

Community Survey Comments

Residents of the West Des Moines Community School District were asked to offer feedback on a list of items related to high school programming and services. Survey respondents offered their opinions on the level of importance and their level of satisfaction with each of the items on the list. In addition, some of those who responded to the survey also answered this question: *How should programs and services be restructured to better meet the needs of our students in grades 9–12?* The comments are recorded in this document. Inappropriate language and references to individuals have been deleted from the written responses.

1. Build a second high school 9-12 or use VSW and redistribute 9-12 student population. Maybe 4 schools 1,000 students each would be an idea.
2. More emphasis on technical training for students who will not attend college or attend non-traditional WCC.
3. Opportunities for every student to make an extra curricular contribution in his/her area of interest. (Smaller schools allow many opportunities and need students to participate-large schools make cuts especially in athletics, for the best of the applicants.) Some students don't get into anything..except trouble.
4. In-school suspension would be better than out of school suspension.

New building for high students in addition to the existing ones. I feel we need less students per grade in Valley High.

Parents can benefit from explaining the options available for higher learning opportunities. School should be able to identify needs from employers and future growth of particular careers. Students can benefit from early exposure to those options with assistance from employers. School can look for scholarships from potential employers to assist children who have limited financial means to go to college.

Everyone in the community can benefit from a larger exposure to education and activities that have a more in-depth approach to diversity and multicultural competence.

I will have grandchildren in the WDM schools soon. We need two high schools. I believe smaller schools are better for children. One school can have some specialty classes, and one can have the others. The kids already go from Jr. High to Southwoods for certain classes (math, foreign language) and from Southwoods to Valley, etc. It works,

Feel very good education at Valley for the most part but need diversity training for: classism, racism, and sexual orientation. Need more contact with parents if problems arise. Need to have communication between special ed. And regular teachers to abide by IEP modifications. Valley's too big and feel we need another high school as too crowded for students. Sports too big an issue and arts not given enough attention. Great drama program but kids buy props and things while football team has a chartered bus for games. Arts help more in later life. You can't play football at age 40 (had sons that were good in both and quite an eye opener!) Sports aren't everything! E. & Jr. Highs good. Valley has a few issues!

Have 2 high schools (9-12) divided equally or have a 9th-10th gr. High school and a 11th-12th gr. high school.

Do not continue to push the neighborhood sectioning of kids in pods. High school students need to learn to deal with a global, large society. We can't keep them in little playgroups forever – but need to give them every increasing large exposure to bigger environments. Iowa State is a big place to go to after being clustered into little cells for the entire length of their public education. Some teaming is good but pushed to an extreme would be detrimental.

Our students are so far behind those in Europe and Asia! It's a shame that our kids will all be working for recent immigrants. They have more drive and direction. They realize that school is serious business – not a social club for adolescent misfits. School should be a privilege not a given. If there are discipline problems, they should be sent to another place, with just the basics – no proms, no music, no sports, meatloaf and green beans for lunch (no pizza!) School is for learning – working moms have forsaken the children's basic social graces and haven't even taught them manners! And "Special Ed?" Our efforts and \$ should be going toward those who it will help the most. (Worked as a rehab counselor and 90% of the time, the \$ was wasted!) Sad that nobody will admit it – and behavior problems? Get them out of the main stream – they only take away from the rest of the students Our kids need "the basics" not all the "showy extras!" Families need to take back some of their responsibilities, teachers can't be expected to raise the children and provide entertainment too. Move to a commune? Please get rid of pop machines!

In West Virginia, where I grew up and went to school, grades were grouped as follows: 1-6 grade/elementary school, 7-9 Junior High, 10-12 High School. Even though times have changed and youth have more opportunities now to learn and grow – I still see this as a good common sense grouping of ages and peers.

The 9th grade school is a ridiculous idea. It is always good to have a variety of grades in our school for mentoring, social networks and just plain old diversity.

West Des Moines is too large for just one high school. I have a student at Valley. What a disappointment. Let's build a second high school or use the 9th grade as promised at the last general vote. West Des Moines is missing the boat. With all the fancy buildings this city builds you would think our children should come first.

Turn Southwoods into a second, full four-grade high school. Divvy up the enrollment between the two to get the class size reduced.

Also, find a bigger location for Walnut Creek Campus. There are so many kids that need this style of education.

I had one child go through Valley and another at Walnut Creek. I prefer Walnut Creek because they really care about the kids. The teachers have no sympathy for anyone at Valley. They don't care about the kids at all unless their parents are athletic or band supporters who can fork over money!

Concentrate on education, not sports! Do Not teach alternate lifestyles! Bring back discipline and respect for teachers. Remove all "bleeding heart liberals" from school board.

I believe that students would best be served by creating 2 high schools in the WDM system. Valley Southwoods could be converted into another 9-12 school (which is why I voted for the Creation of Southwoods 7 or so years ago because I thought this was the plan.) We would still be educating the same number of students, so we could have the same teacher/student ratios without the hiring of any additional teachers. We could continue shuttling students back and forth between schools (as we currently do) for less popular electives. I believe 2 smaller schools would be better for our students for a number of reasons. First, many more students would have the opportunity to be involved in athletics, music and other extracurricular activities without the fear of being "cut." Second, teachers would know students better and students would know each other better. In this environment, it would be harder for a student to "fall through the cracks." Students who need educational or emotional help would be more easily identified in a smaller school. (which creates a safer environment.) Finally, I feel that students have the best opportunity to develop leadership skills in a smaller environment and would feel safer and more secure than in a huge school like the current VHS.

Either make VSW a 9 and 10 bldg. Or build a 2nd high school (VSW & VHS could both be made high schools.) The transition might be difficult; but if any district has the talent to accomplish it (with community involvement,) I believe WDM can!

I believe it is more important to offer smaller classes, smaller student/teacher ratio, and more opportunities for student involvement in activities than more electives at a larger school.

It may take a year or two for the athletics to flourish and each HS should have two, but they would and you would be serving so many more students in a positive way.

Please build the 2nd high school.

We need 2 schools to afford more opportunities for all students to achieve success! I have felt this for a long time, and especially as my two children went through the diploma mill.

It is sad (and selfish) to see only 5 out of over 2000 students getting to start on the basketball team – and still not be the dominant powerhouse you’re trying to achieve with one large high school. That goes for all activities.

It is sad to structure the classes for college prep, and miss so many students who need tech or school-to-work opportunities.

Please split Valley into two high schools to help meet the needs of all learning styles.

I want to see 2 separate high schools even if it means spreading the financial resources a bit thin. The importance of having my child to have a greater opportunity to be involved in sports and other activities is paramount to me.

We need 2 high schools to allow more student participation in activities.

We need fewer administrators – our school district is so over administered that it is a laughing stock to the rest of the state.

The Southwoods experiment failed. Just split into two high schools

The emphasis for athletics as well as music and other arts should be on education and participation. Winning is nice, but not the most important goal.

Fund music/drama/arts at least as much as athletics.

Always keep academics far and above the highest priority.

Many current homework assignments teach nothing.

Drop whole language – it’s a failure. Rediscover phonetics.

WDM needs two high schools to better accommodate kids needs. The competition for athletics, music and etc. Is too hard, every kid needs to be given the opportunity to participate fairly.

I am unsure if Valley High School will be large enough even with the remodeling to handle the future size of the student population.

High schoolteachers shouldn’t coach right after school because they are not available for students who need assistance. Teaching, not coaching should be the first priority. In my experience, with 2 recent Valley graduates, this wasn’t always the case.

Furthermore, many teachers who were also coaches weren’t too interested in finding time to meet individual student’s needs. If teachers must coach, then coaching hours should not conflict with availability to assist students.

My only comment is to place more emphasis on basic core subjects and less on trying to champion so many different agendas – more emphasis on citizenship and responsibility – consequence of action integrity and honesty – we need this and we need role models. We need more family/parental involvement. Although this is, to a large extent, out of your control. Also more sense of community and community involvement. Less concern about the latest technology – more emphasis on preparing for the adult world – many families don’t provide this – whether it be workplace or post-secondary education. Less concern with scoring points for WDM schools getting young people into the “best college.” Many small and less expensive schools are very good. Urge and help each student to do his/her best – but don’t forget those who don’t excel at everything – they have an important role too, in our society, and need to be encouraged too.

I feel that this survey won’t be a true reflection of residents’ feelings. The results could be interpreted in any way. Furthermore, we need 2 high schools for our kids. The number of students per grade is ridiculous. I personally know of at least five families who have left the district because of Valley’s huge

size. We are also considering this option. In fact, I also tell anyone considering a move to WDM to consider their children's education and choose another option besides WDM.

Valley offers more electives than is needed. And if people feel some of this can't be cut, then try some sharing between 2 high schools. Valley and Southwoods already do this. What's the difference?

I'd also like to state that I didn't receive this survey by mail as I should have. I had to go get it myself. Are you sure this survey will be a true representation?

Restructure the elementary schools first to be K-4 then use middle schools for 5-6, 7-8 and 2 high schools to better meet the needs of all students at all grades. Then maybe there would be more consistency in which the elementary schools are run (meaning how students are placed in classrooms, putting your lower students into 2 of the 4 sections (collaborative vs. non-collaborative) which affects the higher and lower ability students. I believe tracking students is wrong and illegal and occurs at one of the elementary schools but not at some of the others. Going to K-4 will allow teachers to communicate, be closer, teachers will look out for each other and previous students. More pressure for the whole building to look out for the best interests of each student. Fewer students and teachers then the principal will be able to be involved more with teachers, classrooms and students.

I am extremely satisfied with the educational opportunities provided to my graduating senior. My only desire would be to get the present Valley facilities up to acceptable standards in relationship to ventilation, heating, cooling etc. then, leave it alone!

The only program I have been disappointed with

.....is a prime example of how leadership within a department can change everything.

9th Grade – Eliminate teams/pods

students want to feel they are progressing from junior high, not regressing to 6th grade

students are ready for more responsibility, independence and interaction

10th-12th Grade – continue with one high school!!!

Build a new Valley at the current site that is worthy of the excellent faculty/students within

The facility is aging and a 6-yr remodel is a huge disruption to the learning environment

2 high schools would severely divide the community

The financing for operating two schools at Valley's present level of quality would be prohibitive.

2 high schools would dilute the quality of every aspect of Valley

A school's primary purpose is to offer strong academics and a wide variety of opportunities –

Valley does this extremely well

Our daughters were so well-prepared for college in both the state university and selective private college setting. They were/are very competitive and successful.

Valley is one of a kind – don't take away the uniqueness

Listen to the students, faculty and alumni – they live and have lived Valley

April 10 student survey is very valuable

This is a decision that should be made by the school board whom we assume is informed. It is impossible to disseminate all of the facts to the public and have a fair vote.

It's really sad that we have had a defend what we consider to be the best high school in the state because of the organized actions and propaganda of a few parents who apparently desire mediocrity for their children.

We are generally pleased with the WDM Elementary schools. However, we are very concerned with the size of VHS. In comparison with other suburban communities, the WDM high school has significantly higher enrollment. Research has been provided at committee meetings that favors smaller school size. The research favoring one large high school was completed mainly in the 1960's and we feel is outdated. We strongly favor 2 WDM high schools. We believe that classes could be shared between 2 schools in certain cases to maintain course variety. Further, smaller schools provide more opportunities for student involvement in extra-curricular activities. Also, the more involvement, the greater sense a student has in being connected to their school. Increased participation may help keep students away from negative outside influences. With the current size of Valley High School, it is extremely difficult to ensure the safety and security of the students.

We know families that have moved out of the WDM school district because of concerns relating to high school size. We are seriously considering doing the same, even though we like the community.

We suggest that the people of WDM be given a chance to vote on the 2 high school issue.

1. Have early bird P.E. to let students in music programs take more classes.
2. Offer more classes opposite P.E. schedule to allow students to take another semester class (through the year.)
3. Let bright students waive taking lower level classes and take college level classes. For example, AP Psych or Stat. Instead of regular classes.
4. Have extended periods on Tuesday and Thursday, so student has a more flexible schedule to take classes at colleges.

VHS is too big and according to Mr. Jilk, the VHS of 1,700 is not supported

By any current research. Only research in the 1960's – 40 years old – says a high school this big is good.

WDM students would be safer in two smaller HS. A recent study reported in the Washington Post on 4/11/02 says no HS over 1,000. Need smaller so students stay connected to school and no more Columbine – type situations. (study of 129 HS and 72,000 students)

No cut does not equal active participation. Valley and Southwoods are the size of 3-4A schools, we need to operate at least 2-4A schools so the large pool of students who want to be active, can be active.

The phone survey done by the market link co. shows student open enroll out because Valley is too big.

Southwoods and Valley currently bus students 6 of 8 periods and students travel on own 1 more period. Only 1 of 8 has no sharing. Sharing can continue to limit class reductions. But reduce classes with small attendance.

Valley does not have small class sizes in core courses. Lang and Lit avg 23.6, Physics 27.8, Algebra II 26.1, Alg II/Trig, US History 24.8, Algebra B @ SW 28.5, Geometry @SW 3.0.

PAA Oral and Jennings Data base show 32-34% - no Valley activity.

The community should vote on whether or not to have 2 smaller high schools.

We are considering moving and/or open enrolling out if 2 smaller high schools are not developed.

Survey is a joke re electives – tell community how many are using what they are and then ask if rather 2 HS or Japanese etc. – answer would be dump Japanese and offer 2 high schools.

I am not impressed with this questionnaire/survey. Most of the choices are “feel good” type questions that you would really have to be “anti-education” to rate the items low.

A more valid exercise would be a discussion meeting which forces one to select between smaller class ratios or more extra curricular.

It seems to me you are spending a lot of time trying to justify maintaining the status quo of the high school level, that is having only one high school. A high school debate, speech swimming, basketball, etc. team has a finite number of members. Two high schools would give twice as many students the opportunity to learn and compete. Possibly each team may not be quite as good as one team from one larger high school but you would double the amount of participants. K-12 is for learning basic knowledge and having learning experiences. Why not double the total amount of participation and help twice as many potential leaders?

Do not feel we need “two” high schools. WDM school growth is probably almost at cap now. Most of the growth is now in Dallas County and not in the WDM school district.

I felt my children adapted to college better coming from a large school

Offer the children more rather than paying for two separate administrations

We all must learn to cope in life! Why not start in high school. Not everyone can be a star athlete, but each in their own way has something to contribute. Focus on this aspect.

Start a second high school now. It will allow students to be more involved. Give them more opportunities to take part in school events. It will take care of parking problems and relieve street congestion. It will allow students to have a good high school experience.

Start a second high school!! Will allow more 1:1 for students, less stressful for students and teachers, more opportunities in events and in academic achievement. Will have increase in school retention – currently you have students going to Waukee, Johnston, Urbandale. Put your egos aside and consider the positive aspects for all our students.

.... has a long way to go. I feel the superintendent is responsible for who he hires. Also the top personnel at LRC are not responsive to the needs of the parents or students. Who do they think pays them?

Convert Southwoods to Second High School.

Two High Schools would allow for education excellence still offering a variety of classes but more of a community for the children & families during the years the kids are in High School. It would also allow for more involvement for a higher % of students in all extra activities and provide an opportunity for kids to actively be in leadership roles. Smaller classes along with these things truly would provide education excellence. A big building and a lot of students in one location in a community the size of WDM does not.

I feel adding another high school would help address some of the issues noted on the other side of this form.

Research shows the teens do better when their day begins later. Possibly start VHS at 8:30 AM. Block scheduling can be advantageous but inservice for staff is needed. Maintain curriculum & class size.

We need fewer children per classrooms, less children per school, better student teacher ratio and more discipline. Children need reasonable rules and a firm hand starting early. These are more important than a fancy classroom. We need more space but not a Cadillac. I'd like to see another high school without frills, maybe they could be added in the future if the building was done with that in mind. Smaller groups and good teachers are the priority.

We cannot sacrifice any academic programs to make hallways less crowded. Valley does a great job of preparing students for college & the work world – DO NOT CHANGE THAT. My son made only 1 team in 4 years and that was the best thing that ever happened to him – he is now a well-adjusted Dean's list college student. Valley has activities for everyone & different kids for everyone. Don't be fooled into creating a "touchy – feely" place that coddles & babies these kids. Teach resiliency to disappointment & how to deal with it. THAT is the real world.

I understand the opportunity and prestige of striving for top quality academics, arts, music and activities. It is nice to have top quality sports teams competing at the interscholastic level, for example. However, this caters to only a select group of students. In athletics programs need to be created/enhanced to provide recreational sports opportunities for a larger group of students, say by expanding intramural offerings. If, on the other side of the spectrum, some parents want to enhance the competitive sports opportunities, they can do that by joining club teams and/or paying for that separately for the WDMSCD. The same goes for music, arts and other non-academic activities. More emphasis on greater participation, not competitiveness. The classroom should develop communication and critical thinking skills and maybe less emphasis on quantitative, ie math. Test scores seem to suggest WDMCSD does better on measurable skills such as a math test, with one right answer, then with composition correspondence, interpretive type skills which better round out the individual. Thank you for your inclusive approach to gathering input.

WDM is big enough to support 2 high schools. The administration and board needs to take a serious look at the current facts and research that encourage smaller high schools. If we truly are the Leaders in Learning that we say we are lets stop with the mega-school mentality and have the best school system so WDM (WDM schools) will be the community of choice to live and educate our children.

WDM is not the hot bed of new construction that it once was; now we need to focus on other things besides new construction and middle schools provide a public educational experience that is second to none. Lets continue that tradition with 9-12 and make the best, most appealing school experience possible. It's the best things this community could do for itself. 2 9-12 high schools!

I think enlarging Valley High is a poor idea, a new school should be built because the population will not shrink but continue to grow so more room and more schools will be needed. If it is necessary to bus students from schools to school for some classes that well work. Other areas have built new schools and

things evened out quickly. I have no young children – no children at all in the area but I really think the smart thing to do is add on or redo the freshman high to make it a four year school.

It would have been helpful if list of current course offerings (core electives) were included. Use Southwoods as a 9-12 school also when our son was student at Valley, we had to be the one to initiate communication. There was none from the school home.

Our past superintendent wanted another HS built. That is really why the 9th grad school was built with intent to make it another HS. Now that we have the 9th grade it has helped the crowding at the HS. I feel this push for second HS is from a few who want better athletic opportunities. It has nothing to do with academics which Valley already is tops.

Get rid of 9th grad building or change it to 9th/10th and have Valley be 11th/12th. Get decision making principals.

Do away with “Pods” at Southwoods! They do not prepare students for Valley or the real world. Enforce rules at Valley . . . kids are getting away with too much. Too much freedom. 7 periods – not 8. School is what kids make of it. Too many crybaby adults are interfering. Valley was great for our kids. One went through Southwoods and said it was a wasted year. Treated like babies. More help in Valley office, registration lines too long. More parking spaces! We need community unity kept with 1 HS. If people want their kids in sports go to Waukee.

We are very strongly opposed to having more than one high school for the WDMSCD even if it means that residents of other communities (Windsor Hts, Clive, Urbandale) would form their own school district or join other existing school districts.

Too many students at Valley High School – another high school? Someday it will have to happen. Another high school would give more opportunities for involvement in sports. Both my children have complained about the number of students at Valley.

The questionnaire is a joke! Just ask if we want another high school or not!!! Yes, we believe we should build another high school!

By cutting back the size of the school, you are only hurting the kids more when it comes to preparing the students for college. I have two kids at Valley right now & they think it’s fine. The kids are getting all the attention they need at the school right now.

Although our children are far from high school (ages 2, 4 1/1 & 5 1/2) I have concerns regarding the large number of students attending Valley. I realize there is a lot of variety of courses which can be offered. However, such a large student population must be a challenge to manage.

There is a need for a quality career exploration program at Valley. Possibly designed like the peer helper program, where students can investigate potential careers, shadow people currently in the field, and investigate more than one career in a semester.

Would prefer a closed campus & stricter dress codes.

It is important to keep student-teacher ratios down & only keeping 5 classes per teacher. As a taxpayer & parent of future Valley students, I want the teachers to only teach 5 a day – this is the only way to keep quality of education up. Rehiring of all teachers who leave is necessary – the community is beginning to find out that many teachers aren’t being replaced & were very dissatisfied with this! Where is my money going then!

My wife and I would like to see the school district add another High School to help lessen the number of students per grade per High School. The size of Valley High’s enrollment may force us to open enroll our children to a neighboring community.

Keep doing what you are doing! Our children leave Valley High School very well prepared for even the most competitive colleges and universities. Keep the scope of our curricular offering. Keep our low student/teacher ratio. Keep our high standards in Academics, the arts and athletics. Keep our community youth intact. It would be a shame to change our intense sense of pride into an intense and probably bitter rivalry.

