



Highline Public Schools
Buildings, Boundary Changes, and Bond Spending

COML 512
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Framing the Strategy-Media Kit
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ISSUE BRIEF:

Changing the negative perception of Highline Public schools stemming from failed bond measures to boundary changes caused by not being able to build enough schools and 6th grade students being transitioned to middle school.

Highline School District | www.highlineschools.org

I. SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Highline Public Schools (HPS), located in the communities of Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, SeaTac and White Center in Washington State serves around 19,000 students grades K-12. The district has 32 schools, employs over 2,000 staff members, and offers a wide variety of educational opportunities from early childhood to college preparation.

II. THE ISSUE

HPS, facing deteriorating infrastructure and overcrowding schools failed to pass two bond measures in 2014 and 2015 that would have allowed the district to build new schools and make significant improvements to existing schools while planning for future growth. A smaller bond was passed in 2017 which will allow the district to build 2 new schools, make necessary improvements to the worst of the existing schools and to plan for future renovation and expansion. Because the bond will not cover enough new schools to meet the current demand, and with HPS transitioning 6th grade students to middle school in 2019, boundary lines across the district need to be redrawn. It is critical for HPS to demonstrate that the proposed 6th grade transition and boundary changes benefit families and students across the district and will help make HPS better for all.

III. GOALS

The effort will be successful when stakeholders understand and support the 6th grade transition and boundary changes within HPS. Media relations strategies will be used to attain:

- Build awareness to the benefits of 6th grade students transitioning to middle school
- Create excitement about the new schools and renovations to existing schools
- Change impression that boundary changes will have negative impact to families, schools, and communities
- Position HPS as thoughtful stewards of bond money
- Influence stakeholders to continue investing in the future of HPS

IV. MEDIA STRATEGIES

- Designated Spokesperson:** HPS superintendent, Susan Enfield will be the main spokesperson in dealing with the media. Chief Communications Officer, Catherine Carbone Rogers will also be available for media interviews. The remaining communications staff of HPS will arrange scheduling and communication activities. Dave Roberts will provide oversight and direction for the campaign
- Key Stakeholders:** HPS will target media that key stakeholders use frequently. Key stakeholders include families of HPS students, tax payers who are paying for the bond, and future HPS families
- Social Media:** Develop social media strategy to target key influencers in HPS district using Twitter and Facebook.
- News Media:** Develop media strategy for local news media covering south King County and issues of education
- Materials:** To aid the media in understanding the issues surrounding HPS bond and boundary issue, the following materials are available
 - a. Fact sheet
 - b. News release
 - c. Media Advisory

- d. Social media strategy and tactics, including images and hashtags
- e. Frequently Asked Questions
- F. **Media Strategies:** The HPS communication team will engage the media using:
 - a. News release sent to local news outlets, local reporters, and education reporters
 - b. Make superintendent Enfield available for media interviews
 - c. Engage readers of local news and websites by offering op-ed pieces, letters from school principals, and key families supporting bonds, boundary changes, and transitions
 - d. Pitch stories to local reporters regarding the good things happening within HPS and future plans for bond money which will benefit HPS and the community.
 - e. Post information in one page on HPS website for easy access
 - f. Engage social media channels to give facts, share updates, ask for feedback, clarify decisions, media placement (video and images), and share stories.
 - g. Monitor campaign for results, progress, and adjustments.

V. **CAMPAIGN SUCCESS**

This campaign will be successful when HPS families understand and support the 6th grade transition and necessary boundary changes. Secondly, success for this campaign will lead to greater trust with key stakeholders and will make passing phase 2 and phase 3 easier when those bond come up for vote.



FACT SHEET:

Buildings, Boundary Changes, and Bond Spending for Highline Public Schools

Highline School District | www.highlineschools.org

The Highline School District recently passed a \$299.85M bond in November of 2016 after two failed attempts in 2014 and 2015. The bond will allow Highline Public Schools to address crowded schools, growing enrollment, and aging buildings by:

- Installing electronic locks on every classroom door.
- Upgrading the video surveillance system at every school in the district.
- Rebuilding Highline High School, preserving as much of the façade as structurally and financially feasible.
- Begin design of new Evergreen High School, Tyee High School and Pacific Middle School campuses.
- Building a new school on the district-owned Zenith site to house Des Moines students, with room for growing enrollment.
- Building a new middle school on the district-owned Glacier site.
- Replenishing the capital fund, which will be depleted in 2017-18. This fund covers critical needs and emergency repairs.
- Making safety improvements to the Olympic site, so it can be used to house students during the HHS construction and future school construction projects.

