

School Board Action Report



DATE: March 1, 2006
FROM: Executive Committee
STAFF PERSON: Joan Dingfield, jodingfield@seattleschools.org

TITLE AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Targets for School Consolidation and Closure
Educational and operations targets to be achieved with the consolidation and closure process

For Introduction: March 1, 2006
For Action: March 15, 2006

BRIEF HISTORY

Originated in Executive Committee December 2005
Space Targets approved by Operations Committee February 28, 2006
Educational Targets approved by Student Learning Committee February 27, 2006
Targets recommended for approval by Executive Committee March 1, 2006

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the following targets be used in recommending elementary, K-8, and alternative schools for consolidation, relocation, reconfiguration, and facilities closure for 2006-07:

Academic targets

Consolidate buildings to prioritize elementary school size as follows:

- 400 students
- 550 students

Operations Targets – based on demographics, current choice system, and enrollment trends

General:

- Reduce K-5 excess capacity.
- Concentrate on K-5 classrooms in permanent space (as opposed to portables).

By Quadrant:

Northwest: Close two buildings
Northeast: Close three buildings
Southwest: Close three buildings
Southeast: Close four buildings

ISSUE

The Board is committed to offering every student an excellent education. This board action begins to specify a baseline for what educational features we expect to see in every elementary or K-8 school in the district, what educational features we expect to be equitably distributed throughout the district, how much capacity we need for our current and projected student population (and therefore how much excess capacity we have), and how much we hope to save in operations and capital costs by rethinking our use of buildings.

The Superintendent developed a closure plan in 2005 which was later retracted. Although the board had opportunities to give input through work sessions, board direction regarding the scope of the resizing and financial savings was not clear. The Board did not operationalize what educational outcomes it hoped to see as a result of the consolidation and closure process. By formally adopting targets to be achieved in identifying changes to schools and use of facilities, in conjunction with board-adopted criteria and principles, the board can give clear direction to the Community Advisory Committee, staff, and public.

CONCLUSION

Because of the urgency to improve academic opportunities and the opportunity to redirect resources currently used on excess facilities, we recommend that the Board formally adopt principles for consolidation and closure to give clear, direct guidance to the community advisory committee so they can immediately begin their discussions with the community that will inform their recommendations to the board.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

These principles, along with board-adopted criteria and educational, financial and space targets, will be distributed to the new Community Advisory Committee on School Consolidations and Closures at their first meeting in March, 2006.