be contemplated in the future, staff are encouraged to keep this in mind, while also considering the reality that, if given the choice, most people will not volunteer to close their school, and so it will still fall to District staff to develop recommendations and propose them to school communities.

Budget—Capital Expenditures

The original estimate for capital expenditures was between \$1,455,000 and \$1,495,000. As of October 1, 2007 we had expended **\$1,077,983.00**.¹ We expect that number to go up slightly as a few lingering invoices are submitted, however, we still anticipate coming in under budget in the capital arena. The total includes \$400,000 to build a new teen parenting program at South Lake to replace the program at John Marshall.

We expect a few additional projects to come out of the FY 2008 budget—we're estimating \$72,000 to install a window at Broadview-Thomson, finish the special education preschool playground at West Seattle Elementary, and complete a library work room build-out at Whitworth. In addition 2008 will see the completion of the greenhouse for Orca, which was a previously scheduled BTA II project.

Budget—Capital Savings

Capital savings were originally estimated to be \$44,870,246 in BTA and long term expenditure savings (seismic upgrades, for example), and cost avoidance of \$351 million in avoided levy costs. Those savings are still expected, assuming the buildings stay closed long-term.

Budget—General Fund Expenditures

During the budgeting process for 2006-07, \$824,900 was identified for general fund closure expenditures, with the anticipation that the original target of 11 schools would be closed. When the target of 11 was not met in Phase I, the anticipated general fund costs were reduced to \$379,241 for 2006-07 and an additional \$116,000 needed for 2007-08. However, the line-item budget was not reduced, so the \$824,900 remained available.

When implementation planning began, it became clear that while we had budgeted for packing and moving costs, a number of other expenditures would be necessary in order to have a successful implementation. We added in a principal on special assignment to help with transition, 8 hours pay for staff members to attend a team-building retreat, extra time for schools to unpack their administrative offices, move managers and coordinators, and discretionary dollars for each school to focus on student and family transition activities. After developing the implementation plans an additional \$466,635 was added to the budget, for a total budget of \$1,291,535.00.

In the end we spent \$338,176 in people costs, \$311,678 in moving costs, \$253,510 on miscellaneous expenses, and \$24,000 in technology costs for a total of **\$927,364.00**. We expect an additional \$500,000-\$700,000 in costs during fiscal year 2008 to accommodate the activities that were not completed this year, including the closure of the John Marshall building and the relocation of staff and students as well as costs that were incurred during FY 2007 but for which invoices were not received during the 2007 fiscal year.

¹ This total does not include the \$2.25 million that had been previously allocated in BTA II to build a greenhouse for Orca as those funds had been previously accounted for.

It is clear that, especially in Seattle, where we have contracts that require people to be paid to move and where costs in general are higher, closing buildings is an expensive endeavor. However, these one-time costs are not so great that they detract from the overall savings (both general fund and capital fund) of having fewer buildings to maintain and staff. Honesty in the closure costs, along with an acknowledgment that we are committed to making closure a successful process for all involved, will make future budgeting for closures an easier and more transparent process.

Budget—General Fund Savings

In the “Superintendent’s Final Recommendations on School Closure and Consolidation: Phase I, July 5, 2006” we estimated \$2,481,595 in expected general fund savings. These savings were to come primarily from utilities, maintenance, custodial and salary savings, plus some additional central savings anticipated from transportation, child nutrition service and warehouse/mail delivery efficiencies.

The delay in closing the John Marshall building, and the decision to move The New School into the Columbia building while their building was being completed reduced those savings to \$1.9 million.

Early in the closure process the School Board approved a resolution dedicating half of the anticipated savings to academics so, during the 2007-08 budget cycle an additional million dollars was added to the budget. These dollars were spent specifically on the receiving schools by giving them an additional staff member for the 2007-08 year. Dollars were also spent on the elementary math adoption and the creation of the K-2 libraries, both of which positively impacted the receiving schools. In addition, every school received an increase in their Weighted Student Formula (WSF) Foundation. Elementary schools and non-traditional schools received an additional \$3,696.00, middle schools received an additional \$7,812.00, and high schools received an additional \$10,000.00.

By creating an academically-driven budget for 2007-08, especially with the flexibility that the additional \$1 million brought, resulted in more dollars being targeted specifically at academics than has historically happened.

Budget Conclusion

Clearly the capital department did an excellent job anticipating the real costs of the closure-related activities. On the general fund side a significant number of necessary activities were not budgeted for in the closure document, although the actual line-item budget included additional dollars. School closures will save money (both general and capital) in the long run, but there is no question that it does take money to close schools. In order to have a positive transition for our students, staff and families, it will be important to appropriately budget for these activities if future closures are contemplated.

Principal Comments

One key element to the success of the closure process was the leadership in the buildings. Teachers, staff members and principals stepped up during this difficult time and maintained their focus on learning and attempted to shield students from the complexity of closures. Now, with some time and distance from the process, the principals have had time to reflect and offer suggestions for future school closure processes.

One item that has come up repeatedly is a belief that the process was under-funded and under-managed. While we did bring on a principal on special assignment, that position did not have a job description, nor did the position have budgetary or decision-making authority. This resulted in a lack of clarity on exactly what the role was, and resulted in a lag between when a request was made and when it was responded to.

Additionally, principals have pointed out that they spent a significant amount of their time attending meetings about closure and otherwise dealing with the closure process—they were the liaisons with the move coordinators, for example. This took their focus off of the students and instruction. A suggestion made was to dedicate one central staff member to each pair of schools (closed and receiving) and make that person the liaison for the operational aspects of this process. A person in this type of position would have to be dedicated to this work, and not have other projects they were working on.

