



# Answering Your Questions

## *Q&A for the Incline community*

*The Washoe County School District (WCSD) is providing additional information and facts to many of the questions posed at the recent community engagement events in the Incline Village community. We will continue our engagement with the families, staff and community members in Incline Village.*

### **Why was the decision made to close Incline Middle School without input from the community?**

No decisions have been made regarding the future of schools in Incline. The Facilities Modernization Plan (FMP) process was designed to explore different options and get community feedback before recommendations are made to the WCSD Board of Trustees. Draft options (which include maintaining the current operating model) have been developed to begin conversations with the community.

### **Why weren't the Incline schools made aware of the data collection and site tours?**

After approval during the public meeting of the Board of Trustees, WCSD and CannonDesign entered into an agreement on July 27, 2022 for an FMP study across the entire district and all 102 WCSD schools. The scope of work included performance of educational equity and adequacy assessments that blend with WCSD Ed Spec standards. This work was completed by a team of in-field and desktop reviewers beginning in early August 2022. All school site administrators/school custodial staff at all WCSD schools were notified of these visits in advance, and this includes all Incline Village schools.

### **Why wasn't the middle school leadership and staff notified of the school closure?**

WCSD and CannonDesign are in the exploratory phase of the FMP process and there are many options to discuss and explore. At this time, no decision has been made to close Incline Middle School. As part of the district's FMP community

engagement plan, a Regional Conversation meeting was scheduled for April 5 and ConnectEd messaging was sent out to families and staff for all three Incline schools on March 21 and April 4. In addition, on March 30 the Chief Operating Officer and Area 3 Associate Chief of Teaching, Learning and Leadership met with Incline MS staff in advance of the meeting to answer questions they had posed.

Additional community meetings and a survey will be conducted in Fall 2023 to solicit input and measure the level of support of different draft options.

### **Is the option to close the middle school based on saving money for the district?**

Charged with putting WCSD student achievement first and placing emphasis on effective stewardship of district assets, CannonDesign was contracted to conduct a comprehensive assessment of every WCSD facility. The primary objectives of the Facility Modernization Plan (FMP) study are to improve facility equity and efficiency across all schools in the district.

### **What is the real timeline for the Facility Modernization Plan process?**



CannonDesign began their facility study analysis and data collection in August 2022 when their agreement with WCSD was approved. This extensive work, including an online community survey and engagement with district staff and a group of community stakeholders, continued through March 2023. Community conversations began in April 2023 in many school communities and will be scheduled for follow-up conversations in Fall 2023. Also, a district-wide survey was conducted in Spring 2023 and another will be available in the Fall to provide another opportunity for the community to provide their feedback and input. At the end of 2023, CannonDesign will provide consultant recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Once the Board approves any options, the implementation period will begin. This process would take place over the next 10 years. Each

project or initiative approved will be on its own timeline over that time period, based on when they are approved.

**Does the Incline area generate a disproportionately greater amount of property taxes compared to other areas of the County. If so, why don't Incline property taxes support only the Incline schools?**

An analysis of actual Fiscal Year 2022-23 property taxes received through early April shows that the Incline area generated approximately 9.5% of school district operating and debt rate property tax revenues. This is considerably greater than Incline's share of the total population in Washoe County, which is 2%.

However, property tax revenues from the school operating rate of 75 cents are not received by Washoe County School District and instead are remitted by the County Treasurer's Office directly to the State Education Fund, where it is pooled with other counties' school property taxes and other school operating revenues, such as the portion of the state sales tax dedicated to schools. These revenues are then distributed to each district on a per-pupil basis based on equity adjustments in the state funding formula.