I don't know the way things should be reconstructed. But I do know that the way things are now with Valley being so big that many of the A-B-C students may get lost in the mix. I feel we could benefit from having two high schools academic wise and sports & art programs.

We always claim that 75% students go college no one ever says how many actually finish. We do not do a lot for the many students who are not "college material" to put them in situations where life skills, trade skills are done. We have a lot of ways to be involved but only small numbers show a lot of school spirit – they want ways out of school to hang out or make money. Our family has always thought there are way to many courses. You create more & more courses but do not subtract many others. There is not always a sense of community for some because of the size of the school. The 9th grade building has been a step backwards some kids transfer out or go to Dowling, etc to avoid the environment – lack of role models there.

My first response to the survey was that the results can be manipulated to justify the school district's position for wanting a new Valley HS. I am in favor of two high schools. I want to see the future of the WDM high school choices be brought to a public vote. When my children reach high school age, I will seriously consider other options, such as enrolling them in a private school or moving to another school district. The perception is that WDM school district caters to the top 10% and the bottom 10%, the ones in between are good kids who can get lost. As in the words of my jr high student, "It would be great to be at a school that wins awards/titles/championships, but I would rather go to a school where I can participate in these extra curricular activities". I believe with a an open and flexible approach, two high schools could be realized. I do not want to see the district build an auditorium that rivals the DM Civic Center. I do not want to see the existing Valley HS be torn down. I live in a 30+ year home, lots of them are out there and we remodel – not tear down and rebuild.

Smaller student-teacher class ratio (ie: 1:17 or 1:20 or even 1:24). Smaller building size, not over 2,000.

A high school with less students gives them better opportunities for learning and extra activities. A collective collaboration between the two high schools would be necessary. Children's education is very important and allowing more activities builds social & esteem skills for their future. A lot of their education is built & used later in life on the basis of how they interact with others and communication. These are skills that could be achieved better within a smaller classroom.

It is a fact that smaller schools build stronger community bonds among students. WDM insists on one large school to foster the best sports teams and win titles. This shuts out many good candidates and leaves them with restricted extra curricular options or more free time for Drugs, vandalism, or other acting out behavior since they aren't involved in the team effort. Two high schools would double the amount of students involved in extra curriculans and promote community values.

Utilize more of the calendar year for classroom education with increased flexibility in the use of that time. Apply the time and money given to driver's education to other educational activities. This should be a local or state police responsibility.

Drop the 2nd high school idea. Concentrate on improving what we have.

Preparation in Math and Science is most important. Organized athletics should take last place to core education, class size, teacher pay, suitable building and availability of space in/at neighborhood schools. I have 2-four year old and 1-two year old. They can easily go to private/religious based schools if your school district can't be responsive to the needs of parents.

I understand you can never please everyone but I have heard the remodel project would take a time frame of 6 years? Why? My children would never be there when there was not remodeling going on – this seems to be an excessive amount of time.

I feel it is very important to maintain the variety of courses being offered. My opinion is that the cost of operating 2 high schools will cause cuts in the number of elective courses being offered. While large numbers of students may not take certain academically challenging electives, those courses provide stimulating challenges for the brightest students and are what distinguish Valley from other high schools. Valley is known among the top colleges and universities as a top high school. Please do not allow that to be changed. My oldest daughter just graduated early from an academically elite university in part because of the AP credit she earned from her course work at Valley. The mission of the school is first and foremost to provide educational opportunities to its students. Too often the elective courses which offer challenges to the brightest students and the music programs are sacrificed when budgets become tight. I do not care whether 70 or 20 course would have to be eliminated. That is too many. Small high schools are not necessarily better. Just smaller.

Overall, Valley is a good school! My son has had a very positive experience there as a sophomore! The building could definitely use some updating. There aren't enough classrooms with windows and the lockers are way too small. A winter coat won't even fit in them! I think the number of students can be intimidating especially when it comes to sports. It seems kids don't participate because there are so many kids, they know they'll spend the majority of the time on the bench unless they are an extremely good athlete. I think a lot of kids found that out as freshman.

Teachers that communicate with parents. Notification at other times of your student's progress or lack of other than just mid terms and 9 weeks. If student is having problems at the 1st, 2nd or 10th week parents should be notified. Students should feel like they matter even if they aren't in sports. Students should feel like school is important. Students should feel like the teachers care. Students should have homework checked for accuracy not just given points for turning it in.

I have taught in the WDM district for 10 years. I definitely do not want another high school. Creative plans for staffing and use of building space could alleviate many current needs. As a district we are sometimes too quick to view new structures as solutions to a variety of needs. Many of my neighbors, both with and without children, have grave concerns about the costs to homeowners. As well if another HS is built. My views are consistent with those expressed by Gene Meier, Mary Kay Shanley and others in the recent article in the DM Register voicing opposition to adding another high school and support for renovating existing facilities.

I cannot give my personal opinion on programs and services from the community schools with children in grades 9-12 because I have not attended nor do I have children who have attended. However I am interested because I do have children approaching HS who will hopefully be attending WDM schools.

WDM Community Schools is one of the best in the nation. There are so many opportunities for students. My daughter who is now at ISU had the opportunity at Valley for courses that no other students in Iowa were offered. Thus they had to make arrangements and some had to study out of state for some electives. One thing that would help the overall system would be to permit the teachers to have more authority with discipline in the classrooms. Most students are well discipline but those who are not know they can get by with a lot. Also better security. I know it has improved but students from other schools are still wandering the halls of Valley. Thank you for this opportunity to participate. One high school for WDM is all that is needed.

There's certainly no need for 2 high schools. WDM tax payers can not afford 2 schools and the quality of education at Valley is excellent! With 2 schools there would be limited curriculum for each and the students would end up commuting between schools to get the diversity they have today. That's pretty stupid! Please save high school.

Need 2 high schools.

I would like to see the studies from the Iowa City Schools before they split into 2 schools. Also Blue Springs, MO. Both large schools, strong academically and extra curricular activities. I believe the purpose of our schools is to provide as many opportunities for as many children as possible.

Our kids have not yet experienced 9-12th grades, however I am concerned that we may have too many students at Valley and that while there maybe a great wealth of variety, that it is difficult even for an above average student to excel or have the opportunities they would have at a smaller school. To big may actually limit opportunities.

Try to lower the teacher/student ratio. Find some way to lower the number of students at Valley. Either by changing VSW into a four year school or build another high school. It's only a matter of time before this has to be done anyway. Why spend all the time and money to just update when our kids need a more drastic change now.

By putting off building the second high schools, the district is doing a great disservice to the students in WDM. I send my children to parochial schools, for one reason, because of the overcrowding at Valley. My children will have a much greater opportunity to participate in after school activities. There are many others that feel the same. Because of this, the district is losing those tax dollars. To me, any other choice is a waste of money.

You support for the 0-20 percent of children performing at the low-end of the academic spectrum is excellent. So is your support for the top 10 percent of the performance spectrum. The 70 percent in the middle find very limited support. My child tells me that only rarely does his instructor show up the seminar time. They are busy with lesson plans or have left the building. These are issue of performance and staff accountability bear no relationship to the size of the building or the number of students. Students learn in classroom and from their peers. Class size is what matters and support for the silent majority – those 70 percent of kids in the middle.

I am opposed to the construction of a new high school building. I favor a new 10th grade building. To build a new HS you will destroy your athletic teams, and the two things that build school spirit, athletics and music. Davenport destroyed the Blue Devils when they divided their student body. Des Moines destroyed Roosevelt when they built Hoover. Keep your (our) school spirit strong even the academic high achievers like to go a winning school.

The programs and services do not need structuring. One school is perfect – leave well enough alone. If the Valley building is in need of attention, find a way to use the 9th grade building for the main HS and move the 9th grade to a repaired Valley. What is the matter with us, that our long range planning didn't see the building falling apart this soon? Take a lesson from the building in DM like East, Lincoln, Roosevelt that lasted forever. Shame on WDM!

Children have different learning levels, WDM schools seem to focus primarily on the overachiever both academically and in the athletic and arts department. Today's world is tough. We need to find a way to raise our children's self-esteem. I firmly believe we put too much pressure on our children at far too early of an age. We need to find a way that children from different ability levels can participate.

If one high school is kept, then an emphasis should be placed on allowing more students to be involved in activities. In a large school, only the few best will tend to get involved in many activities. For example, I think it would be better to have cuts in sport like basketball and then have a good intramural program. Other sports can work better supporting large numbers (track). Music seems to work well dealing with large numbers. In general two smaller schools could be better in many ways, but with care one larger school can work.

Have 2 separate high schools!

High school studies should concentrate on a curriculum for learning such as English, History and Math. Less money should be budgeted on extra curricular things such as athletics and band, which only benefit a small percentage of students and do very little in preparing for college or the work force.

We open enrolled our 9th grader because of the lack of support for We are also strongly considering open enrolling our 7th grader out of WDM because of the size of Valley and the lack of opportunities to the middle sector of kids. It seems that the top students get accolades and the chance to be involved but there is no middle ground.

Our daughter received a fine education at Valley High School. She was fully prepared to handle the demands of Washington University in St. Louis. She graduated in 1999 in what was a period of “over crowding” at Valley.

Valley isn't perfect, but remodeling the building or building a second high school isn't going to resolve the problems it has.

If anything needs to be restructured, it is the way parents think about schools. Schools can never be a utopia for our children. Parents need to understand that schools are a reflection and a microcosm of the larger society. Problems in schools are often the result of failures in parenting and home life Parents need to demand more of the themselves to meet the needs of their children, not deflect those needs to the schools.

I'm not saying we can't be better, but I don't think we should cave into unrealistic ideas about what schools can do for the emotional and social well being of our children. Schools should chiefly focus on academics and preparing student for the real world, which also isn't perfect.

I'm very amazed that a school that's supposed to be such a high caliber institution does not have the ability to keep students (guarantee students) with the same teacher in year-long classes. That's very strange. The continuity of that is essential. Allowing only one teacher choice is not the answer (which is the way it was handled this semester.)

Who is more important, the computer system or the children? It's 2002 – get a new system software that works.

Back off some on the academic emphasis. You're losing some of your students. And offer those who aren't destined to attend Yale some more options.

I have been disappointed that more consideration has not been given to the possibility of two high schools. In fact, the failure to even ask this question on the survey is a lost opportunity to find out what parents of children in the school district would prefer to have.

The approach taken to date ensures that the passing of any bond issue will be very difficult.

We are attending Catholic schools specifically because of the over crowding and lack of opportunities for kids at Valley High. I had cousins that were unable to play in sports and friends that couldn't play in band.

The West Des Moines structure is the envy of most school districts in Iowa and many throughout the country.

To be specific, there is absolutely no need for a second 10-12 building. The district cannot afford it and the present and future enrollment does not warrant it.

The parents who are very vocal about a second H.S. want it for the wrong reasons and are blinded to what would happen to the curriculum and other unintended consequences that would diminish the quality of Valley's present education.

- 1) Less focus on foreign language except as electives.
- 2) Drop the silly Southwoods concept. Students must mix with other grades for proper socialization skills.

Our daughter is open enrolled out of district because of WDM limited ability to serve top 1%. She's already taken Algebra, Geometry & Algebra 2 by the end of this year – 7th grade! At WDM she'd have gotten no H.S. credit even if she were allowed to go as fast as she is comfortable going. Bored, highly capable students are a waste & while we realize that much effort must be expended for those who need the extra help, structuring something better for the top 1% should be a priority. In all IQ & academic tests our daughter is in the top 1% - she'd get into your TAG program but only allowed to stretch her wings within the boundaries of it – that's why people opt for Central Academy among other alternatives.

The survey is a good idea but any person with a background in statistics an/or survey methodology can easily recognize that this particular structure & content can be manipulated to have whatever results & “trends” you want it to have – give us a break!

Although I don't have children, I am an educator and am aware of the importance of meeting all students' needs – academic and emotional. To that end, the importance and effectiveness of smaller schools has been extensively researched and documented. Schools that have smaller populations than VSW/Valley have increased opportunities for staff to get to know students over time, for students to know one another, and for developing a caring learning community. A caring and welcoming school climate where students are names, rather than ID numbers, has been shown to increase student achievement and self-esteem and decrease behavior problems. I firmly believe that WDM should consider a 2nd high school. While having a 9th grade building has its advantages, it also make it difficult for kids to get to know teachers (vice-versa) in a way that fosters and promotes long-term achievement. I also believe the district should consider expanding its options for alternative education (i.e. Walnut Creek), as not all kids could succeed in a traditional, large, highly structured, and college-oriented setting.

I am a graduate of Valley High School myself. I was very disappointed to see the 9th grade school built. If there was a need to reduce total school capacity, I wish it had been done more evenly. I'm not looking forward to sending my future ninth grader to a secluded school. Overall, I think the educational programs of the high school are positive and appropriate.

A difficult issue – currently with the large # of students attending Valley there are limited opportunities to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities. One must choose early on that which is most important to them rather than having the option of participation in several. These activities can enhance the learning experience while building friendships with fellow students. This can be achieved only with a smaller high school.

*Should WDMCSD decide to develop another H.S., problems with disparity in physical facilities/programming/staff would undoubtedly become an issue. (Currently there is a great deal of disparity in physical plants, etc at the elementary level.) What is the goal of the district? Is it to maintain the “biggest and best” status or to diligently attempt to identify what is in the best interest of the student?

Please get back to the basics, reading writing and math. It takes a total educational background of the above plus the arts and athletics to become a well rounded young adult. Everything combined helps youngsters understand life and their environment!

School is the strategic process of getting our young people prepared to advance in an ever-changing work environment. Concentrating on the core educational requirements (math, English, science,

etc...) is paramount. Too much time is wasted on fluff, such as social and emotional concerns. That is the responsibility of parents to guide their kids through difficulties.

Split into 2 high schools.

I feel that more attention needs to be paid to students who need accommodations. Also, the in WDM is a BIG Disappointment compared to other districts my children have attended!!

I don't believe that we need another building. I believe it would hurt the classes they would be able to take (electives.) Teacher student ratios are good. The building we have is fine it just needs some updates. Nothing too fancy! The new bathroom is over the top! Be sensible.

Add on to Valley High School. Do not remodel as it's too expensive for what we get. Keep Valley Southwoods for grade 9.

Please consider two High Schools. It's shameful that a community that is this large has only one High School.

I'm considering open-enrolling my child (6th grader) in Waukee High School, when he is ready to go into High school. Have you thought about "Block" 9-week classes? Waukee H.S. has!

I'm sorry, I think West Des Moines should get it together and build a second High School.

Look at the learning process! Can technology be used more extensively for learning, grading, etc. to reduce teacher time from mundane repetition and labor intensive/time-consuming duties to "teaching." To me it is NOT about caring, environmental, social, emotional, student/teacher ratios but; it is about working hard, discipline, and focus! And, the schools should have weapons training course elective (military class) for those who want to bring guns, knives to school. Once they learn about velocity, ballistics, and force they would understand that they are not toys or something other than a deadly tool! Also, look at the survey the Des Moines guy did on our schools in Iowa for other answers. ----- Thanks

Everything is fine. It's not broke – don't try to fix it!

Just a comment – WDM Elementary schools are excellent! Hopefully, it is the same quality experience for 9-12.

I'm most concerned with communication. A monthly newsletter would be nice. I'd like to hear more about what really goes on; good and bad.

As much as possible have fewer students per teacher. The teachers care about the students and could do better if had to know fewer students.

A class needs to be taught on "how to" open various types of accounts (banking, etc) how to balance checking and savings accounts. How to pay bills weekly/monthly budgets, etc. Basically how to get started and be on your own. Many kids that go on to college need to know this also as many live away from home and are on their own.

We favor 1 VHS not 2.

Possibility to move Soph. To Southwoods with freshmen. Have Junior & Senior at VHS. Would give you room to fix or rebuild VHS and still cut down on crowded hallways!

Build 2 high schools.

I will greatly be affected by the results. I want an environment where my children are challenged, where classroom sizes are not too large and the staff/teachers are really concerned about being great teachers. My kids will be entering this system and I don't know that much about the programs. I was a Valley graduate myself. New methods are great if they excite the kids in new learning directions.

Schools used to be a place where discipline and responsibility were taught, or re-emphasized what had been taught at home. Students entering the workplace have little discipline and do not accept responsibility for their actions.

The high school debate was going on before the construction of Southwoods. The mistake that was made in the mid 90's was to create a freshman building. Southwoods should have been a second high school for the Community of West Des Moines since that wasn't done, the problems have resurfaced to haunt our community and its students. The competition for our community and its students. The competition for involvement at Valley is very high pressure. With the creation of a second high school in 1997, there would have been two student councils, two bands, two football teams, etc. so that many more students in the West Des Moines District could have made a significant contribution to their high school.

We have two children, both Valley graduates. One attended Southwoods. At one point we thought about a transfer to Roosevelt, where there are actual study halls where roll is taken. Our oldest child was very successful at Valley and could withstand the pressure and the competition. But why should any child have to compete so fiercely? Another issue that should be addressed is the fact that not all students are college bound. That's not realistic. Yet Valley approach is preparation for college. Both of our children are now in college and were well prepared for high education. We also appreciated the many individuals at Valley who took the time to care what happened to our children. Weekly reports for progress were sent home to keep us informed. We know that took work and we appreciated the extra effort.

Close lunch hours and finals week! Work to reduce all of the student "driving around" and leaving Southwoods and Valley during the day. Lengthen time spent in the classroom and require more study hall/library time. No kidding!

Reduce soda drinking opportunities and sugary high-fat snacks. Include skim milk (plain) in milk machines as well as the flavored sugar stuff. Diabetes is sharply increasing, as is childhood obesity.

Focus a bit more on grammar – punctuation – spelling – writing and penmanship. Computers have their limits and cannot replace first knowing "basics!"

We have excellent schools and some of the best educators in the state!

I moved to WDM after my children graduated from high school. I realize Valley has a large student body however, I would like you to carefully consider the projected number of students in the next twenty years. I think I've read the number won't be much more and may decline from where it is now with Waukee schools getting the growth.

My perception is that the WDM schools do an excellent job of teaching students.

I work with students in DM who have been abused and the alternative schools are often where they need to be to succeed. I would hope you'd continue to meet the needs of those students in creative ways. Thank you.

One high school is enough since our population is not increasing.

We should take this opportunity to create 2 high schools of reasonable size. This would give teachers time to know all of their students and give students an identity as a person instead of a number. Parents could communicate with teachers who would be aware of your child the person and not “the boy/girl that is in my second period class.”

The power and advantage of large numbers is only beneficial to the few at the top and leaves out the rest of the student body to fend for themselves. Opportunities are limited to the top tier of the class and in a class of 500-600 this leaves out a large number.

Please come to your sense and destroy the monster that a huge school becomes and create 2 high schools that are of an average size and a more accommodating size for all categories of students.

- 1) I would like to see 2 high schools in WDM.
- 2) I don't want major construction in a building during school, (Stilwell!)
- 3) I would like to see schools cut down on paper communication from school to parents.
- 4) I would like to see Stilwell drop the night parents go to school and walk through the schedule. (Very Boring)

Students in grades 9-12 should be in a single district building to promote a Sense of unity and community. Older students teach younger ones.

Restructuring should focus on scheduling adjustments that prevent overload of responsibilities for both students and staff.

Class days should be limited to seven class hours to provide more teacher/student contact time. This is where real education occurs. Students should not be allowed to take more than 6 classes including PE so they can do quality work rather than jump through hoops for a grade. No teacher should have more than 5 sections or 2 course preparations in their schedule so they can provide time for quality planning and one on one opportunity with students.

Leave it one school – even if you break it up into 2 schools, by the time you add in 9th grade it is going to be just as big.

More 9-12 guidance counselors; get rid of Team Leaders – their function is administrative and should be more student centered.

Keep (or increase) variety of course offerings.

Encourage more students to try AP classes and to take “test outs.”

Restructure the intramural athletic program.

Offer a comparable “intramural” band/vocal program. We seem to be focused only on band/vocal program that have state competitions. We are the only school in CIML w/no consistent pep band. There are lots of kids who quit the band program because of required class time. We need options for these kids.

Valley does a good job – Design Down Committee has too many parents with elementary kids – no experience with teens.

Maximize financial resources and keep one high school.

Keep VSW a 9th grade building. It is an excellent building year w/Stilwell, Indian Hills.

More opportunities for extracurricular activities.

There is too much emphasis on WINNING rather than the loyalty and hard work of good kids.

