

https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/ellensburg-school-board-considers-new-option-for-lincoln/article_bf1ee10d-c5db-5515-975a-0ba70ff45535.html

Ellensburg School Board considers new option for Lincoln

By EMILY GOODELL staff writer Aug 19, 2017



Students walk through the entrance to Lincoln Elementary School in September in 2016. The Ellensburg School District is looking at a number of options to alleviate elementary-level overcrowding.

[Buy Now](#)

Brian Myrick / Daily Record file

The Ellensburg School Board is considering a new option to reduce student overcrowding: use state assistance funds associated with Lincoln Elementary to build a new 500-student school on a more suitably sized campus.

Lincoln would go into surplus and be used for other school district or community purposes under the plan from the Community Capital Planning Committee.

“There’s a lot of work yet to be done to explore this option,” school board member Jonathan Leonard said.



The cost to build a new school will be the same regardless of which option is chosen. The difference between the two is the cost of renovating the old Lincoln into a district office or other space.

The new Lincoln plan is just the most recent proposal discussed. The school board is still evaluating options, and will seek community input as plans develop.

LINCOLN PLAN

The new Lincoln idea came out of the final CCPC meeting in May, after which some committee members continued to flesh ideas for a new elementary school.

Possible uses for the Lincoln building if it goes into surplus are building an appropriately-sized district office, professional office space or a possible community center partnership with the city of Ellensburg. If the district built a new school, Lincoln students will move there after completion. If the school board decides to use the building as the district office, then the current office space would go into surplus, creating another property they could utilize.

Pros of this option discussed during a school board retreat Aug. 2 include that the plan significantly increases seats, uses state assistance, provides suitable district office space, provides for future expansion and allows for potential partnerships with city of Ellensburg and Central Washington

University. It might also provide an opportunity to build a kindergarten campus through possible construction cost savings.

Cons of the option were that it takes Lincoln out of use as a K-12 school and requires additional money to re-purpose Lincoln.

Leonard said using the old building as a space for the district office is in line with long-term needs. He said even if the district does not need all the space now, it will in the near future as adding schools to address overcrowding requires more staff and more administration to oversee that staff.

Leonard said possibly using part of the office space for developmental preschool would address a growing long-term need for a space to adequately fit the population of young special education students.

Leonard said that modernizing Lincoln will not change the enrollment capacity for the school, which is 350 students. He said currently there are more than 500 students attending Lincoln and that the core capacity of the building has been significantly exceeded.

“We know kids operate better in open spaces and we need more square footage to make that happen,” Leonard said.

Washington state recommends that a 500-student school have at least nine acres of space, Leonard said. Lincoln currently has half that space.

“We’re missing out on state funding because we don’t have the facilities to decrease class sizes,” Leonard said.

FOURTH SCHOOL

The board also is looking at an option for a new, fourth elementary school as recommended by CCPC in May. That option, sometimes called option K, would build a fourth elementary school for grades 1-5, build a separate district-wide developmental preschool and kindergarten campus, and a safety modernization at Lincoln.



The construction of the new elementary school campus while renovations are complete, students would move back to the old campus. By that time, a more concrete plan for student distribution would be finalized.

“This option has been identified as a mid-range option to meet the most urgent needs of our elementary school children, with the clear understanding that more capital facilities will be needed in the near future,” the CCPC final recommendation to the school board said.

The plan would add an additional 350-student building for developmental preschool and kindergarten, but that building would not be eligible for any state assistance. It would add the most new seats out of previously considered options.

MOVING FORWARD

This fall the school board will send out a survey to the community about the options to get community input. Leonard said the school board should have a more concrete plan in place in December or January.

Leonard said that with the recent growth in the community, the hope is that the school district will be able to do the new projects in a tax-friendly way. He said the committee’s first focus was making sure options would be reasonable to people in the community.

“We want to make it bondable, respectful of our taxpayers and meeting the need of our students,” Leonard said.

The most recent draft available of the 2018 timeline for the school district’s levies and bonds for capital projects through the next 40 years puts a bond for a new elementary school with a developmental preschool and modernization of Lincoln into 2019. The plan could change, as it is in

draft form and the bond could be based on any number of options CCPC has discussed.

CCPC members are Ken Briggs, Micah Brunner, Curtis Bull, Dorothy Casura, John Graf, Katie Haberman, Sarah Hatfield, Joanne Hillemann, Jen Hoyt, Carla Ketchum, Jonathan Leonard, Jeff Slothower and Joan Wood. CCPC was created to provide input to school board members and develop a 40-year capital projects timeline.

Further information about other options discussed by the CCPC can be found on the Ellensburg School District website. Documents are available regarding agendas, minutes, cost scenarios, proposals, criteria and plans.

Two plans at a glance

The Ellensburg School Board is looking at two plans to resolve elementary-level student overcrowding. Both plans would build a new elementary school. The board is still developing the plans and doesn't have cost estimates yet.

DIFFERENCES

The main difference between the two options is what happens to the old Lincoln Elementary building after the new elementary school is built.

In Option K, the students are phased out of the old school into the new school while the old Lincoln campus completes some renovations. In this option, Lincoln would still be used as an elementary school and the school district would work to develop a plan for students inhabiting the new school.

In Option Three, the students from the old Lincoln campus move to the new campus, which becomes Lincoln elementary. The old Lincoln building is then no longer able to be a K-12 school, because the state assistance funds designated for Lincoln will be used for the new school.

The old Lincoln building would then become available as a new district office, developmental preschool and kindergarten, professional office space or any number of options.

SIMILARITIES

Both build a new elementary school and address overcrowding.

STATE ASSISTANCE FUNDING

Under a new plan, sometimes called option 3, the state assistance funds associated with Lincoln would go toward building a new elementary school. Those funds are calculated by the state in relation to the square footage of a school. If those funds are used for the new school, Lincoln cannot be used in the future for K-12 classes. Under the option, the new school building can be paid for with state assistance funds and a bond. The cost for the re-purposing of the Lincoln building for other use would have to be calculated based on the specific use of the building.

In option K, the state assistance funds are used to renovate Lincoln. Bond money is used to build a new school.

EmilyGoodell