

Managing Growth in Secondary
Schools:
Proposing a Third High School
for the Iowa City Community
School District

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Plan Overview

Enrollments west of the Iowa River will steadily increase for the next 10 years. West High will outgrow its current capacity by the 2011-12 school year. In order to maximize existing classroom space and also give the district the time to grow large enough to open a third high school, a transitional plan is necessary. By using existing space at NWJH and planned expansion space at NCJH, the district will be able to best utilize space and negate the need for elementary boundary changes. By the 2016 school year, enrollments will be large enough to feasibly support a third smaller high school. By building a 3A-sized high school and growing in to a larger school, existing space can be best utilized while creating an efficient but flexible building which will be able to grow as NL grows.

The following is a plan to build a 3rd high school in North Liberty to serve the elementary communities of Garner, Penn and Van Allen. The focus of this plan is how to transition to a third high school while maximizing district resources and minimizing shifting elementary boundaries.

Plan Assumptions

This plan grows out of a few key governing concepts:

1. It serves the best interests of the entire school district to maximize current facilities before constructing new buildings or additions. It is prudent, however, to plan for the new facilities before they are needed.
2. It is preferable to keep elementary communities together as students travel through schools.
3. The ICCSD can effectively manage and maintain excellent programs in high schools of significantly different sizes.

The Plan

In the 2011-12 school year, West High will outgrow its existing classroom capacity. However, there will not be a sufficient number of students to sustain an additional high school without wasting space at West High. Also, the prohibitive operational expense of opening a new high school before enrollments justify it will strain the district's budget and the educational opportunities for students in all of the district's schools.

This plan proposes to bridge this gap by assigning some 9th grade students to remain at their junior high schools for one year before all students move on to West High in their 10th grade year. The following is a depiction of student building assignments from 2011 to 2015:

1. In the 2011-12 school year, 9th graders from Lincoln, CC and Kirkwood would all stay at NW.

2. In the same year, 9th graders who live in the Van Allen, Penn and Garner school districts would remain at NC.
3. Also in 2011-12, West High would house all students in the current West High attendance area in grades 10, 11 and 12 plus 9th graders from the Hills, Weber, Roosevelt, Wickham and Horn attendance areas.
4. In the 2015-16 school year, NL High would open with students from the Garner, Van Allen and Penn attendance areas and NCJH and NWJH would return to 7-8 buildings.
5. In the 2015-16 school year, West would have students from the Wickham, Coralville Central, Kirkwood, Lincoln, Weber, Hills, Horn and Roosevelt attendance areas.

Timeline

- 2009 to 2010--District will purchase 50-60 acres of land in the attendance area of Penn, Van Allen or Buford-Garner elementary.
- 2010--District will establish a strategic planning group to work with the Cities of North Liberty and Coralville. The group will seek to identify facility partnerships in the areas of athletic facilities, performance space and library facilities.
- By the summer of 2010, the district will bid additions to NC junior high.
- During the 2010-2011, curriculum teams will be formed to ensure the curriculum integrity for the 9th grade students at the three sites.
- Prior to the 2011-12 school year the district will reassign 9th grade students to NC, NW and West High according to the student's elementary attendance area.
- In SY 2015-16 the new high school will open in the north corridor area.

A Note about City High and West High

Recently the district administration presented data which clearly establishes that both City and West are excellent schools and that both will continue to have stable enrollments for the next 8 years. Appended to this report are statistics regarding high school completion rates, ACT scores and ITBS results which clearly indicate that the health of City and West High remain very strong. Consistent, high enrollment, which is demonstrated below, will allow the leaders of the City High to plan effectively to continue the excellent curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programming which currently exists at City High.

This plan would eliminate the need for additional classroom expansions at either West High or City High. It does not mean to imply that further facility upgrades are not needed at both buildings. Projects such as additional gym space at both schools, music rooms at City and science upgrades at West are still necessary.

The entire community makes use of athletic and music facilities and these projects must remain a priority for the school district.

