

Loudoun County Public Schools
Department of Support Service Community Meeting
Capital Budget Meeting on Future School Facility Projects-Dulles South Area Focus
March 22, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
at Mercer Middle School

Attendees: Jeff Morse, School Board Member/Dulles District; Kevin Lewis, Chief Operations Officer; Joe Pascarelli, Director of Construction; Bill Wohead, Director of Facilities Operations; Bev Tate, Director of Planning & GIS Services; Ajay Rawat, Planning Supervisor; and Six (6) Members of the Public

Provided below are the general questions raised by attending community members and a brief summary of responses.

Q. What are the plans to keep students safe during construction?

A. There are strict construction site rules and safety procedures; Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) has an assigned Senior Project Manager and Project Manager for the construction of ES-32. The Project Manager will be onsite daily. There will be signage in both English and Spanish guiding all construction activity and traffic. Construction traffic will use Hovatter Drive, not Collaboration Drive. A 6-foot-high screened wind fence will be erected surrounding the construction site, which will prevent Hovatter students/staff from looking in and the construction crew from looking out. (Reference slide #16 of the [presentation](#).) Construction staff is and will continue to work with the principals of Hovatter Elementary School and Lightridge High School to address any concerns.

Q. Are there any plans to build a new middle school in the area to reduce the overcrowding at Willard Middle School?

A. Watson Mountain Middle School (MS-14) and/or Brambleton Middle School in the Dulles North area may provide future student relief for the Dulles South area. In conjunction with the opening of a new high (HS-14) in fall 2028, the attendance zone process to establish boundaries for Watson Mountain Middle School and HS-14 will involve Dulles North and Dulles South area middle and high schools. Adjustments between existing Dulles South secondary schools may also be needed.

Q. It is unsafe for students to walk to school, especially having to cross Collaboration Drive with all the cars. Is there a plan for a second entrance for Lightridge High School? The southern side, off Hovatter Drive, near the existing elementary school bus loop would be a great location.

A. Students living outside of any school's walk zone are encouraged to ride the school bus to help reduce traffic congestion on school campuses. Every effort is made during the design of a school to have car and bus traffic using separate entry/exit points to avoid additional site congestion. With Hovatter Elementary/ES-32, student drop off/pick up

will use Collaboration Drive; bus traffic will continue to use Hovatter Drive. (Reference slide #15 of the [presentation](#).)

Q. Will there be a single drop off/pick up location for both elementary schools?

A. Yes.

Q. What will be the start time for ES-32? Will it be the same time as Hovatter Elementary?

A. The start time for ES-32 has not been determined but the start times for both schools will likely be similar. There may be a variance of 5-15 minutes to allow for a more orderly dismissal of both schools at the end of the day, but not a 30-minute difference.

Q. Can the starting time of Hovatter Elementary School be set for a later time? The start time of the school was changed this year to an early start.

A. Start times are evaluated annually but the reason for the variances in school starting times is to allow for more efficient and better use of LCPS buses.

Q. Is there a way to allow direct access to Hovatter Elementary School, separate from Lightridge High School traffic? It's hard to get to Hovatter Elementary School when Lightridge High School students are coming/leaving the school. Could LCPS widen Collaboration Drive and add signs telling high school students to leave room for elementary parents driving to Hovatter Elementary School (and ES-32)? It is especially difficult for parents picking up elementary students from CASA to get to the elementary school in the afternoon/evening.

A. An additional entrance/exit to the campus is not planned. Staff will evaluate widening Collaboration Drive.

Q. Having only one access to the campus is a safety hazard. During emergencies, the ambulance may not make it to the school on time.

A. The campus has two access points, Hovatter Drive and Collaboration Drive.

Q. Can a cell tower be put on campus? Cell service is poor in the area even with the Kirkpatrick Farms Fire/Rescue Station tower.

A. If a proposal is submitted to LCPS by a wireless provider, it will be evaluated by the School Board and Support Services staff. (Reference School Board [Policy](#) and [Regulation](#) 6350, Wireless Network Facility Colocation.)

Q. Is there a special screening process for the workers who will be onsite during the construction of the new school? Some of these people could be sex offenders and in proximity to students.

A. At the meeting, Mr. Lewis responded that there is no special screening process for construction workers. The site contractor manages the construction site and is responsible for hiring the crew; LCPS staff is not involved in that process. The Code of Virginia does require contractor certification of their workforce being free of workers convicted of sex crimes when workers will have direct contact with students. Whereas it may not be interpreted as a requirement for ES-32 given that all construction activities, including parking, will be within the site fencing preventing workers from being in the presence of students and staff, LCPS has taken the approach that there is a possibility that during the course of the project, construction crew may be outside of the fenced area and therefore requires all contractors to certify their workforce. The

following requirement is provided to the contractor and applies to all workers entering the site.

