SUMMARY OF PLANNING OPTIONS

I. Maintain Current Educational Facilities Configuration

I.A. Without redistricting
- Responds to the wishes of the community as expressed at the Community Listening Sessions, and to the direction established by the Board of Education.
- Preserves capacity against potential future growth, especially in the North.
- Allows time to study direction of enrollment trends.
- Does not preclude reducing inventory of administration buildings (e.g., moving BOE to Dennett Road).

I.B. With redistricting
- Overall under-utilization will continue.
- Disparities in utilization will continue.
- Spreads capital and operational funds across a larger inventory, so fewer projects will be funded and more building deficiencies will persist.

Concerns:
- Decisions about allocation of capital funds must be made (see below).
- Can be combined with a voluntary redistricting program to mitigate enrollment disparities and support educational programs (likely at the high school level).

Implementation process:
- No action needed with State or County.
- Determine needed capital improvements (see III. below):

II. Change Current Educational Facilities Configuration

II.A. School Closure/Consolidation

II.B. Grade band re-configuration

III. Capital Improvements

III.A. Widespread Improvements: Capital projects for every school in inventory

III.B. Targeted Improvements: Larger projects to address the most pressing educational and building performance needs

III.C. Major Projects: A limited number of comprehensive major projects.

I. MAINTAIN CURRENT EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES CONFIGURATION

I.A. Without redistricting

Pro:
- Responds to the wishes of the community as expressed at the Community Listening Sessions, and to the direction established by the Board of Education.
- Preserves capacity against potential future growth, especially in the North.
- Allows time to study direction of enrollment trends.
- Does not preclude reducing inventory of administration buildings (e.g., moving BOE to Dennett Road).

Con:
- Overall under-utilization will continue.
- Disparities in utilization will continue.
- Spreads capital and operational funds across a larger inventory, so fewer projects will be funded and more building deficiencies will persist.

Concerns:
- Decisions about allocation of capital funds must be made (see below).
- Can be combined with a voluntary redistricting program to mitigate enrollment disparities and support educational programs (likely at the high school level).

Implementation process:
- No action needed with State or County.
- Determine needed capital improvements (see III. below):

I.B. With redistricting

Pro:
- Similar to I.A. option above.
- In addition:
• Mitigates disparities in school enrollment and utilization (particularly if redistricting is from South to North), with educational benefits and more efficient use of assets.
• May improve transportation efficiency.
• May assist in more equitable and efficient allocation of educational support resources (speech, vision, OT/PT, etc.) and educational programs (CTE, AP)

Con:
• Redistricting decisions may be contentious.
• May separate siblings.
• May require costly capital improvements to accommodate redistricted students.
• Bus ride times for some students may increase to unacceptable levels.
• Overall under-utilization will continue.
• Spreads capital and operational funds across a larger inventory, so fewer projects will be funded and more building deficiencies will persist.

Concerns:
• Effect on student ride times not known until detailed analysis is undertaken.
• Capital projects likely needed at some receiving schools to accommodate increased number of students (in addition to regular projects).

Implementation process:
• Identify likely schools to be redistricted.
• Establish redistricting committee (parents, educators, central office staff, others).
• Undertake thorough community engagement among the affected communities.
• Undertake detailed analysis of transportation and capital improvement impacts.

II. CHANGE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES CONFIGURATION
II.A. School Closure/Consolidation

Pro:
• Improves overall operations (utilities, maintenance, custodial) by reducing building footprint and allowing concentrated use of building staff.
• May improve instruction: larger student bodies can support more resources and educational offerings.
• May improve efficiency of transportation.
• By reducing inventory, allows capital funds to be used more effectively.
• If older school is closed, improves average age of square footage.