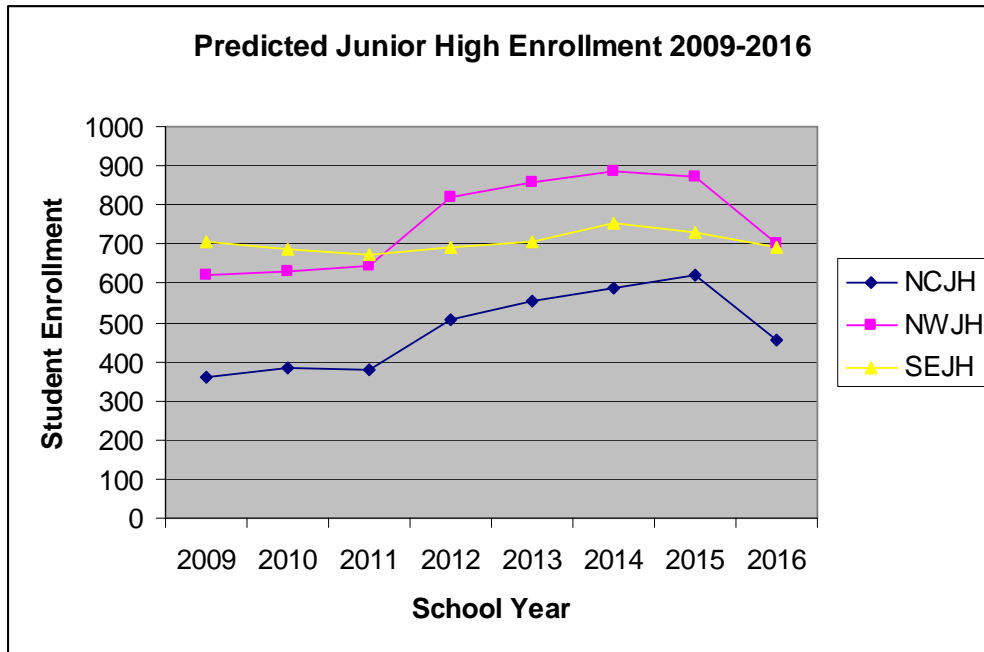
Enrollment Predictions

The following table illustrates the enrollment pattern as the district transitions from 2 to 3 high schools.

Projected Enrollments for Secondary Schools 2009-2018

	2009	2010	2011	2012 ¹	2013	2014	2015	2016 ²	2017	2018
NCJH	360	382	380	506	556	587	622	453		
NWJH	620	630	646	821	859	888	874	700		
SEJH	707	688	674	692	704	753	729	690		
WHS	1741	1843	1898	1703	1732	1698	1850	1689	1702	1694
NLH	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	548	618	688
CHS	1330	1360	1385	1378	1381	1380	1378	1445	1433	1443

The transition phase of this plan would fall mostly on increasing the enrollment at NWJH and NCJH in order to use all available capacity. The following chart shows the year-to-year enrollments for all three junior highs. Note that in 2016, when the new high school is opened, NW and SE are approximately the same size.



¹ The proposed date for taking some 9th graders out of West High is the 2011-12 school year. This could be accelerated as dictated by actual enrollments and by the readiness of facilities at NC and NW.

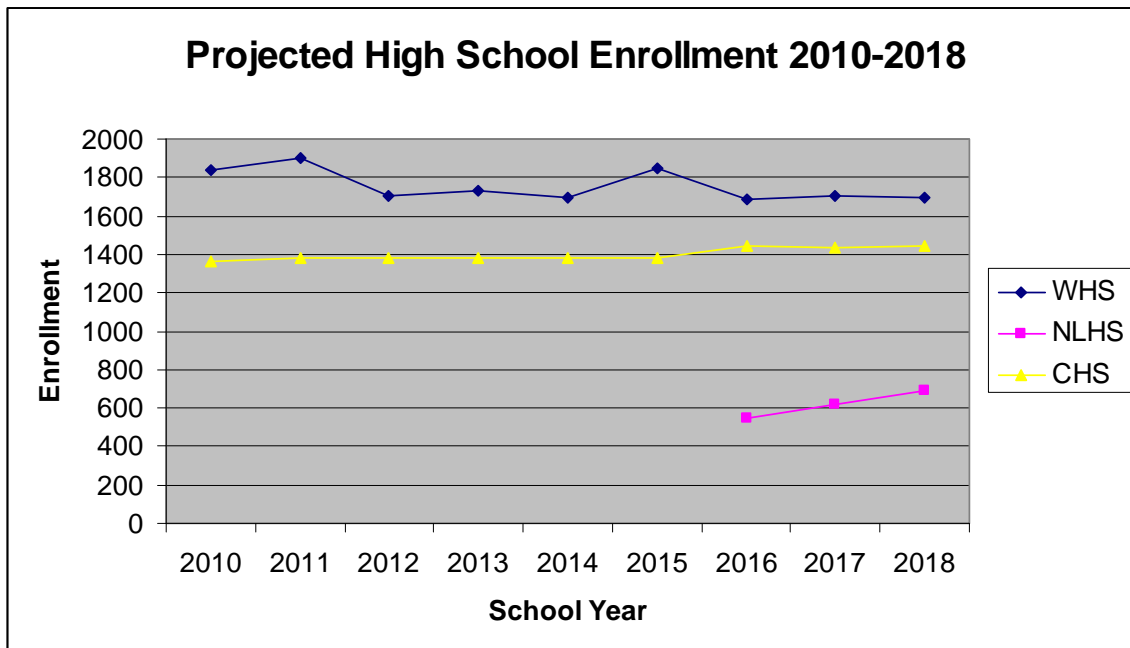
² The proposed date for opening the new high school is the 2015-16 school year. Again, this date could be changed either up or down a year to accommodate actual enrollment.