We have a 3rd grader at Fairmeadows. We have received a top-notch educational experience so far! Clearly the K-6 graders at Fairmeadows are being well taught due to the efforts of a first rate teaching

staff. I have also heard from many parents of their approval of the education in the middle school – Stilwell in our case. My concern is that at the 9th grade level the process becomes very mixed and much more competitive. If you are an “average” child of “average” ability – you get lost in the mix. If you excel and have above average abilities these children are focused on and developed with great enthusiasm. That’s great for the top 10% - what about the other 90% of kids? How many are given opportunities or because of the size of the school are just passed over and told – better luck next time. School is about opening doors and helping kids to learn and grow. With a growing school district we must keep opening more doors. Maybe all the programs couldn’t be offered at both high schools but could parents and kids be given the choice? Offer a core curriculum and turn classes and options i.e. Japanese – maybe. The more opportunities a child has to be involved, to be valued and encouraged will only benefit us as a community and as a school district. Keep kids on the learning track K-12. We need 2 high schools!!!

Primary purpose of schools – education. Can not be all inclusive –social, emotional community service –parent’s role.

Need to prepare all students. Need more programs for students who are not college bound.

More support for teachers.

Divide the school into two schools to allow more opportunity and decrease competition.

I really think two high schools (4 year) would be the best decision based on the population growth in WDM and Clive. My older children (now in college) went to Southwoods and Valley. I felt the freshman being isolated at Southwoods was not good. I also felt Valley was not large enough to accommodate classroom style study halls (now in the open areas) and parking was a problem. To start NOW to allocate for 2 four-year high schools would be my vote. Thanks.

It is imperative that a second high school be added to the WDM school district. The question is not if but when. Southwoods was built to accommodate expansion in the most economical way. It creates flexibility to allow for a transition instead of building a second high school immediately. Bold leadership is required now.

The parents I visit with are firm in their belief that our kids need an opportunity to learn and participate in high school.

I believe Valley provides an adequate opportunity to learn, particularly for high achievers. However the majority of the students would excel more in an environment where class sizes are smaller.

In terms of participation, many students must focus and excel in at Valley. This is unfortunate as it contributes greatly to the high school experience. Valley reminds me of a community college (DMACC) where students come and go without any sense of community or togetherness. Change is needed now. A second high school will promote a renewed sense of spirit and competition that is much needed.

Objections I hear regarding second high school – A. Operating costs will be higher – willingness to pay slight increase in taxes to create a more favorable high school experience. This experience will have to happen at some time – why not now? B. Lose depth of courses – why can’t students attend a unique class at a different school?

I am very satisfied with VSW experiences and anticipate the same at grade 10-12.

We support one high school for WDM. Therefore believe building a new h.s. on the existing campus is most feasible. Maintaining 2 separate building and staff is not economically feasible in our opinion.

We are against 2 high schools. We had 2 children go through Valley – both enjoyed it – didn’t feel it was too big – both now in college soph & Sr. felt that Valley prepared them well for college.

I think the WDM schools need to re-evaluate for the 21st Century. What worked in the past no longer applies to the present and future and refusing to move with the times. I have two pre-school age kids – I am planning to open enroll my kids elsewhere. Why? WDM schools need to offer all day kindergarten.

Also, from what I've heard and seen Valley is too big. Most of the kids won't have a chance at athletics, music, art, etc because there are so many kids & competition. Other school districts are only half the size of Valley the kids still get a good education and feel connected to the school since they are involved in something.

I think you really need to take a look at what parents want – a second high school and is another middle school also next? If the WDM district doesn't make changes I plan to send my kids to a smaller school where they will get more out of it rather than being just a number for Valley.

Fewer languages and fringe courses.

You can't restructure attitudes and relationships.

There are few opportunities for average and at risk students and little that communicates that they are valued.

When was the last time an average or at risk student was invited to a position of leadership and taught the leadership skills to succeed?

When will almost all graduating seniors walk across the stage with at least one or more symbols of recognition on their robes?

When will an adult at Valley reach out to a struggling student and nurture his/her development?

Second high school? **Yes**

More modeling of inclusive practices and valuing of all students from leadership (beginning with the superintendent) on down.

More evidence in newsletters that all students are valued

More offering for non-college bound students.

Recognition of adults who show they care.

Many years ago when our 2 children attended Valley High School we were very pleased with the education they received and pleased with the staff at Valley.

Two High Schools – get rid of stupid 9th grade school.

Beginning questions are criteria to dismiss or retain administrative personnel. If questions or surveys need to be done to get a answers, then super & principals should be dismissed, fired, laid-off, gotten rid of to raise taxes on top of sales tax is conspicuous consumption.

More alternative methods available for different learning styles.

My child availed himself of Walnut Creek during junior year and was the best experience. I credit them for being a very caring, compassionate group of educators. I can't say enough good things about Walnut Creek's efforts.

There needs to be a way to make high school a memorable experience for children. The numbers are too large at Valley. There is no feeling of family and school pride or spirit. I am a Valley graduate as my mother before me. It was memorable for us and we have fond memories where as my child couldn't wait to graduate. I know times have changed but it's like a college not a high school!

Consider a school day with alternative start times that take into account the teenage biological cycles of being wide awake at night and tired in the morning.

As a teacher/coach in the DSM Public Schools, I know first hand the importance of having a low pupil/teacher ratio in every classroom. I like having 1 high school in WDSM, when my teams play Valley in sports, it appears to me Valley students are getting an equal opportunity to participate. As my son begins his education next fall, I hope he is in low numbered (ratio) classrooms throughout his 13 years of school. As far as extra activities I am confident he will find his niche and be able to participate as long as his interests holdout!

Having no children in school, I feel I really don't know what satisfaction I have in anything!

I don't have exact population numbers in front of me, but I fail to see how the same high school that served WDM when it was surrounded by corn fields is by some still deemed adequate to serve one of the largest and fastest growing suburbs in the state.

We missed an opportunity to rectify the situation a few years ago choosing instead to build a separate 9th grade facility. The fact that this was done in part to ensure outstanding sports teams defies all educational logic.

My sons are likely to be average musicians, average sports men, and average students. The current high school system is so huge that only college caliber students are able to participate in sports, music, drama etc.... I don't care if two schools mean you can't offer conversational Russian to the few who want it. I just want my boys to have a chance to be in the school play if they want to be.

Please fix the problem before they get there. Thank you.

Build another high school. We should have two!

I am very open to reducing the number of "elite electives" that are offered to the high-achieving students. I believe the goal is to prepare students for college, not be a college. The high achieving students "needs" seem to outweigh the concern for the "average student." (I also believe the "average student" at VHS is actually above average in skills compared to the rest of the state/U.S.)

I also sense that the administration is adamantly opposed to two high schools although they are trying to appear otherwise. I think a group session with the book Who Moved My Cheese? Might be enlightening! I don't see/hear comments about how two high schools could be a benefit, only why it can't/shouldn't happen.

I'm personally open to one or two high schools but I get the feeling something's being hidden from me. If one high school is best, then convince my why. Same for two high schools.

My gut instinct tells me two schools give more kids opportunities to become leaders. But I'm open to a more factual influence; I just am not hearing facts that have convinced me yet. (Maintaining the elitist attitude that caters to the best and the brightest can be done at two schools if the administration wants to do that.) This is the richest school district in the state; I'm not convinced there's a lack of funds! And I'm not convinced two schools will divide the city. The Valley/Dowling "rivalry" hasn't caused a problem, why should one more school?

-Smaller class (student/teacher) ratio

-More emphasis on the basics:

(Reading/Math/English/Spelling/Punctuation/Writing/Science

-There are too many early outs and special events

I think we need 2 high schools. Valley is crowded. Children in the middle and bottom of the structures seem to get lost in the crowd. More children need opportunities to succeed.

Need more discipline in schools. Need to teach how to handle money and budgets. Need to teach how to stay current on community and world happenings. Need to teach “respect” for others.

West Des Moines needs two 9-12 high schools.

Children need smaller class sizes. Our kids need more work on the “basics.” Gifted & Talented programs are inappropriate and inadequate. A child in WDM can highly excel in one area, but will not be given the opportunity to participate in any extended programs because they don’t excel in all areas across the board. This does not fit the definition of gifted. Our children are not being challenged. The high number of ESL students in our school is “weighing down” the teachers.

Our children are open enrolled out the WDM school district. They currently attend school in a district that puts the needs of the students above the image of the district and ego of the school administrators.

Our daughter attended Crestview Elementary through 6th grade. It was an awful experience – as seems to be the case in the WDM district, the best and the brightest are coddled and other kids fall through the cracks if parents are not diligent.

The conversation on whether a 2nd high school is needed shouldn’t even be happening – It is needed. Once again, school image is being put ahead of student needs, So you may have to cut a few electives. How many of those electives are essential for preparation for college? There are only so many classes any student can take. Maybe you have too many electives or extra “fluff” activities. I don’t know. I do know that the difference in the attitudes and self-esteem of our children improved **DRAMATICALLY** when we open enrolled them **OUT** of the WDM district.

I feel that as a taxpayer and parent of 4 school-age children we as a community need to start being very concerned about the number of students in our 1 public H.S. WDM is a wonderful place to raise and educate our children, however our city has grown tremendously in the past decade, and we have simply outgrown 1 school. No one believes that our community will simply stop growing now that our schools are over capacity, these concerns are shared by many. I understand that the money to pay for much needed improvements at VHS and the addition of a 2nd H.S. building must come from taxpayers, but what other option do we really have? In order to keep our school system at the level that it is currently, we need action. We need our educator, community leaders and school board to set up to the plate and do what’s best for our children, which is not necessarily the easiest or least costly solution. Thanks

I am concerned about the number of students in each classroom. My child is currently in the construction at Stilwell. Her math has been combined with another class. Due to the number of students in the class, the quality of class instruction has been a fiasco. It is impossible for students to learn math well in a class that large.

I would like less sizes to be under 30.

With possible remodeling at Valley, this class would also be there with more “construction interruption: of learning. I am not in favor of continued learning distractions.

We don’t need a “second” high school. We need to put our available resources into either renovating our replacing Valley; and into upgrading the Walnut Creek campus. These expenditures will benefit our students and community the most!

Forget about a second high school, and let the Design Down Committee get on with its work!

Valley High school is too large. We need two high schools in West Des Moines. Valley is out dated and needs major renovation if it continues to be used.

I do not like the 9th grade school. Structure is not conducive to learning. Children in orchestra and other activities have to go to Valley.

There needs to be a review of classes offered.

All teachers should be on the Internet. Parents should have access to grades every week, not at mid term for 5 minutes.

Our counselor has been critical in the way our son has handled the ups and downs of Valley. He has a relationship with because I made sure he met immediately upon his arrival at the school. Without this "link," our son might not have felt comfortable reaching out for help when he was suffering with a bad teacher or situation. Make contact with counselors, regularly, part of the curriculum.

I have passed along most of my comments on the survey distributed at the spring high school conferences.

One additional thing you need to consider is not mixing all the grades together in classes like you do,. My son does better when in class with kids from his own grade and gets better grades because they compete against each, study more, etc. When he's in a class where the kids are a mix of grade levels, he is more unhappy and bored.

Smaller schools permit more kids to do more things.

I believe there should only be 1 high school and if it has to be larger to accomplish ratio goals – so be it.

Some of the most serious concerns that we have about our family experience in West Des Moines Schools may be summarized as follows. These points are offered to stimulate positive change.

- The practice of differentiation of curriculum for students to provide a program that meets the individual learners needs is almost totally absent. Some children are bored to the point of agony with repetition of material below their level while others are lost and fall behind. The actual practice of our schools seems to be "One size fits all."
- Lack of gifted and talented programming is disturbing. Children are selected for extended learning opportunities based on criterion that are not transparent or not clear to parents. The programming that exists is minimal. The organizational culture and school leadership seem to actually be hostile to the concept of providing gifted and talented opportunities.
- Special education programming operates outside of conformity to the I.D.E.A. law and is sorely in need of a review by independent authorities. Parents are marginalized in the planning and development of educational plans for their own children. Many areas of special education programming fall far short of educational "best practices" from across the State of Iowa and the nation.
- True leadership of our school is weak or absent or lacking. By leadership we refer to a variety of phenomena such as vision, team building, commitment to excellence and mentoring.
- Further to the above, integrity, trustworthiness, and character, are missing in the senior administrator of our school.

Smaller high school, many communities of this size have 2-3 high schools (public.)

I feel that the city of West Des Moines is growing rapidly and that the trend will continue for several years. The city is also faced with an aging high that will probably exceed its capacity quickly. I feel that it is important that plans be made to build a new high school for the western half of WDM & that the

current high school be updated to serve the eastern half of WDM. Bigger in high schools is not necessarily better.

I am single and have no children. If I did have children, I would most likely send them to parochial schools.

Valley Southwoods is not the optimum solution but a second high school is not needed. There were more students at Valley during the 70's. The important factor for HS is a low student to teacher ratio and a large number of high quality course offerings like the school has now.

I am a graduate of the WDM school district. We were given a survey our senior year of H.S. and our voices were not heard. We were pleading to build a second H.S. at that time. Our feeling as students was that there was not enough one on one interaction with teachers and the opportunities to succeed in sports, or the arts were limited due to the abilities of others. (If you were an average player, you weren't good enough for the Valley programs!)

We should be setting our kids up for success. The current environment only sets children up for failure in life. It teaches kids to quit. That they are only a number in the masses and quitting is acceptable because there is someone else that will fill your roll.

It was proposed, and I support the building of a second H.S. in the West Des Moines School District. The only feasible option that we have is to make Valley Southwoods into a senior H.S. and go back to 9-12 per school.

Please give the kids a change! Listen to what they are saying.

Thanks for your consideration!

I would like to see WDMSD have two high schools. I would rather have my children be in a smaller classroom, be able to participate in more extra activities than to be crowded out by too many students. I feel the fewer students per school would also benefit from more individual attention.

I feel it is important to keep the current structure in place. From what I can see, further growth is mainly going to affect Waukee schools to the west. I am opposed to building a second high school and feel that remodeling the current building is the best plan. Thank you.

My Valley High School student does not get the information needed to register for classes. My student has gotten information from the guidance counselor, PAA, and individual teachers. The system is ineffective because parents with their first child at Valley do not know the "right" questions to ask in order to get complete information I sent my student to school with questions to ask. Seems there should be a way for students to be brought "up to speed" on courses and options for courses. We had to change my student's schedule second semester sophomore year and first semester junior year because of inaccurate or the absence of information.

There should be a way for students who are not allowed into advanced math as 7th graders to be able to move up if their desire and abilities math "advanced math concepts" in later years. Tracking students at age 11 or 12 is very restrictive.

West Des Moines Community Schools needs to look at a second high school. The community has been growing and our high school system needs to expand.

The current high school structure allows for very few students to be involved in activities – only the best can be involved. A high school should have these opportunities for all students to participate actively.

Build a second high school. Isn't it obvious?

I am very disappointed in your choice ofa teacher.....
.....You need to make this school quality again, Not make another one just as bad.

Build a new high school. The city is way too big for 1 high school. WDSM needs 2 high schools.

The schools should concentrate on the basics and not get involved in the social, religious or lifestyle programs that may be feel-good topics but are better left to parents to teach. A student should be well prepared for college or the workplace upon graduation.

If it ain't broke don't fix it.

I feel that the Vocal music dept. does an excellent job utilizing as many of the kids as possible in a variety of programs. I wish the athletic dept's could do the same – There are too many talented kids that fall through the cracks and get left out.

I feel strongly, that early outs and collaboration days are too frequent. You, the school administration, are setting our kids up for failure and I feel, putting them at risk and in harms way, when you know there is no parental supervision at home for the working parent. One of these days the WDM Schools will be sued when an accident or worse occurs on this time.

Valley High school is prime real estate, what would be wrong with selling all that land and re-locating. Investing our millions in new state of the art educational facilities, instead of sinking millions in repairing the structural unseen things at VHS. You could make a lot of \$ on the location we are at now and just build a new campus!

A second high school.

I believe there should be two high schools in WDM. Valley High school is around thirty years old now and was not built for the growth that has occurred in our suburb. The class size is too large leaving many students left as just a number. It is too impersonal. Dividing the school into two high schools of equal sizes could reduce overcrowding conditions. Perhaps the only reason this has not been done is the prestige of having one large high school, which allows Valley to receive many academic honors and sports recognition. Our daughter was a merit scholar. I believe she would have enjoyed a smaller school. She has expressed that Valley was too large and she was just a number. Her academic achievements did, however, enhance your schools' image.

Add another high school!

I am still torn between a new school and fixing the current high school. I think, bottom line, Valley is too crowded, but I don't want to jeopardize the current status we have as a high school in academics and sports.

I think the only way you could change to 2 schools, is to start in the earlier grades to form an eventual high school.

Keep 1 high school – Do Not build another.

Allow students to participate in more than one activity without fear of reprisal, i.e. band & choir, football & basketball, cheerleading & band/choir.

Explore a dress code. Enforce better discipline. Utilize buildings year round. (Not 12 month school, however.) If cuts have to be made, cut administrators. Continue and improve favorable publicity for school activities, i.e. Grammy award winning program.

Emphasize critical thinking skills and problem solving skills.

As a former school employee (support staff) the present Valley High has always been adequate. See no need for a “second” West Des Moines high school.

Make the 9th grade school a separate high school going from 1 to another is not fair to students having to get used to two new schools.

Acknowledge & then address the intensely competitive nature of the high school experience in West Des Moines. Because of the “hugeness” of the student body, the average student is getting lost in the shuffle. And I’m not just talking about the average academic student; a student must excel & devote extreme amounts of time and energy to be considered worth in athletics and music as well. A lot can be gained through participation in sports and music, but not if our only focus is to be state champions or win a Grammy award.

I couldn’t be happier about the elementary and junior high education my child received at Clive elem. And Indian Hills. The staff was superior in their nurturing, encouraging and educating of all students. Then came high school: a rude awakening and an experience for which very few were prepared.

I talk to my child; I communicate with her friends; I interact with the kids through volunteering and church activities. They are stressed. Please listen. And consider that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Thank you for asking. I believe that you care as much as we do.

2 schools. Make Southwoods one and Valley another. Redistrict making either University or Hickman cut off north go to Urbandale.

Tear down the “sick” building that is presently Valley H.S. and build a new facility that is healthy and technologically sound.

We do not need 2 high schools to accommodate “wanna be” athletes.

Respect, maintain, and encourage experienced veteran staff.

Make students accountable for their own learning.

Reduce LRC administrative staff by 50%.

Fire.....

Eliminate membership in NCA.

Divide into 2 high schools. Focus money into building a safe and healthy structure, less into a unique expensive architectural monument. No more \$8 million fiascoes (stadium.) Centralize high school w/VSW. Improve teacher salaries. Look at improving condition of WCC. Study elimination/reduction of study halls.

The Southwoods facility is similar to Columbine High School and if changes aren’t made soon, the socioeconomic and cultural mix is likely going to lead to disaster. The attitudes of the “haves” versus the “have nots” are intensified by the homogeneity of maturing level of that student body.

We are in favor of two high schools in WDM rather than one very large Valley H.S. What happened to the ability to connect the Southwoods physical plant to a second high school?

I am concerned about the number of students per graduating class but not per classroom size. I don't think Valley needs to be completely rebuilt but probably updated. I think two high schools would be ideal but not financially feasible based on future anticipated enrollment.

We strongly believe in the Montessori method of teaching. The children learn a wide variety of activities and daily living skills in addition to the academic courses.

Double opportunity to participate in sports, arts etc. More should have a chance to participate.

Develop another high school. Need to dissolve the "Valley" image and provide opportunities for all students. Provide better facilities for Walnut Creek. Small high schools are better and make for a better learning environment.

To provide a better education for our students at the secondary level, WDM needs a second high school. As a professional educator all of my working life, I had the opportunity to observe, review and evaluate programs all over Iowa and several other states throughout this country. WDM is about to take a serious "nose dive" with its secondary education program. A second high school is needed now!

Valley should have more modern facilities. I have attended many functions in the auditorium and swimming pool and both are inadequate in size and amenities. The cafeteria is not adequate for the number of students in the building.

Valley Southwoods should have an auditorium for performing arts.

I would like to see more summer classes with subjects such as keyboarding.

Programs and services at Valley do not need to be restructured. It would be a big improvement if:

- 1) Incompetent teachers (there are a few) were replaced.
- 2) Some programs were worked on to return to previously high levels. The deterioration of thedept.is a glaring example.
- 3) Building and grounds improved – larger auditorium more parking, classroom spaces improved/ increased if necessary.

We do not need another high school. It is much more important that the student/teacher ratio remains low than the overall size of the school be reduced. To spend the millions of dollars necessary to build another school and then not be able to afford top quality educational offerings just so that few more kids can be on varsity teams is ridiculous. It would be a valuable learning experience if the kids and their parents accept the fact that many are not skilled enough to participate at that level and that they may need to play junior varsity and/or choose another activity of which there are many available.

Building a new school will offer the opportunity for all kids to participate in all areas – meaning Debate to Sports – Music – to Dance – whatever it may be. The bottom line is Valley High School is too large to accommodate the needs and the interests of the students.