Con:
• Community opposition likely to be intense.
• Decisions about which school(s) to close/consolidate likely to be very contentious.
• If combined with grade band re-configuration, opposition is likely to increase.
• Bus ride times for some students may increase to unacceptable levels.
• Some parents may decide to home-school their children rather than allow them to travel or to be consolidated with other student bodies.
• May separate siblings.
• Financial pressure is less compelling than in 2013 (FEA proposals).
• BOE decision must be taken re: closed building (retain building in system? mothball for future use? demolish but retain property? surplus building and property to County government?)
• If surplussed, County government decision must be taken re: facility (retain? demolish building but retain property? sell or lease, with portion of proceeds potential paid to State?)
• County must assume outstanding State debt on capital funds for projects less than 15 years old in closed school.
Concerns:
- Decisions about which school(s) to close should be based on data on transportation and operational costs, on impact on ride times, as well as community concerns.
- Educational advantages should be thoroughly analyzed and program improvements should be in process before closure/consolidation takes place.
- Community concerns must be addressed re: ride times, extra-curricular activities, class size and student:teacher ratio, school hours. If closure also involves grade band re-configuration, mixing of different age groups must be considered.
- Capital projects likely needed at some receiving schools to accommodate increased number of students (in addition to regular projects).

Implementation process:
- State closure process (COMAR 13A.02.09.01) must be followed.
- Agreement from County government is required.
- Conduct analysis of outstanding State debt.
- Develop prioritized list of educational and capital improvements at remaining schools.
- Undertake any needed capital projects to accommodate students via the EFMP and CIP.

II.B. Grade band re-configuration

Pro:
- May improve utilization of secondary schools (e.g., by moving 5th grade into middle schools, with 8th grade moved into high schools).
- Subcommittee research may indicate that there are educational benefits, e.g. K-8 (continuity of education, fewer transitions, etc.)
- May simplify transportation routing and costs.

Con:
- Community opposition to mixing of age groups may be intense.
- Decisions about which grade bands to reconfigure likely to be very contentious.
- If combining with school closure/consolidation, opposition is likely to increase and concerns re: repayment of outstanding State debt and future use of closed schools are similar to II.A. above.
- Receiving facilities must be reconfigured to accommodate educational requirements of different age groups and to ensure appropriate separation of age groups.
- Some parents may decide to home-school their children rather than have them participate in mixed-age settings.
- May separate siblings.
- Similar concerns to above

Concerns:
- Mixing of age groups must be thoroughly understood, with comprehensive architectural and scheduling analysis of the receiving buildings to ensure separation to satisfy parents’ concerns.
- Other concerns are similar to II.A above.

Implementation process:
- Undertake architectural and schedule analysis of receiving building before final decision by Board of Education is made; include a thorough community engagement process.
- Other process issues are similar to above.

III. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
III.A. Widespread Improvements: Capital projects for every school in inventory

Examples of Projects:
- Replacement of individual HVAC components and equipment;
• Partitions to isolate a specific educational program;
• Security vestibule;
• Selective ADA projects (ramps, lifts, sidewalk, etc.)
• Parking lot improvements

Pro:
• Will have positive impacts (albeit limited) on both educational environment and building performance for all schools.
• Equitable distribution of limited funds among all communities and schools.
• Modestly assists to extend the life of the affected buildings.

Con:
• Difficulty of determining an objective method to identify and prioritize multiple projects.
• Impact on any single building will be far less than needed to address its total deficiencies; improvements visible to occupants and the public may be negligible; cosmetic improvements are unlikely to receive high priority.
• Inefficient approach to capital improvements: unaddressed deficiencies will require improvement in the future, resulting in higher costs, modification or tear-out of prior installations, repeated disruption to the learning environment; and with increased maintenance burden in the meantime.
• Most projects unlikely to improve utilization of facility or reduce average age of square footage.
• Since program is likely to be spread over many years, future costs are highly uncertain.
• Managing multiple small projects may impose a considerable management burden on limited facilities staff.

Concerns:
• Requires a transparent, easily-explained method for prioritizing projects.
• May require engaging third-party project management services for multiple small projects.
• Requires a process of re-evaluation on a two- or three-year basis to determine changing educational and building priorities.

