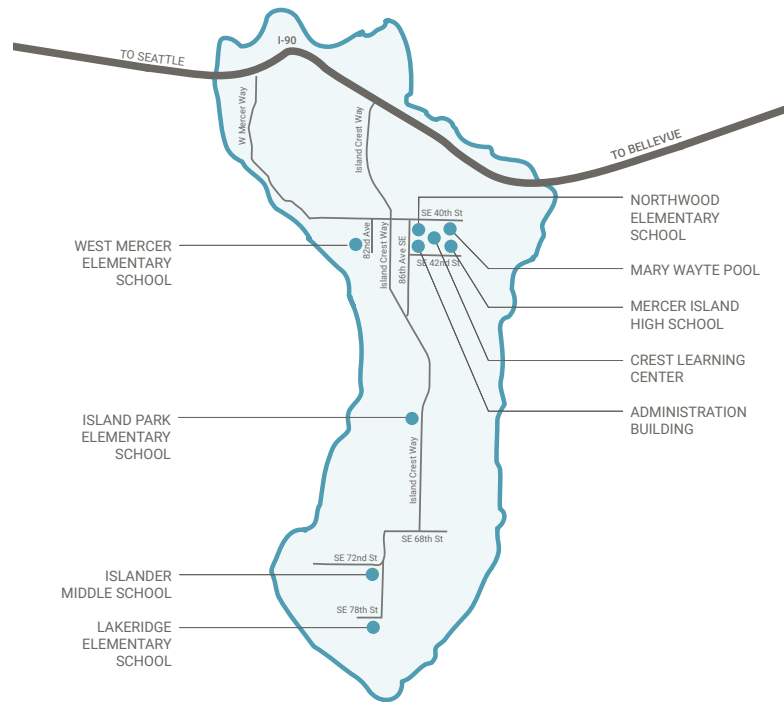




MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
LONG-RANGE FACILITY PLAN

Issue Paper 1: Vision & Educational Programs

18 NOVEMBER 2019



MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mercer Island School District (MISD), which serves the city of Mercer Island, enjoys a widespread reputation for quality and excellence, combining academics, cultural expression, and athletic achievement. This tradition of excellence is a major reason many families make Mercer Island their home.

Mercer Island School District has a K-12 population of approximately 4,300 students, and employs about 550 teachers and support staff. The average student to teacher ratio is 20:1. Achievement test scores at the elementary, middle, and high school levels are consistently the highest in the state, and the district maintains a graduation rate of over 95 percent.

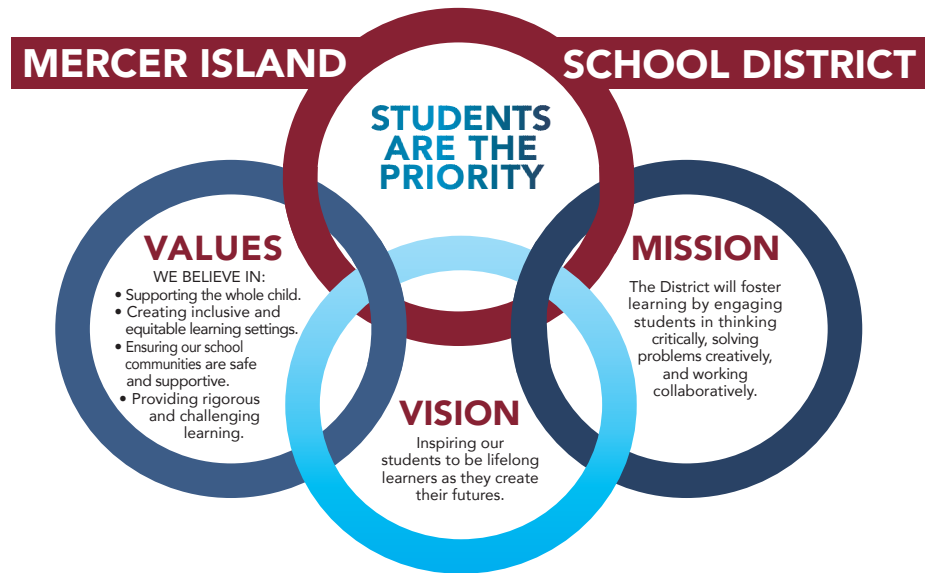
Mercer Island encompasses an area of approximately 6.38 miles. The district operates over 675,000 square feet of facilities on almost 100 acres throughout the Island. MISD's educational facilities include four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school:

- > Island Park Elementary School
- > Lakeridge Elementary School
- > Northwood Elementary School
- > West Mercer Elementary School
- > Islander Middle School
- > Mercer Island High School
- > Crest Learning Center

In addition, the district has several support facilities, including:

- > Administration Building
- > MOT (Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation) Building
- > Maintenance Building
- > Mary Wayte Pool

The map diagram above illustrates the district boundary and approximate locations of MISD facilities.



DISTRICT VISION

The Board of Directors has approved new Policy 0001 that sets the District's direction by defining its Core Values, Vision, and Mission.

The new values, vision, and mission statements center the District's work on students as the priority and educating the whole child.

The Student-Focused Fundamentals sustain accountability of these goals through an annual monitoring and measuring process.

VALUES

Students are the priority. We believe in:

- > Supporting the whole child.
- > Creating inclusive and equitable learning settings.
- > Ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive.
- > Providing rigorous and challenging learning.

VISION

Inspiring our students to be lifelong learners as they create their futures.

MISSION

The District will foster learning by engaging students in thinking critically, solving problems creatively, and working collaboratively.

OPERATIONAL EXPECTATION 1800 OE-1: STUDENT-FOCUSED FUNDAMENTALS

In accordance with the values, vision and mission stated in Board Policy 0001, the District will strive to achieve the following fundamentals, goals, and objectives:

- > Create a personalized learning environment where differentiated instruction, student-centered education, and varied learning opportunities are responsive to students' strengths, needs, interests and passions.

- > Maintain the highest learning standards in the areas of fine arts; health and physical education; English language arts; mathematics; financial education; science; environment and sustainability; social studies; world languages; computer science and educational technology.
- > Develop self-awareness, empathy, emotional/social intelligence, responsible decision-making and citizenship.
- > Encourage and enable students to be academic entrepreneurs and risk-takers who can choose to pursue academic passions and interests beyond traditional curriculum and beyond the traditional classroom environment.
- > Cultivate and foster thinking and process skills such as analytical and critical thinking, cross-discipline thinking, creativity, innovation, leadership, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and information and technology literacy in curriculum design.
- > Cultivate global awareness and understanding of real-world problems, issues, concerns, commonalities, differences and interdependence.
- > Foster and embrace diversity, inclusiveness, and equity with a focus on respect and acceptance of every student.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The following list includes information on district educational programs that could require and/or benefit from modification of existing facilities within the 10-year time frame of the Long-Range facility plan.

Not all of the district's educational programs are included. Of those shown, it is yet to be determined what, if any, changes may be made. Some programs were determined to not require action in the long-range plan, and are included for informational purposes only.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

PREKINDERGARTEN

Existing Conditions

Currently, the district provides two prekindergarten classrooms located at Northwood Elementary, with no prekindergarten options offered at other district sites. Historically, private prekindergarten programs have served the majority of island residents, however, there has been some discussion regarding a limited expansion of the public-school prekindergarten option.

10-Year Program Approach

For purposes of this long-range facility plan, the district has recommended that expansion of current prekindergarten offerings will not be incorporated into the plan. Therefore, no facility modifications will be required as part of this long-range facility plan.

Program Requirements

The education specification for Northwood Elementary represents the latest program of space for MISD developmental preschool programs. This area, including two classroom spaces and associated support areas, requires approximately 2,700 net square feet.