With these improvements, Highline Public Schools will be better positioned to provide excellent public education for its students and families including transitioning 6th grade students from elementary to middle school in September of 2019.

Significant challenges still exist. Because the bond was smaller than the two that previously failed, Highline Public Schools are not able to build a sufficient number of needed middle schools to meet the influx of 6th grade students and still keep the present neighborhood boundaries. To address this need a Capital Facilities Advisory Committee (CAFC) was established to develop boundary reviews and make revisions. The proposed boundary changes were created to establish the following:

1. **Ensure Equity**

Plan boundaries that serve the good of the whole district, with equitable distribution of students and access to programs, in accordance with the HPS Equity Policy #0010. The determinants of equity are the social, economic, geographic, political, and physical environments and conditions in which people live. Full and equal access to the determinants of equity are necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender, language spoken, and geography.

2. **Forecast for Future Needs**

Design school boundaries that allow for future growth and changes in population and land use, to the best of our ability with the information available to us now.

3. Value Cohorts & Community Connections

As much as possible, keep cohorts of students together and recognize family and community connections, municipal boundaries and possible impacts to after-school programming. Retain high school service areas for the existing elementary schools, if possible, acknowledging that five middle schools will now feed into four high schools.

(In education, a “cohort” refers to a group of classmates. For the purpose of boundary review, a cohort is a group of classmates at one grade level in one elementary school.)

4. Plan for Safety

Prioritize student safety by drawing boundaries to minimize student crossing of major arterials and high traffic areas.

The CAFC spent 2.5 years working through the issues before presenting the boundary change proposal. The proposal was met with strong resistance from the communities affected. Highline Public Schools remains committed to working with the affected communities to find the most equitable solution while maintaining the 4 principles that guide this change.

About Highline Public Schools: Highline Public Schools serves around 19,000 students grades K-12 in the communities of Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, SeaTac and White Center in Washington State. The district has 32 schools, employs over 2,000 staff members, and offers a wide variety of educational opportunities from early childhood to college preparation. Highline Public Schools is committed to equity in education, high expectations for all and partnering with families and the community to ensure that all children achieve their potential.



FAQ's:

Buildings, Boundary Changes, and Bond Spending for Highline Public Schools

Highline School District | www.highlineschools.org

1. Will school boundaries and draw areas change when Highline complete the new schools?

Yes, HPS will need to redraw middle school boundaries to add a new middle school in our district. Some elementary boundaries may need adjustments due to shifting demographics. Boundaries in Des Moines will be adjusted since the new elementary at the Zenith site will accommodate more students than Des Moines Elementary does.

The citizen-led Capital Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC) is charged with studying and recommending new middle school boundaries, and adjusting elementary boundaries as needed. The high school boundaries are not expected to change. Since the four elementary schools in proximity to the new middle school are Hilltop, Southern Heights, Beverly Park and Cedarhurst, there is an increased likelihood that some of these students may end up attending the new middle school.

The meetings of this committee are open to the public. You are welcome to come and listen. Opportunities for community outreach and input are expected in spring 2018.

Boundary changes are scheduled to be announced in June 2018, to take effect when the new elementary and middle school open in September 2019.

2. When will the new Evergreen High School, Tye High School, and Pacific Middle schools be designed?

HPS expects the design work for the new Evergreen, Tye, and Pacific schools to begin in early 2020. Construction of these schools will be funded by a future bond, which is an estimated six years out. Waiting three years to begin designing these schools makes good planning and business sense.

- The funds raised from bond sales must be used within three years of the sale. Breaking the work into two 3-year stages saves on staffing costs, since the work can be completed with fewer people.
- Designing the buildings too far in advance could lead to costly design alterations resulting from changing building codes.
- Selling the bonds in two stages saves taxpayers on interest and keeps district debt lower.
- This will not delay the opening of these schools. High schools typically take up to 18 months to design and permit, and two years to construct.

3. Are there plans to renovate the other middle schools in the district?

Voters approved Phase 1 of the long range facilities plan recommended by the community-led Capital Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC). Phase 2 and Phase 3 will be funded by future bonds. New middle schools will be addressed in these two phases.

One of the reasons replacement/renovation of the other schools is so far out on the timeline is that HPS voters did not pass a bond for 10 years before the successful 2016 bond. Prior to 2002, there was a 16-year gap between bonds. Because of these two periods with no new capital funding, HPS has a long list of backlogged capital needs.

