

## Report on process and survey results from the COMMUNITY FORUM on NOVEMBER 29 held at the request of advocates for two high schools

On November 29, nearly 300 parents, students, staff and community members attended a forum to discuss options for the future of 9-12 education, with a focus on the option of building and operating two high schools. The public meeting was held in response to a petition by district citizens. Participants heard presentations on facility concepts for three options: remodel Valley High School, new construction at the Valley site or build two high schools. Due to the purpose and structure of the forum, additional information was presented only by advocates for two high schools. In small group discussions, participants offered feedback on benefits and concerns related to each option and listed questions regarding the choices.

A survey was developed by representatives of the group advocating for two high schools. The seven-question survey was completed by 256 people attending the forum – 196 parents, 13 students, 20 staff members and 27 community members.

The survey responses and comments will become one part of the comprehensive data gathering the district has planned for the next several months. The data is informative and will be added to the variety of feedback considered in making choices for the future of high school education in the West Des Moines Community School District.

### TABULATED RESULTS – COMMUNITY FORUM (11/29/01)

Please complete the following brief survey prior to the end of tonight's forum.  
Your input is valued and appreciated.

Circle the appropriate category below:

Parent (196) (check all that apply)	Elementary student Junior high student High school student Pre-school student Valley graduate	<u>157</u> <u>79</u> <u>84</u> <u>20</u> <u>30</u>
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Student (13)	WDMCSD staff member (20)	Community member (27)
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1. Three options were presented at tonight's meeting. Please rank these choices in order of preference (first choice -- #1):

Remodel Valley High School						_____		
#1	17	#2	73	#3	113		N/A	32
New construction at the current Valley site						_____		
#1	64	#2	102	#3	33		N/A	33
Build and operate two high schools						_____		
#1	154	#2	14	#3	42		N/a	32
		NO	1					

COMMENTS:

- Wrote “never” for build and operate two high schools
- Six years is too long for the remodel – not if advanced classes are dropped
- Remodel and new construction are poor choices
- New construction is not an option
- Look at all options
- Remodel and new construction are not options we will move or open enroll
- One large and one small
- I do not like the remodel option and what concerns me about two high schools is that one of the schools would be a remodeled Valley and not a state of the art school I want to see curriculum comparisons – costs – don’t feel we are able to compare “apples to apples”
- One larger and one smaller (175 students /class maximum)

2. Should the West Des Moines Community School District build and operate two grade 9-12 high schools?

Yes	<u>161</u>	No	<u>76</u>
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COMMENTS:

- Crossed out two grade 9-12 high schools and wrote “three”
- Consider 2 options: 9-12 vs. 9-10 and 11-12
- I want what ever gives our children the best education
- Two 10-12 schools and put 9<sup>th</sup> grade back in junior high
- Depends on cost effectiveness and “real” benefits
- I need more information
- That depends on what is given up
- I need more information to make this choice
- I need more info before I decide

3. Do you feel the current Valley High School enrollment is too large?

Yes	<u>170</u>	No	<u>76</u>
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COMMENTS:

- Size isn’t good or bad
- It’s as large as it need to be
- One high school with a “neighborhood” or “house” concept

4. Could you accept a reduction in programming and curricular offerings at the high school level in order to operate two high schools?

Yes

153

No

90

COMMENTS:

- Yes, minimally/ as long as it is classes few use (i.e. Japanese or Latin)
- Keep core courses and reduce others that are only used by a small % of the students
- On non-core classes
- Limited
- I am not sure that would be a reality
- Curriculum sharing between 2 schools—Russian, Radio station
- Why would this be necessary
- If it really was for a minority of kids
- Depends on what programming
- Maintain minimum for continuing education (college)
- Explain this further – it has been suggested that elementary programs would have to be cut –music, guidance counselor, etc
- Or share some needs
- Depends on what those reductions are
- This is not providing increased opportunities for students
- Depending on those cuts
- I feel incompletely informed since we did not get any information from the district side of these scenarios
- That depends on what those reductions are
- Nor in orchestra or other music
- Possibly yes

5. Which scenario would you prefer:

47 Two equal-size high schools with equal extra-curricular and co-curricular activities offering the same curriculum. (This would require elimination of some courses that are currently offered.)

165 Two equal-size high schools with equal extra-curricular and co-curricular activities offering as much equity in the curriculum as possible but providing some courses at one site only and allowing students to travel between the two high school sites. (This would require elimination of some courses that are currently offered.)

77 I would not favor either scenario.

N/A 10

COMMENTS:

- I don't believe this is true

- Concerned about the operating costs for both schools - where is the \$\$ coming from
- Do not let athletics or band determine what we will do – the purpose of the school is to educate
- Would be in favor of either scenario, most feasible
- Either is fine as long as there is two high schools
- No for scenario #2
- Or online courses – use technology
- I could go either way – I appreciate some of the advanced coursework like Central Campus in DM
- I don't believe scenario #1
- If you share courses why do you need to eliminate

6. Have you considered open enrollment out of the district, enrollment in a private school or moving out of the district due to the present size of Valley High School?

Yes	<u>134</u>	No	<u>107</u>
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COMMENTS:

- Currently do and have for 5 years
- Yes and have done so
- Child at Stilwell now
- Absolutely
- Will move out if we don't have a smaller high school or open enroll children in private school
- Kids are still too young
- I moved back here after graduation to raise my children in this district
- Did consider
- We are looking at the Downtown school because of the class size

7. Should the decision regarding the future high school organization be voted on by the community?

Yes	<u>206</u>	No	<u>33</u>
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N/A 13

COMMENTS:

- Absolutely
- Community is uneducated as a whole