BEFORE AND AFTER CARE

Existing Conditions

Before and after school care is both desired, and needed, for many families within the Mercer Island community. Students are currently served by a third-party provider that is licensed to offer before and after care in gymnasium spaces and at Northwood, in the Art classroom. Historically, this third-party vendor has used unassigned classrooms, portable classrooms and the library as well. There are no dedicated spaces available for the sole function of childcare.

Before and after care is provided at all four district elementary schools, with all locations currently at capacity. In addition to this on-site before and after care, approximately 200 students are bused to off-site programs at the Boys and Girls Club



and the Jewish Community Center. If an approach were developed to expand this program within existing school facilities, the district would be able to serve more families within the Mercer Island community.

10-Year Program Approach

There are currently no plans to change the before and after care delivery model. If, however, the district opted to provide this service within its range of programs, other existing spaces, beyond the gymnasium, might provide additional capacity. There are no current plans to offer dedicated space for before and after school care within the district.

Program Requirements

There is not a quantifiable space need for this program at each site. Varying approaches to before and after care delivery will determine which existing space may be utilized.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Existing Conditions

The district currently serves students with identified disabilities using a continuum

of special education services. This spectrum of supports is distributed across the schools. Elementary facilities serving students with higher-needs for support exist at Northwood and Island Park Elementary, with Island Park serving as the centrally located site for students also needing more intensive behavioral and emotional interventions. Existing elementary schools each have a resource classroom, however the function of these spaces could be significantly improved.

10-Year Program Approach

Facilities serving students with high needs for support will remain at Northwood and Island Park. The current and long-term vision is to embrace an inclusion model in all schools and encourage access to the general education setting rather than creating dedicated “special education” learning spaces or classrooms. Northwood’s model for a dedicated resource room, but with many services moving into the “fishbowls” or classrooms, illustrates a configuration that serves students in this way. This is known as pushing services into the general education environments rather than pulling students out of their regular education program.

Other existing elementary schools currently have makeshift resource rooms, however the function of these could be significantly improved. While other support functions, such as sensory rooms, are currently provided in existing schools, the district may consider a redistribution of these functions throughout school buildings (rather than consolidated), thereby facilitating rapid and natural access for students and staff. The district’s overall goal is to continue working toward an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

Program Requirements

For schools being considered for modernization, existing special education resource rooms, classrooms and support facilities should be assessed against target program areas established by the latest elementary education specification. Northwood Elementary represents the latest program of educational space developed for MISD Special Services. This area, having one classroom, one resource room, one occupational / physical therapy room, and associated support areas, requires approximately 1,600 net square feet.

PORTABLE CLASSROOMS

Existing Conditions

The district currently has double portable classroom buildings located at Island Park Elementary (four portable classrooms), Lakeridge Elementary (four portable classrooms), and West Mercer Elementary (four portable classrooms). The district owns these buildings and they are relatively new and in good condition.

Following construction of Northwood Elementary, many old portables were removed from the sites, with those left intended for non-classroom uses. When used as classrooms, these portables create challenges, both for students and staff, including truncation of playground areas and interruption of sightlines (visual supervision) at some sites, limitations on class size, access to technology, safety / security concerns, and isolation from other students and support services.



In addition, direct student traffic via the exterior doors of other classrooms (to access restroom facilities and other school functions) impacts the learning environment of those classrooms. Other operational issues include conflict with stipulations made in staff contract language and difficulty managing “lock down” or other types of emergency drills.

10-Year Program Approach

Ideally, portables classrooms would be eliminated from all district sites, thereby eliminating all current operational challenges associated with them. Since portable use for classrooms is the direct result of enrollment exceeding permanent capacity, it would be necessary to add additional permanent learning space capacity, either through a classroom addition to existing schools or a replacement of schools that would increase total permanent capacity.