4. Why is Highline building a new school at the Zenith site so close to Parkside Elementary?

The Zenith site was recommended by the community-led Capital Facilities Advisory Committee. The Des Moines Elementary site is small for the size school needed, with growing enrollment in the area. The district already owns the Zenith property, which has ample space for a 750-student school. This site is within the Des Moines Elementary service area, though it is close to the Parkside boundary. Boundaries will likely be adjusted to relieve overcrowding at Parkside.

5. What are the long-term academic/social pros of moving sixth grade to middle school?

- a. Sixth graders will be taught by subject-area specialists rather than generalists. Teachers who specialize in a content area have the opportunity for richer training and professional development, which leads to more rigorous and consistent instruction to students. This is especially important in math, language arts and science. As a result, students will be better prepared for higher-level work.
- b. Students will have the opportunity to take a variety of electives matched to their needs and strengths. This will allow them to explore a wider range of interests and potential career directions and will help them stay engaged in school.
- c. Families and students will have three full years to develop relationships with teachers and staff. This consistency and personalization are especially important during the critical early teen years in a student's life.
- d. Sixth graders will be challenged to meet the higher expectations that go with middle school. They will be pushed academically by being with older, rather than younger, peers, and they will have the opportunity to develop the behaviors, attitudes, and habits they will need to succeed in high school and college.

6. Are sixth graders socially and emotionally ready for the middle school environment?

Most other school districts, including our neighboring districts, use the 6-7-8 model and find it makes sense as an age grouping. Developmentally, 11- and 12-year-old students have more in common with 13- and 14-year-old students than with students in primary grades.

One of the benefits of a 6-7-8 middle school is that it allows three years for students to build relationships with staff, which is critical during the difficult early teen years. Our plan is to develop a sixth-grade program that would address the specific developmental needs of sixth graders and help them prepare for the academic demands of secondary school. Parents and teachers will be deeply involved in the planning to ensure that our sixth-grade program reflects what our community wants for our children.

Since tens of thousands of middle schools across the nation are grades 6-7-8, there is plenty of data and information about this model. Many school districts in King County and across the state have used this model for many years.

7. What does research say about sixth grade in middle schools?

There are many studies on grade configuration. In 2009, a task force made up of parents, staff, and district leaders spent several months reviewing research on middle school models. HPS learned that grade configuration is not a critical factor in student achievement. Both K-6 and 6-7-8 configurations can be successful. What matters most for student achievement is the school climate and the quality of instruction happening in the classroom.

When the study was completed in 2009, though all of our neighboring districts have 6-7-8 middle schools, the school board decided not to make the switch because of the logistical issues involved. However, many middle school teachers have expressed an interest in adding sixth grade in order to have more time to build relationships and to nurture learning in their students. HPS see this as an opportunity to capitalize on those positive aspects of the 6-7-8 model.

8. Some middle schools are located near high schools. How will you ensure younger students are safe from older students?

While three of our middle schools are located close to high schools, students are in their buildings most of the day. Contact is limited because students are required to stay on their own campuses and the schools have different start and dismissal times.

In addition, each middle and high school is staffed with security personnel, and each high school also has a School Resource Officer (SRO) who is a uniformed police officer.

9. Will sixth graders be compartmentalized or mixed into the general student populations?

There are a number of models that could be used for sixth grade. HPS will engage parents, teachers, and principals in developing the sixth-grade program.

For more information, visit www.highlineschools.org



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For Immediate Release

27 April 2018

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Media Advisory

Highline Breaks Ground for New Elementary School in Des Moines

A new chapter begins Wednesday at the Zenith site

What: Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Elementary School in Des Moines

When: Wednesday, April 9, at 2 p.m.

Where: Zenith Site, 16th Place South & South 240th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198

Who: Media, elected state, city, port and district officials, planning committee members, Hutteball & Oremus Architecture , Bayley Construction, district and project staff, including:

- Sen. Karen Keiser
- Sen. David Frocht
- Rep. Mia Gregerson
- Des Moines City Council Members
- School Board Member Fa'ziah Bradford
- Superintendent Susan Enfield

Details: Media are invited to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Highline Public Schools new elementary school in Des Moines. The district is building a new elementary school for kindergarten through fifth grade students in Des Moines. The new school, with capacity for 750 students, will be named Des Moines Elementary. The school is on schedule to open in fall 2019.

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School Boundary Plan

Like it? Want to Change it? Want to Learn More?

We want your feedback on our process.

Burien, WA- School boundary changes are never easy and not something we take lightly. This past Wednesday and Thursday members of the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC) – Highline Public Schools volunteer bond and boundary planning committee– hosted a series of community meetings throughout Highline to share their proposed districtwide boundary plan. This plan is based on data, guiding principles, while keeping the interests of the whole district in mind. The draft maps, background information, and feedback are now available [online](#). The CFAC listened to questions and concerns and encouraged families and community members to give feedback.

