



Secondary School Configuration: Model D

One Middle School, One High School Model

*Merging all 7th and 8th grade students into the current Wauwatosa East facility,
and merging all 9th-12th grade students into the current Wauwatosa West building*

[Summary of All Models](#)

Overview

This model outlines relocation of all 7th and 8th grade operations within the current Wauwatosa East building and merging all 9th - 12th grade students into the current Wauwatosa West building. This model would include the closure of both Longfellow Middle School and Whitman Middle School, thereby decreasing the number of facilities that require ongoing maintenance while allowing District administrators to explore the development of an athletic complex on the current Whitman Middle School site and explore liquidation of the Longfellow property.

In this model, the projected enrollment in each building is as follows:

School Year	Wauwatosa East Building (7th - 8th grade)	Wauwatosa West Building (9th - 12th grade)
2029-30	927	2,043
2035-36	832	1,839

Below is a list of the school districts in Wisconsin that utilize this model, the number of students that it serves, and the 2022-2023 rating on the Department of Public Instruction's Annual Report Card. Only schools that most closely resemble the size of Wauwatosa have been included in this report. There are other districts that leverage this model in Wisconsin, however, they are much smaller than Wauwatosa.

Middle Schools (Grades 7-8)

Note that these are the same schools listed under Model B.

- (1) Neenah Joint School District
 - (a) Shattuck Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 978
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Meets Expectations
- (2) Howard-Suamico School District

- (a) Bay View Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 896
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (3) West Bend School District
 - (a) Badger Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 851
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Meets Few Expectations
- (4) Hamilton School District
 - (a) Templeton Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 750
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Significantly Exceeds Expectations
- (5) Kimberly Area School District
 - (a) Gerritts Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 748
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (6) Mukwonago Area School District
 - (a) Park View Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 747
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (7) Waunakee Community School District
 - (a) Waunakee Middle School
 - (i) Number of Students: 682
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Meets Expectations

High Schools (Grades 9-12)

These are the schools that would be most similarly sized to one 9-12 high school in Wauwatosa.

- (1) Arrowhead Union High School
 - (a) Arrowhead High School
 - (i) Number of Students: 2086
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (2) Fond du Lac School District
 - (a) Fond du Lac High School
 - (i) Number of Students: 2006
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Meets Expectations
- (3) Neenah Joint School District
 - (a) Neenah High School
 - (i) Number of Students: 1943
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (4) Howard-Suamico School District
 - (a) Bay Port High School
 - (i) Number of Students: 1926

- (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations
- (5) Verona Area School District
 - (a) Verona Area High School
 - (i) Number of Students: 1802
 - (ii) DPI Report Card Rating: Exceeds Expectations

Academic Analysis

The literature on middle school and junior high school configuration is not complementary to either structure in regards to supporting academic achievement (Byrnes & Ruby, 2007; Jacob and Rockoff, 2011; Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010; Weiss & Kipnes, 2006). Jacob and Rockoff (2011) note that the middle school/junior high school change comes at an unfortunate time in students' developmental journey which is, "marked by major changes in attitudes and motivation, low self-esteem, poor ability to judge risks and consequences, decreased respect for authority, and other behaviors that may make students more difficult to educate" (p. 13). For this reason, the literature highly supports a Kindergarten - 8th grade (K-8), 9-12 configuration to mitigate the aforementioned adverse effects (Cook, MacCoun, Muschikin & Vigdor, 2007; Jacob & Rockoff, 2011; Weiss & Kipnes, 2006).

If it is the will of the community to maintain a separate middle school, research on the topic highlights that there is a greater negative impact on academic achievement when the transition occurs during the 6th grade year than when it occurs during the 7th grade year (Rockloff & Lockwood, 2010). This finding supports the decision to move to a JK-6 model. However, it cannot be overlooked that the aforementioned research states that school to school transitions negatively impact student academic achievement. By maintaining a separate middle school, so too would be maintained the added transition which research shows does have a negative impact on students' forward academic progress.

Knowing that the research does not present compelling rationale for a middle school or a junior high school, the Division of Academic Performance presents the following internal analysis of what one comprehensive middle school and one comprehensive high school would afford the local community from an academic perspective.