Since the 9th grade class of students living west of the Iowa River will effectively be split up while enrollments grow large enough for a third high school, it would be helpful to look at how the 9th grade class would be distributed by building. Note that West High would retain nearly half of the 9th grade students as they have the most space.

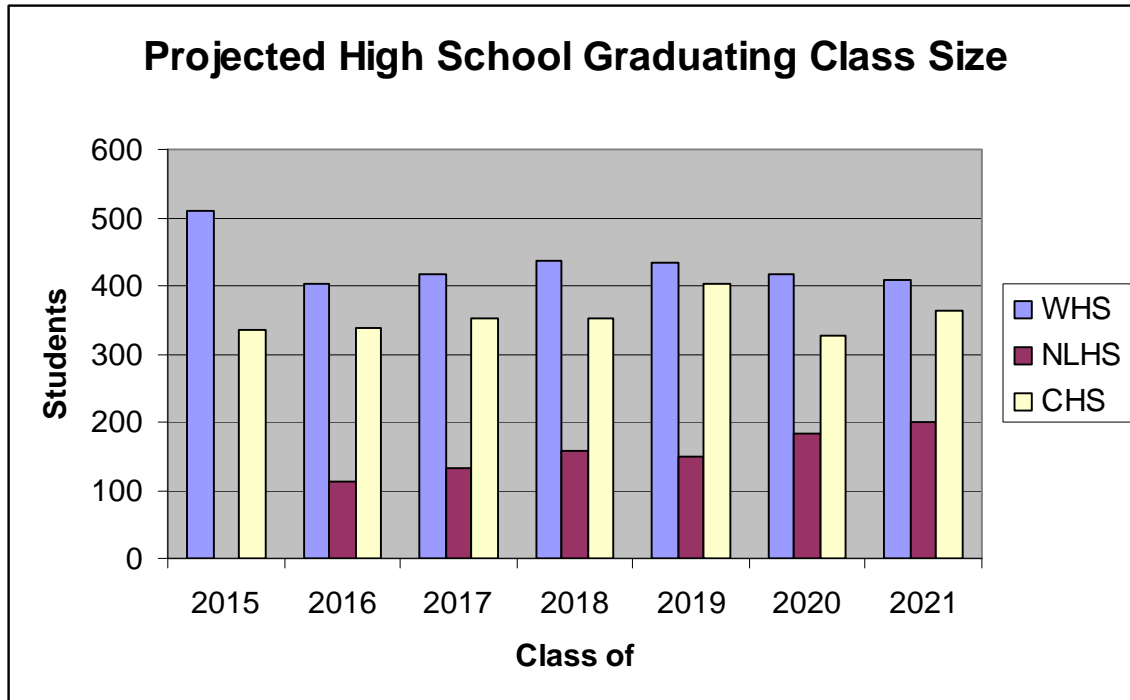
9th Grade Enrollment at NC, NW and West High

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
9th NC	0	0	0	127	112	131	157
9th NW	0	0	0	148	153	170	160
9th West	476	479	501	247	241	247	276

Another important aspect of this plan is to keep enrollment of West High at or under 1800, which is the stated capacity of the school. The following chart illustrates that West High will have consistent enrollment, but they are under 1800 for most of the years of the plan. This chart also illustrates how remarkably stable City High enrollment is. There have been some fluctuations to the enrollment at City High, but beginning in the 2010 school year, the enrollment is steady and trending upward.



Although we are only able to predict enrollments up to the existing kindergarten class, the class of 2021, the following graph indicates the relative size of the graduating classes between West High, City High and the new high school. Once the new high school opens, its enrollment will trend gradually upward. The graduating classes of West High generally level off so that the school is roughly 40-60 more students per graduating class than City. Given the existing size of the schools, this would be the optimal use of existing classroom space.

