

February 14, 2018

FAC Preliminary Recommendations

To: Monona Grove Board of Education
From: MGSD Facilities Advisory Committee

On August 23, 2017 the Monona Grove Board of Education formed the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) consisting of 20 community members from throughout the District. The FAC was charged with developing facilities options that address the District's capacity, capital maintenance and learning environment needs.

Thus far, we have:

- met seven times over four months;
- reviewed enrollment projections and building capacity data;
- learned about the District's facilities and athletics / co-curricular needs;
- explored various facilities options, and;
- narrowed recommendations to those that best meet the long-term needs of the district.

The following summarizes our work to-date and our preliminary consensus recommendations.

PROCESS & APPROACH

Significant facilities planning was done in the District prior to the formation of our committee including an extensive facilities assessment in 2015. That assessment helped inform the work of the District's Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee (LRFPC), whose recommendations were adopted by the Board on July 22, 2015 (see attached). We view our work as an extension of the LRFPC.

The FAC has utilized the best available enrollment projections and adopted a long-term approach to develop a facilities plan that will meet the District's current and future needs.

When utilizing projections, we used data on resident student enrollment only. We felt it was important to plan based on projected resident enrollment because the District has some flexibility in managing the size of its open enrollment population if its facilities are at capacity.

NEEDS

In reviewing the work of the LRFPC and other data, we identified five significant needs, each of which is described below.

Additional Capacity

The District's resident enrollment is projected to increase by approximately 1,250 students over the next 20 years (excludes open enrollment and off-site 4K students). This projected growth is in addition to the actual growth of approximately 400 students since the 2010-11 school year.

Much of this projected growth is expected to be in the Village and Town of Cottage Grove, placing a strain on the existing schools. Taylor Prairie School is projected to exceed capacity by 2019-20, Cottage Grove School by 2022-23, and Glacial Drumlin School in 2020-21 (see attached).

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CURRENT SCHOOL CAPACITIES AND PROJECTED RESIDENT STUDENT ENROLLMENT

School	School Capacity	2022-23 Enrollment*	2027-28 Enrollment*	2036-37 Enrollment*
Cottage Grove	497	512	561	681
Taylor Prairie	384	427	473	590
Winnequah	638	481	477	499
Glacial Drumlin	876	903	980	1067
Monona Grove High School	1,256	1,128	1,201	1,381

*Resident Students Only

	More than 25 students under capacity
	Between 25 students under to 25 students over
	More than 25 students over capacity

Given this projected enrollment growth, our committee has focused much of its time exploring 4K-8 facilities options that create sufficient capacity through new construction, grade reconfiguration, and building remodeling.

Capital Maintenance

Our school buildings require a substantial investment in physical infrastructure to ensure they operate safely and efficiently. In total, the District has identified \$16.4 million in priority capital maintenance items. The identified capital maintenance needs at Winnequah alone account for nearly half of this total – \$8 million.

Flexibility

There is a growing need within our District for flexible, adaptable spaces capable of serving a variety of uses, teaching methods, learning needs and changes over time. Where practical, it is important that a school's physical space accommodate evolving instructional practices.

It is well beyond our committee's scope to recommend specific design features. However, all the options explored by the FAC devote funding to remodeling and updating our existing facilities.

Grade Alignment

The Committee felt strongly that our 5th graders are best served in an elementary setting. At the same time, shifting Cottage Grove 5th graders to the elementary level helps alleviate the overcrowding at Glacial Drumlin School, while serving the best interest of our students.

Athletic Facilities

The District has a shortage of on-site co-curricular and athletics facilities. As a result, our students of all ages are spread throughout community sites for practices and game play. This presents several financial and logistical challenges including site scheduling, transportation, communication, and student supervision. Additionally, current facilities (track, tennis) are in disrepair and need upgrades.

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RECOMMENDED OPTION

We have carefully reviewed seven different facilities options, each of which varied in philosophy, organization, scope, grade configuration and cost. These seven options, their associated preliminary costs and their estimated tax impacts are attached.