These boundary changes become necessary as the district builds a fifth middle school and a new larger elementary school to open in September 2019 which will require a new feeder program.

The new schools will mitigate overcrowding and help meet the Legislature’s mandate to lower class size for kindergarten through third grade.

Information: Visit our website to view maps and read the background information:

- [Background & rationale](#)
- [Boundary maps](#)
- [Proposed feeder pattern](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

The CFAC and HPS are seeking input on the draft plan and invite [online](#) feedback through May 17 and invite concerned families and citizens to attend additional meetings on Wednesday, May 23 and 30 to learn more and give feedback.

- **May 23, 7:30-8:30 p.m.**
Pacific Middle School Cafeteria
22705 24th Ave S, Des Moines, WA 98198
- **May 30, 7:30-8:30 p.m.**
Sylvester Middle School Cafeteria
16222 Sylvester Rd SW, Burien, WA 98166

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SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT:

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TWITTER:

HPS will use Twitter leading up to the finalization of school boundary changes. We will drive engagement to highlinepublicschools.org/boundaries through relevant tweets that promote the benefits to HPS, students, and families of new boundaries and subsequent 6th grade transition into middle school. During this campaign, we will tweet 3-5 times a day and adjust based on engagement metrics. We will also retweet and respond to pertinent tweets.

TWEETS:

The following are example tweets that should be in rotation throughout the campaign.

- The student/teacher relationship is critical to student success. Adding 6th graders to our middle schools will give more time for nurturing every student during the critical middle school years.
- Highline is growing! We need more space to keep our promise of “every student known by name, strength, and need.” Learn more <https://bit.ly/2r5Zftt>
- We need your help! Give your input on the proposed boundary changes that will allow every student in our district to succeed. <https://bit.ly/2r5Zftt>
- We believe that the 6-7-8 middle school model is the best for the future of our students. Not convinced? Learn why we are making this change. <https://bit.ly/2KnoklC>
- The recent bond means more than just new schools. It also allows us to protect our kids and plan for a bright future. <https://bit.ly/2HxA79A>
- Highline is working hard to keep our promise. Watch @SuptEnfield share the vision and future of @HighlineSchools (use “this is Highline” video with tweet)
- New schools mean smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes means better learning environments for our children.
- Building a strong Highline for everyone requires us to shift school boundaries. Learn more <https://bit.ly/2r5Zftt>
- Our goal is a fair, equitable, and balanced district. Changing boundaries is necessary to make this a reality for all. <https://bit.ly/2r5Zftt>
- Changing boundaries is serious business. Learn the factors and challenges we faced. <https://bit.ly/2r5Zftt>
- The future of Highline has never been brighter! Thank you voters for allowing us to shine! <https://bit.ly/2HxA79A>
- With new schools and smaller classrooms, there is no stopping us! <https://bit.ly/2HxA79A>

TWITTER HANDLES:

The following twitter handles have been identified as pertinent handles for our campaign. @btownblog, @westseattleher, @mattmarkovich, @waterlandblog, @theseatacblog, @wcblog, @BurienReporter, @nealmorton, @RoweReport

Tweets for this campaign should originate from @HighlineSchools and @SuptEnfield

FACEBOOK:

Our Facebook strategy will be similar to our Twitter strategy. We will post content regularly, but not with the same frequency as twitter.

- We will limit our posts to once per day throughout the campaign.
- We will also schedule and promote a 30 minute Facebook live event with Superintendent Enfield to share the vision for the future of Highline, including boundary changes, new schools, and the other benefits that the new bond money will allow Highline to enjoy.
- Engage audience with “This is Highline” video cross posted from Twitter.
- Post relevant content from HPS website to FB using Facebook notes as a way to give target audience quality long-form content pertaining to bond use, 6th grade transition, and boundary changes.
- Include engaging images with each post.
- Use appropriate hashtags with posts

INSTAGRAM:

Our Instagram following is quite small compared to our Twitter and FB following and currently doesn't provide enough engagement to be viable for our campaign.

HASHTAGS:

The following hashtags should be used throughout the campaign: #KeepingOurPromise

#StrongHighlineStrongFuture #HighlineBuilds #HighlineProud #WeAreHighline #EveryKid #BrightHighlineFuture



VISUAL CONTENT:

Buildings, Boundary Changes, and Bond Spending for Highline Public Schools

Highline School District | www.highlineschools.org

VISUALS:

The following visuals are available for use throughout the campaign:







**WE'RE JUST
GETTING STARTED!**

