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Design Phase Begins for Renovation of Denny and Sealth *New facilities will support rigorous academic programs at both schools*

Design planning for renovation of Denny Middle School (Denny) and Chief Sealth (Sealth) High School is in its preliminary stages, and community members are invited to participate. Funds for the \$125 million facility, the largest capital project ever undertaken by Seattle Public Schools, were approved by Seattle voters in February 2007 as part of the Building Excellence III capital bond measure.

The project will include a new building for Denny and a significant upgrade for Sealth, plus some combined facilities that will enable the schools to offer enhanced academics and electives to all students. Denny's separate building will be designed based on the educational and emotional developmental needs of middle school students, including space for small learning communities. Facilities at Sealth will, among other purposes, support the prestigious International Baccalaureate program, offered beginning fall 2007. Shared spaces leverage available funding to provide best-in-class facilities such as modernized classrooms complete with technology upgrades; technologically-advanced language labs; six contemporary gymnasiums; a renovated 1000-seat auditorium, art spaces, and increased space for collaboration between the schools. The project will also include safety and ADA upgrades.

Over the past two years Denny Middle School and its near-neighbor Chief Sealth High School have collaborated to bring increased academic rigor and course offerings to students. The partnership began with combining some music offerings, and has expanded to planning for a rigorous academic pathway for grades six-twelve in southwest Seattle. "The Denny/Sealth project is a great example of how academics drive plans for renovations and new construction," said Carla Santorno, Chief Academic Officer for Seattle Public Schools. "By building some shared facilities for these two schools, the District can provide a wider variety of services and opportunities to students."

Co-located campuses have found success around the country in both urban and suburban areas. Academic researchers point to the ability of teachers and staff to collaborate on specific curriculum areas to help bridge the current gap between middle and high school.

"Students in southwest Seattle will benefit from stronger schools as Denny and Sealth provide a seamless, aligned education," said John Boyd, principal at Chief Sealth High School. "We will gain that strength through collaborative planning for academic and social development for our students. There will also be more space for conference areas and family and community gathering spaces. This will support the focus that both schools have on family and community involvement in the life of the school. I'm excited about the great potential of this plan."

"New cross-age tutoring and mentoring programs, an expansion of our music, art, world language and pre-engineering offerings, and new 8th to 9th grade transition programs--all in a state-of-the-art facility--is what our students deserve," said Denny Middle School principal Jeff Clark. "At the same time, the design and supervision of the schools will support and acknowledge the unique developmental needs of both middle school and high school students, in a safe and nurturing way."

Construction cost inflation is severe in the Pacific Northwest region, so plans are in place to begin work on both schools as early as summer 2008. Compared with the alternative of sequencing construction on the two campuses, the District will be able to maximize the funds available for the project.

"We see this is as a wise use of our resources," notes Fred Stephens, Director of Facilities. "We are able to deliver more to both schools, spend the taxpayers' dollars sensibly, and practice sustainable land use principles."

Although the decision has been made to co-locate the schools, the overall design is still in a preliminary phase. Seattle Public Schools engages in a process through which the community is invited to participate along with teachers, students, and design professionals to create a school that reflects the values and culture of the neighborhood.

"We look forward to working with our community to create this exciting new facility that will serve West Seattle for generations to come," said Boyd. The voter-supported Building Excellence Program will have renovated or replaced 24 of the District's 100 buildings by 2008.

Interested parties should contact Eleanor Trainor, Capital Projects Community Liaison, at 206.252.0655.

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