

**TACOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10**  
Tacoma, Washington

**ITEM TITLE:** Approval of the closure of  
Hunt Middle School

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** 5/27/10  
Action Session

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**BACKGROUND:** Based on student performance on standardized math and reading tests over the last three years, Hunt Middle School ranked among the lowest-performing five percent of schools in Washington State. As a result, Hunt qualified for the School Improvement Grant program from the U.S. Department of Education. Under this program, four options are available for improving student performance. One of those options is closure of the school.

**CURRENT CONSIDERATION:** Hunt was selected for closure under the SIG grant because its student population has declined from a high of 841 in 2001 to only 300 students projected for the next school year. With such limited enrollment it was not a good candidate to be a turnaround or transformation school under the grant, each of which requires robust infusions of new academic programs. In addition, with the approval of the capital levy in February, there is funding to rebuild Hunt, with reopening of the new school projected to occur in September 2014.

During the closure, the District will work on developing new academic programs for the new school. This will also require redrawing middle school boundaries to better ensure equitable enrollment of students.

While the school is closed, Hunt students and incoming fifth graders will be reassigned to Mason or Truman middle schools. In addition, Hunt students and incoming fifth graders who live in the southern portion of the school's current boundaries have been given the option to enroll at Gray Middle School. Transportation will be provided by the District for all of these students. Next year, 207 additional students will attend Truman Middle School, 88 will attend Mason Middle School and 48 will attend Gray Middle School.

Students in the adjustment and developmental/autism special education programs at Hunt will attend either Gray or Jason Lee Middle Schools, based on the school closest to their homes. Students who will be in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in these programs were offered the option of attending a high school 8-12 grade program, in lieu of going through two consecutive years of school changes and 5 students have opted for this model. Personal contacts were made with the parents of these students by personnel in the special education department.

In addition, support for families of Hunt students in general has included:

- Letters to parents and families regarding their child's school assignment for next year;
- A special optional enrollment window to give families flexibility in assignment if the preferred a school assignment other than Mason or Gray;

- Provided Hunt teachers to work with students during Navigation 101 to answer questions;
- Sent counselors and principals from Truman and Mason middle schools to Hunt for meetings with each grade level to share information, answer questions and begin registering students for courses;
- Offered information and support for parents during student-led conferences;
- Planned open houses this spring at Truman and mason for parents and students to tour the schools and meet staff and current students.

While Hunt is closed, but before it is demolished, it will be used for storage of items that are currently in other locations. Some furniture will be transferred to other schools.

In compliance with Board Policy 6883 and RCW 28A.335.020, two public hearings were held on May 13, 2010, regarding the proposed closure. Notices of the hearings were published in The News Tribune on April 29 and May 6, 2010. In addition, notices were sent home with the Hunt students, and a Connect Ed call was placed to Hunt families regarding the hearings. No one from the public testified at the noon hearing. At the 5 P.M. hearing, three persons spoke. They were parents who had children who were attending or had gone to Hunt. Concerns expressed were that the school is the only middle school on the west side and that the closure will mean the loss of a neighborhood school and a feeder school to Foss. There was concern that the closure will lead to loss of students to University Place School District. With the middle years IB program approved for implementation, the comments were that things were turning around at Hunt.

**FISCAL IMPLICATION:** The District will receive \$95,000 from the grant for closure activities and save approximately \$1.2 million annually while Hunt is closed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Directors approve the closure of Hunt Middle School effective at the end of the 2009-10 school year.

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Submitted by:



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Arthur Jarvis, Ed.D.  
Superintendent