Long-Range Facilities Task Force
Board Recommendation for School Configuration
June 5th, 2014

BACKGROUND
The Board of Directors revisited, revised, and approved the Port Angeles School District's Strategic Plan in March 2011. Included in this plan is a goal regarding resource allocation. This goal called for a task force to examine resource allocation due to the enrollment and the expense trends. In January 2013 the Long-Range Facilities Task Force (LRFTF) was charged with long-range planning for the School District's facilities, technology services, and educational support functions. The Task Force has met regularly until the present time to study and plan for recommendations based on the Board of Director's charge.

The Task Force examined a large volume of data, considering five possible scenarios. Out of this study, two recommendations were made for Board consideration and were approved at the December 12, 2013 board meeting.

> 1. The Port Angeles School District Board of Directors approved the Task Force's recommendation to move forward with asking the voters in the Port Angeles School District to pass a bond up to the District's bonding capacity to build a new high school and begin implementation of recommendation 2, following:

> 2. The second recommendation approved by the board of directors gave the established Long Range Facilities Task Force more time to research the PreK-8 delivery models and infrastructure that effectively address the District's long term facilities, technology, and educational needs.

With the implementation of full day kindergarten during the 2013-14 school year, increased enrollment and building capacity use throughout our schools, the gifted and talented program set for implementation at Roosevelt Elementary in 2014, full time counselors budgeted for all elementary schools in 2014, plus the current pre-bond committee work in planning School District facilities for the future, it is timely the district consider grade reconfiguration to support instructional equity.

PROCESS
The Task Force reconvened for further research on an appropriate grade configuration that addresses both overcrowded schools and schools with underutilized capacity. The Task Force has looked comprehensively at past, current and projected demographic trends, capacity and room utilization information.

Approximately 40 staff and community members met monthly, January through April 2014, to review and analyze six configuration models using a decision-making matrix (Appendix A) developed by Task Force members.

School Configuration Options Considered:
1. PreK-8
2. PreK-6, 7-8, 9-12 (current model)
3. Banding; PreK-3, 4-6
4. PreK-5, 6-8, 9-12
5. PreK-12
6. Smaller Learning Communities

Of the six configurations studied, two quickly emerged as both achievable and within our school district's core competency for implementing and operating a new grade configuration:

- PreK-6, 7-8, 9-12 (current configuration)
- PreK-5, 6-8, 9-12.

RECOMMENDATION

After scoring each of these configurations using the decision-making matrix (Appendix A), Task Force members voted the PreK-5, 6-8, 9-12 configuration model as its preference for recommendation to the board of directors.

LRFTF recognizes the complexities and challenges associated with grade reconfiguration including capital and general fund cost and staffing issues. In spite of these significant obstacles, the LRFTF continues to believe that it is the best long-term solution to both manage growth and optimize instructional equity and opportunity.

Task Force members cited multiple advantages of the PreK-5, 6-8, 9-12. Highlights include:
o 20 year successful operation of this model;
o increased academic and enrichment opportunities for 6th graders at the middle school level; and
o the economic advantages of 4 elementary schools versus 5

SUMMARY

The instructional vision for our students is not one that should remain static. While our existing instructional model had served us well, evolving research and curriculum development requires us to act strategically.

Given the overcrowding and aging facility issues facing several of our elementary schools, the potential opportunity to improve our instructional model through grade reconfiguration to one 9-12 high school, one 6-8 middle school and fewer PreK-5 elementary schools is timely. The reduction of current and future enrollment pressure at our elementary schools while enhancing instructional options for our 6th graders deserves significant consideration.

The core of our instructional leadership, our principals, overwhelmingly advocate for grade realignment. Their assessment is that our students are ready for an increased challenge. Continuing to stay the in the same instructional model may only limit the full potential of what our students might be able to realize.

May 22, 2014

A recommendation for change as complex as grade reconfiguration is not taken lightly. While the disruption of the proposed change may be significant, so are the potential benefits to our students' learning environment.

APPENDIX A

Decision Matrix

Highest Educational Achievement
Fewest School Transitions
Optimal Total School Enrollment
Smallest Number of Schools
Lowest Capital Cost for Facilities
Low Operating Cost
Low Transportation Cost
Highest Security for Students
Collaboration opportunities for teachers/staff
Remediation and Enrichment Options
New configuration must be simple, fair, transparent and be acceptable to most families
New configuration must account for current and projected demographics
Fiscally responsible
Proposed configuration must strengthen the District's ability to deliver quality education for all students
Delivery options must effectively address current family mobility realities

APPENDIX B

K-5 Configuration Pros	K-5 Configuration Cons
- better academic offerings for 6th graders - easier scheduling for elementary K-5 - more electives added at middle school - can do block scheduling for 6th graders - maintains strong music programs for 6th graders - better engagement with 3 grades @ middle school	6th Graders grow up faster in middle school environment - more infraction with middle school behaviors
- more opportunities for 6th graders: band, intramurals, clubs - community grew up with this model (buy-in) - move quicker by moving 6th grade will open up slots in elementary	6th graders grow up too fast - Changing configuration take time and space
- district demographics support K-5 model - current programming (i.e. band, strings, etc.) enhancements 6th grade - increase or stay @ current levels	
- more opportunity for electives, sports, programs - frees up much needed space in elementaries - more time @ middle school – feel connected to staff & school community - more balancing at 6th grade - more opportunities for 6th at middle schools - keep 6th in a separate wing in middle school	900 student middle school still - years away from 6th grade being out of elementary
- music options for 6th - activities for afterschool - academic remediation and enrichment - aligns with common core - collaboration for 6th grade	- change – different than now - restructure – support – staff - social – emotional maturity - if have to wait 5 years – will be an issue – in limbo

- reducing number of students at elementary - past history was good - more paras available because they won't be covering recess - more opportunities available @ middle school music, afterschool enrichment, sports - move 6th sooner rather than later - put 8th in portables rather than 6th – more rotational	none at this time