Implementation process:
• Establish planning committee (central office staff, county officials).
• Identify prioritized needs in every school building.
• Prioritize the needs among the school buildings based on agreed objectives and criteria.
• Develop preliminary capital plan: project scopes, costs, schedule, implementation factors (e.g. vacating facilities during construction).
• Determine likely funding capacity of County and likely approval of funding by State.
• Identify other potential funding sources: grants, community partners to share space, energy performance potential, other.
• Develop detailed project scopes, costs, and schedules.
• Develop detailed annual cost projections, showing anticipated State and County budget obligations.
• Apply for County and State funding in annual CIP (and for State planning approval, if needed).
• Engage 3rd party project management services, if needed.
• Implement projects: Design, construction, occupancy.

III.B. Targeted Improvements: Larger projects to address the most pressing educational and building performance needs

Examples of Projects:
• Replacement of entire HVAC system;
• Enclosure of open space pods;
• Science classroom renovations;
• Targeted renovation of specific educational or support spaces in one or more schools, e.g. alternative education;
• Major ADA improvements (e.g. elevator)

**Pro:**
• Addresses a limited number of comprehensive projects that will have the largest impact on the objectives prioritized by the SFC (educational excellence, efficiency, etc.).
• For the affected buildings, will result in greater benefits to the educational environment and/or building performance than the approach outlined in III.A, above.
• Depending on project scope, may result in visible improvements to the buildings; some cosmetic improvements can be incorporated into project scope at little additional expense.
• Will extend the useful life of the affected buildings and reduce the overall maintenance burden.
• Likely that more limited number of projects can be managed within existing resources of school system.

**Con:**
• Likely that a majority of schools will not receive capital projects under this program.
• Will constrain resources available for the minor projects identified under III.A above, resulting in their deferral or not being scheduled at all.
• Since program is likely to be spread over many years, future costs are uncertain.

**Concerns:**
• Needs a thorough, comprehensive method to identify projects and project scopes.
• Method must produce results that can be explained to the public, particularly to the school communities that will not receive improvements.
• Requires a process of re-evaluation on a two- or three-year basis to determine changing educational and building priorities.

**Implementation process:**
• Similar to III.A process, without 3rd party project management services.

**III.C. Major Projects: A limited number of comprehensive major projects.**

**Examples of Projects:**
• Southern Middle School renovation or limited renovation;
• Crellin Elementary School addition

**Pro:**
• Will result in a substantial and visible improvement of the learning environment and building performance for all students in the affected school.
• Comprehensively addresses all, or most of, the needs in the affected school building.
• Improved building will not require further major work for several decades.
• Will reduce maintenance burden for affected school, freeing staff resources to attend to other school buildings.
• Likely to substantially improve energy and water efficiency.
• Likely to improve the average age of square footage.
• If carried out with community partners, may reduce overall SRC and improve utilization.

**Con:**
• Very large capital costs: constrains or even eliminates possibility of funding other projects for many years, resulting in continuation of educational and building deficiencies at the majority of schools.
• Majority of schools will not be affected, hence will perception of a “two-school system” will be reinforced: some students in modern, state-of-the-art facilities, others in facilities that are deficient.
Concerns:

- Difficulty of identifying the appropriate project(s) and the correct project scope (e.g. replacement, full renovation, limited renovation, etc.).
- Difficulty of accurately estimating the cost several years in advance.
- Difficulty of ensuring adequate staff resources are available to carry out the project.
- If full or limited renovation, decision if building will remain occupied during construction; and if not, where students and staff will be relocated.

Implementation process:

- Establish planning committee to identify project, the project scope, the schedule, and the estimated cost.
- If proposing a replacement school on a new site, identify site and begin acquisition process.
- Apply for County funding; and for State planning approval and funding.
- Implement project: design, construction, occupancy.