Program Requirements

Each existing portable structure contains two classroom spaces. The elimination of portables would require the addition of two to four permanent classrooms

per site, cumulatively accommodating approximate 50-100 students per site. The area required for a four-classroom addition is approximately 3,800 net square feet.

MULTIPURPOSE SPACE

Existing Conditions

Island Park Elementary, Lakeridge Elementary, and West Mercer Elementary currently have a “multipurpose” space that serves as the auditorium, cafeteria, and physical education (PE) program space. These elementary schools currently have two lunch periods, with associated set-up and clean-up time.

Daily use of the multipurpose space for both PE and lunch is less than optimal from the standpoint of scheduling conflict. This conflict extends to kitchen/food service operations, with food serving carts at one elementary being stored outside while PE classes are being taught. The configuration of the Island Park multipurpose space also requires that students exit the main building in order to access the space. This arrangement is less than desirable from a safety/supervision standpoint.

10-Year Program Approach

The district’s latest elementary education specification provides for separate food service and gymnasium (PE) functions. Ideally, all elementary schools would align with programmatic spaces identified in this district document. This could be accommodated by adding a physical education space or food service space to existing schools. The additional programmatic space could also be added during the future replacement of an existing school to meet education specification requirements.

The district provides community access to all school gyms and multipurpose rooms outside school use hours. The High School, Middle School, and Northwood Elementary School gymnasiums are generally used by the community until 10:00 each weeknight and on weekends. A number of requests are not able to be accommodated due to demand. Additional gymnasiums would also be an asset that could be utilized by the community during non-school hours.

Program Requirements

Ideally, all elementary schools would have a dedicated elementary-sized gymnasium and a separate cafeteria/dining area that seats 250 students.

The area required for an elementary-sized gymnasium can range from approximately 3,500 net square feet to 5,500 net square feet, and may also need to include associated support such as office, storage, and restrooms. However, the age of the district's three older existing elementary schools (between 56 and 66 years old, with one significant renovation) should also be considered when determining if adding new permanent square footage is the best option.

EDUCATIONAL SUITABILITY / FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACE

Existing Conditions

Island Park Elementary, Lakeridge Elementary, and West Mercer Elementary were all constructed over fifty years ago and renovated in the early 1990's. Consequently, they do not reflect current thinking around teaching and learning. One critical element is flexible learning space, such as learning areas outside of the classroom and varying types of learning spaces for different learning styles and group sizes. Volunteers and support staff must use crowded hallways with frequent distractions to work with individuals and small groups of students.

Area per student is one metric that can be used to evaluate educational suitability in school facilities. Area per student is determined by taking the total gross square footage of a facility and dividing it by the total student capacity of the building. This takes into account all spaces within the building and provides the average amount of total space per student.

However, due to variation in the types and sizes of district programs beyond general education in each elementary school, such as preschool and special education, it is difficult to use this high-level metric for comparison.



10-Year Program Approach

Ideally improve educational suitability at all elementary schools to provide parity among schools. However, it may not make sense to adapt older facilities.

Program Requirements

Each of the classic elementary schools contain approximately 18 to 20 general education classrooms. In order to improve educational suitability, four shared instructional areas of approximately 400 net square feet can be added per school, creating learning clusters of four to five classrooms.

Implementation would require both modernization of existing space and adding new building area, as some existing classrooms would be displaced and need to be replaced. Specific space requirements need to be determined on a school-by-school basis, however given a school's age and condition, this may not be the recommended approach.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Existing Conditions

Special education programs at Islander Middle School are currently distributed into two separate buildings.

10-Year Program Approach

Ideally, all special education programs would be accessible throughout the learning spaces to allow for an inclusive educational experience for all students. The spaces should be flexible in their use to allow for all related special education services to be delivered.

Program Requirements

Further evaluation is needed to determine the specific program requirements for combining middle school special education spaces, however it is likely that this can be accommodated through modernization of existing space rather than new construction.



HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Existing Conditions

The district has an alternative high school program, located in the Crest Learning Center. This program primarily accommodates MISD students on a flexible, part-time basis, with a small number of full-time students. The program serves students that need additional support or an alternative learning setting to the comprehensive high school environment. Additionally, CREST is home to the district's online learning program.

Currently, enrollment in this program is limited by the amount of physical space. It is estimated that the current enrollment demand is as much as double what current facilities can accommodate.

- > 108 courses taken at CREST (fall semester 2019)
- > 93 students taking one or more classes at CREST each day

10-Year Program Approach

In order to accommodate the growing demand for this type of education enrichment and an alternative environment, an increase in the amount of facility space for the alternative high school is needed. In addition to providing adequate space for existing functions, additional space is needed for online learning and small group / shared learning areas.

There is no plan to expand alternative education programming to the middle or elementary levels.

Program Requirements

Provide an alternative high school facility that is double the size of the current facility that is being used by the program (15,000 gross square feet). The existing Crest Learning Center is approximately 10,000 gross square feet, with 2,500 gross square feet currently being used by the Adult Transition Program.

Further evaluation is required to determine specific program requirements, as well as the best location in the district for the Crest Learning Center program (near, with, or away from the comprehensive high school).

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS (CCR)

Existing Conditions

College and Career Readiness, sometimes referred to as Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, offer the opportunity to explore and prepare for post-secondary education through real-world learning experiences that develop leadership, professionalism, and project management skills. Although the district offers a number of College & Career Readiness (CCR) courses at the high school and middle school levels, there is a significant unmet need in this area, in terms of the breadth of courses offered and appropriate facilities to accommodate CCR programs.

Currently, MISD sends students out of the district to access some CCR courses, which creates issues related to both travel time and cost. The lack of appropriate space has limited the type of CCR classes that can be offered. Many of the programs that currently exist are held in makeshift spaces that do not provide adequate learning space, accommodate equipment, and/or limit participation.

Current district CCR offerings include:

- > Arts, Communication, & Design / Multimedia: video arts, radio broadcasting, digital photography, metal and jewelry design, music technology, graphic design, AP studio art, journalism, and yearbook
 - Radio (small studio space with break-out and two offices; classroom is remote, so hard to monitor live radio and classroom of students at the same time)
 - Jewelry and metalworking have limited, space
- > Business & Finance: AP micro- and macro-economics, accounting, personal finance, business law, business communications and technology
- > Computer Science & Engineering: computer science, AP computer science, engineering technology, and robotics

- Materials science classroom (used for robotics, too small to accommodate all students and is used until nine pm)
 - Spaces for students to work in teams and individually on projects are needed
- > Health science: health, family relations, child development, AP psychology, biotech research and ethics
- Growth of this pathway, would have future facility needs
- > Horticulture: greenhouse
- > Marketing: marketing, international entrepreneurship, and retail store management
- Store and DECA room cannot accommodate demand

10-Year Program Approach

Students are required to earn two CCR credits to graduate high school. More importantly, completing a CCR pathway is one of eight ways students can meet the English Language Arts and Mathematics proficiency requirements. Students who struggle on standardized tests are disadvantaged by a limited offering of CCR options.

Create a stronger connection between all communications programs, to create a “multi-media” pathway (radio, journalism, marketing, newspaper, yearbook, and video production).

Add a new large, flexible space that includes robust hands-on learning environments such as a wood shop, metal shop, composites lab, innovation lab, and clean tech lab, for high school students.

Create a stronger connection to the alternative high school and look at the potential for shared use between CCR, alternative education, and a professional learning space.

Program Requirements

Modernize existing space in the high school to create stronger connection between communications programs, including a 50% space increase for the radio program (increase studio size and adjacent instructional space).

Develop a new skills center with a number of hands-on shop spaces. Further evaluation of CCR pathways is needed to determine which specific programs and spaces would be the best fit for the district.