The State Constitution and Nevada statutes do not allow disparate funding for school districts or areas within a school district based on the relative wealth of an area. Section 2 of the State Constitution calls for a uniform system of common schools. Nevada Revised Statute 387.121 lays out principles of equality and equity even further. Subsection 1 states "The Legislature declares that the proper objective of state financial aid to public education is to ensure each Nevada child a reasonably equal educational opportunity. Recognizing wide local variations in wealth and costs per pupil, this State should supplement local financial ability to whatever extent necessary in each school district to provide programs of instruction in both compulsory and elective subjects that offer full opportunity for every Nevada child to receive the benefit of the purposes for which public schools are maintained."

Thus, it would be a violation of State law for funding for students in each area of the state to be contained to what that area generates in taxes. The State's funding model attempts to equalize opportunities for all students statewide using various equity adjustments to reflect the size of a district, economies of scale, revenues, and other factors. This is a state formula and allocation process.

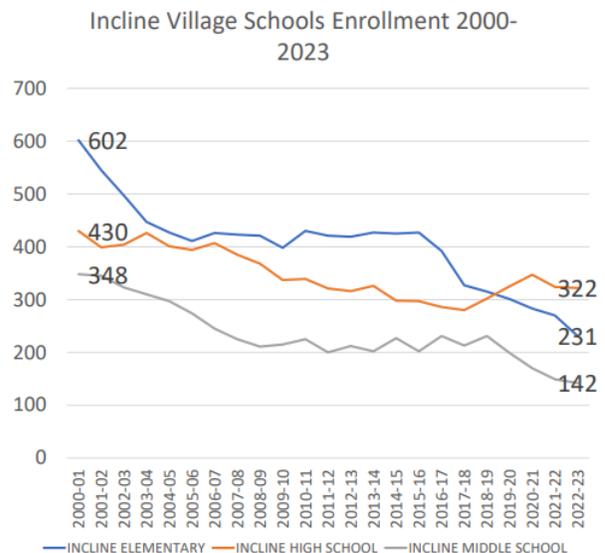
## What is the enrollment for Incline schools?

Enrollment projections: Pk-12 enrollment has dropped in half since 2000-01. Enrollment is projected to continue to decline over the next five years.

These projections are based off of a variety of data sources, including existing students within WCSD (i.e. the declining enrollment at IES is a strong indicator of probable continuation of declining enrollment at IMS in years to come), as well as historical trends (the enrollment at IES has declined each year for the last seven (7) consecutive years), and detailed demographic and economic trends and information compiled by WCSD staff, sourced from Washoe County, the State of Nevada as well as other sources. These sources are combined with multiple individual inputs from WCSD staff including Incline area principals. Average Lake Tahoe Regional real estate prices have increased steadily for the past 5+ years in excess of 50% increases, and rental rate averages in the Incline Village and Lake Tahoe areas have followed a similar trend. All while supply of new residential units has remained relatively flat and long-term rental units have decreased, coinciding with an increase in short-term rental trends.

### Historical Enrollments (screenshot from FMP Presentation 04-05-23)

- The three schools have declined from **1380** PK-12 students in 2000-21 down to **<700** currently. (-50%)
- Incline schools declined in all but 4 years since 2000.



Additionally, Incline Village school capacities, based on current class size standards and current floorplans, as built are:

Elementary – 700 students

Middle – 603 students

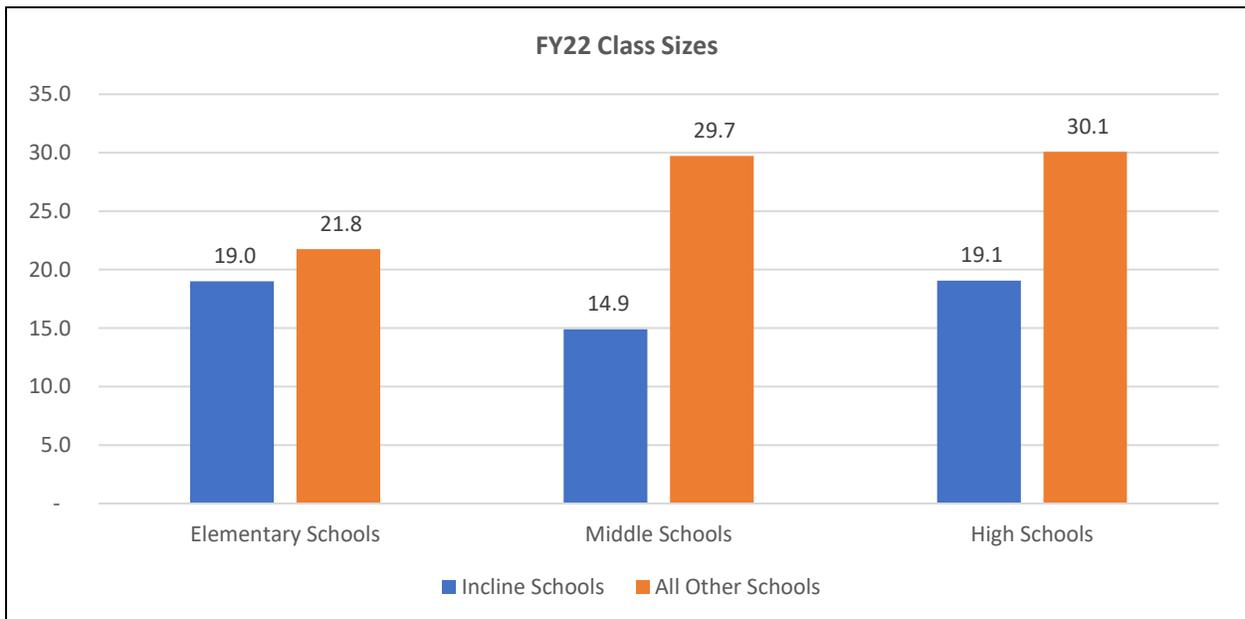
High – 929 students

### What are class sizes in Incline schools versus other schools?

See the table below for Fiscal Year 2021-22. Class sizes for Incline Elementary are slightly smaller than average class sizes at other schools in Washoe County School District. The average class sizes of the middle school (14.9 class size) and high school (19.1) are substantially lower than other middle and high schools in the District. The middle school has ½ of the average class sizes of other middle schools and the high school’s average class size is 2/3rd of that of other high schools.

School Type	Incline			All Other Schools			Class Size Difference
	Enrollment	General Ed Teacher Positions	Average Class Size	Enrollment	General Ed Teacher Positions	Average Class Size	
Elementary Schools	266	14	19.0	27,769	1,276	21.8	(2.8)
Middle Schools	149	10	14.9	13,170	443	29.7	(14.8)
High Schools	324	17	19.1	19,257	640	30.1	(11.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>60,196</b>	<b>2,359</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>(7.5)</b>

These class sizes are shown in the table below:



## What is the funding for the Incline schools and how does this compare to other schools in WCSD?

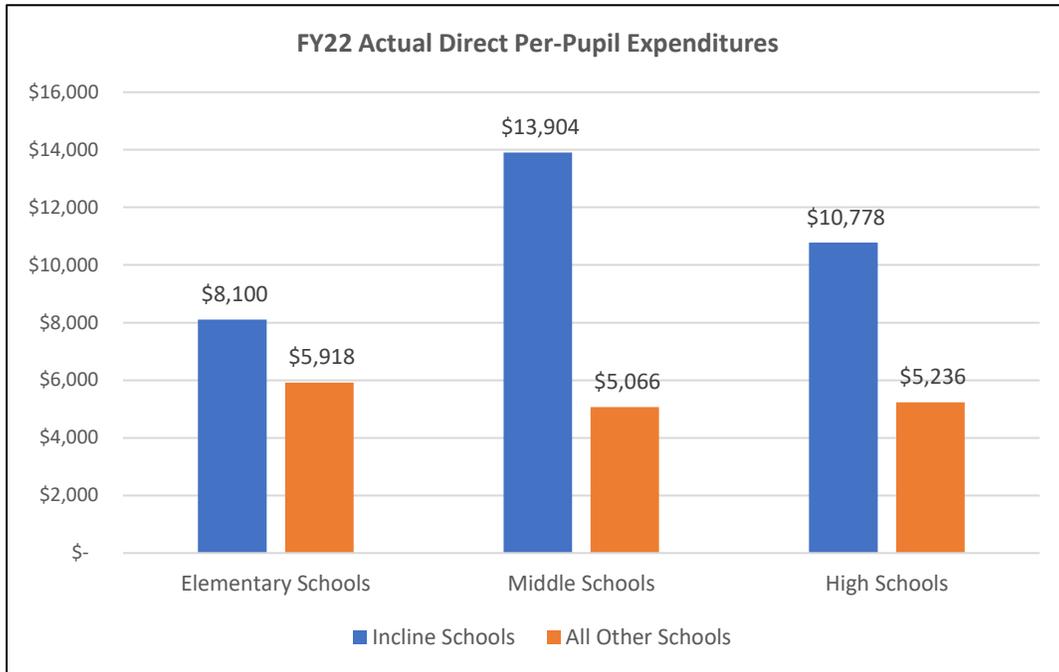
Washoe County School District spends significantly more at each of the Incline schools on a per-pupil basis than the average of other schools in the district.

Direct expenditures per pupil in FY 2021-22 at Incline schools were:

- Incline ES: direct cost of \$8,100 per pupil, versus \$5,918 for all other elementary schools
- Incline MS: direct cost of \$13,904 per pupil, versus \$5,066 for all other middle schools
- Incline HS: direct cost of \$10,778 per pupil, versus \$5,236 for all other high schools

School Type	Incline			All Other Schools			Direct Cost per Student Difference
	Enrollment	Direct Costs	Direct Costs Per Student	Enrollment	Direct Costs	Direct Costs Per Student	
Elementary Schools	266	\$ 2,154,721	\$ 8,100	27,769	\$164,326,896	\$ 5,918	\$ 2,183
Middle Schools	149	\$ 2,071,734	\$ 13,904	13,170	\$ 66,716,276	\$ 5,066	\$ 8,838
High Schools	324	\$ 3,492,207	\$ 10,778	19,257	\$100,826,853	\$ 5,236	\$ 5,543
Options & K-12 Schools	-	\$ -	\$ -	1,223	\$ 5,591,568	\$ 4,572	\$ (4,572)
<b>Total</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>\$ 7,718,662</b>	<b>\$ 10,445</b>	<b>61,419</b>	<b>\$337,461,593</b>	<b>\$ 5,494</b>	<b>\$ 4,950</b>

Combined, Washoe County School District spent \$10,445 per pupil in direct costs in Fiscal Year 2021-22 at Incline schools, versus a District-wide average of \$5,494 at all other schools. The direct cost of operating schools in Incline was thus almost double that of other schools.



### **Can Incline form its own school district?**

State law does not allow for the breakup of a county school district. Only if Incline Village/Crystal Bay became its own county, then a new school district would be formed in the area.

However, that would not mean that Incline would get to “keep” property taxes collected from that area. As explained above, any system in which a wealthy county school district -- or by extension any wealthy area within a county school district -- would receive greater tax funding per student because of that wealth would be a violation of state law. It would be illegal for students in poorer counties to receive \$4,000 for education while students in an affluent county received \$20,000, as a hypothetical example. This is why there were “equity adjustments” in both the old funding formula the State used since 1967 (called the Nevada Plan) and in the new funding formula (called the Pupil Centered Funding Plan).

### **Can Incline be recognized as a rural school district?**

There is no statutory term of “rural” or “urban” used when it comes to school district operations or funding in Nevada law. Colloquially, people refer to Clark and

Washoe as “urban” school districts and all others (including Carson City which isn’t rural) as “rural”.