Our child is a Valley graduate and is very successful in his field. He attributes his success to the education and motivation he received at Valley. He had a wonderful experience in both education and

extra curricular activities. We strongly believe that a building does not preclude a successful education. We are opposed to a second high school and believe that the current Valley should be remodeled but not rebuilt. Please limit the design to essential needs.

More counselors so that every counselor could get to know each of their students and could help each individual with their schedules and course selections to fit their own needs. I feel that Valley is too impersonal and that is due to the number of students. Many students get lost in the cracks. Sometimes important information doesn't always get to the students and their families that don't fit into the majority of students. This is true of the gifted students and the less than average students.

A reduction in the emphasis placed on "advanced placement", which generates over anxiety among many students.

Determine what is not working. Do not build because there is money to be spent. (.01 tax). Des Moines needed this very badly, WDM has wonderful schools. Tearing down the current Valley would be very foolish. If a smaller school is needed exp and VSW and have 2 high schools.

I am happy with Western Hills Elementary but I have concerns about the number of students at Valley. I really think a second high school is inevitable and I think perhaps sooner is better for these reasons: Better teacher per student ratio. Better athletic opportunities. A more caring atmosphere for students rather than them just being "numbers"

I am a parent of a VHS grad and a Valley student. Our VHS grad benefited from course offerings and in participation is athletic activities (1999). Our Valley student has benefited from the course offering, including advanced classes and electives. While VSW provides an opportunity for a variety of learning opportunities that acclimate students to a high school setting, the pod arrangement seems to meet the social and emotional needs of the students.

Valley did not have professional staff and did not have interest of the student priority. Valley has to have interest in all students not a select few. Staff needs definite improvement including administration.

We would like to see small classes to help facilitate an environment that promotes learning. We feel small classes would allow teachers to be more flexible and better able to meet individual's learning styles.

The assumption must become an expectation that a majority of student will seek post-secondary education. This must result in stronger college preparatory course work and more widely promoted college prep activities (not just the upper % of the class).

I believe teacher/student ratios are pretty good however, overall too many students at VHS results in too many students not able to part take in extra curricular activities. Not every student on football team is able to play. Personal advocates at VHS is a good idea but are teachers and students taking advantage of this support system?

I think that rather than simply teaching evolution you need to address or at least recognize that it is theoretical at best and there are other beliefs. 83% of the U.S. claim to be Christian so why does it have to be 100% atheist that is taught in the schools. I think at least it should be told to our children that this is not fact but only the views of some. I would send my child to a Christian school if I had the money.

2 high schools

Our students, I believe, should be required to stay at school for the entire day whether or not they have a class. More study space is needed for those who have a study hall. We do not do them a service by allowing them to go home or out where they are unsupervised.

Adequate building space for future growth. Consideration of another high school if needed.
Security/safety issues explored and implemented.

Bigger isn't better. I would love to see WDM split into an ARTS high school and an Athletic high school.

Give special help to all students, not just the student involved in sports. Teachers should set good examples. Spend much less money on sports and spread the money out evenly to all students. Stop allowing parents with a lot of cash flow to run the school and buy the staff!

Few students per class.
Increased mentoring
Quality learning environment

I would like the school district to consider 2nd high school in WDM. Valley is too large. I would like my children to attend a smaller school. I don't understand why WDM doesn't think they can support it financially,. How do all the small towns do it?

I don't know if this is the appropriate place for this, but I have a suggestion to make. My children sometimes miss more than a week of school due to illness. Some of their friends do too. If all the courses could be taped in weekly segments so that student could have the teacher lecture, it would be wonderful. I'm not suggesting each teacher, each class, but the Algebra II Trig- here standard things- covered by 1 teacher, once, then you could go to the library- take out tapes of specific sections you missed. Thanks!

My child has attended Westridge Elementary from Kindergarten through sixth grade. I have been happy with the school and the teachers UNTIL..... I realize that they are preparing our children to enter junior high and need to crack down on them. That's not the problem. The problem is that they have absolutely NO sense of humor and they are just plain sour-pusses. I have never seensmile. They also think WAY too highly of themselves. Send them to a "lighten up and laugh" seminar. Also, the reading 30 minute every night is fine, but they should not have to read over Spring and Christmas Breaks. It is a BREAK!!!

Having sent one child through the system at Valley High School I would not and could not send another. Our eldest daughter graduated in May 2000, we asked for help- I begged for help from the counselors- WE RECEIVED NO HELP. Our second daughter is now a 9th grader at Iowa Christian Academy. Although it is very hard for us to do financially we will also be sending our youngest daughter to Iowa Christian Academy next year for her 9th grade year. I believe this makes clear how much I hold Valley High School responsible for their failure for our eldest and our family very clear. We will be sending over \$700 a month (all of what I make) to send out younger girls to a safe and caring school. Thank you.

I think it's important for students to have the chance to participate fully in school activities. Unfortunately, when a school gets too large, kids are lost in the shuffle. I myself am a graduate of a large high school in California, with an enrollment of 2200 students in an over-crowded facility. The advantages of a large high school could be kept by two smaller high schools through a creative sharing of resources. For instance, AP and honors classes could be all held at one facility in the morning so that a shuttle could transport kids to the classes and back. A swimming Pool and tennis courts could be shared as well.

I am deaf and think that it would be a great idea for kids to learn sign language. It is a way of talking without speaking.

Increase opportunities for student participation in athletics, arts and other school sponsored activities. Involvement is critical to having a diverse high school experience that builds confidence and self-esteem.

These experiences can help students find ways to funnel their energy and time in a positive fashion. Also, it gives them a chance to experiment with a wide range of activities that may later develop into their life's passion. Probably the only way to accomplish this is through having two high schools. If this problem is not addressed we will move from the district before forcing out kids into the current system that limits development opportunities.

Spend more one-on-one time with students to counsel/prepare them for post-secondary opportunities.

You do not need to keep building new buildings. So there may be some inconvenience.

Students might as well learn that everything isn't peaches and cream, it's just the easy life is.

I wish a uniform dress code could be enforced. With the many income problems of so many children, the 'peer pressures' are so great to keep up with the 'financially endowed' children. (Just a thought)

I think the District is large enough to seriously consider two high schools and/or redefining boundaries to control the size of the high schools in our district and adjoining districts.

Build a new Valley or refurbish the old building. A second H.S. would be a waste of tax payers money.

Less emphasis on resources allocated to athletics and more emphasis on resource dollars allocated to academics and teachers.

The tremendous waste of money in public schools is sad. Teachers should have a part-time wage for their part-time job. There is no place at all for adult ed.

Need to plan for future growth. If that will require two high schools then we need to build and have 2 high schools.

We always felt very fortunate that our 2 children attended WDM schools/ We are third generation Valley graduates.

I am not sure the best approach for the future but I am not happy with what I hear regarding inflated grades and cookie cutter classrooms. Bigger is not always better.

Build a 2nd high school. Athletics shouldn't decide this important decision.

I am a strong supporter of 1 high school, but am not sure whether Valley should be remodeled or rebuilt. Rebuilding would be more practical, but whether the bond issue would pass is another question due to the 2 high school controversy.

The most important issue is to keep class room size small. Then we need to more accurately assess students needs. We must realize those needs are changing and if we are to be truly comp One of our main reasons to open enrollment was the lack of diversity & tolerance of diversity evident at Jr & Sr. Hi. (not by staff – but peer tolerance levels - not just racial, but economic, social diversity.)

That tolerance for diversity is difficult to teach – but do-able.

We also like a smaller school – even though we don't always win the awards (although we get a few) all participants are valued and feel an integral part of the programs (musical, arts, athletics).

Parents need to be educated to the fact that their children may not be varsity athletes or artistic students, but there are still plenty of opportunities to participate in those activities. You make yourself feel good by “doing” not by someone else promoting your self esteem. As far as I can see West Des Moines Schools is doing a fantastic job and they should continue to do so. Thank You!

Over achievers are catered to. “Average” students are ignored.
Too competitive in music, band, choir students cannot participate.
Need a non proactive counseling staff.

At Parent University several years ago the keynote speaker advised a packed gym that 2% of children thrive on intense competition. The other 98% are damaged by it. I wondered then if the school decision makers were listening. But apparently they were not as the intense competition atmosphere at VHS still rules. Let’s let them be teenagers – winning is not everything.

My third child is in school at VHS now and I find the majority of the teachers to be extremely high caliber educators. But there are also some who are taking up space and wasting students time because they are sub-standard teachers. The administration know who they are and so do the students, the parents and the other teachers. It is time to expect the same performance from educators that the private sector expects from employees.

One high-school

Opportunity to create an environment where all students believe or have the opportunity to participate in any activities they to.

Create an environment where students are connected.

Leverage other groups in the DM Metro area like Drake, Central Campus, DMACC and other schools in addition to public groups, cities and government.

Review the electives to determine if appropriate in a public school or should be shared with other educational groups.

West Des Moines need another high school! In five years when my daughter is in 10th grade, how big will Valley be? 2000 kids?

I do not have children but plan to in the future. Therefore, the choices I’ve made on this survey reflect my future opinions relating to the education of my children.

Two schools, smaller classes, better parent/teacher communication. More attention for average students. Two separate schools meaning: 2 football teams, 2 golf, two of everything to give more kids a chance.

One thing I found immensely helpful in High School was the tutoring room. It was a room opened up after school hours that had a couple of teachers to assist you in Math & Science.

My wife and I are very concerned about the class size at Valley. We are considering moving to Adel if a second high school is not built. We feel that the smaller class size will benefit the students – our kids. We both grew up in small Iowa towns, played in athletics and feel that is an imprint part of high school. Regardless of winning the “State Championship” or not. My point is, Valley may not be the big athletic powerhouse, but it would give more kids a chance to participate.

Need to reduce the total student population at Valley. Current population is too high. Increase time between classes so student don't have to carry backpacks all day. Increase opportunity for students to participate in non-academic activities. I want our children to be known! This is accomplished at the elementary and middle school levels, but not at the 9th grade or high school level, we must know every child.

Start teaching the 3 “R’s” As you can tell from the internet and newspaper even the ‘respected’ TV news media, people from 20 to 60 can no longer spell, write an intelligent sentence, or proof read. It is

time the educational systems fixed what they have screwed up over the last 40 years. For those of you that are unaware, the 3 “R’s” are readin, ritin, and rithmetic.

A class of 600+ students is too many students. Only the best of the best have opportunities to play sports, instruments, sing, etc. Staff cannot get to know students on an individual basis. Students suffer because of it. If you are not the best or worst you fall between the cracks and you’re just filling in your time until graduation. Two high schools are better than one.

One high school on the present location. Build a new building then tear down the old. It would be a huge mistake to design the new school along the lines of VSW.

VSW, I.H. and Stilwell should become 7,8 and 9th grade schools. The new high school for 10,11 and 12th.

Provide opportunities for all levels of students, not all students are in the top 10, or want to be. Students should be able to participate in various activities regardless of their abilities.

Change VSW into a second high school.

You are meeting high expectations of programs and services already. The idea being floated around for a second high school would only make for a divided school community, reduced offerings to students and a divided community.

We need 2 high schools! We need to forget about having state championship teams, band etc. We need to make it so more students can participate. We have enough money and population in WDM to support 2 high schools. Southwoods was a band aid for a massive wound.

Supportive of structure that will not raise current tax.

I do not support 2 high schools... Stand alone 9th is a great educational opportunity so few can participate in. Please keep. District needs to concentrate greater focus on C students. May mean offering more skill areas.

Without knowing what options are in regards to restructuring, my only comments would be:

- (1) Accommodate building space to offer full day Kindergarten.
- (2) Improve the student/teacher ratio. I know families that are moving from the district because of class size.

Greater emphasis on western civilization.

Consider making VSW a 9th and 10th Grade school.

A second high school would give more students a chance to play sports. Not everyone gets to play. The 9th grade school does not have curricular drama or a performance space (theater).. This concerns me.

You need to consider a second high school building.

Have only one high school. Do not cave in to a few vocal parents who have their own interest in mind and not the best interests of the students. Valley is the best high school in the state. Don’t mess with it.

New to the district in 2000, having retired from school administration I have these thoughts on publicity I have seen. Why can’t VSW be for 9th and 10th. Did I read that some staff and programs are already shared? Some students may be bussed. I don’t know of all the problems you have, but this might be the least costly. Keep the students welfare first.

Although my daughter won't be attending 9-12 grade for several years I do like the concept that WDM has for the freshman school. I feel the 9th graders are at an awkward age. Too old to be in middle school and too young to be in high school. We have only lived in WDM for 2 years and our daughter is only 6 months old. But I believe she will be attending quality schools in WDM.

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL IN WDM.

Put 9 and 10th at one campus. 11th & 12 at the other.

I think all students would benefit in smaller classes. Less mobs in the hallways. Many opportunities for the not to talented athletic or musician.

I feel the need of high school students are being met. I do think it is very important that we keep 1 high school. More than 1 high school will weaken opportunities the students now have and create a feeling of varsity and JV school. Thanks for asking! Graduate of VHS and a teacher in the district.

We are very satisfied with the existing structure of programs and services. We feel the addition of a second high school will lower the quality and quantity of programs. Lack of funds will undoubtedly cause large class sizes and fewer class choices for students if a second high school is built.

I feel strongly there should be two separate high schools. This would give more students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities such as music, athletics, etc. Right now there isn't much opportunity to experience a variety of activities because of the level of competition to get in as well as the sheer number of students. Academically, I believe the quality of education would be better in a smaller environment. Two High Schools are needed.

If more room is needed add on to Valley or use the freshman school. When VSW was built we were told it would be used for a second high school if needed.

No second high school. We can do better without duplication of services. There are many things WDM schools can initiate to improve evaluation and promotion of education. We could also utilize the VSW space to accommodate crowding. These numbers will level off. I would not support another high school.

I think VHS is too big to meet the needs of all students. It would be better to divide into 2 WDM high schools.

I strongly believe 2 high schools is the only way to proceed. There are way too many kids at Valley and that is without the freshman there! I don't buy the boards reasoning for keeping one high school. I certainly don't trust their figures concerning Valley's current enrollment in extra curricular activities. Do we really need to offer such classes as second year Russian or Japanese. If there aren't to high schools by the time my kids reach that age. We are strongly considering open enrolling them out to a smaller school.

Have more intramural/club sports.

Need to have or enable more students to be in activities. Too many children are left out in the cold because of politics and money. Be aware of different teaching techniques. The teachers only work with the "A" students. Valley is and always has been a bigoted and biased school.

Build a second high school.

Implement a cut policy for sports or allow every student the opportunity to participate equally-same for other programs.

Teach students how to study
high school we will be more than a college prep school. Funding will be a key issue no matter what we decide, if it is not adequately staffed, the results will be to no avail.

Prepare Valley! If it is necessary to enlarge, do what were told would happen when VSW was built. ADD ON! If we have to expand... it should be at VSW. I don't believe Valley is so hopeless and expensive to repair and I do not think an entire new high school need to be built.

I do not know what the programs are at the high school level since my children are K-6 but I think there needs to be a push for the following:

Collaboration between teachers and across subject area
Attention to the individuality of students.

I don't feel there is harm in having 2 high schools. It would give kids who aren't really sports or could be on the A team.

Build another school.

Need 2 high schools. Overcrowded.

I have been told there are no computer classes at Indian Hills. I also hate hearing how all the "gifted" teachers, administrators and students are at Stilwell. The schools should be the same. I think you need to make VSW into another high school.

The WDMCSD could best meet the needs of many more students by going to 2, 9-12 high schools. That way it is now too many students are denied an opportunity to participate. That is too bad.

We would love to see two high schools, both having fewer electives. Core courses and opportunity for extra curricular activities. We have open enrolled one child to Des Moines.

Put more emphasis on communication skills: vocabulary, spelling, grammar, ability to write clearly and speak to groups. Leave Valley H.S. as is and convert VSW into a 4-year H.S.

W.D.M. needs to build a second high school to decrease crowding at present building. Two schools will also increase number of students who can participate in the various sports currently offered. I realize this will disappoint the current coaches etc. who live and breathe winning at any and all costs. While on the subject of improvements lets reduce both administration and their salaries. It's to decrease the ratio of administrators to both teachers and students.

Build a new VHS on site so as not to disturb learning for numerous years. I have a student at Stilwell and they should not have to again live through 3 years of remodeling at Valley as it is very disruptive. The Valley building is not worth saving. With growth patterns as they exist we do not need 2 high schools. Two high schools should not be built so that more students can participate in sports. More money should be spent on uniforms so that more can participate. We have one of the states best soccer teams and there are not even 20 JV soccer uniforms available. Simple things like that could stop some of the complaining. Thank you for asking.

I think the high school and VSW are fine the way they are. The only negative thing would be the size of Valley. There are so many kids that it is hard for kids to make teams or orchestra, etc. Overall I don't see any needs for changes at either school.

I think that requiring VHS students to be in the top 50% of their class in order to gain admission to state universities is ridiculous. It is one of the top school in the state and they are very well prepared – probably more so than smaller schools around the state. I think that VHS is too big. There are too many kids lost in the shuffle. Only the very best athletes, artists, musicians, etc. are showcased year after year. This is not fair to the many others who are left out. So many get lost.

It is hard to know if 2 high schools would be better than 1 since the community has never shown how it would be done. Why not a 9th and 10th grade school and an 11th and 12th grade school. The school board has only sold one idea – theirs.

We have 2 children entering grade school soon and feel the elementary schools are good but seriously doubt we will send them to the high school because it is way to big with too many students. I've heard the arguments that classes will need to be dropped if there are 2 high schools versus one, but unless your children are in the top 10% they will never get the chance to play sports or be in debate clubs, etc. as there will be too many students wanting in the clubs. A student has to tryout to see if they can participate. This is especially true of sports programs. I was from a school of 450 students per class and that was too big. Most of my friends couldn't play sports because they weren't good enough. It is absolutely absurd to consider plans of adding on to Valley instead of adding a second high school. The district owns a ton of land by the LRC and VSW. Use it for a second high school.

Make 2 high schools to enable children that aren't in the top 50% to participate and not get lost in the shuffle.

We whole heartedly support a second high school for WDM. Academics should take precedence over athletics.

Focus on academics, arts, science, math, language.

Spanish is taught K-6. Why not available in 7th?

VHS needs to be restructured if our mission statement is to be carried out. To know and lift every child cannot occur in the current environment. The fact that we have been successful at all is only due to the teachers. There are some wonderful teachers at VHS and VSW that truly care about their students, and they facilitate a love of learning in their students. They touch and lift their students. These teachers are our strength. Another strength we have is our students. They want to be important enough that we reach out and embrace them and welcome them to learn. They deserve a chance to be in an environment where we encourage individuality. We share ownership in their educational experience, and where they have a personalized learning plan to fit their needs. This can not and is not being done in our current situation, except for the ELP students. They have been allowed, since elementary, to be pulled out, enriched, and have a personalized experience every other school day in Jr. High through High School. They have a chance to bond with a small group of students. They are encouraged to bloom to their full potential. They support each other in their successes, and their failures. These students are living an educational experience that all our students deserve. Yet even these students are let down in our current situation. Our situation sets the 9th graders apart, keeping those top students from fast-tracking to where they need to be. I have a sophomore son who just received a 36 on the science reason of the ACT test. Yet he couldn't pass out of the ninth grade science class where he averaged over 100% and is doing the same in biology this year. Challenged? 2 more high schools, please.

No pods at the high school level.

I have children who have yet to enter grades 9-12, but would greatly value opportunities for a wide range of learning and experiences as part of their education! At present there seems to be a euphoria upon the excellence of the few (in athletics & arts) at the expense of participation & well rounded education of the many. With regard to a second high school the question should be what provides the best educational opportunities for the many versus producing two top scholars/athletics, etc.

The quality of varsity coaches in some sports could be improved

As a high school teacher, I know first hand the importance of teacher to student ratio that is low enough to foster quality education. The teachers can only do their jobs, and students can only succeed when this ratio is reasonable. Valley is too big- we had a chance to solve this problem for good when we built Southwoods – we didn't solve it by building a 9th grade facility. Now we must address the same problems AGAIN as we discuss what to do. We must have 2 WDM high schools!

After years of failure in jr. high and high school my son dropped out of Valley. He has been diagnosed as ADD and a Kinetic learner. He finally had some success in the alternative school. Most teachers at Valley and Stilwell weren't very helpful. One counselor finally mentioned the alternative school during his Jr. year.

With the growth the community has experienced, we feel the school system can keep pace with the needs and number of students only if separate facilities are established. To increase the opportunities for all students to participate in activities regardless of their abilities. We are seriously considering schools outside WDM for our sons as the approach 9 – 12 if this current situation is not changed.