This model calls for a community that has had a structure of two middle schools and two high schools to reunite which does pose academic benefits. First and foremost, by having all students in grades 7-8 in one building and all students in grades 9-12 in another building, this model would allow for continuity, equity of offerings and efficiency of programming while also requiring less need for educators to travel to other schools. It would foster greater collaboration opportunities between educators in service of student learning. Additionally, if educators are not traveling and can

plant roots at one single school, they are more readily accessible to assist students that may need additional support outside of the regularly scheduled class time. Furthermore, this model opens up the possibility for there to be a greater breadth of elective course offerings as well as greater likelihood that advanced math opportunities would be available on the middle school campus. In the current model, some students that need access to advanced math courses at the middle school level need to travel to a high school. At the high school level, this model would offer a greater likelihood that niche courses would run. In the current model, courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) Art History, AP Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism, Musical Theatre, and Civil Engineering & Architecture (to name only a few) do not have enough enrollment to allow them to run every year or they may only run at one high school. This currently limits student's ability to take classes that align to strengths, passions and future career pathways. Additionally, by having all 9-12 grade students in the same building courses that often combine levels, such as Latin, French, and German, may be able to support stand alone levels of courses. For example, there may be enough students wanting to take French 1 and 2 that there could be a stand alone French 1 class and a stand alone French 2 class. In the current model world language courses other than Spanish often combine levels which presents challenges to ensuring an exceptional student experience.

However, some might argue that this model presents a loss in opportunities for students. For example, in the current two high school model, there are two leads to theatrical performances, two varsity basketball teams, two valedictorians, et cetera. While the same number (or more) co-curricular opportunities exist, due to student competition, it is likely that fewer students would have access to the aforementioned experiences and honors.

Social Emotional Analysis

In regard to advantages, this model brings together all Wauwatosa students as one cohesive cohort from their middle to high school experience and provides the opportunity to create a unified identity and coherent school culture for all students and families. It increases the number of students in one building, shrinking the focus of service delivery to two grade levels in this middle school and traditional high school configuration. Further, it brings consistency and familiarity in terms of developmental grouping and student experience. The typical range of social emotional interventions, supports, and a system for identifying and layering interventions would be comparable to that of the current Wauwatosa model. Similar extra and co-curricular activities would continue to be offered, though should there be only one team of each sport or activity, there may be limits to how many students can be involved. However, transition planning would be streamlined especially from

middle to senior high with only two schools to coordinate communication and events.

Further, professional learning may be more consistent to deliver from a district perspective, with one cohesive staff engaging in the same learning at the same time. Additionally, a higher number of staff in one building may mean more opportunities to provide flexible groupings and tailored social emotional interventions to varied student group sizes. This model may bring cohesiveness to the school community, unifying Wauwatosa students and families in one building with shared values and goals.

In regard to disadvantages, there are several to note. In this configuration, students would still experience two transitions, with a brief opportunity to build positive relationships with staff for just two years in seventh and eighth grade before transitioning buildings again. Traveling to one side of town for school may present a barrier to families, even if transportation is provided, given high traffic areas and multiple neighborhoods across Wauwatosa. Managing a higher number of students in the two buildings would prompt a need for staff to be even more vigilant with hallway and common area supervision to avoid dense passing times. This configuration may also pose a challenge for students used to learning in smaller elementary schools, convening in a larger 7 / 8 building, then attending one large high school. Further, with only one school option for grades seven and eight and high school, families would no longer have an option to intra-district transfer to a different school for mental health or safety purposes, which could lead to greater requests to open enroll out of the district or enroll in private school options.

Fiscal Analysis

Staffing implications

This model reduces approximately 33.4 FTE as a result of greater operational efficiency. A detailed accounting of FTE across support staff, teaching, and administrative positions is included below.

Existing Deferred Maintenance and ADA compliance costs

Deferred maintenance cost estimates for all secondary schools and ADA compliance cost estimates for both middle schools are identified in the table below. High School ADA compliance is pending completion as a result of the approved 2024 capital referendum and not included in this table. All cost estimates are 2026 dollars.

* A detailed analysis of all deferred maintenance items is pending further review in 2025. It is anticipated that the cost estimates below will increase.

