



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent  
FROM: Happy Valley Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee  
DATE: November 19, 2014  
SUBJECT: Schematic Design Recommendation

### **Introduction**

In spring 2014, Bellingham Public Schools convened an 18-member Happy Valley Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee representing staff, community members, and parents. After meeting twelve times, holding three community input/update meetings, and visiting other elementary schools in Washington, the committee is recommending the attached schematic design for your consideration.

### **Building Design**

The building design calls for the replacement of the existing school while the existing school remains in session; the new school would be constructed on the eastern section of the property. The design shows the new school to be approximately 53,000 square feet in size, provide three classrooms per grade for grades K-5, two preschool rooms (four sections) plus a multi-use 'Idea Lab' that may be used as a computer/tech lab, art room, or general purpose classroom, as needed. The school will also include a gymnasium, lunchroom, and music room/stage, as well as administrative offices, a special education room, and other educational support spaces.

Floor plans and building elevations associated with the recommended building schematic design are included [here](#).

### **Site Design**

The existing site is approximately eight acres and has sloping topography that slopes 29' vertically from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. The site is rectangular in shape and has street frontages on east and west sides though currently there is only access from the west side (24<sup>th</sup> Street). The existing site has 40 striped parking stalls on site, and allows queuing of five cars without blocking the fire lane access; thus designed to accommodate 45 cars at one time. The existing condition has been noted to function poorly as noted by district staff, city of Bellingham staff, and in the district's traffic study conducted by Heffron Transportation, Inc.

As part of their work, the committee considered three site plan options and is recommending what is referred to as the Preferred Site Plan (included in link above). The Preferred Site Plan re-grades and

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redevelops a large new parking lot in the southwest portion of the site that is accessed from 24<sup>th</sup> Street. It also calls for access from the east (off 27<sup>th</sup> Street via Mill Avenue) for up to five busses and seven staff parking stalls. Additionally, the plan increases the parking count to 57 striped stalls in the main lot off 24<sup>th</sup> Street, plus up to 36 cars queued or parked along the drive for a total of 100 cars on site at one time and re-grades and redevelops a new large playfield in the northwest portion of the site. Finally, it redevelops the area between the new playfield and new building for hard-surface play and soft-surface play areas.

The committee is well aware of the concerns raised by neighbors who live on Mill Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Street regarding how traffic will change on those streets as a result of the recommended bus drop off/pick up and seven stall staff parking lot off of 27<sup>th</sup> Street. The committee considered those concerns and information from various other sources including [feedback](#) from the Sept. 16, 2014 Project Update Meeting of Happy Valley families and staff, information from the City of Bellingham and Sanitary Service, information related to bus routes in other parts of the district on streets with no sidewalks and widths similar to Mill and 27<sup>th</sup> Streets, and information contained in the Heffron Transportation, Inc. traffic study. A detailed addendum that addresses those concerns is attached to this recommendation.

After considering all of the information from the various sources, the committee reached consensus on this recommendation, including that the Preferred Site Plan is the recommended choice. (Note: During the committee's Nov. 17 meeting and discussion regarding the recommendation, some committee members shared their perspectives, un-related to the site plan traffic issues, on items they hope can be addressed by the architects in the next phase of work: advocating that solar be part of the design; advocating for as much sidewalk construction as possible; wanting to provide more input about landscape architecture; advocating that the staff gathering area remain in the design; and expressing concern about how to clean the interior of the library's skylight.)

### **Conclusion**

The above narrative as depicted in the attached schematic design drawings represent our recommended schematic design for the new Happy Valley Elementary School.

We have enjoyed our work to date and look forward to continuing our advisory work in anticipation of the opening of the new Happy Valley Elementary School in the fall of 2016.