

District looks at student enrollment projections for plans for Honey Dew Elementary School in 2008-09

Stable student enrollment patterns prompted delayed opening of Honey Dew this school year

January 21, 2008—Renton School District officials are reviewing student enrollment data to determine recommendations to the School Board for the use of Honey Dew Elementary School for next school year.

School Board members voted in January 2007 to delay the re-opening of Honey Dew Elementary School because student enrollment increased only slightly and did not add up to opening a new school. The board plan included revisiting the issue for the 2008-09 school year.

Increased enrollment necessary for opening additional school

A cursory look at student projections for next school year indicates that student enrollment will remain about the same as this year. If so, the district likely will again propose delaying the opening of Honey Dew Elementary for next year.

An increase in student enrollment is necessary to open an additional school.

Without added students to the school system, the district would have to find in its current budget the money needed to operate a new elementary school, estimated at nearly \$2.5 million.

An increase in student enrollment is essential to opening an additional school. Without added students to the school system the district would have to find in its current budget the money needed to open a new elementary school: hiring additional teachers, teacher aides, a principal, a custodian, and other support staff, purchase books, computers and equipment, and pay annual operating and utility costs. The annual operating costs for an additional elementary school could be as much as \$2.5 million.

District administrators plan to present the School Board with a recommendation for Honey Dew Elementary in early spring.

For years Honey Dew Elementary has been used to accommodate students from other district elementary schools as those schools were rebuilt from 1994 through 2004. The original plan for Honey Dew, developed by the district Enrollment Review Committee, was to re-open the building as an elementary school for students in kindergarten through fifth-grade to handle anticipated overloads from neighboring elementary schools including Highlands, Maplewood Heights and Sierra Heights. But, with lower-than-expected enrollment throughout the district, board members postponed re-opening Honey Dew, with an analysis of 2007-08 enrollment growth and costs associated with re-opening to be presented at a subsequent board meeting.

Renovations to ready Honey Dew continue

Renovations at Honey Dew began last year, and continue now as the district ensures the school is ready when enrollment increases enough to warrant opening the school. The renovations were overwhelmingly approved by voters as part of a bond package in May 2003. Some of the site improvements include:

- Reorganize interior building layout including classroom wings
- Improvements for access by students with disabilities
- Improve site circulation by separating bus and auto drop-offs
- Provide staff parking area at rear of building

- Upgrade electrical, water and storm sewer systems
- Improve roadway to meet City of Renton requirements
- Provide loading dock area for use with kitchen deliveries and waste disposal
- Upgrade plumbing fixtures and piping, electrical devices and wiring, and mechanical equipment including boiler
- Technology upgrades
- Replace roof
- Replace kitchen equipment
- Adding restrooms to accommodate kindergarten children

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