

Enrollment Update

The Bellingham School District has approximately 10,590 students enrolled, about 80 more than last year. Elementary enrollment continues to grow, as indicated by the increase of 51 students; middle school enrollment increased by 48 students; and high schools decreased by 16. Twelve schools in the district experienced an enrollment increase between 2008 and 2009. State funding for our district is determined by calculating the average of student full-time equivalent enrollment for the months of September 2009 through May 2010. We estimate actual enrollment for the year will slightly exceed budget projections.

Thank you to voters who approved a 2006 bond to fund several capital projects, including these:

New Shuksan Middle School Opens On Time



The new Shuksan Middle School, built with sustainable WSSSP (equivalent to LEED silver) design features, opened its doors to students on the first day of school. The project was completed on time by Whatcom County-based Colacurcio Brothers Construction Company. Shuksan has been working with its students, staff and parent community to create a focus for the new school as a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Academy, where students will learn 21st century skills. Students will experience and explore learning opportunities in the arts, physical education/health, culture and history, and literacy through

an integrated STEM curriculum in the future. **A ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening celebration — featuring student-led tours of the new facility and a student orchestra performance for community members and staff — is planned for 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, followed by an open house for Shuksan families.**

Creation of the new playfields on the site of the old Shuksan facility, including seeding and underground irrigation, is continuing this fall, allowing earlier access to the playfields for physical education classes and recreation in fall 2010, instead of 2011. In the meantime, Shuksan students will continue to play athletics on Birchwood Elementary School's playfields. Road improvements to Alderwood Avenue are nearing completion. North of the school, Alderwood Avenue is being widened to include a turn lane into the new Shuksan to improve traffic; buses will access the new facility through a loop off Maplewood Avenue behind the building, providing a safe separation between automobiles and buses.

District to Develop Plan to Reopen Lowell

At the Sept. 24 School Board meeting, the Board asked the district to prepare a plan for its review at the Oct. 8 meeting to reopen Lowell Elementary School in fall 2010. Lowell was temporarily closed for seismic retrofitting work and its reopening delayed for one year as part of last year's Budget Savings Plan.

SEE REVERSE

While Lowell is closed this school year, the School Board approved additional improvements, including interior and exterior painting, as well as repairs to the brick mortar joints — cutting out deteriorated mortar between the bricks on the exterior of the building and filling with new mortar — to prevent moisture and prolong the useful life of the building. This work is currently in progress.

Seismic Update

The first two phases of seismic work for improved earthquake safety at Whatcom Middle School have been completed. The final phase of retrofitting at Whatcom will continue through the fall. The final phase of seismic work at Larrabee was completed this summer and includes re-enforcement of exterior walls and the roof, new floors, paint and new exterior front stairs. Seismic work is also now complete Lowell and other improvements are under way. Lowell's exterior walls were reinforced and attached to the roof and floors. Lowell is not being used during its temporary closure for any other purpose. All of Columbia Elementary School's seismic work was completed during summer 2008.

Seismic work at the Central Services/Roeder building has been delayed to allow contractors to expedite work on the schools and to allow for earlier completion of Shuksan Middle School's playfields. The original plan was for Central Services staff to temporarily occupy the old Shuksan building, but this would have delayed students' and community access to playfields as well as completion of the new parking lot, driveway and road improvements. Central Services staff will likely need to relocate to another location due to the extensive retrofitting needed for the Roeder building. A new timeline for this work and temporary relocation site have not been established.

Summer Maintenance Update

To maintain and continue to improve our facilities throughout the district as funding allows, a number of maintenance projects were completed this summer at schools throughout the district. [Please click here for details.](#)

Aldrich Road Elementary School Update

In spring 2009, the School Board approved the purchase of a wetlands mitigation site that is needed in order to build the Aldrich Road elementary school in the future. A new timeline will be considered and developed during the 2009-10 school year.

Funding Sources

Funding for school construction, facility improvements and property purchases comes from a capital projects fund. This is separate from the district's general fund and by law, cannot be used for day-to-day operations or to address budget shortfalls. Funding for staffing to operate a school comes from the district's general fund. For more budget information, please visit: <http://www.bham.wednet.edu/staff/BudgetUpdate2009.htm>