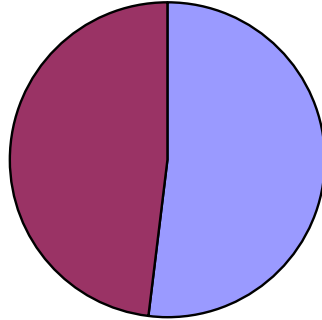


A Note about Poverty Distribution

There have been many concerns expressed about the distribution of students in poverty and their building assignment throughout the district. The following chart shows the current percentages of students on free and reduced lunch currently in the feeder schools of City and West High. There is a slightly higher number of students on free and reduced lunch living in the west side attendance areas; 52% of the students on free and reduced lunch currently in grades k-6 live on the west side. However, since there are more total students living on the west side, the percent of students living at or below the poverty line is greater in the elementary schools that feed City High.

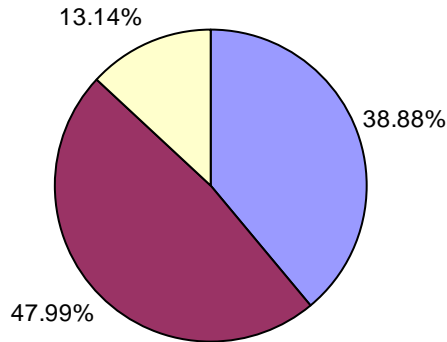
Current Percentages of the total students living in poverty by high school and junior high feeder school	
52.01%	West High Feeder Schools
47.99%	City High Feeder Schools
38.88%	NW feeder schools
47.99%	SE feeder schools
13.14%	NC feeder schools

Free and Reduced Lunch Distribution by High School Feeder Schools K-6



■ West High Feeder Schools ■ City High Feeder Schools

Free and Reduced Lunch Distribution by Junior High Feeder Schools k-6



■ NW feeder schools ■ SE feeder schools
■ NC feeder schools

Overall, Iowa City is fortunate to have such an equal distribution of students living in poverty. The formation of a new school, however, has the potential to create an imbalance by creating one high school with very low rate of poverty and two schools with substantially higher rates. In short, the effect could be “white flight” within the district of Iowa City itself. The board should be aware

of the impact of building the new school and look for possible remedies to enact prior to opening a new building. One example of such a forward-looking policy would allow students to transfer with busing privileges if the transfer would help balance economic or racial inequities within the district.

Benefits of this plan

- Existing and planned space would be maximized and continue to be used after the third high school is built.
- The district will have ample opportunity to plan for the 1.5-2.25 million dollar increase in recurring operating expenses necessitated by a new high school.
- A framework with a 5-7 year timeline allows students and parents to plan for switching buildings at the appropriate time.
- Elementary communities are kept together.
- This plan provides for the least amount of transportation costs. Only students from the Wickham, Lincoln and Hills attendance areas would have to be transported in the 9th grade.
- There will be room for enrollment growth at City, West and the new high school far into the future.
- West High and City High will both have 8 feeder schools and both the minority populations and the free and reduced lunch populations will remain very close to being equal.

Challenges

- North Central Junior High was built for a capacity of 450. This design included options to increase the capacity of the building to 550-600. This plan would predict a maximum capacity of NCJH of 622. The timeline for adding on to NCJH would have to be moved up to accommodate 9th graders at NCJH.
- The 9th grade curriculum would have to be accommodated in a junior high setting.
- Some changes to NWJH would have to occur, most notably in locker space and the addition of two temporary buildings.
- Problems associated with extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities would have to be worked through by district staff.
- Teachers would have to be re-assigned from West High to North Central and Northwest Junior High.
- Some 9th grade options for elective classes would be restricted especially for the 9th graders who are assigned to NW and NC.
- A counselor or a Dean of Students might be required to maintain 9th grade curriculum at NW and NC.

- The new high school will be a 3A school and it will not have comparable percentages of students on free and reduced lunch or minority populations as either West or City.
- Students would be assigned to West High even though they would live closer to the new high school.