That aside, the explanation of why smaller county school districts in rural areas receive more per-pupil funding than Washoe and Clark has to do with the sparseness of the populations in those areas and their relative lack of economies of scale to distribute administrative and indirect costs. Because of the lack of population densities in many rural areas, class sizes in schools are necessarily smaller. Otherwise, you might have to bus a student 50-100 miles to a school. Also, the small student population means a smaller base to distribute the cost of a district’s superintendent, personnel department, business office, etc. It’s just hard to operate as efficiently as a larger district like Washoe or Clark. For these reasons, there is a small district/small school adjustment in the funding formula.

If the Incline area was its own school district, it might receive more funding on a per-pupil basis due its small size, probably in the range of what Washoe County School District spends currently, but it would also have higher administrative and indirect costs than Washoe.

It would not be the case that because Incline Village/Crystal Bay is wealthier and generates more taxes per-capita, it would receive greater funding per pupil. As discussed previously, this would be a violation of the principle in NRS 387.121 of the State’s intention “to ensure each Nevada child a reasonably equal educational opportunity.” If not for this principle, Washoe County School District itself would have much higher per-pupil funding than it does, due to its relative affluence. The school funding formula attempts to equalize resources for every student across the state rather than being based on the wealth and tax-generating abilities of an area.

### **Does WCSD own Incline Middle School? And what about the deed restrictions for the property?**

Yes, WCSD fully owns Incline Middle School.

#### ***Initial Purchase:***

In April 1980, the Washoe County School District (WCSD) purchased the Incline Middle School site (APN 127-030-16; 980 Southwood Blvd.) from the Incline

Village General Improvement District (IVGID) per Doc #668923 for the amount of \$284,628. This amount is substantiated in both the WCSD and IVGID Board minutes, by the Title Policy and Escrow Instructions through First Commercial Title Inc. of Reno, NV, and by the court order described below. The escrow could not have closed without the financial commitment being paid in full.

***Deed Restrictions:***

The transfer of the deed from IVGID to WCSD came with certain Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&R's) that effectively limits the use of the land to "park and recreational and related purposes" for a period of fifty (50) years from the date of recordation, which was on December 13, 1977. Thus, this restriction is in effect and binding until the CC&R's sunset on December 14, 2027, at which time the property could be used for any legal purpose that Federal, State, and Local laws permit.

***Court Case:***

On April 17, 1980, and just several days prior to the deed transfer from IVGID to WCSD being recorded, Judge Peter Breen of the Second Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada entered an order that essentially allowed WCSD to build the middle school notwithstanding the current deed restrictions. This order was petitioned by WCSD and IVGID for what appears to have been as a result of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party dispute questioning whether a school was allowed on the property per the deed restriction. The court order allowed WCSD to build the school without delay.

The WCSD paid IVGID \$284,628 for the property and has clear title to the property subject to the applicable conditions of the Court's Order, CC&R's, the Joint Use Agreement with IVGID, and all other items identified in the Preliminary Title Report.

**Did district leaders meet with local organizations before the April 5 meeting?**

The following communications occurred from WCSD prior to the FMP meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup>:

- Small group meetings with all Trustees on February 13, 15 and 21
- Board of Trustees presentation of the FMP updates on February 28

- Stakeholder briefings (IVGID, UNR, Commissioner Alexis Hill, Duffield Foundation, NLT Boys & Girls Club, Incline Village Crystal Bay Community & Business Association) –individual briefings throughout March, including updates via email on March 16
- Principal briefings (ES, MS, and HS) – week of March 13<sup>th</sup>
- Staff notification via emails from principals March 20
- WEA leadership notified March 21
- In-person meeting with all IMS Staff on March 30
- Connect Ed messages to community on March 21 and April 4

### **What is the WCSD Administrative Regulation 7087 revision timeline?**

The Board of Trustees reviewed and acted on the updated Board Policy 7086 – School Closure during Open Public Meetings held on June 21, June 28 and [July 26, 2022](#).

Board of Trustees approved removal and/or deletion of Administrative Regulation 7086, School Closure during an Open Public Meeting on [March 14, 2023](#).