We are recommending Option B. Option B proposes to:

- Expand K-8 building capacity to meet long-term projected enrollment growth.
 - Alleviate overcrowding at Glacial Drumlin School by shifting Cottage Grove 5th grade students to an elementary setting. Glacial Drumlin School thus serves 6th – 8th grade students district-wide, better aligning the District’s K-8 grade configuration.
 - Build a new school on District-owned land in Cottage Grove for grades 3 – 5. The new school creates needed capacity in Cottage Grove to accommodate enrollment growth, thus relieving pressure on Glacial Drumlin School, Taylor Prairie School and Cottage Grove School.
- Address \$16.4 million in District-wide capital maintenance needs.
 - Invest in existing school infrastructure to extend the lifespan of current buildings and building systems.
- Create flexible learning environments.
 - Remodel various spaces within the District’s existing schools to address changing instructional practices, create equity between schools and expand shared spaces (cafeteria, IMC, gymnasium, etc).
- Centralize competition fields and reduce the use of shared facilities.
 - Reduce the use of municipal facilities while keeping football, tennis and track at the high school. Upgrade current athletics/co-curricular facilities.

Option B employs a “Grade Transitions” model. All Cottage Grove students in a particular grade attend school together. All Cottage Grove 4K-K students attend Taylor Prairie. Students then transition to Cottage Grove School for grades 1-2 before transitioning to the new 3-5 school.

The Board may wish to consider Option D, a variation on Option B. There is one important distinction between these two options: the configuration of grades 4K-2 in Cottage Grove. Option D employs a “Neighborhood School” model. Under this option, Cottage Grove School and Taylor Prairie School are both utilized as 4K-2 schools. School attendance boundaries are used to determine students’ school assignments.

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Committee members preferred Option B - the “Grade Transitions” model. A primary concern was the implementation of attendance boundaries in Cottage Grove with the “Neighborhood Schools” concept.

NEXT STEPS

This recommendation requires a significant investment by District taxpayers in our schools. We believe this investment is important, and necessary, to meet the needs of our growing district. However, we also believe the community deserves a voice on an issue of this importance.

We therefore recommend the Board:

1. Consider and discuss our committee’s recommended option;
2. Distribute a community-wide survey that gathers residents’ opinions on facilities priorities and project costs / tax impact.

We believe this survey will help the FAC formulate a final advisory recommendation. The survey results will help our committee validate, prioritize and, if necessary, revise the recommended option described above.

3. Gather input from administrators and staff.

ADDITIONAL KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Maywood

Our committee spent considerable time discussing Maywood. Maywood is a District-owned elementary school that is currently being leased to the Madison Metropolitan School District. We recognize that many within the District will question the need for additional school capacity, pointing instead to Maywood as an option for our projected growth. We believe there are several reasons why Maywood is not a viable option:

1. Limited Capacity – Our long-term needs significantly exceed Maywood’s capacity of 300.
2. Operational Costs – Operating Maywood as a District school does not create enough capacity to solve the long-term need for a new school in Cottage Grove. Therefore, operating Maywood as a District school will require bringing two schools online – Maywood and the new school in Cottage Grove. Operational costs associated with the facilities options that utilize Maywood are therefore approximately double those of Options B & D.
3. Higher Remodeling Costs – The scope of renovations and additions required to bring Maywood to an equitable standard are significant. Therefore, the facilities options utilizing Maywood were the most expensive that we reviewed.

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4. Programmatic Limitations – It is difficult to deliver comprehensive, equitable middle school programming, whether delivered at Maywood or Winnequah, to a group of 250 students, Monona’s approximate middle school population.
5. Not Supported by Enrollment Projections – Enrollment growth is expected in the Cottage Grove portion of the District. Expanding capacity in Monona by operating Maywood as a District school creates a mismatch between the District’s available capacity and where that capacity is needed.

Although not a viable option for facilities planning, our committee recommends the District develop a long-term plan for Maywood.

Nichols

Similarly, some may believe the Nichols building represents a long-term solution to our projected enrollment growth. However, the vast majority of the Nichols building is being used by the District Office and by MG21, the District’s project-based charter high school. The building currently does not have available capacity for multiple grade levels.

Monona Grove High School

Monona Grove High School is currently well under capacity. That said, projections suggest that high school enrollment will increase steadily. The District should monitor projected growth at the high school. Based on current enrollment projections, the District may need to add capacity at the high school with a potential addition in approximately 10 years.

Consequences of Inaction

While doing nothing may seem like a viable option, there are several consequences to this approach:

- Projected over-capacity in three of five buildings in the next five years;
- Strain on students and staff due to overcrowding;
- Deteriorating buildings;
- Increasing construction and financing costs;
- Additional deferred maintenance costs

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the facilities planning process and submit this preliminary recommendation. We look forward to reviewing the results of the community survey and submitting our final recommendations to the Board.