E.W. Thurston Middle School

FY 2007 Budget

A Team Approach

- Six academic teams (two per grade level) provide a “school within a school” experience
  - **Core subjects**: math, science, English language arts, social studies, reading (grade 6), foreign language (grades 7 & 8)
  - **Grade-level arts**
    - grade 6: information technology
    - grades 7 & 8: technology communications, drama, health, life skills
  - Each team has its own team leader, guidance counselor, and administrator

A Team Approach

- Teachers on each team meet twice weekly to support the academic, social and emotional development of students
- During this time, teachers:
  - develop plans to help struggling students
  - work with parents to promote student achievement
  - share strategies for teaching cross-curricular skills, e.g., paragraph writing
  - plan interdisciplinary activities, e.g., Diversity Day
- Under the current model, special education teachers attend team meetings and serve as liaisons between teachers and families

Curriculum for All Learners

- A well-developed inclusion model supports the integration of special education students into regular classes
- Semester-long and year-long arts classes provide students opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in art, music and physical education
- Subject area departments meet regularly to evaluate existing programs and design and implement new curricula

Beyond the School Day

- Each semester, Thurston offers more than 20 different activities, and most students participate
- *Alice in Wonderland*, this year's school musical, involves over 1/5 of the student body
- 90% of our 8th grade class is participating in WOSC
- 80 students from grades 6-8 joined the cross country team this fall
- An after-school study program supports students in all grades who need help with homework
- Basketball, Floor Hockey, Badminton, Computer Café, Chess Club and the Great Chef's Program draw between 15 and 25 students per session
- Late buses on Tuesdays and Thursdays promote participation in after-school activities

Class Size at Thurston

- 664 students in grades 6, 7 & 8
- Core Academic Subjects
  - Grade 6 Average = 23
  - Grade 7 Average = 22
  - Grade 8 Average = 20
  - Range: 9 (Level III Math) to 25 (Level I Math)
  - 94% of classes have 15-24 students
- Arts Classes
  - 43% of art, band, chorus and physical education classes have more than 30 students
  - 16% of physical education classes this year have 40 or more students

FY ’07 Unfunded Staffing Requests

- Restore 1.0 special education teacher
  - 1.0 SPED teacher cut in FY ’06
  - Additional teacher would allow for more in-class support, more effective co-teaching, and less reliance on instructional aides
- Restore 1.0 physical education teacher
  - 1.0 physical education teacher cut in FY ’04
  - Class size could be reduced to allow for less student wait time and more active participation
  - Currently, larger classes are unable to participate in activities that require court space (e.g., badminton) or specialized equipment (e.g., step aerobics)

FY ’07 Unfunded Staffing Requests

- Hire 1.0 guidance counselor
  - Current caseload of 332 students for each guidance counselor
  - The American School Counseling Association, the American Psychological Association and the American Medical association recommend a maximum caseload of 250 students per counselor
  - An additional counselor would allow for “looping”—a practice that allows counselors to build relationships with students over three years
- Restore 0.4 art teacher
  - Grade seven art program was cut in FY ’04
  - Restoration of 0.4 position would allow restoration of program

FY ’07 Proposed Cuts

- Eliminate 1.0 technology communications teacher
- Eliminate 0.3 strings teacher
- Eliminate 0.5 information technology teacher
- Eliminate 2.0 special education teachers

Impact of Proposed Cuts

- **Eliminate 1.0 technology communications teacher**
  - Technology Communications program for grades 7 & 8 eliminated
  - Grade 7 & 8 students attend a study hall block every day for one term
  - Fewer teachers available for supervision of lunch and dismissal

Impact of Proposed Cuts

- **Eliminate 0.3 strings teacher**
  - Elimination of middle school orchestra
  - All strings instruction will take place after school

Impact of Proposed Cuts

- **Eliminate 0.5 information technology teacher**
  - Current InfoTech program modified to focus on technology component
  - Library research skills taught by library media specialist on a consultation basis only
  - All sixth grade students attend one study hall block every other day
  - Fewer teachers available for supervision of lunch and dismissal

Impact of Proposed Cuts

- **Eliminate 2.0 special education teachers**
  - Elimination of resource program positions in grades 6 & 7
  - Change in model of service delivery—two teachers share responsibility for servicing resource room students
  - Higher student to teacher ratio for grade 6 & 7 students on IEPs
  - Fewer students on IEPs will receive in-class support from certified special education teachers
  - Greater reliance on instructional aides to provide services
  - Co-teaching dramatically decreased
  - Potential need to cluster students on IEPs