A proposed Draft Administrative Regulation 7087 was published on [www.washoeschools.net](http://www.washoeschools.net) for public comment beginning on March 16, 2023, and remained open through April 19, 2023. The WCSD is reviewing the Public Comment received on this Draft Administrative Regulation and may determine whether to adopt the new Administrative Regulation as proposed, with revisions, or not at all, at the sole discretion of the Superintendent.

### **Why aren't Incline community members on WCSD Committees?**

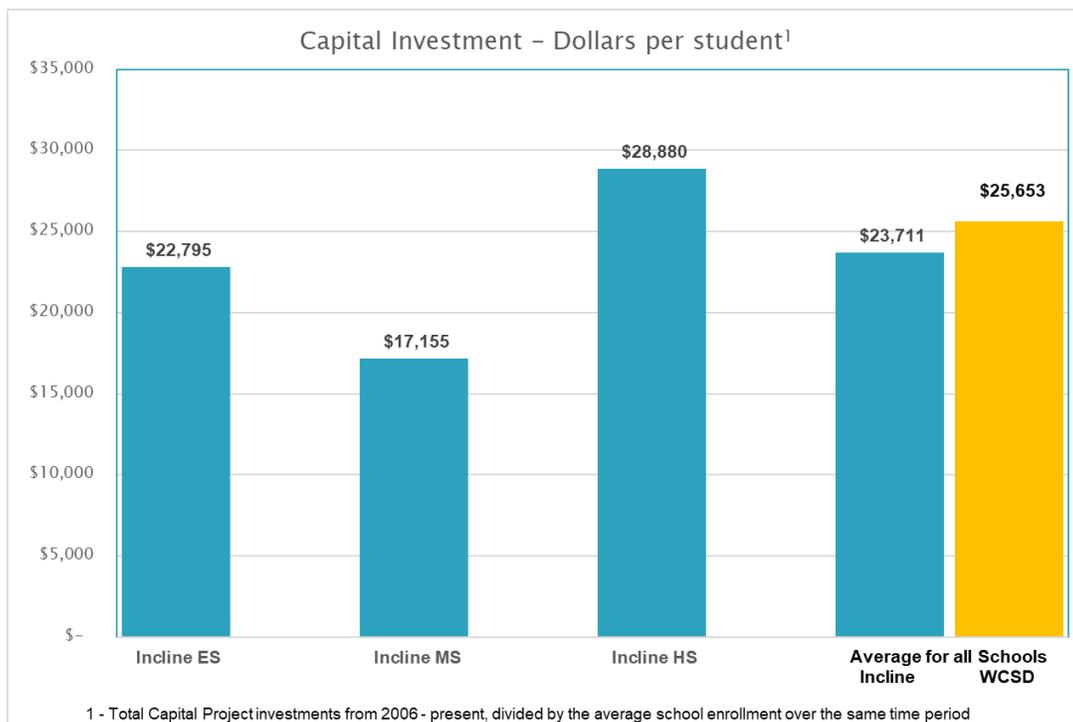
Both the Zoning Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees each have two (2) members who represent the Incline Village community as well as multiple At-Large representatives and both Public Bodies conduct all of their meetings and work in accordance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

## TRPA has rules and regulations regarding building in the Incline community – were you aware of this and how do you plan to work with them if changes are made to Incline schools?

WCSD is very familiar with TRPA and Washoe County requirements for buildings and all construction. We have worked with these and all jurisdictional agencies for decades and will continue to do so through any future facility modifications.

## What capital expenditures have been made to Incline schools?

WCSD has invested nearly \$1 billion into all our school facilities since 2017. We are grateful to all members of our community and are committed to investing equitably and professionally using data driven decisions and cost-effective solutions. As a function of enrollment, Incline area schools have received a comparable share of Capital Investments to the rest of the district, as illustrated by this data.