§ 16.3 CERTIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS REGARDING FELONS AND SEX OFFENDERS

§ 16.3.1 Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 22.1-296.1.C, the Contractor shall provide to the Owner certification that neither it nor any of its employees nor any of its Subcontractors, consultants, vendors, and suppliers who will have direct contact with any Loudoun County Public Schools students has been convicted of a felony or any offense involving sexual molestation or physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child. The Contractor shall promptly report to the Owner any change making such certification no longer valid.

§ 16.3.2 The Contractor shall not permit any employee nor allow any of its Subcontractors, consultants, vendors, or suppliers to permit any employee who is a convicted felon, a registered sex offender, or who has committed any offense involving sexual molestation, physical or sexual abuse, or rape of a child on to the Project site after Substantial Completion or in any other school building or on to any other school property used by students.

§ 16.4 IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT

In the performance of the Work under this Agreement, the Contractor shall not knowingly employ any unauthorized alien as defined in the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Additionally, site visibility will be prevented with a permeable 6-foot high wind fence that will surround the construction site. Construction site access will be via Hovatter Road.

Q. Will there be more teachers and staff on the playground, to keep students away from the fencing?

A. That is a school administration decision.

Q. There will be two schools, two school names and two staff for the elementary schools. Will the two schools overlap any staff or have just one PTA?

A. Since the school's inception, being adjacent to Hovatter Elementary School, the intent has been that ES-32 will serve students in kindergarten through grade two and Hovatter Elementary School will serve students in grades three through five. While there will be separate administrative and school staff for the two buildings, there may be itinerant staff serving both schools. It will be the decision of the two schools' principals and parents if there will be one or two parent organizations.

Q. Acknowledging that the School Board has appointed a school naming committee to recommend names for ES-32, has there been any consideration for a Hovatter Upper/Hovatter Lower school naming? Sharing a name would provide a community connection for the students and families.

A. The sharing of a school name was talked about by the School Board when appointing the naming committee. It was voiced by Mr. Morse that he believes there would be confusion among staff, students, parents and the community if the schools share a name.

Q. Has there been consideration given for the new school to only open serving kindergarten and grade 1 students for the 2024-25 school year? Hovatter

kindergarten students assigned to Pinebrook Elementary this year (2022-23 school year) will attend Hovatter Elementary for grade 1 (2023-24 school year), then have to change to their third school when ES-32 opens to attend grade 2 (2024-25 school year). Then these same students will go back to Hovatter ES for grade 3 in fall 2025 – staying there for grades 4 and 5 too.

A. The suggestion will be shared with Department of Instruction staff. Mr. Morse voiced his support of only kindergarten and grade 1 students being assigned to ES-32 for the 2024-25 school year. A similar scenario is planned when Watson Mountain Middle School opens in fall 2024. This can also be considered during the fall's attendance zone change process.

Q. Why does LCPS consider modular classrooms in the total capacity of a school?

A. Modular classrooms are placed at schools to provide additional temporary capacity. The objective of LCPS is to accommodate students in brick-and-mortar buildings but variances in enrollments sometime result in the need for flexibility with modular classrooms.

Q. With the opening of Watson Mountain Middle School, will there be enough middle school capacity to accommodate middle school students from this area?

A. Yes, with attendance zone changes.

Q. Why are student enrollment projections typically off by 20-30 percent?

A. Division-wide accuracy of student enrollment projections (for +82,000 students) is historically within one percent of actual September 30 enrollment, with the exception being during the recent COVID pandemic. Individual school projection accuracy, as smaller student groups, is more influenced by variances (e.g., impact of new communities, program changes) but does not reflect variances of 20-30 percent. Hovatter Elementary's projection for September 30, 2022, was reported at 79 percent due to the temporary assignment (not rezoning) of all Hovatter Elementary School kindergarten students to Pinebrook Elementary School.

Q. Will cars and buses still be able to access Hovatter Elementary School during the construction of the new school? Will school buses still use Hovatter Road?

A. Yes.

Q. Will all students (kindergarten-grade 5) ride the same bus, regardless if attending Hovatter Elementary or ES-32?

A. Yes.

Q. Will LCPS employees be making sure that the elementary students get to the right school – Hovatter Elementary or ES-32?

A. Yes, staff from both schools will be part of school arrival and dismissal.

Q. How come there are no crossing guards at Hovatter Elementary School?

A. Crossing guards are not placed on LCPS property. The hiring of the crossing guards is the responsibility of the Loudoun County Sheriff's office. The deficiency in crossing guard staff makes it hard to provide this service to all schools that would benefit from having an assigned guard. Only four homes are within [Hovatter Elementary School's current walk zone](#).

Q. Is there a 'Plan B' if the school does not open on time for the 2024-25 school year?

A. ES-32 will open in fall 2024, with the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Q. Will there be separate playgrounds for the two elementary schools?

A. Yes.