Quit worrying about keeping the high school. Sometimes two schools is the best and offers more students opportunities to get involved. Bigger isn't always better. Don't worry about keeping top athletic teams, etc. Do what is best for the students. Small classes, individual attention. Not what make the district look good.

Make sure you don't forget the average and below average students in your quest to be the best! Teachers and all staff need to have good positive relationships with all students. Please remember you are teaching kids (not just the curriculum)! Thanks

I feel the administration needs to be much more visible at all activities. How does the community know how you react if you are not at school sponsored activities – conferences. This certainly doesn't fly for your teachers.

We will consider moving unless a new high school is built.

Should design a class on Money: Buying a home, investing, 401K, health plans, accounting.

I would like to see more interaction with counselors at Valley. Expand PAA. I feel the VSW environment is very supportive to students and is invaluable in their development.

Size of class and quality of teacher with background for the subject is most important. Challenge the student to understand that curiosity and preparation are both necessary part of learning.

Expand Valley if need be, but one high school is enough for our community.

As someone who was from a community similar in size to WDM (Bellevue, NE) that added a second high school right before my senior year, I can relate to the issues being faced here. In my experience, a second high school did provide a more caring and personalized environment without taking away from the educational and athletic programming offered to students and the community. Has WDM visited with similar sized communities to learn from their experiences? I don't have the answers to the restructuring debate, but I think the community would do well to find out how other cities addressed this issue with what result.

No more lessons in cruelty, WDM schools have a tendency to teach children to be cruel. Teach them to be more open minded, before it is too late.

Quality of learning is far more important than being champions in the largest high school. Athletics and extra curricular activities are not the highest order of high school business! Teachers and staff need to know students well enough to understand something of their social and emotional level. Security had better be an important matter for all concerned! Limit student auto access to school areas!

Clive has elementary schools and Jr High schools. It is time to split Valley and have Clive student go to a Clive high school. The current high school is fine. If anything some remodeling. It certainly should not be knocked down and rebuilt new. Valley high should be split into two high schools. Splitting all activities. If school system was split with Clive. And WDM school population returned to such large numbers then it should split its high schools.

WDM schools need to support students that want to attend off-campus learning opportunities, such as Central Campus, DMACC, U Of I, ISU, Drake, Etc.

Allow students to take more electives and career preparation classes so that those who may not go to college have experience for work as well as prep for college classes they may be interested in majoring in.

The size of the school doesn't seem to be what I perceive as a problem. Having teachers who are burnt out or just poor teachers is a concern. Now that people can not request to avoid bad teachers, this has been frustrating. I do not feel this is an isolated problem. The school system needs to find a ways to reward good teachers and to discipline or fire teachers who aren't teaching the children.

I also don't understand why Valley can't attract or acquire quality coaching staff for sports. Not having an opportunity to play sports does not seem to be as big as problem as not having enough students who continue to participate in a sport due to a bad coaching experience. I've had three strong athletes in our family and this subject seems to pop up repeatedly.

We are looking into open enrolling. I do not like the idea of VSW not being with the 10-12 students. I wanted 2 high schools 7 years ago. I want 2 high schools now. The public should be able to vote on the issue of adding another high school. Administration should distribute updated costs in operation and construction. Also release the true amount of classes that will remain in the event of adding another high school.

Very surprised at how defensive WDMCSD is about considering designing the high school experience for its students in smaller schools. We find it unAmerican to not allow resident to vote on this issue.

Go for two high schools. It will not be that much more expensive and will give opportunities to more students. Being the largest and the best is not near as important as giving more students an opportunity to participate in all of the activities. It will help them for a lifetime and there will be many students helped over the years.

Build a second high school. School and the programs are not large enough to meet individual needs.

I think all four grade levels need to be kept in the same building even if this means that there will be 2 high schools in our district. While I think it is important to have good facilities, I think that we wasted too much money on VSW and we now have a problem because it is not meeting our needs.

All students should have the opportunity to be on athletic teams, Student Council etc. without a who you know basis. All teachers should be required to use internet to communicate with parents.

WDM needs 2 high schools. I feel that Valley should be remodeled and VSW should be added on to in order to become a 2nd high school. Can't some sharing of classes be done. It seems this would be

more logical than 1 meager high school. Look for more people to leave the district if this problem isn't addressed.

We would like to see smaller classes to help facilitate an environment that promotes learning. We feel smaller class sizes would allow teachers to be more flexible and better able to meet individual learning styles.

Our child is a Valley graduate and is very successful in his field. He attributes his success to the education and motivation he received at Valley. He had a wonderful experience in both education and activities. We strongly believe that a building does not preclude a successful education.

I am terribly upset with the "music" played throughout the school. Many parents are appalled at this. Please, for our children's sanity and futures, get rid of it. I promise you'll see an improvement in attitudes as well as other areas.

Don't be afraid to discipline. Most parents really won't object.

Valley High is doing a wonderful job and is well staffed. We appreciate your time and sacrifices.

Oh and there's no room for bi-sexual teachers in the classroom or educational system. Thank you, Caring Parents

Two schools are needed!

Preserve K-8 programs. 3-600 student units on one Valley H.S. campus. Preserve VSW Freshman High School.

Please build a second high school. Both of my children attended Valley High School. Valley is too large and too competitive and a majority of your students don't have opportunities to excel or feel a part of the school community. I am also a teacher in one of the metro high schools. I am very sad to say but as a teacher I am not able to teach effectively because of our large student population. Valley needs to concentrate on smaller learning communities. A second high school is needed so that the student population becomes manageable and students can feel that they belong. Opportunities should be made available so that the majority of students can become a part of the activities sponsored by the school. Young men and women should not feel that they can't belong or are outsiders. The high school years are so important and many young people feel alienated and isolated. Build another school for the sake of the students.

Build a second high school, or designate Southwoods as 9-12 for ½ students in the district.

I would like to see more counselors so they have time to help and know their students better. Counselors are fine right now but they have too many students.

Better tracking of students who are low to average in school. Seems students whose grades are low get lost in the shuffle.

Too many students trying out for sports which means too many students who can be on the teams but never play.

Lousy Question!!!

You infer by this question and by the format of the survey in general, that change is necessary.

Hello!

Your Change = My Tax Dollars

List your agenda first ...sell me your options, don't back this one! This survey and its results can and will fit your agenda. You should just as well present your results to the local media now as they have already "spewed" your rhetoric! GO VOUCHERS!

We send our children to school to learn. Not to be taken out of core classes for character counts programs, or an award assembly. The district offers too many electives. The district puts too much emphasis on music and sports. The district demands too much from school-age children. The competition is overwhelming. The district could be focusing more and dealing with behavioral problems and really taking issue with zero tolerance.

Two high schools are probably necessary for the over population at Valley. But two schools don't need to be bigger and better!

More opportunity for students to be involved or active in extra school activities is fine until it goes to the great extremes that the WDMSD tends to encourage and follow.

Spending more money is not the solution. This is evident by examining the costs spent per student in parochial schools vs. the results per dollar spent at these schools. Education has become big business at the expense of the over worked taxpayer and the students. Students don't matter to the WDM administration – numbers on reports matter. Try to get a teacher at... to give a parent material to help their struggling child – just try! I have! You get nowhere. The bottom line is the administration needs students in Title One Programs to line their pockets not to help students. Parents are willing to do anything to help their children – even pay twice for educating them. Use parents to help students achieve – it is very cost effective and makes for great young people. By the way, I took my child out of WDM schools and he is thriving at a 4.17 grade pt. average.

I have become increasingly concerned about the WDM schools the past 2-3 years. My concerns include:

- 1) The school district seems to focus most on the most academically gifted students. My daughter is a B average student but she is bored and tired of school. Every Valley student I know is counting the days until they can “get out.” Very few of them plan to go to college. I fear the “graduates who attend college” statistics we're so proud of is going to start to decline. They all just seem burned out on school. Are we pushing them too hard? The career counseling seems of no use.
- 2) My son has minor learning disabilities that it took us finally pushing the school in 6th grade to address. He does not learn in traditional ways. The school has no good way to focus on his talents in his learning styles.
- 3) I believe every teacher and every school should be evaluated by parents/teachers each year – maybe twice a year. Why can't you do what business are doing successfully? What are you afraid of? No one can get better without feedback.
- 4) I'm a Vice President of a major DM company. I'm not sure you're turning out many students I'll want to employ. They seem listless and unmotivated.
- 5) The program wins lots of awards but if they continue to put so much pressure on students and take all the fun out of it they won't have many students. Does the program exist to win awards or for the benefit of the students?

I find it reprehensible in a democratic society that our school board will not allow a fair democratic vote on what the taxpayers want relative to the possibility of a second high school. Power to control seems to be a higher priority for the board than accurately and fairly determining the needs of their constituency. Participation is the key component of a student's positive high school experience. A smaller student body, smaller classes and better chances to participate in sports and the arts should be the priority of this board. Winning state championships should not be the priority. Common sense would indicate a second high school is a no-brainer. I will be fighting to organize the constituents against those board members who put their power and control above our children's needs. They will not be re-elected.

I suggest that guidance counselors be informed to assist each student to reach for their potential. Perhaps each student could be guided by a variety or alternating counselors. Using the alphabetical system was a failure for our high schoolers. The same unimaginative counselor “advised” each of our students over a period of years based on the 1st initial of their last name.

The “one size fits all” philosophy needs to be scrapped. For instance, all 9th grade students take the same General Science – do we really believe that the same science class is appropriate for every student? Ditto for Language Arts and Social Studies.

In order to take AP Biology or AP Chemistry, we require the student to take General Chemistry or General Biology first. They are forced to sit through an extra year of too-easy science, and miss the opportunity to take other, advanced offerings.

WE like to hold kids back instead of encouraging them to take advanced and AP classes. We do that by requiring unneeded prerequisites and by requiring all students to take the same courses.

Top universities are looking for students who take the most challenging courses, but VHS has a belief that their curriculum is correct for every student. Wake up!

There needs to be a second high school in WDM. The school board is elected to do what is best for students, not what is popular in the community. If bigger is not better in grade school, why is it in high school?

WDM schools need to be more responsive to the needs of students with learning problems such as learning disabilities and ADHD. As a pediatrician, I am ashamed at the unwillingness of teachers and administrators to work with these young adults.

Valley Southwoods should be expanded into a 2nd high school for 9-12.

A split into 2 schools - Valley High West, Valley High School South or East is the best for students.

I have recently returned to the Des Moines area after an absence of more than 35 years. My children are grown (1 daughter); she lives out of state. I have very little current knowledge about the programs and services available in this district. I do put a high value on the education I received in the Des Moines school system. It has made all the difference in my life.

Connect Southwoods to 2nd high school and omit 9th grade-only concept.

West Des Moines needs to build another high. It has been indicated through valid research that more students are successful in high school when the student/teacher ratio is small. Unless the principal of Valley can call each upperclassman (11 & 12 grades) by name, this city must get over the "Valley High" sentiment and build another high school. I went to Valley myself and graduated 30 years ago. At this time, my class was way too big. This is the reason I sent my children to Dowling!

(My sister went to Valley and should have graduated in 1988. During her sophomore year, our mother died. Not one of her teachers attended the funeral. I teach in the Des Moines School District and have attended every funeral of a parent of one of my students I was currently teaching. No one showed my sister any compassion. She transferred to Dowling.)

I don't see how cost fails to correlate w/each ranking/rating evaluation. Importance should be established by distributing the educational dollar among your items.

Students cannot be wrong all the time nor liars all the time! Some teachers are poorly qualified and should be removed! Clean your own house!!!

I believe that when a student has an immediate problem in class that it should be addressed. Whether that or bad grades, not turning in homework, doing poorly on tests or simply not understanding something. Some kids are shy or embarrassed. They may ask for help – they may not. If you don't catch this early you can have a whole year of trouble. I know that's where my family is right now. I'm paying for tutoring services because not one of my child's teachers saw the need to intervene. As a parent I call, I go to conferences. I ask what should we do. The English teacher told me to rent a movie to see if that would help my child understand the book. I'm not sure that was the best advice. I don't understand why we aren't notified if a student starts slipping – that seems to me to be what teaching is. Then there's study hall – – what's this deal – if they talk or look sideways they get in trouble – quite a role model!

I guess I'm fed up. For the amount of taxes we pay – I fee like my child really got shortchanged.

Because I will someday have children in high school. I take a great interest in public education issues. From everything I've seen and read from national studies and sources – and based on my personal experience (1987 high school graduate, college 1991, law school 1994.) I do believe smaller is better at all levels of grades, including high school. Please fully explore building/creating a second high in WDM.

I think you should add on to the 9th grade school and make it the 2nd high school.

I would certainly support 2 separate high schools that would allow more extra curricular activities for the students.

I am also somewhat dismayed at the perception that our

West Des Moines schools are facing some very difficult choices in the next 10 years. It is critical that we have competent leadership that will help to implement the wishes of the community.

Enlarge Valley if necessary. Don't add a new school unless no other option is feasible. Add on to Valley if necessary. Consider additional use of portable classrooms.

I think course offerings are very limited at Southwoods. For example, if a child is interested in science their only option is the general science class. Had my daughter been in 9th grade at VHS she would have taken Biology her freshman year. As this wasn't possible she had to take both biology and Chemistry her sophomore year to fit in Anatomy and any AP courses. The curriculum at Southwoods with posters, making masks, etc is grade school/Jr. High level. Southwoods curriculum needs to be more rigorous and set at VHS standards.

Both of my children were pleased with VHS. I think a few stronger teachers would be helpful. Band and athletic dept. are good.

VHS needs more student parking. The neighbors in the area continue to win their requests to the city to limit street parking. With all of the school activities before and after hours students need to be able to drive and park near the school. The building is fine for current needs from my student's perspective.

Offer two equal 9-12 high schools plus WCC. Remodel VSW, remodel Valley. Eliminate VSW as a stand-alone building. Partner with the city of WDM to build the rec. center planned by VSW.

Make the school environment smaller. Use our new vision; to know and lift every child. Massive amount of research shows smaller is better. **Use the vision!**

If you have a no-cut policy, make it mean something. You should have enough coaches, uniforms, practice gym time and games for all levels A, B, C etc.

Let the public vote on whether to make two 9-12 high schools. A committee of a select few should not make the decision for everyone.

2 high schools – 9-12

2 high schools – 9-12

2 high schools – 9-12

Too often we try new programs and spend thousands of dollars just because it's new. That is not smart. (Modern math for example.)

We have a real good school system. Just look at ITBS scores compared to rest of the country. We don't need to spend 58M on a new high school nor do we need a second high school.

We should and could have 2 4-A size high schools in West Des Moines.

I think it is ridiculous that we emphasize small classes, an individualized learning experience all the way through 9th grade, and then throw over 1800 kids into 1 building for 10-12 grades. Don't our actual increasing rates for open enrollment and private school enrollment for these grades show us that something is not right? How many more families will we lost to Waukee?

At one of the D.D. community meetings I attendedcould not respond to the simple question of how many foreign exchange students were at Valley. How can teachers and administrators know and lift every child in that environment?

You need to start listening to what the whole community wants, and not just alumni supporting the football program. Do what's best for all our children, not just the football team. If we have \$8 mil. to spend on a new, unnecessary football stadium, we have enough to operate 2 high schools. I will campaign actively against a \$28 mil bond issue for a new Valley, and consider moving if this issue is not resolved to the benefit of my children.

The school administrators should "learn" and apply a level of service that respects students and parents.

VHS has a consistently amazing indifference to parents input. It is no wonder the district is so strong.

Attitudes of teachers need to shift from pressure, discipline, content to knowing each child and knowing how/what motivates each child.

A culture of joy, fun, provide the best context for rigorous learning.

The size of the student body does not matter nearly as much as the culture and classroom ratio. Our classroom ratio is excellent. Our attendance drop out rates are excellent.

Our community members need to learn how to learn together. The district's commitment to interrupt a nationally successful process to learn about the issues of a group of citizens should be met with an equal desire to understand the district rather than criticizing and mistrusting every thing the district has done and is doing! The accusations against administrators as "lacking integrity" and as being "untrustworthy" (I actually heard those) causes me great pain as a parent and active community member. Our district, with the leadership of our administrators have a proven track record of commitment, caring and success (according to my reading) was designed to do – see what's best for students and then decide what our community and finances will allow us to build. We need to model the learning we want our children to have. Judgments prohibit that, I believe.

Though I am trying to understand the reasons for 2 high schools – in the end, can we reorganize and restructure our building and learning and opportunities to address the issues being raised? I fear that if we increase costs with another high school, we'll end up with 2 first strings in sports, etc and fewer opportunities for the majority of HS and elem. Students. Let's look carefully before we make this commitment that will stretch our resources for a very very long time. Thank you for this opportunity.

I believe that WDM should have 2 high schools. I voted against the 9th grade building when it was proposed because I thought WDM needed a second high school then. My husband and I have a choice as to where we will send our children to elementary school and high school. Valley is not an option because it is too big. Our sons would not be able to participate in athletics based on the numbers of students. Classes for core subjects are too big and Valley does not participate in the programs at Central Campus. If Valley was our only option, we would seek to open enroll our sons at Roosevelt. Children in this school district deserve the opportunity to experience high school and all its facets whether through art, athletics music, and all the other educational options a school district like WDM can offer. Students can't do that now because Valley is too big.

I will oppose any bond issue to add on to the current high school. I think Southwoods should be converted to the second high school. After all Des Moines manages with more than one high school, as does Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, Davenport and Sioux City to name a few.

I have seen high schools in Calif. With over 3,000 students and they manage quite well. Course offerings would suffer in a smaller enrollment school.

Programs and services on the previous page could have different definitions for different people. I would have liked an opportunity to rank the importance rather than just rate. All have some level of importance but not are all-equal in importance. This is an expensive survey to design, distribute and interpret without getting real, valid, comprehensive results.

Current high school is beyond maximum, effective size. We need 2 high schools.

Need to have programs for talented and gifted children equal to the programs offered for mentally challenged children. The school system bends over backwards to provide for physically and mentally challenged students but there doesn't seem to be any curriculum or alternatives for the talented and gifted. This is reverse discrimination and needs to be addressed.

Accommodations should be made for children with a bi-polar condition.

I think that Valley Southwoods should be turned into a full high school instead of adding onto Valley. There is such a thing as TOO many in one high school building. West Des Moines is growing so much that we will have enough children for two high schools.

The problems in the schools today are not caused by our schools. They are caused by lack of time parents spend with their children either by choice or increased demand on their time. Students are missing the simple lessons of RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY for themselves and others. When these things are practiced by all students, good teachers will be able to teach.

I don't feel that two high schools are necessary for WDM. It is my understanding that enrollments are NOT increasing. I don't see how all the programs at Valley can be duplicated at 2 high schools without taking away from other schools. I attended Valley when there were 2500 students. I don't feel there was anything lacking in my education or that I would have benefited from a smaller school.

Although extra-curricular activities are a vital component of any education program, the parents in our community involve their children in many programs outside of the educational arena. I do not think a second high school would promote participation in school activities. Our district is on the right track by investing in our elementary programs and facilities. On a lighter more frivolous note; why don't we buy Valley West Mall and convert it into classrooms??? (Just fix up the existing Valley, okay?)

There are too many students at Valley H.S. There are so many wonderful teachers that could fit the needs of 2 high schools. I grew up in a town of 50,000 and there are 4 high schools. I can't figure out WDMSD problem of thinking. One high school is what we need! Someone needs to make the decision and just quit asking what everyone thinks- more schools, more opportunities- plain and simple! I have an 8th grader, I thought years ago there would be 2 high schools by the time he got there. BOY, was I wrong!

- *Single high school- NEW construction
- *Maintain the 9th grade at Valley Southwoods
- *Continue to excel in all grade levels!
- Thank you for providing a greater education for my family.

Build another high school.

Improve or replace current physical structure- size of school is fine provided building space and conditions is adequate. Do not divide high school unless you can afford adequate staffing and equal learning and social opportunities at a level equal to or better than that presently at Valley. Think not only short- term, but long-term as well.

Lower student/teacher ratio. Accommodate different learning styles. Make athletics possible for more kids, not just top achievers.

I don't know a lot about Valley, my children are 7 & 5, but what I do know is that there are too many children in that building. I hope by the time my kids are ready for High School it will be broken up into at least 2 high schools .

The school should be divided into two building (high schools) so there are less students at each school and there are more opportunities for the students to participate in activities as well as they will have a better sense of belonging.

I have tried to stay fairly informed on this issue. I originally felt we should have 2 high schools but after listening to some facts I feel 1 school would be much better. It doesn't matter if there are 4,000 or 400 children (young adults) at the school as long as their needs are met and class size does not become too large. It makes more sense to me to pool our resources and have one excellent school rather than two good schools. The teachers and staff will get that done.