## **What methodology did you use to determine future enrollment projections for Incline schools?**

All three WCSD schools in Incline Village have been on a consistent, 22-year trend of declining enrollment. The current enrollment at these schools is now half of what it was for the 2000-2001 school year. Whether that plateaus or continues to decline as projected does not preclude a conversation around facility consolidation. Current enrollments at the elementary and middle school levels are primarily indicators of future enrollments in the secondary levels. Additionally, we used data from the State Demographer and other more localized sources of information such as The Tahoe Prosperity Center (<https://tahoeprosperity.org/>)

## **Did you consider and include pre-school numbers in Incline?**

Based on community input regarding pre-school aged populations within Incline Village, additional investigation is being conducted and will be incorporated into future projections.

## **Do you have data that supports either K-6 and 7-12 or K-8 and 9-12 models for schools?**

Schools across the nation and even within WCSD have and are currently successfully being operated utilizing a variety of grade configurations.

## **In either of these scenarios, how would you support the mental and emotional well-being of all students?**

Certainly, there are concerns about middle school aged students interacting with older high school or younger elementary school aged students. Concerns include physical and social harassment and bullying. The size difference could be intimidating, and age difference between grade levels, etc. Through creative configurations and scheduling, options that may not seem feasible now, the physical set up of the building, use of resources, and scheduling can create an environment to minimize interactions. There may also be mentoring opportunities created in these scenarios.

Also, no matter what the future configuration will be for schools in Incline Village, we will continue to support the mental and emotional well-being of all students.

**What would these scenarios look like for students? Specifically, how would students be separated by appropriate grade levels? How would you support elective classes? How would extra-curricular activities work?**

Design decisions have not been specified at this time, but there would be a thorough review of the space and student needs to determine the configuration. Middle school aged students and their classrooms would be in a separate area of the school to allow them to be part of the high school or elementary school while maintaining a more controlled environment. Schedules would include thoughtful planning for lunch/recess and PE.

A 7-12 configuration would allow students to embrace their high school for six years, which allows for deeper relationships with teachers and families. Students can also take advantage of increased academic rigor through advanced courses (Algebra, Geometry). There would also be the benefit of maintaining consistency for children needing services (Special Education Case Manager consistency, EL, etc.).

Concepts to facilitate both a 7-12 environment within the existing high school building and/or to facilitate a K-8 environment within the existing elementary school building are being developed by CannonDesign and will be shared in Fall 2023. However, specific details of building modifications will not be developed as part of this conceptual study.

**How would school staffing be impacted by any potential changes or if we stay the same?**

***Certified staff:***

Due to its low enrollment and still meeting the need to offer all courses for a middle school, Incline Middle School is a fixed allocation school. There are 10 general ed teacher allocations. If the staffing guidelines were followed as we do for all other middle schools (30.5 students per allocation), IMS would have five general ed teacher allocations for 2022-2023 and four for 2023-2024 with

