

Working Together to Strengthen Our Schools: Our Work Today

Help us shape the next steps on seven issues that will make the biggest difference the soonest. These are some of the big issues raised by the school community, Marysville, and The Tulalip Tribes through the community engagement process. Your feedback today, and everything that we have heard throughout the community engagement process, will help us update our *Strategic Directions* and develop a secondary school plan. Note that issues and corresponding sample actions have been categorized in the goal areas of the Marysville School District's current *Strategic Directions* document.

Following each issue are sample actions that have been suggested so far and the questions that we would like to explore with you today.

Engaging Our Community

A. **STRENGTHENING PARENT ENGAGEMENT** – We heard parents want to engage more with their child's education and school.

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Engage more parents in Parent Advisory Council, PTSA, district committees, and family nights.
- ❖ Regularly invite parent ideas about school programs and setting high expectations and goals for their child.
- ❖ Invite parent participation in school activities and field trips.
- ❖ Strengthen relationships between teachers and parents.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important things schools can do to make the biggest difference the soonest to better partner with parents to advance each child's education?
2. What can parents, staff and the community do to help the District achieve this?

B. **IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING OUR FACILITIES** – We heard our school buildings and campuses need to be better maintained, improved and beautified. Most think new schools are needed, but not everyone thinks this is a priority.

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Adhere to the Master Facility Plan, including analysis of all building conditions and a prioritized plan to address issues.
- ❖ Improve upon the Master Facility Plan to include grounds and sports fields.
- ❖ Use capital levy funds to address building maintenance needs according to the Master Facility Plan.
- ❖ Improve routine maintenance schedules.
- ❖ Continue to work with community organizations to provide more opportunities for sports and other extracurricular activities.
- ❖ Continue to work with the community to help with school beautification through simple landscaping and painting projects during "community action days".

QUESTION

1. What are the most important things schools and the community can do to make the biggest difference in our schools to provide great learning environments and make us proud?

Inspiring Our Students

C. **BOLSTERING PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY** – We heard that more needs to be done to help students feel safe, physically, and emotionally (mutual respect, cultural awareness, bullying).

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Foster mutual respect, cultural awareness and compassion in the classroom.
- ❖ Continue to implement PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Systems) in schools.
- ❖ Look for creative ways to continue to provide mental health services for students and families.
- ❖ Promote use of SafeSchools to report incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and unsafe behaviors.
- ❖ Continue working with Marysville Police Department to address safety and provide School Resource Officers in schools.
- ❖ Invest in more security cameras.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important actions schools can take to bolster physical and emotional safety?
2. How can we all work together to help students feel physically and emotionally safe?

D. **IMPROVING SCHOOL CULTURE AND STUDENT SUCCESS** – We heard some students do not feel encouraged to do their best and that attendance needs to be improved.

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Support teachers in building strong relationships with every student.
- ❖ Build a culture of high expectations for all students.
- ❖ Intervene in attendance and other barriers to student success early.
- ❖ Invest more in courses for advanced students and supports for those who are struggling.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important things schools can do to make the biggest difference in welcoming and supporting the learning of all students so we see improvements quickly?
2. How can parents, staff, and the community work together to create a culture of mutual respect, kindness and high expectations that supports the learning and development of youth in our community?



Preparing Our Graduates

E. **BUILDING CAREER AWARENESS AND PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND TO THE TRADES** – We heard students need to be more aware of careers options early and have more pathways to the trades.

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Bolster student awareness of career options through partnerships with employers and colleges.
- ❖ Build and increase awareness of pathways to the trades, including dual credit and apprenticeship programs.
- ❖ Ensure that high school students know the requirements for continuing education and careers that interest them.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important things schools can do to make the biggest difference in strengthening career awareness starting in elementary school?
2. What can we – parents, staff and the community - do to help build career awareness?
3. How can schools better organize to provide awareness of post-secondary options for students including career awareness, college and the trades?

Honoring Our Commitments

F. **ENHANCING COMMUNICATION** – We heard that we need to improve our two-way communication.

SAMPLE ACTIONS

- ❖ Invite ideas from the school community about important topics and ways to communicate.
- ❖ Create consistent communication procedures with actions for all schools and personnel.
- ❖ Ask everyone to help spread the word.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What are the most important things schools can do to make the biggest difference to strengthen two-way communication?
- ❖ What can parents, staff and the community do to help schools strengthen two-way communication?



This page intentionally left blank

Secondary School Issues

Middle and High School Decisions

This spring, the Superintendent will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors about how to best manage competing needs affecting how middle and high schools are structured. These include:

- ❖ Small learning communities are valued by some of the Getchell families we heard from, and the size of SLCs limits course choices and extracurricular programs;
- ❖ Some like the idea of one very large high school to promote unity in the broader Marysville community, and some feel this may create safety concerns associated with a very large high school and make it more difficult to create a welcoming environment;
- ❖ Open school choice may respond to student and family interests and needs, and it is often impossible to adequately shift programming, staff, and resources to specific schools to meet the shifting needs caused by open school choice;
- ❖ Some feel middle schools are overcrowded, and creating two middle school levels (sixth-seventh grade, and eighth to ninth grade) will create additional transitions for students, limit course options for high school credit and require additional facilities.

Middle Schools

Outdated and inadequate middle school facilities contribute to a feeling of overcrowding. Addressing this issue will be considered in a future bond measure.

High School Decision Factors

Seven key factors the District is weighing to decide how to structure our high schools are listed below. The rank ordering from the community survey reflects generally what we heard through the entire community engagement process. (Survey responses range of 88% of respondents agreeing with statement “1” to 76% percent agreeing with “7”).

1. Making sure every high school student has a safe, modern and efficient space to learn
2. Creating equitable arts, clubs, and other extracurricular activities
3. Ensuring equity in student socio-demographics and special education and gifted programs
4. Creating a clear equitable school path for students from kindergarten through graduation
5. Creating comprehensive high schools that offer equity in courses
6. Creating equitable sports programs and extracurricular activities
7. Ensuring small specialized programs that help students prepare for specific futures (e.g., engineering, biochemistry, etc.)

QUESTION

1. Do the above factors seem like the right factors to weigh in making a decision about high schools? Do you suggest others? If so, why?

Things to Consider

Small learning communities, like those at Getchell, were popular about 10 years ago. In Marysville, small learning communities have not, by size alone increased student academic performance or graduation rates. It is also hard to fill classes and offer electives within small learning communities. We know some students and families appreciate the smaller settings, and we also hear some families want access to programs, courses, sports offerings and more extra-curricular opportunities such as student-run clubs which can be more easily offered at larger, more traditional, comprehensive high schools.

Decisions Made

Two decisions have been made so far:

1. Marysville Getchell will remain a high school.
2. If a decision is made to move to neighborhood boundaries, freshmen who start at one high school in September 2019 can finish their high school career at that school (however, the District would need to determine if and how transportation can be provided).

Decision-Making Timeline and Process

In the spring of 2018 the Superintendent will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors whether to continue the current system of open choice high schools or to set boundaries. If a decision is made to change the current configuration, a task force will be convened to work through the many details involved in the process. Major change would not be fully implemented until the fall of 2019.

