

https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/school-committee-narrows-options-to-adopts-class-and-school-size/article_32bdb03f-d2f1-5242-b5b3-eb8860b4e207.html

School committee narrows options to 4; adopts class and school size targets

By JULIA MARTINEZ staff writer Apr 10, 2017

An Ellensburg School District planning committee tasked with recommending a fix to the district's elementary school overcrowding has narrowed the options to four.

All four options include building a new elementary school and offer variations on what else could be built. The Community Capital Planning Committee used a spreadsheet-style process of elimination, rating different options in small groups based on some criteria such as cost, maximum seats offered, educational environment and access to state assistance. Overall, the committee voted to drop seven plans after seeing the results.

The proposals:

n Plan B would add 500 seats to the district. It would modernize Lincoln and purchase land north of town for future use, with a rough cost estimate of about \$48.8 million.

n Plan F would build a new school at Mount Stuart and demolish the old structure after the new school was finished. It would also modernize Lincoln. It is the most expensive option at a rough estimate of \$78.4 million, and would add 658 seats.

n Plan K would build a new developmental preschool and kindergarten, making all elementary schools grades 1-5, and would roughly cost \$69.7 million. This option adds the most seats to the district with 850.

n Plan L, with a rough price tag of \$55.7 million, would include seismic and safety upgrades for Lincoln without a full modernization, and then add a gym and eight classrooms at Valley View Elementary School. An additional 700 seats would be added to the district.

State assistance has the ability to lower the cost of all the options.

Adopting targets

The committee also adopted an optimal target for class sizes: 19 students per class in grades K-3 and 25 students for classes in 4-5.

Initiative 1351, a statewide class size reduction measure passed in 2014, recommends 17 students in K-3 and 25 students in 4-5.

Lincoln principal John Graf presented his numbers on how full classrooms were across the district. Overall, the elementary schools are 463 students over the adopted optimal target of 1,071. The current elementary enrollment in the district is 1,534.

The optimal target would hold enrollment at 342 students at both Lincoln and Mount Stuart, and 387 students at Valley View, which offers more classroom space.

Along with class size targets, the committee also adopted a target school size of 500 students for a fourth elementary school.



Graf again shows school districts in Washtenaw County with an average of around 500.

Some board members were eliminated. Other options, especially for T

Jodee Mulder,



school with an average of

es are in the district,

small school,

one of about 500 students, was important for the environment of students.

“The size of the school matters,” she said, recounting stories of siblings seeing each other in the school hallways and how students from different grades interact one-on-one.

At Tuesday’s CCPC meeting, the committee will decide how many options will be offered as ideas to the school board and set forth timelines for the implementation of each.

The meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. at the Valley View Elementary cafeteria. The school board’s regular meeting will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday at City Hall.

All costs listed are rough estimates and all documents used by the committee can be found online at: <http://www.esd401.org/community/capital-planning>



Julia Martinez