Principals also stressed the need for honesty throughout the process. We appeared too facile in our comments that everything would be better in the new buildings. It is true that with more students the schools can provide more services. However, that is small solace to teachers who are involuntarily removed from an environment they have created and are placed into a new environment with new people and new processes.

Communication throughout this process was relatively poor, in part because no one working on the project had done closures before, and in part because the project was under-funded and under-managed. Having staff dedicated 100% to this project who were able to make final decisions and who had access to budgets would have prevented communication lag times and would have made central office staff more responsive to the technology, budget, and human resources questions and requests from the schools. Should closures be contemplated in the future it is strongly recommended that at least a small core of staff be dedicated to this project.

Conclusion

The goal of closing schools was to make the District more efficient and save money, while offering students larger schools that would have more services available. In this particular case we were able to merge schools together, although the emotional part of the merger is still being worked on. In the future straight mergers may not be possible, depending on where excess capacity lies. Even if the result looks different in a future closure process, however, the elements reported above, and the other comments that principals and staff have made, will be relevant. Honesty and transparency in budgeting, early clarity in staffing, and clear project management by central staff will be necessary in any school closure process to ensure that students, families, and staff are provided the environments necessary for academic success.

Enrollment Charts—School Specific Data

Fairmount Park Students Originally Assigned to High Point/West Seattle Elementary

CurrentSchool (Oct. 2007)	Gen. Ed.	Bilingual	Spectrum	Special Ed.	Not SPS	Total
High Point	46	12		4		62
	Alki	7		1		8
West Seattle North Cluster	Cooper	3	5			8
	Lafayette	2		1		3
	Schmitz Park	3				3
West Seattle South Cluster	Arbor Heights	2		1		3
	Gatewood	8				8
	Highland Park	3				3
	Sanislo		1			1
Other Clusters	Maple (S)		2			2
Alternative	Pathfinder	2				2
	A.A.A.	1				1
Not in Seattle Public Schools					18	18
Subtotal	77	20	1	6	18	122
Gatewood (Special Ed. BIP)				3		3
Total	77	20	1	9	18	125

Note: Numbers do not include preschool students

Rainier View Students Originally Assigned to Emerson

CurrentSchool (Oct. 2007)	Gen. Ed.	Bilingual	Special Ed.	Not SPS	Total
Emerson	83	20	9		113
Southeast Cluster	Brighton	5	4		9
	Dunlap	6	2		8
	Graham Hill	4			4
	Van Asselt	4			4
	Wing Luke	2	1		3
Other Clusters	Hawthorne (S)	1			1
	J. Stanford Intl. (NW)		1		1
	Leschi (C)	1	2		3
	Northgate (N)			1	1
	Olympic Hills (N)	1			1
	Stevens (C)	1			1
	Kimball (S)	1	2		3
Alternative	A.A.A.	2			2
Not in Seattle Public Schools				46	46
Total	111	32	10	47	200

Note: Numbers do not include preschool students

Whitworth Students Originally Assigned to Dearborn Park

Current School (Oct. 2007)		Gen. Ed.	Bilingual	Special Ed.	Not SPS	Total
Dearborn Park		45	7	1		53
South Cluster	Beacon Hill	1				1
	Hawthorne	6				6
	Maple		1			1
	John Muir	8				8
	Kimball	1	1	1		3
Other Clusters	T.T. Minor (C)	2				2
	Sanislo (WSS)	1				1
	New School (SE)	1	2			3
	Broadview-Thomson (N)	2				2
Alternative	Orca	15				15
	A.A.A.	1				1
Not in Seattle Public Schools					20	20
Subtotal		83	11	2	20	116
Brighton (Special Ed. Low Incidence A)				3		3
Total		83	11	5	20	119

Note: Numbers do not include preschool students

Viewlands Students Originally Assigned to Broadview-Thomson

Current School (Oct. 2007)	Gen. Ed.	Bilingual	Spectrum	Special Ed.	Not SPS	Total	
Grades 1-5							
Broadview-Thomson	86		3	10		99	
North Cluster	Greenwood	4		1		5	
	Northgate	3				3	
Other Clusters	Coe	1				1	
	Maple	1				1	
	North Beach	1				1	
	West Woodland				1	1	
	Whittier	1				1	
Alternative	Salmon Bay	1				1	
	Summit	1				1	
Not in Seattle Public Schools					24	24	
Subtotal Grades 1-5		99	0	3	12	24	138
Grade 6							
Broadview-Thomson	11	1		1		13	
Middle Schools	Hamilton	1				1	
	Whitman	15		1		16	
	McClure				2	2	
Alternative	Salmon Bay	1				1	
	Summit	1				1	
Not in Seattle Public Schools					13	13	
Subtotal Grade 6		29	1	0	4	13	47
Whittier (Special Ed. Preschool)	Whittier			4		4	
	Greenwood			2		2	
	Exp. Ed. Unit			1		1	
Total		128	1	3	23	37	192

M. L. King Students Originally Assigned to T. T. Minor

Current School (Oct. 2006)		Gen. Ed.	Montessori	Special Ed.	Not SPS	Total
T.T. Minor		30	7			37
Central Cluster	T. Marshall	2				2
	Gatzert	3				3
	Leschi	6				6
	Madrona	17				17
	Montlake	1				1
Other Clusters	Dunlap	1				1
	John Rogers	1				1
	Daniel Bagley		1			1
Alternative	AAA	1				1
	Orca	1				1
Not in Seattle Public Schools					31	31
Subtotal		63	8		31	102
B. F. Day (Sp. Ed.	B. F. Day			3		3
BIP Kindergarten)	Not in SPS				2	2
Total		63	8	3	33	107