Unique Civic Partnerships

One key aspect to opening a new high school is establishing a strong partnership with the cities of North Liberty and Coralville. There are many such partnerships which could serve as models for civic and school efficiency in the state of Iowa. In order to provide excellent and efficient use of resources, a team would be established to work with city planners of North Liberty and Coralville to identify areas of the new high school campus which could serve civic needs as well as the needs of the students. Examples of this would include athletic facilities such as a larger multipurpose gym, tennis courts, track and athletic fields for football and soccer, performance spaces and a competition pool. Both the town and the school would benefit from sharing the expenses of maintaining and managing these facilities for shared use. This would help defray the operating expenses as well as provide an excellent service to the citizens of North Liberty and Coralville

The 9th Grade Curriculum

The 9th grader core curriculum consists of English 9, American Studies, Science, (Foundation of Science 3 or Biology), math, PE/Health and electives. The electives open to 9th graders are limited, but they include Foreign Language, Band, Orchestra, Choir and electives in Family and Consumer Sciences, Art, Business, Industrial Tech and Journalism. The core curriculum would not be difficult at all to reproduce in the 7-9 building. The biggest challenge would be science. NC has brand new science rooms easily adaptable to FOS3 and Biology. Some upgrades in the science classrooms might be necessary at NW to allow for proper ventilation required in some science experiments. Since the only honor courses in 9th grade are in Math (Honor geometry and Honors Algebra 2) and in Spanish Honors, it would be less complicated to recreate this in a junior high setting. Since both NW and NC both offer electives in FCS, Art, and business the inclusion of 9th graders in these classes will actually help stabilize enrollments in these classes.

A 3A High School

This plan would ensure that we would have sufficient numbers at City and West high to keep them operating efficiently as well as a core group of students to operate a sufficiently large high school in the north corridor. Currently, in the state of Iowa, a high school with 550 students would rank as the 77th largest high school in the state out of a 391 high schools in Iowa. City High school is

currently ranked 27th in the state and West is 8th. This plan allows for three schools of sufficient size to allow for the core curriculum. If current trends continue, the high school in North Liberty would be a 3A school until their enrollment reached approximately 770 students. At that time, they would be in the top 48 schools in the state and would then be considered a 4A school.

Course selection will be limited in a 3A school. Therefore, technology will most likely be the solution to offer some specific classes. This is currently being done successfully in the German classes at NC and NW.

Financing a Third High School

Two high schools are more efficient than three high schools; this is the hard cold reality of financing schools. With a third high school, we will have to duplicate programs which already exist at the other schools and do so with fewer students than the other schools. The administration estimates that the operational costs of a third high school will be between 1.5 and 2.25 million dollars per year. This plan sets forth a 6-year time horizon for determining where this savings will be achieved. It also selects the school year 2015-16 as the opening year for the school. In this year there will be 496 more secondary students just on the west side of the Iowa City school district. **In today's dollars, an extra 496 students would generate 3.24 million dollars more revenue.** In short, if we had an extra 496 students, we would be able to open a third high school today.

This plan, however, recognizes the need for greater efficiencies district wide and encourages the school board to look closely at the operation of the smaller elementary schools in the district. Shared administrative services, consolidation and building larger elementary centers may be necessary in order to achieve the efficiencies necessitated by the opening of a new high school. Below are figures prepared by the district on the additional operational costs of a third high school. It indicates the number of additional teachers needed to support a high school in addition to the regular education teachers who would be transferred from West, NCJH, and NWJH, all of whom would be losing students to the new high school.

Third High School - 800 Students

Position

Principal
Assistant Principal
Act. Director
3 Counselors
3 Paraeducators
1.0 Librarian
1.0 Vocal

1.0 Instrumental	
1.0 Orchestra	
5 Custodians	
5 Secretaries	
Art Teacher	
Foreign Language Teacher	
Family Consumer Science Teacher	
Industrial Tech. Teacher	
Total Personnel Costs	\$ 1,303,580.00

Others	Amount
Activities	\$ 314,946.00
Utilities	\$ 207,000.00
Cleaning supplies/Grounds maintenance	\$ 40,000.00
Tech/Media support	\$ 20,000.00
Total Others Cost	\$ 581,946.00

Grand Total **\$ 1,885,526.00**

This plan would look to significant cost savings through joint operation of athletic and performing arts facilities with the city of North Liberty. It also proposes that several of the above positions would not need to be new hires to the district. As NCJH, NWJH and West High all lose enrollment to the new high school, positions listed above would simply be transferred to the new school.

Furthermore, this plan would look to increase the current practice of holding some classes with lower enrollment using video conferencing technology. This currently exists at Northwest and North Central in the area of German instruction. Under this model, the teacher alternates schools daily. The students will either have the teacher live, or participate in the class using video and audio conferencing technology. This arrangement will further lead to cost savings efficiencies.

Summary

A new high school situated in the North Liberty, north Coralville area would be economically feasible if it were opened as a 3A school by the 2015-16 school year. This school would open with approximately 550 students and grow to around 750 within four years. A school of this size would maximize the existing facilities at the two existing comprehensive high schools but also provide room for growth at each of the secondary schools.