I believe it would be in the best interest of the WDM school district to have 2 separate high schools. There are too many students attending the current high school. Class sizes are overwhelming, hallways are extremely crowded, not to mention students being unable to get to "know" their fellow classmates. In addition to that, the ability for students to participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, is VERY limited, since only a select few are able to make the team/s. I believe that if the number of students at school were decreased, it would give more students the opportunity of experiencing the "team" atmosphere. These experiences are something that is carried with them throughout life and I feel we are doing them a very real injustice if we do not provide them this opportunity.

The debate over whether WDM should build another school is a very difficult decision. However, our decisions should be based on current research instead of outdated research. How are we going to be "leaders in learning" if we don't follow and use current research.

As far as the current Southwoods School is concerned, I do not like it, and neither does my daughter who attends there. It is called a Freshman "high school, but is that what it really is? I don't think so. Because they are located so far from the "real" high school, they do not feel that they are a part of it. The freshmen have their activities and the high school has theirs (there are some things like the homecoming, Valentine's Day and Prom festivities where they are invited). For the most part, though, they feel as if they are not a part of the high school. The other problem I have with Valley Southwoods is the actual set up of the school itself. The whole "pod" situation is no different than when these kids were in elementary school! Now how is this supposed to help generate maturity in our children? They feel as though they are back in grade school--not high school, and I can't blame them for feeling this way. To make things worse, they had to adjust to a new school their freshman year, and now they must go through another adjustment period again next year when they attend VHS as sophomores! How good is that for them? Not very, in my opinion.

I know having two high schools in WDM will be costly to those of us who live in the district, but I feel it's in the best interest of our children to do so.

I did not mark the satisfaction columns since I do not currently have a high school student.

Overall program and services need to be structured to best meet the needs of all students. Smaller class sizes for core, required subjects, is very important.

Average performing students must feel like they fit in.

I personally believe examining the possibility of two high schools is needed.

Scheduling.

I understand Valley has a large number of students, however, according to predictions, it won't get much larger than it is now for a very long time. I like the current low student/teacher ratios and think they would increase if we went with two high schools.

I do not like the idea of two WDM high schools for, any reasons, too numerous to list here. I will add most of the parents who approve of two high schools that I've talked to are doing so for increased opportunities for their children to participate in athletics. I sympathize with them, however, feel it is more important to support higher academic achievement.

I think there is too much emphasis on sports. It's more important to have education than the "best teams" or highest ratings for high school. There also needs to be more classes or programs like PEER HELPERS.

It has been 12 years since my last child left Valley. (3 grad. From Valley) and many times over one of the major complaints from parents I heard was the quality of the I am not aware of thetechniques or quality at this time, but am sure it is just as important to parents and students now as it was 12 years ago. Who does the child with a need for positive emotional help go to?

As a newcomer to the community and a parent of younger children, I found the questions impossible to answer. As a parent I was insulted that the simple question of another high school was omitted. I have attended 2 of the public forums and felt reprimanded when I asked the question in the small groups. I admit I don't know all the issues being new to the schools, but I definitely feel as if the administration has already made up their minds despite their protests to the contrary. We have been very happy with the schools to date but I am disappointed that a petition was the only way to bring this issue to the public. I am also disappointed and frightened that the mold issue raised at a meeting has not been addressed.

Our children are under pre-school age. We would like to see a second high school built to accommodate the needs of kids to get more personal attention, better education and the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities. Our children are our best resources. We should be giving every effort to ensure their success and happiness.

It doesn't appear that this survey is designed to provide any meaningful feedback.

I support 1 high school. Having graduated from a rural school I know what it's like to have limited course offerings and opportunities. The amount of options available to WDM high school students is plentiful and wide ranging. I'm afraid that 2 high schools will take away many of the choices now offered. I'm offended that many people base their "need" for 2 high schools on the amount of playing time their son or daughter could gain. That mentality is not what is best for WDM. In the whole scheme of things a well rounded-top notched education is far more important to me than 5 minutes of fame on a court.

Too much emphasis is put on "new" building. There are far too many administrators. Put more \$ into classroom teachers and not so much in to administration.

New buildings (Southwoods) aren't well built – leaking roofs.

Need to gear curriculum for those who are not college bound.

One new high school would better meet the needs, than the much publicized and misguided demands for a second such school. We have an excellent system. Change sometimes is not always for the better, and the 2nd high school "proposal" would dilute excellence and foster mediocrity

2 high schools so more kids could participate in sports.

It would be helpful if thewould return phone calls. If Valley were a business, it would be bankrupt. I have never heard so many excuses for not returning phone calls. I wish I lived anywhere but WDM.

Two high schools. Make VSW 9-12. 2. At the high schools: short homeroom everyday (to replace PAA) 3. Direct more HS students to vocational areas. 4. More emphasis and phonics in reading program. 5. End first semester (at high schools) before winter break (give finals BEFORE the break)

- Creating "learning teams" like Southwoods or the junior high schools might help to alleviate concerns of some students or parents. * Building a second high school is not the answer. Particularly under current projections with regards to enrollment and budget. I would not support any bond issue, which would support a second high school! (in the form of a split of the school and it's resources and students) * Perhaps building, or creating schools within schools would be a solution, where the concept of one "Valley" still exists, but different learning option with in the school exist. (I'm sure you've thought of this) * creating a "central campus" idea here, but not for advanced classes only.

West Des Moines needs 2 high schools! They needed this back when Valley Southwoods was built! Please listen to the parents of high school students and vote for 2 high schools in our ever-expanding WDM community.

I am not in favor of building a second high school. I am in favor of building a new Valley High School in order to update technology and make a comfortable environment for the students. Academics are our priority and we don't need a second school so more kids can play football.

The requirement of marching band for 10-12th grade instrument student seems unnecessarily restrictive. Keep a lot of students out of music who would enjoy jazz or regular band but wants to play fall sports.

Overall, we are happy with the WDMCSD, however, we strongly believe the district would be greatly improved with two smaller high schools as opposed to one mega H.S. The opportunities for student participation in various extra activities would be greatly enhanced and every study I've seen suggests that students, do better in the critical areas of their lives when they are in smaller schools rather than larger ones. I hope this option is seriously considered.

It is your job to educate. It is not your position to mold students into something "You" or the "State" desire. Keep your liberal/feminist biases to yourselves and provide the students with math, science, English, history, etc.

I am very pleased with the "re-structuring" that already occurred the construction of VSW 9th grade building. It gives freshmen the opportunity to get to know each other prior to attendance at VHS. Our family is very satisfied with VHS as a 10-12th grade school and hope that our one "community" school is not divided into two different high schools.

More opportunity for extra curricular activities. To not limit students to only one activity (in sports vs. drama)

Essential to have smaller high schools so that there is more flexibility and more kids can participate in activities. Existing high school is excessively competitive – rewards kids who are early to mature physically and socially – fails to allow for late bloomers.

It's clear to me that administration is most focused on larger school population to keep test score numbers high. Administration & staff take credit for those high scores, when in fact the numbers reflect the socio-economic level of the school population.

Drop out & transfer out rates are two high. Walnut Creek is an important right step. But we need more flexibility for varying learning styles in classrooms and to eliminate the excessive competitiveness.

We need a second high school.

I am in favor of 2 high schools.

We would love to see two high schools in WDM, to give our children a better and higher quality education in a smaller school.

The size of Valley High is a great concern for me. My worry is that there are talented students (or just students who want to be involved) that are not having an opportunity to be in athletics, the arts and extra curricular because they are not the best at what they choose to explore. My wish for my own children at a high school level is for them to be able to choose and experience many different activities. In my opinion high school students are too young to be specializing. Exploration at this age is invaluable.

The purpose of high school is not to produce college athletes or band members – it is to provide top notch academic opportunities. Valley has done that for many years. I am concerned that too much emphasis has been placed on providing extra-curricular activities with some parents calling for the establishment of a second high school. I am totally opposed to a second high school. Children can participate at Valley in many activities. Not every child can be a star but that is true in life also. The argument that Valley is crowded is not true. The school has had four classes in the past & now only has three. I believe capacity is 2,300 and the school is nowhere near that level.

I have not read a detailed explanation of the proposed renovation costs for Valley. Those figures quoted in the paper seem very high considering the projects completed in the past.

West Des Moines should have 2 high schools. * Students refer to Valley as a “system” not a personal caring environment. It’s an existence not an experience. * My child in high school, is open enrolled to a smaller high school where the staff has much more control of the security because of the smaller number of students and the fewer doors to keep track of students coming and going. When my oldest child was at Valley, before we open enrolled him out, the administration admitted they couldn’t possibly keep track of students coming and going the way they should because of the thirty some doors in the building! * Guidance counselors have more students than they can handle. The quality suffers greatly and the students pay for the student-counselor ratio that is too high. *Staff performance should be assessed on a regular bases. * Because of the number of students at Valley, the level of competition is very great because of the large number of children competing for a few spots. This is true in sports and music activities. There is a tremendous amount of pressure on the participants to perform at a high level. The pressure isn’t worth it and large numbers of students drop out of sports and music activities after 9th and 10th grade. Two high schools would eliminate this problem. * Classes should be cut that have less the 12 students. Those classes serve too small percent of the student body. Valley is a high school not a college! * Students could attend classes that are shared between 2 high schools we already have the busses running between buildings for TAG and sharing classes between Southwoods and Valley!

As a parent of a 1st grader, I am looking towards the future and the possibility of a 2nd high school. My concerns are that we do not get into the financial situation of our neighboring districts (Urbandale & DM Public Schools). West Des Moines needs to continue to be diligent in budgeting and standing projections for the future. I am all for smaller classes and more one on one, better teacher/student ratios, but not at the expense of class offerings, arts and athletic programs. Can we truly support 2 high schools with the excellence we now have? Will the future growth cut elementary programs to support upper grade level programs? Where will the \$ come from to support an entire 2nd high school without sacrifice from other areas?

Southwoods needs to get away from the Pod System!

Student evaluation is complicated and often replaces teaching because evaluation takes much class time. Grades are often figured on massive point systems, but students frequently earn points for bringing boxes of Kleenex to class or cans of food for food drives. Teachers often award points for completion of worksheets, not for understanding the material.

Fix the computer program in Valley to include partial day truancies into final numbers for unexcused absences.

Keep the fine A.P. programs. They are valuable.

Great music program

WDM administration does try to communicate and interact with the public.

A second high school is needed & maybe a third to provide opportunities for students to experience as many extra curricular activities. Being #1 is not that important.

I have no direct involvement with the school system. It was decades ago, a great system for my children.

Perhaps a second campus to accommodate certain fields of study (ie: science/math), The students schedules could be modified so they had subjects relating to a particular campus on certain days & the other subjects (campus) on alternating days. You would save the expense of duplicating certain equipment/facilities & staff by having two different types of campuses.

Our children went to WDM Public Schools for their elementary education and then on to Dowling. They are both in College now (one in Graduate School). You have excellent material and people to work with.

We need another high school! Valley High school is extremely big. We have three children who graduated from Valley. Academically they were well prepared for the rigorous college expectations. Our three children were all involved in a variety of extracurricular activities at Valley. Unfortunately they had to choose the one or two areas they excelled in because there was no way they could be “somewhat” involved

in any area. Each area expected them to live, eat, and die just their area. The exceptional athletes played, of course, but if we had two high schools, twice as many students could participate, instead of a few select students. Isn't high school a place where young adults should have many options.

I think a second high school should be built in order to offer greater opportunity to more students in the area of athletics, arts, and other sponsored activities.

School is first a school. Extra curricular – just that – extra. Level of performance expected. Should not require so much time on one activity that student cannot try several. High School students should have freedom to try several kinds of activities without professional level expected. The question was “opportunities” not just opportunity.

I was told by Ridiculous.

A smaller school would help. Get rid of pool of enough students so an activity can exist for the few who are willing to give it their life.

I support 2 high schools. Valley is so competitive and crowded. I believe 2 schools would give more average students a chance to participate in more activities.

They need two high schools so the students won't feel overwhelmed. Maybe if there were two high schools the counselors and principals wouldn't be afraid to come out of their offices and deal with the issues some students have. They need to involve themselves more with the students.

Emphasis should be on learning basic skills. Parents should be responsible for personal and political values and not the values of the instructors or school district administration. No drugs on the premises should be strictly enforced. No further taxation should be instituted over the already special taxes allowed to you.

1. Build another school on the West side. Convert Stilwell, Indian Hills and Southwoods and the new school to (3) year Junior High Schools, grades 7, 8, & 9.
2. Keep one high school, grades 10,11, 12 at Valley High School site. Enlarge Valley as it is rebuilt/replaced to accommodate the (3) grades – 10, 11, & 12.
3. One High School – 10, 11, & 12
4. No more 9th Grade only schools.

In my opinion as a Professor at Drake (so concerned about the future education of children) I believe a second high schools needs to be built in WDM. My children are not yet school age so high school is a long way off for our family. However, I can foresee major problems with the WDMCSD not keeping up with the demand of a growing populace. We are from California and think about moving back but the “prospect” of a high quality public education keeps us here. Please don't let us down – because we and others like us will surely leave the state. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

I favor two high school in WDM. I feel a great many students get “lost in the shuffle”. If they are not outstanding students and/or athletes or a disruptive student, then no one seems to know them. To some extent the PAA meetings ensure that one staff person gets to know a small group of students. The program that began this year, “Student Led” progress report with the PAA person was very informative. Having a scheduled time was a bonus! Hope to see this for Juniors and Seniors in the future.

Two high schools would be better for the kids. It is too easy for students to get “lost” at Valley. If they are gifted or if they have special needs, the program is fine at Valley. For the kids in the middle, it's a disaster. It's too hard for high schoolers to try a variety of things. They're expected to “specialize” or, basically, to

pick a major in high school. That is bad for kids. We don't have to be #1 in everything we do. It's more important to let kids try a lot of different things in high school.

Exceptional students do not have enough programs at the elementary level. I graduated from a school with almost 500 in the grad. class and I felt like just a number – part of the herd. Only the best of the best were able to participate in extra-curricular activities. I don't want that for my son at Valley. If there is a second HS, allow cross-classes between the schools or make them magnet schools – 1 for arts/humanities and 1 for math/sciences. Make them collaborative schools – but allow for overall smaller grad class sizes/pupils per bldg.

It would seem that even though West Des Moines is growing to the west and south, that does not necessarily indicate growth in the “school population” – the outlying districts will be more likely receiving children of those new development families. Therefore, I think refinements of the current high school plan would continue to serve the needs of the students.

Make the Southwoods experience more realistic with Valley experience – it seems to be a reversion to elementary school, 5th and 6th grades with “teams”, etc. Junior high set up actually seems to be a better preparation for Valley. Improve the auditorium! I have had to stand along the wall during the vocal concerts – need more and better seating – band concerts should be able to be held there needs to be in closer proximity to band area.

2nd High School

A second high school should be greatly considered. Our children are at a smaller elementary and the attention they get is great. I have no problem with taxes being raised to keep our elementary school programs where they are at and to create smaller environments that offer the same programs for our high school kids.

Overall, Valley has excellent programs that prepared my children for college at large universities. Concerns in athletics and activities seem to be an issue with many people. Can more opportunities be developed? I know funding in these areas is always a problem. For example, this year there were fewer dance teams than in the past at Valley. Communication need to continue to improve. The community perception of Valley is not accurate.

We just love Jane Moulton, Holly Burns, etc. with the Brighter Beginnings Program. We are very pleased with our first introduction to the West Des Moines School System. We are hoping to have just as positive an experience when our children begin kindergarten at Crossroads. They are real gems – you're lucky to have them!

1. Programs for different learning styles are very inadequate. The Valley High School with our child's diagnosis because she had never seen the symptoms. It certainly complicated our efforts to arrange accommodations. Counseling staff was very helpful, but it was a struggle to get the medical department to assist us in any meaningful way. A major re-vamp in personnel is suggested for
2. Fix the roof on Valley and put this money into AC for all grade schools and quality staff. Southwoods addressed the crowding issue. We Don't need a second high school.
3. We've been upset that the #10 item on the tax ballot became the #1 item once passed. A new football stadium before everything else? Shame on all who pushed that through.

Why should my daughter have gotten a diploma from high school and still been lacking 1 English class before entering any college? I had to pay for 1 English course during the summer for her before any college would accept her because of the downfall in Valley education.

We took our son out of Valley this year. He is a sophomore. We have enrolled him in a Christian school and it has been a wonderful change. WDM needs 2 High Schools and a much more caring environment. He was an honor student at Valley and Stilwell and continues to be at his new school. Yes his new school doesn't have all the special classes that Valley can offer but he doesn't have over crowding large class sizes and he doesn't feel like a number. He is enjoying participating in activities, teachers who truly know who he is and care about where he is going. We will be moving our other son out of public school and he will be going in 8th grade to the Christian school. P.S. He is also an honor roll student. I hope my comments are not just put in the trash can and disregarded. Proud to be a Christian school parent.

I believe VHS, as it exists, is simply too large. By building a second high school, it will give a greater number of students a real chance to become involved and develop a personal connection with the school. Please use the enclosed article "Connectedness Called Key to Student Behavior – Study Says Close Ties in Smaller Schools Reduce Likelihood of Drug Use, Violence, Early Sex" by Michael Fletcher of the Washington Post as a reference for your Design Down Committee. I would appreciate if the 7 members of the committee, the 2 consultants, Superintendent, and School Board President all received a copy of this article. It makes some very valid a relevant that will effect our learning community for many years to come.

Building two high schools that were sharing resources would have met the problem. It is ridiculous that "big" athletics should form educational decisions. We missed the opportunity to address the issue in a way that places academics first and the needs of all students above those who need a #1 football team. Students who don't fit the "average" student profile do not get their needs met without being remanded to Walnut Creek.

I am completely satisfied with ONE Valley. I do understand that the building is in dire need of repair & would not be opposed to the construction on ONE new high school. I do not feel that 2 high schools would be feasible financially or could continue the Valley tradition of excellence in education. Too many programs would be cut. There would also be a division between the 2 schools, even though the 2 school advocates say this would not happen. As a former educator for over 20 years, I have seen lines drawn between two schools, where one becomes superior in peoples minds over the other. Thank-you

Valley Southwoods has been the worst experience for our child and us as parents. If a student is not a cookie cutter student, teachers and administration drag their feet. As my child puts it, "They are nice but they don't do anything to help me." If we could do it over, I would not have sent them to this school. It has been a nightmare for all of us. Teachers don't seem to care. There is no follow through. The attitude there has been a struggle since day one. Do something for the next students coming next year.

If the WDM School Board and Administration opt to put all the tax \$ into existing Valley and abandon a second high school option they need to hit the pavement and look for other employment. They need to face the fact that Valley is too big and need to be split – no matter how "good" it is. Bigger isn't better. Two schools in WDM could do great. If they turn away from a second high school now, this issue will keep resurfacing and there will be a war.

Put 9-10 at Southwoods and 11-12 at VHS

How are you interpreting and how do you expect parents to interpret a “caring environment” and/or an “environment that promotes learning.” Such generic, abstractions have no meaning. I’d like to see Valley focus on mainstream academics and technical preparation for students to elect pre-college or work tracks. There are plenty of activities for the talented and gifted and little for the average student who needs assistance in finding a direction for his/her life. Not all kids want to or need to go to college – at least not right out of high school. Squelch the propensity for elitism at Valley and you’ll go a long way in meeting more diverse student needs.

I am a graduate of Valley High School and could not have enjoyed my experience more. I am disgusted by this idea to split the high schools and can say that a two high school West Des Moines will almost certainly drive my kids to the Waukee school district. Why? I feel as though splitting Valley in two will severely limit the ability to offer top quality programs in all areas. Valley is a large school and has been for years, but it can’t get much larger due to geography. I believe that going to a large high school can be a great benefit when going to college and also in preparation for life.

The Valley Southwoods concept was good for our son – continue it.

I think one high school offering lots of diversity of course and extracurricular activities and sports

If there were two high schools parents would soon develop an expectation that both schools have equal programs, resulting in higher cost and duplication of services.

High school should be about experiences. I learned as much or more being a part of the valley band, A Cappella choir and basketball as I did from my academic classes. I was busy having fun and didn’t have time to get into trouble.

Not enough children have an opportunity to participate unless they plan to go on with that choice as a career...it is more like a prep school. Academia is important, but in high school if you feel you belong you are more likely to succeed. I think 2 high schools are needed. Let the teachers commute between the two to offer the curriculum variety. Make one a sports major – arts minor and the other a Fine Arts major and sports minor. That way more kids could participate and focus on their personal talent but still have fun and participate in one they are not quite as good at. Make family a priority.

