



Secondary School Configuration: Model B

Single District Middle School Model

Merging all 7th and 8th grade students into the current Longfellow building

[Summary of All Models](#)

Overview

This model outlines consolidation of all 7th and 8th grade operations within the current Longfellow Middle School building. This model would require the closure of Whitman Middle School, thereby decreasing the number of facilities that require ongoing maintenance and allowing District administrators to explore the development of an athletic complex on the current Whitman Middle School site. It would also require the District to address the deferred maintenance at Longfellow Middle School and ensure the facility meets ADA standards.

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

School Year	Longfellow MS	Wauwatosa East HS	Wauwatosa West HS
2029-30	927	1,055	988
2035-36	832	950	889

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.

- (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

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 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 does present the following internal analysis of what one comprehensive middle school could afford the local community. The merging of all 7th and 8th grade students to one school does provide academic benefits. 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. For example, 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 need to travel to a high school.

Social Emotional Analysis

In regard to advantages, this model increases the number of students in one building, shrinking the focus to two grade levels in terms of service delivery. Further, it brings consistency and familiarity in terms of developmental grouping and student experience. Middle school social emotional interventions, typical supports, and a system for identifying and layering interventions would be comparable to that of the current middle school model. Similar extra and co-curricular activities would continue to be offered.

Further, professional learning may be more consistent to deliver from a district perspective, with one cohesive staff engaging in the same activities 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 and building a shared culture rooted in common values and goals.

In regard to disadvantages, there are several to note. Bringing students together under one roof with shared values and goals, only to separate for their high school experience may negate any school climate and culture benefits realized by unifying seventh and eighth grade students under one roof. Similarly, students would still experience two transitions, with a brief opportunity to build positive relationships

with staff for just two years 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 the multiple neighborhoods across Wauwatosa. Managing a higher number of students in one building 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 returning to smaller high schools. Further, with only one school option for grades seven and eight, 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 16.43 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 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 Whitman Middle School, which totals nearly \$15M.

Construction Costs

The cost associated with this facility model is \$304.7 million. The proposed projects at each building include addressing all outstanding deferred maintenance items.

In this Model, Longfellow Middle School becomes the single school for all seventh and eighth grade students. The current facility is large enough to accommodate the projected combined enrollment but is dated and requires a full remodel of all spaces to create a modernized learning environment. No new construction is required. The cost for this project would be at least approximately \$77.1 million.

This model would require the District to remodel all areas of Wauwatosa East, excluding the unused third floor, which would be a substantial project. The abatement of asbestos and updating electrical and plumbing systems quickly makes this remodeling project challenging. No new space would be constructed. The cost for this would be at least approximately \$127.1 million.

Similar to Wauwatosa East, Wauwatosa West would require the District to remodel all areas of the existing building in order to provide appropriate learning environments. No new space would be constructed. The cost for this would be at least approximately \$100.5 million..

Longfellow Construction	At least approximately \$77,100,000
Wauwatosa East Construction	At least approximately \$127,100,000
Wauwatosa West Construction	At least approximately \$100,500,000
Total	\$304,700,000

Operational Cost Savings

Consolidating all grade 7 and 8 students in one building will result in fewer administrative, teaching, and support staff positions. The following proposed FTE reflects core content class sizes at 27-28 students per section for the new 7/8 building.

	Current FTE	Position	Proposed FTE	Salary Savings
Administrators	4	Principal	3	\$117,500
	6	Associate Principal	6	\$0
Pupil + Family Supports	4	Dean of Students	3	\$70,000
	14	School Counselors	12	\$140,000
	4	Mental Health Specialist	3	\$70,000
	2	Social Worker	3	-\$70,000

	4	Healthroom Aide	3	\$25,000
Teachers	24.5	ELA	23.5	\$60,000
	25.7	Math	24.7	\$60,000
	24.5	Science	23.5	\$60,000
	24.5	Social Studies	23.5	\$60,000
	4	Library Media Specialist	3	\$65,000
Operations	16	Admin Assistants	13	\$75,000
	4	Building Supervisor	3	\$50,000
	4	Building Lead	3	\$50,000
	11.86	Student Supervisor	10.43	\$35,750
Total	177.06		160.63	\$868,250

It is possible that additional FTE reductions from consolidated Allied Arts sections 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

Cost of Keeping or Demolishing a Building

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

- Byrnes, V. & Ruby, A. (2007). Comparing achievement between K-8 and middle schools: A large-scale empirical study. *American Journal of Education*, 114, 101-135.
- Cook, P. J., MacCoun, R., Muschkin, C. & Vigdor, J. (2008). The negative impacts of starting middle school in sixth grade. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 27, 104-121.
- Jacob, B. A. & Rockoff, J. E. (2011). *Organizing schools to improve student achievement: Start times, grade configurations, and teacher assignments* (Discussion Paper No. 2011-08).
- Rockoff, J. E. & Lockwood, B. B. (2010). Student in the middle: Impacts of grade configuration in public schools. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(11/12), 1051-1061.
- Weiss, C. C. & Kipnes, L. (2006). Reexamining middle school effects: A comparison of middle grades students in middle school and K-8 schools. *American Journal of Education*, 112(2), 239-272.