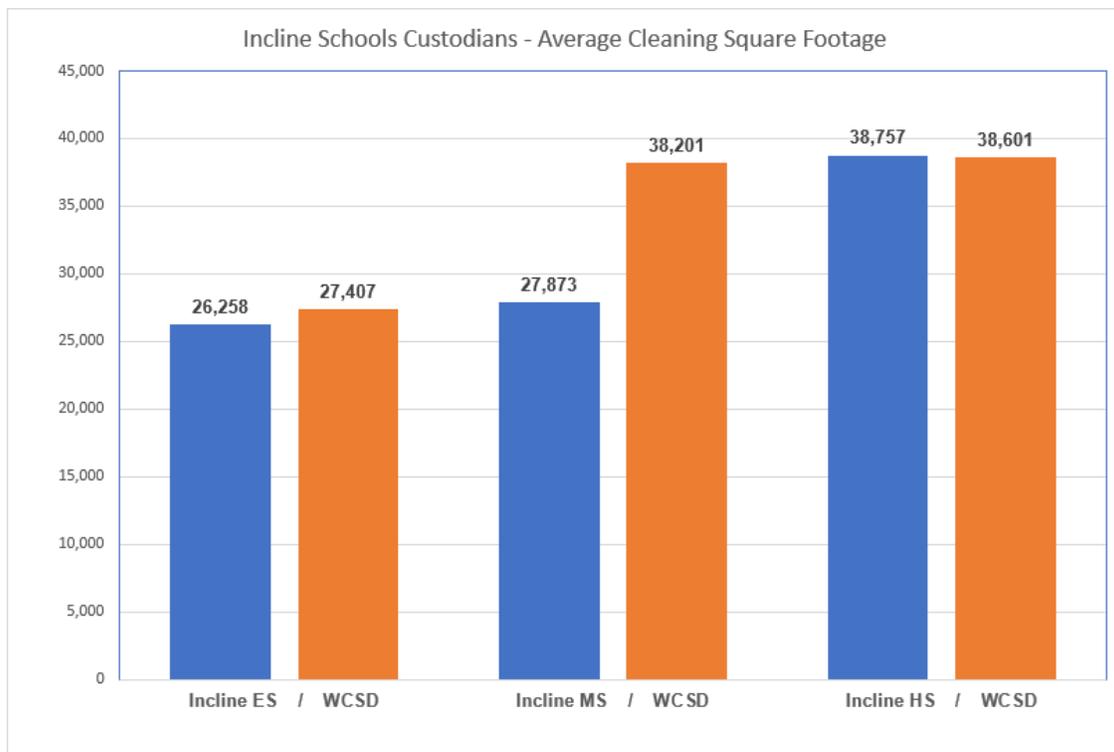
projected enrollment. They also have six additional certified allocations in specialty positions such as alt ed, music, special education, librarian and counselor.

Allocations at the high school are fixed as well under the same concept as the middle school. There are 18 general ed allocations given. If staffing guidelines were followed as with all other high schools, there would be 11 for 2022-2023 and 10 for 2023-2024 with projected enrollment. There are approximately 12 additional certified allocations at the high school between the specialty positions and grant funded positions.

At the elementary school, allocations are based on enrollment in line with all other elementary schools in our district.

***Custodial staff:***

WCSD allocates custodial staff at a level equal to other schools across the district at ES and HS levels, however additional allocations at the IMS provide a greater level of housekeeping allocations than the rest of WCSD middle schools, as illustrated by this data chart.



However, despite WCSD’s increasing wages to custodians by over 20% in 2022, and multiple hiring and retention incentives, Incline area schools have and

continue to endure chronic unfilled positions amongst custodians, resulting in negative impacts for students and staff. Due in large part to the remote location, and severe cost of living imbalances, of the allocated custodial positions since 2020, several examples of current vacancies include:

- ES Custodian position – unfilled since October 2020
- HS Custodian position – unfilled since April 2020
- HS Lead Custodian position – unfilled since October 2021
- HS Groundskeeper position – unfilled since April 2022

**Has the district considered paying Incline staff members more due to the unique circumstances?**

In the WEA negotiated agreement, teachers at Incline schools qualify for a “geographic allowance” which gives them an additional \$765.93 for the 2022-2023 school year, which gives them additional compensation. (Article 24.10.1)

**If a school is closed in Incline and future enrollment warrants the need for another school property, do you have a plan to be able to purchase a site?**

No decision has been made to close Incline Middle School. However, should Incline Middle School cease to be operated as a traditional school, the district’s first interest would be to partner with the community to repurpose it for another use, while retaining underlying ownership and preserving the opportunity to return it to service as a traditional public school if needed.

**Our community has a lot of ideas, thoughts, statistics and data that we would like to share with the district. How can we do this?**

The district welcomes your input and feedback. You may send your information, input and data with references to [building@washoeschools.net](mailto:building@washoeschools.net)

This email will be monitored, and information will be forwarded to the appropriate district department and staff member.