Two high schools

Drop “liberal” feel; good classes

Phonics taught in elementary

Tough rules on foul language and appropriate dress

We would favor a second high school to create more opportunities for students. Valley is too large and creates limits to these opportunities

2 high schools More interest in improving student environment than the prestige of a large school

Improved resources for students with special needs instead of the assumption that the alternate high school be the one size fits all solution

I hear the term survival of the fittest being used at Valley. Children should enjoy their high school experience

I am not impressed with the current school board members or the administration

Please look at the strong academic history of the WDM Schools. The excellent college preparation in academics and the arts have kept my family in WDM for 20 years. I feel the success of my two college students is due to the academic and art opportunities-not the building they attended school in. While small class sizes are crucial I believe that the opportunities offered at Valley gave my children an advantage at

the university level. Their freshman focus was on content – not adjusting to high level class sizes. They had adjusted to larger class population at school. Splitting the high school will only serve those with the money to pay for extra college prep, not Valley's entire population. Please do not disregard those parents.....

Need more teachers in required core classes to bring student ratio to teachers down. Social studies should be required with more options. PE should not be required beyond 9th grade. Science and math should have more options. Art classes should have more options. Choir should not be so competitive – more for enjoyment. Sports should have intramural teams for those who enjoy playing but are not a first stringer. Administration should be more accessible – When students miss a person should contact a parent not a recording that students can erase. Teachers should retain at least one duty-free period a day

Student-teacher ratio – 1-20-even less in elementary. Have 2 high schools – a smaller, more personal environment is beneficial to student learning and overall success. Personal contact w/teachers in critical – size matters. Not all students are college bound – courses should benefit all students, not just college bound. Perhaps different types of diplomas could be considered. Educational goal should be to produce well-education, well-rounded citizens who can function in a global environment.

Tougher standards for grades. A=95% - make the grade meaningful – overall grading watered down nation wide. Extra curricular activities provided needed skills, but emphasis on athletics is too great – appears more important than academics.

My suggestions are based on 30 years of teaching English at the high school level. My children attended Des Moines Public Schools prior to our moving to W.D.M.

I like the way Valley is structured. You have already split West Des Moines kids with Southwoods and somewhat Dowling. And no matter how much you try Valley and Southwoods feel very separated. Don't separate them again. I have had lots of experience in this district. Just b/c elementary parents want their kids to have more varsity sport opportunities or a few less kids in one class doesn't mean you can split the town.

We have two daughters who graduated from Valley (95 & 01) and went on to large universities. Their academic, social, and extra curricular activities at Valley prepared them very well for their future. They would have been at a disadvantage without the opportunities they had at Valley. They learned to be independent while still being able to come home every night to a safe, supportive environment.

In the real world not everyone is on the first team. That's also a lesson to be learned.

Our son is presently in a Sp Ed program and we are very happy w/his education and preparation for the workplace. His program is tailored to meet his specific needs. All programs for all students need to follow the same format. Be it TAG or Sp. Ed and all the in between kids. Technology is a must for all and school needs to be nurturing yet hold kids accountable. Staff can make or break a great program – positive attitude and modeling are vital no matter what the program.

You're doing a great job!

I have a son who graduated May, 2001, and is currently a freshman in college. I have totally changed my opinion concerning a one or two high school setup for WDM. I feel it should remain a one high school community. Currently the numbers at Valley are average when compared to most high schools around the country and even a little below. I believe these numbers helped prepare him for college as well as the competition from other students, amount of homework required at Valley and opportunities for involvement in various activities and classes.

Do not change a system that has worked for so many students throughout the years. Most students find their niche at Valley as they are forced to do in the workplace or in post-secondary schooling. Do not

change the high expectations or variety of offerings. Each year provided him invaluable opportunities and experiences that prepared him well for college. It is only after he entered college that I came to truly appreciate all that Valley offered.

I was not happy with the environment at Southwoods when he was there and from what I hear that has not changed. But it was only a year and he literally suffered through it as many did and continue to do. But it should remain a 9th grade school.

Even though we have a graduate from Valley and a student who will be a senior 2002-2003 we have strong feelings for a 2nd high school. Both our graduate and upcoming senior have been very involved in sports and extra curricular activities, however, we see the small # who actually do get the opportunity to participate. We do not think a coach's opinion on 1 or 2 high schools should carry any weight. Of course they don't want a smaller pool to draw from. Same with music and drama. School much smaller (1/2 the size) continue to dominate with state titles. It would be about the kids. Let's stop talking about how our best interest is for the kids and actually do something to show we mean what we say. The more students who get to participate, not just stand on the sidelines as observers, will carry those lessons learned for life. Cutting from golf, tennis, cheerleading, show choir, jazz band, dance team, and other activities occur at Valley. Just think how many more students in the district would benefit from 2 schools. I hope this doesn't fall on deaf ears who already have their mind made up!

How can WDM grow? Where is the land?

I personally don't think we need a new high school, but it is possible I don't have all the facts. It is my understanding from teachers I have spoken with that we don't need a new High School

No new Football Stadium is needed, especially when we cannot meet the academic needs of our students!

Cheerleading tryouts are structured to be unbiased which can have advantage but we need some kind of other data when choosing the squad – need teacher recommendation and need to look at demerits from last season. While the girls that get chosen are the best what I saw this year is

Band – don't make marching band a requirement in 10th grade. My two older daughters (who held 1st chair positions) dropped out in 10th because of that. I wish they could still participate in concert band.

Keep ratios of teachers to students at 20-24 to 1. Keep smaller schools and offer lots of academic and athletic opportunities for them. Always provide safe secure environment! Offer challenging classes in wide variety of options for many different students learning styles.

Teachers need to be able meet students individual needs – more training and less teacher/student ratio.

Build a second HS!!!

I am opposed to the building of another high school.

I am an active community member and a former teacher in another community. I have observed positive outcomes of a 9th grade high school. For the first time these students are a "class." Often times upperclassmen are not a good influence on 9th graders. This one more year is a good opportunity for the maturity of the 9th graders.

The status indicate Valley HS is large, but the student-teacher ratio is within good reason. Student-teacher ratio is most important.

We are not in favor of two high schools.

Small classes needed.

Keep 3 buildings serving their current students
Rebuild VHS with adequate heating/cooling/bandwidth/air quality etc
Add some school-to-work programs for non-college bound students
Provide a more comprehensive intramural program

Utilize talents of all music students by not requiring marching band at the high school level.
Let athletics take a back seat by building the second high school. Let academics be the first priority and responsibility.

Teachers need to be more approachable and caring. We need 2 high schools.

Valley revolves around the top 40-50 students. Administration's attitude is one that Individual teachers were good to my children but the administration

The structuring process should also allow for current students and students that have recently graduated to have input. Parents don't have all the answers!

I believe we should enlarge Valley HS and not build another high school.

If needed have some 10th grade students at Southwoods.

remodel Valley as is, do not expand and build a new high school!

I have heard great thing about WDM Schools – we will be transferring our son from St. Theresa's Catholic school to Western Hills next year and are very excited about the move.

Being a double working parent family as most are these days I wish it was easier to get into your before and after school programs such as Kids West. That right now seems to be our biggest challenge in changing schools. I'm #6 on the waiting list so let's hope for the best.

Why did you not just ask the question??? Do we need 2 high schools? NO

The most important thing is teacher/student ratio. According to my research this is at a very acceptable level!! You will lose very important classes and programs with two schools.

The questions on this survey are very lame! I can't imagine it will give you what you need.

The school is too big and too crowded.

I suggest smaller classes to help students get more personal attention and not just be a number. I have one child who is an over achiever and will do well in any environment. But I have another child who is neither brilliant nor a resource candidate and he tends to get lost in the large pool of students. He would greatly benefit from smaller classes where teachers could give him more attention. Right now he gets by, but does not excel nor feel extremely confident. He has potential but needs more help that large classes and overloaded teachers cannot give.

I have been impressed with the way Valley prepares students for college. My oldest is at Southwoods, but I have spoken with other parents and can see already how much my daughter is being prepared. That, to me, is Valley's greatest strength and most important quality. Please assure that it is maintained in whatever plans are made for Valley's future. Thanks.

Sports – "Sports Clubs" should take over. Schools cannot afford for ex. to suit up est. 100 students w/football gear an expensive rate per child.

Transportation – Schools should not be in the business of owning buses, maintenance of such and transporting students. Contracting transportation needs to be considered.

Education – The school should focus on 100% education only. Electives should be offered to include more technical style training.

I participated very successfully in sports of all kinds and am cognizant of the benefits one can gain from participating. Some w/fine arts – I was a music major in college but got the majority of my training thru' private lessons. However, budgets are dictating where our focus needs to be and it should certainly be education quality of academics vs. particularly sports. While valuable, they need to be less important. Need to accentuate accelerated programs for gifted and talented children.

As a 1987 graduate of Valley and past elementary teacher in the district, I wish you luck as you try to meet the needs of this growing community! I hope the Design Down Committee remembers the importance of listening to people that are educated in this field and have committed their lives to serving the public. I believe you can have all of the best programs/classes/clubs/athletics, but if you do not have skilled professionals to implement these, the intentions of these programs will suffer.

I do find it humorous that no one seems to mind that we have how many elementary schools, 2 jr. highs, a 9th gr., and alt. high school ... and there is concern about splitting the community with the possibility of 2 high schools.

Again, good luck in your challenge ahead!

Stop teaching from politically correct history books. Teach the truth about history! Teach the truth about

Though our daughter is only 15 months old she and any sibling will most likely attend WDM public school so I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. The one strong point about extra-curriculars is that they played a vital part in the people my husband and I became. They kept us out of trouble as well as helped developed a sense commitment and determination toward a common goal. With this in mind, we encourage the continued support of extra-curricular activities sponsored by public schools.

There should be 2 high schools to accommodate the students and their interests. This would allow more opportunities for more students. I believe WDM is definitely large enough to support 2 high schools.

I believe the job of the school system is to prepare students for college, the workplace and interaction with others. Many of the athletic programs can be handled by other groups. Athletics should never be the goal of the education system. We must keep our children interested in going to school via other means, such as improving their self-esteem and improving their ability to relate to others. We must not forget to promote exercise for everyone as a way of life.

No need to restructure programs or services. Refurbish Valley H.S. – keep one high school..

Need another high school? Issues that I am aware of are: parking, athletics. Freshman baseball for example. When there are so many kids that only half of them dress for the games and then when they do dress they may not get to play all, there is a problem! I also think that Valley is way too concerned with winning!

We need two high schools. Possibly expanding Southwoods.

Bottom line, a graduating class of between 600 plus is too many. Many times only the best get to participate. The 9th grade Building was built for a future 2nd high school. The time has come for 2 high schools in WDM.

I recently moved here from another state where 6 of my 7 children graduated from high school. I can tell you from personal experience that the smaller class sizes and the discipline and nurturing environment my child has encountered here has enhanced his ability to learn nearly 100% over what he previously experienced. Kids need choices that match their interests and an environment where they can concentrate and learn. I hope high school continues to be as positive an experience as his junior high is.

Reduce school size, classroom size, student-teacher ratio. We will not send our children to WDM schools until their quality of education improves dramatically.

We would like to see continuation of the ninth grade school and one school for grades 10-12.

Please do not use these surveys to justify your spending millions to redo Valley – We need a second high school when VSW was built and we still need a second high school now – my children left public education after the first discussion – what a shame! Shame on all of you!

Full day kindergarten or will transfer out of the district.

Counselors need to get better acquainted with those they are working with – give guidance! Office needs to be more friendly

Split into two schools – more kids would have the opportunity to compete and perform.
We do not need a new Valley High – renovate the old one.
\$51 million builds a TajMahal high school – no need for such a fancy school

Valley Southwoods is a very negative concept. Sophomores are as unprepared as freshmen always were. Now students have to adjust at an additional level. In my opinion 9th grade should be returned to middle school, Southwoods should become a middle school and the district rezoned at middle school level.

In a stand alone 9th grade school there are no mentors nor are there younger students “looking up to” the students. “Pods” further isolate the students and if and when they advance to Valley they are still familiar with up to 80% of their class and 100% of the upper classmen. My daughter attended the first year of Southwoods and over the last 4 ½ years I have never heard one positive thing about Southwoods from the students that attended there.

Keep 1 high school 10-12 grades and do whatever it takes to keep the school in its present location.

I am very tired of K-12 receiving over 60% of the state budget, huge property taxes, etc. and having whining from everyone involved – most especially Valley parents because there are 1700 spoiled brats in the school. There were 1500 + in my senior class at Roosevelt in the late 60's.

GET OVER IT

My children received an excellent education at Valley High School. They were able to go on to college and succeed. Is restructuring really necessary?

Do not build two high schools!!!

I like the idea of building a new high school on its present location using the existing pool and sports auditorium. The problem with the other idea of having 2 high schools is that it will break up this community. Thank you.

I honestly believe the best solution would be to separate Valley into 2 high schools so that more students would be able to participate in athletics and arts. We bus students between Southwoods and Valley now for special classes, so to solve the problem of duplicating special classes, we could bus between 2 high schools to ensure the course offerings were not diminished. I think we could expand

Southwoods into a high school to take in Stilwell Jr. High students and update Valley for the Indian Hills Jr. High students.

Do NOT cave in to those who think two high schools will make their children and them happier. This argument is based on athletics. Those who are complaining have not had children @ Valley or are just starting VHS. They forget that kids in small schools sit on the bench too and schools with only 40 kids in a class may get little or no playing time either (I was one of them).

Academics should be our job priority and no one complains about the offerings. If we have two schools, we have all AP classes plus how many others.

Two high schools will cost twice as much obviously in terms of staff, administration, text books, etc. but we don't have any more \$. I will not settle for 2 mediocre high schools so that we can have smaller schools with less class offerings to please.... I shouldn't care but I have too much pride in the opportunities Valley afforded my daughters (classes '98 and 2001).

Final thought, if we were located in a bigger city, this whole argument wouldn't be happening. All schools are this size.

I favor the second high school, reducing current enrollment in Valley. Second school would provide opportunities to more students.

We are long-time, loyal supporters of the district who feel that in recent years the district has lost its way. The district of late loudly proclaims itself an academically excellent leader in learning, but it most certainly does not "walk the talk." Although we wish the district well and are willing to work for its betterment and to support it financially, our comments below are in some cases highly critical of existing practices. Our comments are offered constructively with the hope the district's administration and board will seize the opportunity to improve the district rather than permit further deterioration of its academic rigor and integrity. We offer the following comments and suggestions:

Improve Academic Rigor

- Value honest academic rigor and genuinely high academic performance expectations. In the current mode, students may "feel good" about their high school experience while they are there, but are less likely to feel that way when they find themselves ill-prepared for college or work because they were not challenged academically in high school.
- Quit hiring the cheapest new teachers, go for quality. The district needs to replace thewith teachers of comparable intellect and teaching ability -not withwho know less than their students about the high school.....(subjects) they are allegedly "teaching."
- Increase AP course offerings and remove grade level/age requirements for AP courses so they can be taken by underclassmen. We must do this or increasingly lose our brightest and best to Central Academy where a more rigorous education is available to them.
- Quit misleading students and parents that 9th grade social studies is a required course – it may be in the school's core curriculum, but it is not and should not be required. Offer Western Civ, US History or other challenging courses at Southwoods (6 years ago when 9th graders attended Valley they were mature enough to take Modern Europe and other challenging and had them available.)
- Let grades reflect an honest and objective assessment of academic performance measured against a reasonably high standard. Support teachers who grade rigorously and refuse to give "feel good" grades or inflated grades in response to parent or student demands. Often failing can be more beneficial than an unearned passing grade. Reality catches up with us sooner or later.

Improve Administration and Program

- Begin cooperation in curriculum design and vertical articulation between Southwoods and Valley - this is about improving student education, not preserving comfortable teaching positions and departmental fiefdoms at one school or the other.

- Demand vertical articulation of curriculum between Southwoods and the junior highs - Southwoods wastes time and dilutes student achievement by repeating readings and other items taught at the junior highs.
- Drop NCA accreditation process -it is expensive, there is little follow through and it is no longer relevant given other measures of performance. Spend the money more productively.
- Eliminate time wasting busywork for teachers – excessive communication with home, excessive midterm and other grade reporting, seldom read personal web pages -and spend saved time on the above items and teaching.
- Improve technology -implement only programs e.g. email and grading programs -that can be supported on available hardware.
- Let the teachers do what they do best -teach. The district is charged with the job of educating our children. Don't ask teachers to be social workers and don't dilute the district's educational mission by trying to make it all things to all people. Let families or appropriate social service organizations handle the social work.

Be careful of adopting "what everyone else is doing!" --"Be not the first for which the new is tried, nor last to lay the old aside!" Bigger is not better in classroom size (students), or building size or district size! All of these can be too big and all can be too small for effectiveness or efficiency! More than one high school can provide more student opportunities, one HS has five starters in basketball and two has ten starters! One HS has one lead trumpeter in the band, two HS's has two lead trumpeters!

I am glad to see the district studying this problem! I hope you get it right for today's needs! Build in flexibility as today's needs may change and provide different needs in ten years! Someone once said "the prevailing law of things is change!" The needs of today will not be the needs of tomorrow, so provide for some flexibility!

TAKE CARE OF OUR STUDENTS TODAY, AS THEY WILL BE THE ONES WE WILL BE DEPENDING ON TOMORROW!!

I believe that the educators (teachers and administration) are best qualified to create and implement programs and services. I have faith in the people who operate within the system.

However, I am very disturbed by the "two high school" idea. Education does not take place in the halls or in the cafeteria. It takes place in the classrooms. It is my understanding that class size is somewhere in the 22 student range. I think that is wonderful! This community is no longer going to grow by leaps and bounds. West Des Moines and Clive are almost landlocked.

From what resource will the additional money come that we will need to operate two schools? Isn't it true that the amount of money WDM receives is dictated by the state legislature? Isn't it true that the taxpayers can only vote increased taxes for infrastructure? Isn't it true that we cannot afford to staff two buildings? Isn't it true that we will have to cut programs or shuttle students between buildings?

Where is the administrative leadership that they are not speaking out on the facts? It seems to me that the public discourse has been rather one-sided. I also understand that the students are overwhelmingly in favor of one school. I haven't seen that publicized. Or are we taking the attitude that what the kids think is not important? I hope not!

I have experienced a community in which the schools became a divisive issue. We are heading that direction and it is not pretty! We need reasoned arguments, not emotional ones. I believe the facts point to the necessity of a one high school community.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to "sound off."

Introduce structured project planning, facilitating individualized student high school career planning based on post-high school aspirations. Document these plans and conduct progress reviews. Emphasize academic performance. Remove behavioral distractions that interfere with learning.

The students in the West Des Moines School district would be better served by TWO high schools. It is very hard to understand why the school board and administration is so unwilling to talk about this issue. One can only speculate that being in charge of the larger high school looks better on their resumes.

It is also quite amazing how much distorted data the administration has put out to the public. From double counting students participating in extra-curricular activities to touting wonderful class size averages, while not disclosing the fact that many elective classes have enrollments of less than 10 students, which

distorts the average. Is the administration afraid to release the class size statistics for required courses? The administration has also done a fine job of bringing forward students to the public meetings that do very well at Valley. Isn't it amazing that they could not find one dissatisfied student in the whole school to address the public and let them know what is wrong with Valley? Or maybe here again it is because Valley is so big that the administration does not have time to waste with the less than perfect students and denies their existence.

The scare tactic being used by the administration where they say classes will be cut is also quite amazing. There are currently many electives offered with very low enrollment. Do these classes really benefit the majority of the students in the West Des Moines school district, or once again do these class offerings make the administration look good? Currently Valley and Valley Southwoods students are transported between buildings to make the best use of resources. So one would believe that this practice could continue in a two high school environment.

The administration needs to listen to the residents of this school district. They need to quit denying that there is evidence that supports a better quality of education in a smaller school environment. They need to let the residents decide which would be better for our children and request a vote on the two high school issue.

In a perfect world there would be 2 high schools exactly like Valley, only each should be a smaller (lower total enrollment with the same opportunities). This would allow more kids to participate in activities and would lower teacher/pupil ratios. However, with the current constraints of the appointment and funding issues, I think the Valley Schools are doing what they can. We have one graduate and one junior, so these will be issues for others to grapple with.

The students need an opportunity to speak out also, not just parents.

We have chosen private, religious education for our children. A smaller high school would enable us to consider public education as a viable option.

1. Southwoods curriculum should be upgraded to create a high school atmosphere, rather than an elementary school atmosphere. 2. There needs to be a larger variety of electives that actually teach upper level, academically gifted students. 3. More challenging classes (i.e. Math A vs. Math should be weighed).

WE DO NOT NEED two separate high schools in WDM.

Any decision to build a new school should reflect 10 year plus projected needs of WDM.

Two schools -complete high schools! Valley is TOO big!

