



Six-Year Capital Levy to Rebuild Federal Way High School

Why rebuild Federal Way High School now?

- The need is great. But the opportunity even greater. Local taxpayers can rebuild the district's flagship school for future generations with a \$60 million investment over the next six years.
- The total construction cost will be \$110 million. The balance would be made up with a combination of funds left over from the previous bond measure and anticipated state match funding. These funds **can't** be used to plug the hole in our operations budget brought about by state budget cuts.
- The \$60 million would be collected as a levy rather than a bond, meaning that taxpayers won't have to pay interest and the school will be paid for in six years. This saves taxpayers an estimated \$29 million in interest payments.
- The cost to maintain this aging building is typical of an older structure, and will only increase each year.
- Throwing more money into replacing and repairing the school's aging infrastructure will not solve the bigger issues we face:
 - *The building can't be easily reconfigured to support high-quality instruction and learning.*
 - *It doesn't lend itself to providing a safe and healthy learning environment.*
 - *And staff and student morale and pride suffer when faced with a deteriorating school.*
- Our students need a school that will support a world-class education for the future.
- It should be safe, support excellent academic instruction, and be flexible to change as education evolves.

How can a \$110 million school cost our taxpayers just \$60 million?

- The upside to the dismal economy is that the district was able to rebuild schools and facilities on the last bond measure for significantly less than originally anticipated, leaving about \$10.6 million unspent.
- In addition, multiple school improvement projects were paid for by state match funds triggered by the bond passage. State matching funds came in \$12.4 million over what was needed and can be carried over to rebuild FWHS.
- FWHS also qualifies for an additional estimated \$27 million in state match funds.
- Thanks to solid financial management of our construction funds, the district can build a \$110 million school for a little over half that much.

Why rebuild instead of remodel?

In 2004, outside building experts examined the district's buildings for structural and functional condition. Federal Way High School earned a 4 out of 10. Those same experts advised that rebuilding the school is the most cost-effective solution. When it comes to schools, renovating is nearly always more expensive than rebuilding.

- FWHS was originally built in 1929 as an elementary school, and then partially rebuilt in 1938 as a K-12. It is now struggling to support a more sophisticated high school instructional program in the 21st century. To date, it's the district's only high school not built to be a high school.

- The school had a partial remodel in 2003 as part of the 1999 bond, when all high schools in the district received additional classroom space to help accommodate the larger high school populations that resulted from the movement of 9th graders from junior highs to high schools.
- The 2003 remodel also gave the school a larger cafeteria and an attractive entrance. The work was overdue and necessary, and could not be postponed. It was, however, only a partial fix to the issues facing our school.
- The new building will be designed to accommodate the latest research into how young adults learn best. Rebuilding also lets the district more effectively address waterproofing and mold prevention to enhance indoor air quality.
- The district will work with the Historical Society to preserve artifacts.
- Safety of students and staff are paramount – at least 70 entrances and proximity to Pacific Highway 99 present daily challenges.

FWHS may not superficially appear to be in disrepair. But the things you generally can't see -- like roofs, furnaces, and electrical, plumbing, and ventilation systems -- are in need of attention, and are quite costly to repair or replace.

Throwing more money into replacing systems doesn't get to the root of the bigger issues we face.

There have been at least seven major additions or remodels to the building since it was built. The overall result is a sprawling network of halls and rooms that have several disadvantages.

- With multiple doors into the building, security is harder to enforce than in a more cohesive building.
- The building is inefficient to heat and cool.
- The layout limits our ability to implement efforts to improve student learning, like small learning communities and some technological upgrades that we know help adolescents learn better.
- The physical condition will need to be addressed one way or another – and the district's operations budget is shrinking further as the state economy continues to struggle.
- Construction standards have changed since 1938 – newer buildings have better indoor air quality, are more earthquake resistant and can be designed to be flexible and convertible.

Here's what our students say about the school.

FWHS staff and students make up a wonderful and diverse school community, who care very much about each other and their school. But the building's condition does sometimes affect their morale and performance. Principal Griebel says their concerns about their school can be summed up in a few key points:

- The lack of windows.
- Long hallways which create difficulty at passing time.
- The public's perception that FWHS is a bad school because of the facility.
- If often doesn't feel secure.