



REFERENDUM 2014

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March 11th
2014



Our Enrollment Crunch at the Elementary Level



Above: Sweeney 5th grade classroom in the Media Center.

the crunch is only going to get tighter in his building next year. "I would hate to get to the point where we would have to use temporary walls in our pods here at Jackson Elementary. We are going to have to do something. Looking ahead to next year, I will need additional classrooms to accommodate growing enrollment. I don't have extra rooms," said Schleif. One place where there are temporary walls and classrooms is inside Sweeney Elementary. Half of the media center now holds a 5th grade classroom. A Kindergarten class is also being held inside temporary walls. But the crunch doesn't end there. Staff members have given up the work room for additional learning space and rooms that were once dedicated to special services are now being used for classroom space. "Our



Left: Students learning in cramped hallways.

The enrollment crunch at our elementary schools is apparent to those who learn and teach in those buildings every day. Right now, our biggest class size is at the 3rd grade level where we have 653 students. Our 4th and 5th grade level is of a similar size at 650 and 605 students each. Currently, we graduate about 450 students a year. With new job opportunities, a renewed interest in building homes and hundreds of acres of still buildable space in the city, we expect these numbers to continue to climb. While all of our elementary schools are at or near capacity, Jackson and Sweeney are most overcapacity. Principal at Jackson Elementary Doug Schleif says, "The lack of space does not provide the optimal environment for learning. I want to support the teachers as much as possible and give them the resources they need and one of those is space." Schleif says

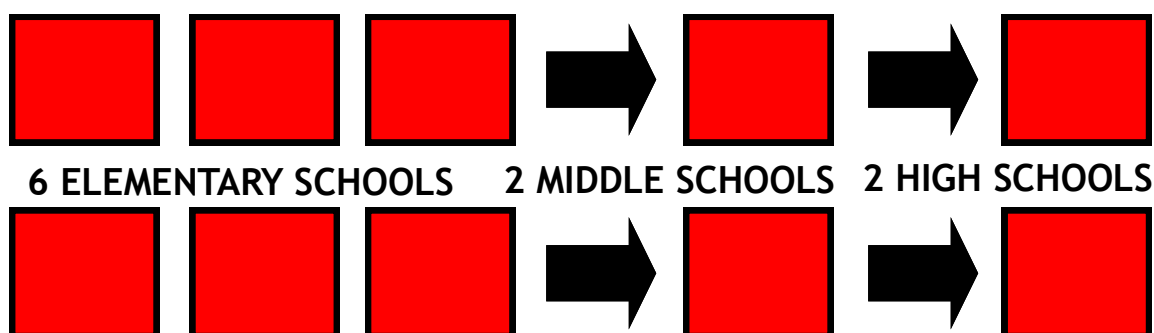


Above: Temporary walls become makeshift student lockers.

teachers are glad to give up their space for the

students, but they get frustrated when students have to give up space for other students," said Principal at Sweeney Elementary Mike Savage. Students and teachers are forced to work in already cramped hallways. "If we had more space, we could provide the best learning environment, but we have students in our school that are learning in spaces that are far from ideal."

Our Enrollment Crunch: How a Second High School Will Help



One additional building will ease our current enrollment crunch at all grade levels. This is what is being proposed and how it will ease enrollment district-wide. Adding a second high school allows 9th graders to move to one of the two high schools (current and second). The 6th graders, currently being housed at the Pearson 6th Grade Center, would then move into the junior high buildings, which would become middle schools with grades 6-8. This would free up Pearson 6th Grade Center to transition back to an elementary building and help ease our enrollment crunch at the elementary level. This is a key component to the plan. The changes would take place for the 2017-18 year. This new model will also set our district up for a feeder-type system: three elementary schools go to a middle school and then a high school. Boundaries would have to be adjusted at the time of the transition in 2017. The district continues to monitor our community's growth, which may lead to the need for additional buildings in the future.

Expected Enrollment at the Elementary Level

Example:	5th Grade
2013-2014	605
2017-2018	712

Shakopee Public School uses demographer Dr. Hazel Reinhardt to help us keep track of and say ahead of our growing enrollment needs. Dr. Reinhardt is a former demographer for the state of Minnesota. She has been an international consultant and speaker on behalf of the U. S. Embassy, Director of Research for the Star Tribune and is currently the president and founder of Hazel Reinhardt Consulting Services. The district has used Dr. Reinhardt for the last 10 years.

She presented her latest findings at the July 15, 2013 School Board meeting. The chart to the above shows some of Dr. Hazel Reinhardt's projections at the elementary level. At our already full elementary schools, the crunch will get worse if we do not free up Pearson to transition to another elementary school and therefore ease the pressure at the rest of the elementary buildings. Dr. Reinhardt's latest report did not include any students that may come to the district because of the new companies moving into Shakopee. To watch her full presentation to the School Board or to dig deeper into her projections go to "Referendum Central," from the district's homepage. Superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson is also hosting "Soup with the Supe" and "Rolls and Referendum." Two opportunities for the public to learn more about the referendum. RSVP to the events on "Referendum Central," and click on "Learn More."



Where can I find more information?
www.shakopee.k12.mn.us/referendumcentral