* Longfellow MS	\$ 22,000,000
* Whitman MS	\$ 15,000,000
* Wauwatosa East HS	\$41,000,000
* Wauwatosa West HS	\$18,000,000
Total	\$ 96,000,000

This model would allow the District to forgo addressing deferred maintenance at both Whitman and Longfellow, which totals nearly \$27M.

Construction Costs

The cost associated with this facility model is \$343 million. The proposed projects at each building include addressing all outstanding deferred maintenance items.

In this model, the Wauwatosa East would be renovated and fully modernized, excluding the unused third floor. This project would create academically and age appropriate learning environments for students in grades seven and eight. The existing building is significantly larger than is required to accommodate these two grades so not all areas would be modernized. No new space would be constructed. The cost for this modernization project is at least approximately \$106.9 million.

Wauwatosa West High School would be expanded to accommodate all students in grades nine through twelve. This will require a significant addition to be constructed to the north end of the building. Additionally, the parking and vehicle circulation areas will also need to be greatly expanded to accommodate the doubling of students and staff on this site. As a result, all athletic facilities will need to be relocated to the current Whitman site. To serve the large number of high school students on this site, a four station fieldhouse will also need to be constructed to meet the scheduling demands for physical education programming. The cost for this expansion and modernization project is at least approximately \$222.9 million.

At the Whitman site, hazardous material will need to be removed from the existing building before being demolished, opening up land for the creation of new athletic fields. The cost to remove the existing building is approximately \$2 million. The construction of new parking, utilities, a football / soccer stadium with track, tennis courts, and a practice soccer field will cost approximately \$11.2 million. The total cost

to relocate the athletic facilities from West to the Whitman site is at least approximately \$13.2 million.

Wauwatosa East Construction	At least approximately \$106,900,000
Wauwatosa West Construction	At least approximately \$222,900,000
Athletic Complex at Whitman	At least approximately \$13,200,000

Total **\$343,000,000**

Operational Cost Savings

Combining all grade 7-8 students and grade 9-12 students in single schools will result in fewer administrative and support staff positions. The following proposed FTE reflects core content class sizes averages of 27-28 students in grades 7-8 and an average of 28-29 students per section in grades 9-12.

	Current FTE	Position	Proposed FTE	Salary Savings
Administrators	4	Principal	2	\$235,000
	6	Associate Principal	4	\$190,000
Pupil + Family Supports	4	Dean of Students	2	\$140,000
	14	School Counselors	12	\$140,000
	4	Mental Health Specialist	2	\$140,000
	2	Social Worker	2	\$0
	4	Healthroom Aide	2	\$50,000
Teachers	24.5	ELA	22.9	\$96,000
	25.7	Math	24.1	\$96,000
	24.5	Science	22.9	\$96,000
	24.5	Social Studies	22.9	\$96,000
	4	Library	2	\$130,000

		Media Specialist		
Operations	16	Admin Assistants	10	\$150,000
	4	Building Supervisor	2	\$100,000
	4	Building Lead	4	\$0
	11.86	Student Supervisor	6.86	\$125,000
Total	177.06		143.66	\$1,784,000

It is possible that additional FTE reductions in elective areas and, as a result of aligned school schedules and less teacher travel, would increase savings.

Staffing reductions made after the 2025-26 school year will reduce the projected operational savings associated with the implementation of the proposed model.

Transportation Costs

Costs of Keeping or Demolishing a Building (Longfellow and Whitman)

Mothball building - Relatively insignificant cost.
Demo to be studied.

Facility Usage Analysis

Facility utilization is dependent upon class size, course offerings and scheduling. As these variables change over time, so too will the utilization rate of each building. Given the projected student enrollment in 2030 and beyond, this model accommodates the anticipated demand and leaves significant available capacity for future use.

	Target Capacity (LRFP)	2029-30 Projected Population	% of Capacity Utilized 2029-30	Parking Stalls
Wauwatosa East	1215 (1519)	1055	87%	158 (7 ADA)
Wauwatosa West	952 (1190)	988	(4%+)	370 (10 ADA)
Longfellow	813 (956)	471	58%	223 (6 ADA)
Whitman	600 (706)	456	76%	201 (6 ADA)

Further Considerations

References

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