SCIENCE LABS

Existing Conditions

The high school currently has a total of 12 science labs, including eight science labs in their original 1997 configuration. These rooms need to be modernized, equipped, and sized to accommodate the current programs.

10-Year Program Approach

Modernize the older science labs at the high school to be equivalent to the new science labs that were recently added in 2014.

Program Requirements

Modernize approximately 15,000 square feet of existing space at the high school, include eight science labs and associated support spaces.

ATHLETIC SPACE

Existing Conditions

Mercer Island High School has a robust athletic program with nine fall sports, six winter sports, and 11 spring sports. The existing high school facility does not have enough space to accommodate all of the athletic teams, including gymnasium space for practice and locker / team room space. Currently, some teams are using the PEAK facility or the Northwood gymnasium for practices.

10-Year Program Approach

Modify existing space at the high school as needed to provide equitable practice and locker / team room space for all high school teams.

Program Requirements

Specific requirements associated with athletics improvements have yet to be developed.



SUPPORT / OTHER PROGRAMS

ADULT TRANSITION PROGRAM (ATP)

Existing Conditions

The Adult Transition Program (ATP) serves any student with a disability (typically medically fragile students) who would like to stay in school until they are 21. The program focuses on independent living and employment, with most students traveling to jobs off site daily. Currently there are approximately 14 students in the program.

ATP is currently located at the Crest Learning Center and does not have adequate space to meet program needs.

10-Year Program Approach

Growth is not expected in the program as it is currently implemented, but ideally the program would expand to provide job coaching services for high school students who are not ready for college as well, particularly at the alternative high school.

Program Requirements

Provide ATP program space at approximately 150% of the current area (3,800 gross square feet). The facility should include three teaching areas, including an apartment-like space for life skills, a flexible worksite-like space for job training, and a learning space for education. Additional needs include office, restroom, and other support areas.

Further evaluation is required to determine specific program requirements, as well as the best location in the district for the ATP program (with or separate from the Crest Learning Center).

LIBRARIES

Existing Conditions

Particularly at Mercer Island High School, but also at the classic elementary schools, library / multimedia centers are outdated for the current and projected delivery model. These spaces offer the opportunity to redefine existing space to integrate book collections, technology resources, and collaborative small-group work areas.

10-Year Program Approach

Modernize existing library / multimedia centers to provide space for functions beyond traditional library programs.

Program Requirements

Specific program requirements will need to be determined on a school-by-school basis.

TECHNOLOGY SPACE

Existing Conditions

Currently the district has limited space to store and securely store mobile technology.

10-Year Program Approach

Provide a dedicated space in every school facility to repair mobile technology and store securely in the summertime.

Program Requirements

Dedicated space should accommodate 12 carts of laptops and a repair/work



area. Specific technology space needs will be determined on a site-by-site basis, however it is estimated that approximately 200 net square feet will accommodate this function. Consider the potential to repurpose underutilized existing space in each school to address this space need.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Existing Conditions

With the increased emphasis on professional learning, there is currently not enough space available to accommodate the need for large meeting spaces for teachers and staff during the school day. Each school has professional learning at least three times per month, with the largest meetings between 60-70 people.

Currently, smaller meetings are held at the Administration Building, with larger ones having to utilize rented space at a nearby church or the Mercer Island Community Center. The PEAK facility is used only occasionally due to schedule conflicts with PEAK programs as well as suitability of the facility.

10-Year Program Approach

Provide a "learning hub" for teachers and staff that is a robust virtual classroom environment for adult learning, as well as a permanent resource and "think tank" area. This space can also function as community-use space in the evenings, and may also be able to be used for some additional educational functions during the day.

Program Requirements

Provide a new multipurpose space that seats 70 people, with associated support space (break out spaces, storage). The multipurpose space should be dividable into three smaller areas, for greater flexibility of use, and have appropriate technology for remote learning and large group presentations.

The professional learning space could be part of the administration complex rather than at a specific school, although it could be part of a reconfigured Crest Learning Center Facility.