1. The educational quality at Valley is outstanding. The teachers are excellent. The opportunities broad. Thank you.

2. The athletic program is an embarrassment. If the student is not a great athlete, they are ignored. They never play. Coaching attention is minimal. Sports do not teach them to try, to work, to commit. Instead they learn to be satisfied watching and participating solely in practice. They never learn the joy or pain of having a game depend on them. I am stunned that smart people cannot find a better way to give more students an opportunity.

- Field 2, 3 or 4 Valley teams, not one
- Get more coaches, 45 kids on tennis team with one coach? Come on!
- 9th grade football: 90 kids on Valley sidelines, 20 on the opposing team. Split the team.

3. Efforts to make the large school more personable are failing. I see and hear no evidence from my kids of administration or counselors knowing they exist. My impression is they went from Jr. High directly to college, skipping the personal development of high school.

Re: opportunities for student involvement in the arts. The reason I'm dissatisfied with this is because I have a child who's entering 8th grade at She wants to continue in orchestra and if she does that she's limited to one other elective. If she wanted band, it would alternate days with PE and then she's be able to take 2

other electives. This is only a minor point of dissatisfaction, but it would be nice if students choosing orchestra had the same opportunities as other students.

Our two children are graduates of VHS (1980s) VHS more than met the needs of the children. They were involved in music and athletics. Our son, who has a learning disability, was well-served by the special ed program and resource room. I strongly urge the committee to recommend ONE HIGH SCHOOL. It is not the number of students attending the school, but the quality and implementation of programs of merit. Don't dilute a quality high school like Valley.

I feel it is important not to jeopardize the educational standards of WDM schools for activities and athletics. The main goal of our high school should be to maintain and improve academic standards to ensure a quality education for our youth. I also feel we should listen to our current students. Their opinions are valid. They go to school every day and know what it is like to attend VHS. Their thoughts should be considered FIRST.

Another high school is needed! We need to vote on this!

Big concern is the inability of some staff and extra curricular activities directors to be flexible enough for students to be active in more than one event or activity. Example: Each area thinks it is the ONLY thing worthwhile and while yes, a student needs to commit to a group, that activity sponsor should not treat it as if it is likened to a job. The activity is after all for the student. Class sizes are just fine. The need for a 2nd high school is something for the district's future. West Des Moines is not large enough to merit 2 large high schools. Neither school could offer enough variety to make it worthwhile.

I have 3 children who went to Valley but did not graduate. Two received DMACC diplomas and one received a Walnut Creek diploma. They were frustrated with Valley. I think the PE program could be redesigned to fit individuals better. Offering non-competitive activities that promote wellness and good health, physically and mentally would serve a greater purpose than REQUIRING students to take volleyball, swimming, etc. All of the teachers I encountered had only one way to teach and did not have any imagination when it came to students who did not conform to their standards. The homework level is ENTIRELY too much and if a student misses school because of illness they become overwhelmed by the make-up work and in our cases, become too discouraged to complete. There is little room for individuality and creativity at VHS.

I am a 1975 Valley graduate. I think Valley Southwoods should be expanded to be the new second West Des Moines high school. The original Valley can be repaired on an as needed basis. Making a new high school is all about opportunity. It would double the opportunities for the communities' young people to participate in sports, cheer leading, clubs, etc. It would help reduce the student / teacher ratio. Unfortunately, Valley has a stereotype of the "old boy system" when it comes to extra curricular activities. This is nothing new. It has gone on for a long time, but has become worse as the town has grown. If you are not one of the school's elite students you are just out of luck. I have volunteered my time for years working with young people. Let's just say I have an east side perspective. I know if opportunity exists, the young people will jump at the chance to be a part of it all. It's o.k. not to come in first place every year. If there are two high schools, this will happen. This is a hard pill to swallow for some coaches. You know, "protect your turf". To me it is beyond comprehension that they would tear down Valley to build a brand new high school at the site. 1965-1972 Valley dead? Are they nuts? I just hope Clover Hills/Rex Mathes is not the site of the next drug rehab proposal. I truly feel I now reside in plastic land.

Have 2 separate high schools. The current high school is too crowded and will continue to grow with increase population in West Des Moines. There are not enough opportunities for the number of kids that want to participate in athletics, drama, chorus, etc. There are too few openings in these areas and too many kids wanting in. West Des Moines is more than large enough to accommodate two high schools.

More flexibility between music department and other extra curricular activities. The administration encourages parents to get their student involved in as many activities as possible. Then when there is a schedule conflict with practices or performances, no one will be flexible. All the flexing must be done by

everyone else and the student ends up frustrated and withdraws from the activity they may be very talented in, but have no support from administration.

It seems as if the predominate argument for staying with one high school centers around athletics. The point should be made that having a championship team is for the benefit of adult boosters. The goal should be for as many students as possible to have the opportunity to participate and grow. The argument that having two high schools as opposed to one and one freshman school, takes too many teachers is ludicrous. There are only so many classrooms and teachers to fill them. The number would be the same in either case.

I strongly desire two high schools to promote a more intimate setting for students.

Keep Valley as the one high school, but offer more choices to the students.

In addition to publishing "average" number of students per teacher, please publish the number of students per teacher in core classes only.

I strongly support building a new school on the same site. Valley has many opportunities not found in smaller schools. Don't ruin it.

It is difficult for us to address some of the specifics of the educational offerings at Valley as our children are still young. However, we are trying to learn as much about these issues as we can now. In speaking with friends with HS age students and by assimilating information from the now very active parents groups, some of our biggest concerns and fears have been confirmed. Valley High School is way too large. With that many students in one school, it is difficult for all but the most exemplary students to excel and even participate in some areas, particularly in music and athletics. It is very important that our children have significant participatory experiences in high school, in academics as well as extra curricular activities. We feel that it is essential that WDMCSD take seriously the option of building a second high school and before millions of dollars are spent to renovate VHS or build additional facilities there that the issue be put to a public vote.

However, even before that is done, the public needs substantive pro and con information from competing sides of this issue in order to make an intelligent and informed decision.

I would respect the opinions of the Design Down committee and the school board as they have been studying this issue for some time and I believe they have the student's best interests at heart. I'll support whatever they recommend. However, from the info I have received and forums attended, I believe Valley should remain one school, but build a new building to better facilitate learning and be more cost-effective in the long term. I am a 1983 Valley graduate and LOVED Valley, probably because of the many extra curricular activities and varied classes offered. I hope my daughters have as many opportunities at Valley as I did when they attend in 10 years. Thank you for studying this issue so thoroughly.

Valley High school is TOO big. I don't buy the argument that programs will be cut if there are TWO HIGH SCHOOLS. It's crazy to transport kids so far to attend school for one year. At this point, if no changes are made to the size of Valley, I expect we will open enroll, move or attend Dowling.

VHS is too crowded. Need to have two high schools.

TWO HIGH SCHOOLS for more student opportunity. Share special courses.

Our programs are structured to meet the needs of our students. It seems that special interest groups have emerged everywhere. I met with Valley students and parents who stated: Student: NO NEED for another school. Mom: It is too big. Student countered: My classes are small. That's what counts!

It's not necessarily the size of the school, but the size of the class that is more important. We had two children attend and graduate from VHS in the 90's. They both received a great education, were able to participate in any and all athletics and extra-curricular activities they chose to, and VHS was a 4-year school with an enrollment of nearly 2,000 at the time.

Areas of emphasis for courses in high school should be acceptance of personal responsibility for their actions, some type of consumer education that prepares the students, particularly the seniors, to enter the adult world, with emphasis on credit cards, how they work, etc., bank accounts and balancing them, etc., and perhaps business people to talk to the classes to let them know what will be expected of them when they work.

During my children's tenure thehad way too much authority (or thought they did). We did not find theoverly concerned with the students. This was reflected in the At times we felt that these persons really did not like young people.

The academic programs at VHS are outstanding and certainly prepare students for college. They are several steps ahead of other kids going to college. Overall, we were very pleased with the education that our children received at VHS. They are both now successful college graduates.

A great deal of the problems that are attributed to VHS are the result of the type of parents that have students attending there, particularly in the area of athletics. Someday they will quit trying to cloak themselves in glory they hope they can buy or intimidate the coaches into giving their child. I believe the last major league star VHS had was Matt Bullard, a long time ago.

We are a retired high school teacher and a retired high school principal. We think it is absurd that WDM would even consider destroying the current Valley classrooms only to rebuild another huge high school. We have grandchildren who attend the Valley system and therefore have paid close attention to this issue. Our grandchildren and all other HS students should attend two, smaller 9-12 high schools. All current research supports smaller high schools due to safety, attendance, drug use, connectedness, active participation, and student success. We would never support any bond issue that would rebuild the large, single HS system and would encourage other senior friends to do likewise. Do what is best for all kids and operate two smaller high schools.

Two high schools would create more opportunities academic, athletic, and extra curricular for more students overall and not just an elite few. More kids would get an opportunity to participate. It works in IA City, Waterloo, S.C., C.R., why not here?

Grade point average may accumulate above 4.0 for students needing to prove this grade point for certain colleges. Grade point cut off 4.0 so kids can be ranked in upper ½ class. You would have several more children who then could meet the requirement of ½ upper part of class. My son played his entire life age 5 through Freshman year. Started 10th and quit. The way he was treated and he was a qualified ballplayer. Politics in high school sports make kids quit. The kids who are smart enough to see it do not want to sit the bench everyday to maybe play. They are never given a chance to make mistakes. They are assumed. The program is stale. They do not develop the players to move on. That A kids should not play both games into B games. Need to make their team deeper not shallow as they do. It is a coaching problem.

Valley is too big. We need a second high school. Children get lost in the crowd.

I do not consider athletics more important than academics. I believe students are given fair opportunities to take the classes they need and want. I am concerned about the opportunity for students to participate in athletics during high school.

I do not believe all students have the opportunity to play sports in high school. There are few positions available for such a large student body. Because of this, we would give consideration to enrolling outside of the WDM school district for high school.

As a family, we don't see any need for a second high school, yet we feel that a renovation is long overdue at Valley.

Probably OK as is. Always room for fine tuning and enhancement. Do not favor 2 high schools.

Why are there so many inadequacies at the alternative high school? Are they not as important?

I am enclosing a stamped return envelope for the purpose of receiving the proposed budget information comparison of one high school versus two. Please provide me with those figures.

Honor level classes in HS not just AP but honor classes that lead into AP classes JR and SR year. Academics should be #1.

I have 2 kids in Valley now 9th and 11th and I have NO concerns over the size of physical plant at Valley. We are pleased with class size and our kids' opportunities to participate in activities. We quite frankly are happy. Both will have graduated by the time a second school would open. I do think communication between the school/teachers and home could be improved both at Valley and Valley Southwoods. For example, one child has been having unusual difficulty in math at I've called the teacher twice to discuss only after my child told me about the difficulty. I asked the teacher to contact me if she saw concerns. What happens to the situation where the child chooses not to tell the parent difficulties? Do they just wait until a D/F midterm report comes 6 weeks into the quarter? I do think a new, more frequent report of ongoing grade change throughout the quarters would be of great value. And why not use e-mail? There is NO use get at all! The only teacher we have ever had is one teacher who updated parents when tests were coming up.

I feel education of the high school students is above average. I do not like so many block scheduling days. I understand the idea and need for longer periods for labs and special projects but I don't think it does the student any good to be out of school sometimes as early as 10:30-11:00 because of them. The physical education dept. has a challenge with so many students. I feel the student needs to have P.E. everyday. Also showing a movie in P.E. is not physical. I would like to see Valley Southwoods turn into a Freshman /Sophomore HS. Why so many parking spots over there, so many can't drive. Thank you for your work and thank you for listening.

I think the student could be served better with a smaller school population and more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities A second H.S. could help accomplish this. Not all classes would have to be duplicated in both schools. One could be a magnet school for English and Arts, for example, and the other for science and math.

I believe classes should be small in size and there should be numerous opportunities for involvement in school activities. The environment should stimulate learning and be a caring, nurturing, growth oriented environment. I have read about the second high school idea and like what I've read and heard about it. Valley effects me as being too big right now. I am a Valley graduate from the 1970's.

Our opinions on the opposite page reflect our views of Valley High School from our past experiences there. They do not reflect on what we consider an excellent administration at Stilwell or opportunities for students there. An outstanding student at Valley has the opportunity for an excellent education at Valley. An average or below average student has a greater chance for a poor experience at Valley. We have encountered both.

I personally believe we should have 2 high schools to serve students in grades 9-12. I believe smaller schools result in a better education for students by providing more student input, involvement, self esteem and all around experience. I believe we should renovate the existing high school and expand VSW into a second high school. I believe we should have a referendum on the issue of a second high school at the school board election in September, determine the will of the community at the polls and proceed with a bond issue. I do not believe that a bond issue on replacing the current high school with a new Valley High School is a good idea. I do not believe it will receive 60% vote approval. I believe it will polarize the community.

I favor 2 smaller high schools 9-12. Too many students lost in the crowd. Not enough opportunity to participate in activities in smaller groups. current Valley need not be torn down. Building is fine. Southwoods can be 2nd high school. Students should be able to participate in sports, arts, music without such a big commitment- for fun- for the experience- not #1-most will not be professionals in sports or arts.

There are too many students per grade level consequently there are too many students totally in the entire high school. For the students, this means extreme competition for involvement in sports and arts. Also, it is easy for certain types of kids to fall through the cracks. Kids need help but don't get the necessary attention. It's also difficult for students of large high schools to create and maintain good relationships with adults in the school. This is also an issue with 9th grade school. Kids develop friendships w/o adults but then they move to Valley and have to start all over! Studies show kids are less likely to get into trouble when they feel connected to adults who know them, know their families and care about them. I'm sure some of the reasons we have the teams or pods at Stilwell and VSW is because of all the above. We already know and apply these ideas when they reach 10th grade. When we send them on to a huge school.

I know that parents I have talked to are mostly concerned about building a new high school in WDM to benefit the fact that their kids will be able to participate in sports. I think it makes sense to build a new one for Clive residents and make them pay for it. If it is for sports reasons only, I don't see it necessary for WDM to have 2 high schools.

It will be the rich kids in the newer "better" school vs. the not so rich kids in the old school. Let Clive create their own high school and separate them from Valley , just like Dowling.

Valley High school is in excellent physical condition compared to many schools in the U.S. How foolish to tear down and build again. The community was seriously misled when deciding on the building of Valley Southwoods. We were told over and over again that the school was being purposely designed to become our 2nd high school. We shouldn't even have to be going through this decision making process again. The parents of WDM school children WANT a second high school. Only the teachers and administrators want Valley to remain the biggest high school in IA. Parents do not care if the team or the choir etc. is the best in the state. They want to watch their child actively participating – children learn from doing, not from sitting on the bench watching only the best of the best play. If more students have more chances for participation in plays, clubs etc. they will become more well rounded future citizens and their parents will have more chances for involvement. We strongly support a 2nd high school for WDM. We've read the research and lived the disappointments a student encounters at Valley.

We do not need a new stadium. We do not need to get rid of 2 schools. Build a new one where the old stadium is located. We need 2 high schools. Convert the one for the 9th grade to a 9-12 school and keep the current Valley. We have a country club attitude for the school system. We need to be down to earth. Tax payers are not a bottomless pit!

First I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts and opinions.

For starters the 9th grade building, VSW is ridiculous as a 1 year pit stop. Our students spend K-6th in their neighborhood elementaries and then go off to one of the junior highs for 2 years. Our kids just become adjusted to their junior highs and then move again, for 1 year to 9th grade, followed by another move again the next year. Anyone who knows anything about children knows this upheaval is not beneficial to kids or conducive to quality learning. Dr. Omotani has publicly said how research trends demonstrate the positives of the 9th graders being separated. Our common sense doesn't buy it! We believe in rights of passage for kids. Why not have a Varsity (11-12th grade@ Valley) and a junior Varsity (9th and 10th grade@ VSW). We feel this would be practical solution to many of the concerns being addressed. (i.e. overcrowding, opportunities for student involvement and behavior issues that are on the rise). We as the general public were told there would be room for expansion @ VSW, when and if needed. So why have more community division (old/new, rich/poor) in WDM? Why spend more for another high school? The only reason we've heard some don't want that is due to sports. Our kids are in school for EDUCATION not to play ball! There's too much emphasis placed on it. Our children will not be attending Valley-not as it is.

Stay in existing high school – no new building on existing site, and no second high school. Post high school college/career advice is inadequate.

I filled out this survey for my parents, since I am a recent graduate – class of 2000 of Valley. I thought I would better know the answers. I think Valley has a wonderful selection of classes and opportunities. Probably the best diversity of class choices in the state. Valley also has a wonderful group of teachers who are well informed in their subject. What Valley lacks is preparation for their students for jobs and post high school education.

I believe that there needs to be some kind of option to make class sizes smaller and make sure all kids have the opportunity to participate and play sports, band etc. Maybe 2 high schools which share classes (electives). I don't want my kids attending a high school w/class sizes ranging from 400-600. This is too big and we may consider open enrolling outside the district because of this.

The program doesn't, the system does. This district is too top heavy! too many administrators who are paid way too much! Administration needs to support its teachers and not cater to every parent's desire and complaint.

The latest studies show that 1200 students are the maximum capacity for a sense of community. Larger is not better. Too small is not good either (600-800). We need to continue having caring teachers, not necessarily those with higher degrees. More isn't always better. We need to bring the WC students back to the general HS environment. They are labeled odd or misfits by segregating them, not to mention limiting their abilities to maximize their potential in a satellite environment.

During the academic year students participate in one sport ONLY. School officers serve for one semester ONLY. cheerleaders according to grade level, cheer at different games or rotate during half time. Involve students in selecting elective courses through survey etc. Assign the number of teachers need to teach the elective courses so each student can take the elective of his or her choice.

It is hard to understand how there is a need for additional physical plant when there are fewer students vs. several years past and declining numbers. It would seem that the ninth grade facility with its extensive rounds and parking might be better suited as a high school. Existing facility on 35th could be remodeled as ninth grade. One of my concerns is that WDM meet the needs of all students including programs for special needs and vocational programs. The social milieu of WDM suggests preparation for post secondary education is a prime objective however would like to see a comprehensive study of the programs and needs.

Valley only meets the needs of gregarious students who are independent enough at age 14 to take on a large world of uncertainty and pressure. I have 3 children who are good students and in the top 10% athletically. They will still go to Dowling. The high school should nurture more in a student than just his academics/athletics. It's time for WDM to be less conservative and maybe even proactive to the emotional needs of its youth.

The need for 2 high schools, grades 9-12 is very evident. Two high schools will allow more interaction between student and teacher, students and counselor, student and administrator. Greater opportunities for extracurricular participation in athletics, music and the arts. We are neglecting the average students. We emphasize programs for the talented and those with learning problems. But we don't make enough of an effort to motivate and nurture the vast majority of students in the middle. If they are not self motivators they sometimes get lost and just slide by.

There are students with ADD or ADHD in the school system that don't get enough school assistance. Classes too full, too many students and the teachers don't have the time to care for special needs of these kids. Without forcing the issue with a 504 plan, there's very little or no teacher participation to guide these students. The Learning Lab is a good start, however the teacher seldom knows what school work the student should be working on and where they're behind in a given subject. Those "kind reminders" of what needs to be turned in that day could make the difference between a child remembering or forgetting, the difference between A or an F. All too often these special needs students are sold short by the system and a majority of them are very bright, solid A students with the right attention.

Sex education should be taught in the home. Children don't need to know how to use a condom or where to go for an abortion. The schools should be teaching about morals and chastity. There is no need to teach alternative life styles either. Stop teaching humanism and stop teaching liberal ideas.

I am a parent of four school age children, attending grades 8, 7, 5 and 2 in the WDMCSD. We have had a wonderful elementary experience for the children, both in academics and in activity participation. I have been very involved, as a parent, serving on the PTA board at the elementary level, and spending a lot of volunteer time at the junior high.

I am very confident that our youngest three would "survive" and perhaps even shine in a huge high school setting such as Valley, as they are competent, hardworking children with outside activity interests that they like to pursue. They have proven to be leaders in both their classroom and extracurricular, and I hope that this pattern will continue.

But our oldest is a very unique child. He is extremely intelligent and has benefited from ELP since elementary. But while he is very bright, he also suffers from ADHD and possibly Auspergers' Syndrome. Organization is a constant battle for him. Additionally, transitions are a nightmare for him. Our son would benefit and grow from an educational experience that offered a smaller 9-12 grade setting, geared towards a personalized plan for him that specifically focused on his learning problem. While I have heard supporters of the current system say that "survival of the fittest" is something that all must learn in life, I am not willing to take the risk that he will not "survive" in the current setting, for his own sake.

I feel that we, as a district, need to look into the 21st century high school research, in that "smaller is better". We have a wonderful school system, with top notch administrators, staff, and students. Let's enhance the learning environment even more, by increasing the opportunity for interrelationships between students, teachers, and parents.

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