

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community forums to address growth and plans to relieve crowding

The public is invited to attend community forums in January and February to learn about surging enrollment growth and a proposed plan to move sixth graders at some of the most heavily impacted schools to junior high schools with available space.

Superintendent Tim Yeomans will outline the impacts of growth in the district and a proposed three-year plan, which has been under discussion by the school board since November. He will also welcome public comments at the following four community forums, which will be held from 6:30-8 p.m.

Community forums are scheduled:

Monday, January 26: Zeiger Elementary, 13008 94th Ave. E., Puyallup
Wednesday, February 4: Woodland Elementary, 7707 112th St. E., Puyallup
Thursday, February 5: Sunrise Elementary, 2323 39th Ave. S.E., Puyallup
Monday, February 9: Shaw Road Elementary, 1106 Shaw Road, Puyallup

The three-year plan, which was revised this month from an earlier version discussed by the board in November and December, proposes moving sixth graders to junior highs beginning in fall 2015. Specifically, the plan proposes:

2015-16

Move Zeiger Elementary sixth graders to Ballou Junior High School. Temporary instructional spaces, also known as portable classrooms, would be moved from Stahl Junior High to Ballou Junior High to accommodate the sixth graders on that campus.

2016-17

Move Woodland Elementary sixth graders to Ayles Junior High.
Move Sunrise Elementary sixth graders to Ferrucci Junior High.
Move Shaw Road Elementary sixth graders to Ferrucci Junior High.

2017-18

Move Edgerton Elementary sixth graders to Glacier View Junior High.
Move Northwood and Mt. View elementary school sixth graders to Edgemont Junior High.

With more than 22,250 students in 32 schools, the Puyallup School District is the second largest school district in Pierce County and the eighth largest in the state.

The district experienced a year's worth of enrollment growth in the first month of this school year alone, and staff projects at least 1,600 more students, many of them at the elementary level, in the next five years.

In some cases, schools are serving several hundred students beyond the number they were built to serve. Zeiger Elementary, for example, serves 830 students this fall in a school built for 550 children. Woodland Elementary serves nearly 700 students in a school also built for 550.

It will be 11 years next month since Puyallup School District voters last approved a school bond, which pays for construction projects such as new schools and other capital improvements.

“We are approaching a crisis, especially at the elementary level, and I don't use that term lightly,” said the district's Chief Operations Officer Rudy Fyles.