



Strategic Facilities Committee Meeting #8
Teleconference 301-914-1341/ Board Room at Central Office
Garrett County Board of Education
40 S Second Street
Oakland, MD 21550

Minutes of July 10, 2019

Facilitator: David Lever

Committee Members Present: Crystal Boal
Jim Browning
Patrick Damon
Karen DeVore
Tracie Miller
Kevin Null
Carissa Rodeheaver
Nathan Sorber
Bill Swift
Richard Wesolowski
Duane Yoder

Dr. Lever called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Some of the committee members joined the meeting in the Board Room while Dr. Lever and some of the members joined via teleconference.

I. Introductions

Dr. David Lever, Facilitator, welcomed the committee members and made certain that committee members had received the meeting documents.

II. Research Subcommittees – Status Update

a. Grade Band Configuration – DeVore, Rodeheaver

The Grade Band Configuration subcommittee members provided an update. The subcommittee's initial research findings are inconclusive. They stated that no research shows that one configuration is better than others at improving student learning. There is some evidence that each of three grade level approaches can positively, or negatively impact students. But reorganizing grades is merely a shifting of students, teachers and programs from one site to another. Research shows that there is greater impact on student learning when the emphasis is not on the location of the students but on the educational experience students receive. Grade configuration is merely a tool that can create the potential to improve student learning.

The subcommittee stated that in their research shows that the type of environment created in the school is a determining factor in considering the results. The schools need to make certain that the environment is conducive to the reconfiguration; relationships and the environment are the overarching themes in a sound reconfiguration. The schools must insure specific conditions are met, including adequate resources that support the changes. The research also shows that a focus on restorative practices should be in place, which builds relationships in the school buildings.

b. Alternative Education – Boal, Miller, Paugh, Swift

The alternative education subcommittee also added research documents to the share drive. They stated they have compiled the survey results, with comments, and that this information is very informative. Behavioral issues are increasing system wide and the research is still being done on this as it is a nationwide issue. Much of the research is focusing on proper responses and support for students with trauma-based issues. Committee members discussed research promoting restorative practices, which repair relationships rather than implementing punitive responses to the behavior. The behavior problems have dramatically increased in the last 5 years and have negatively impacted the classroom instruction, drawing time and energy away from instruction. Teachers need help and support to properly teach and build positive relationships with their students.

The subcommittee reminded the group that they are welcome to visit Antietam Academy, which is a Washington County Public Schools alternative school which offers behavioral as well as academic disciplines for students in grades 6-12 in Hagerstown, MD. While the committee may not be considering recommending a separate alternative education facility, Mr. Swift stated that it may be beneficial to view their facility in order to learn about alternative spaces for students within the facility. The committee discussed the benefits of the alternative education spaces so that students can receive proper attention and services and then be able to go back to the classroom as needed.

c. Single High School / CTE Subcommittee – Damon, Null, Wesolowski

The single high school subcommittee provided an update. The committee has finalized their report but wanted confirmation regarding timeline: if the committee is recommending a single high school but not within 5 years, should they remove this from the table? The committee members also inquired about making recommendations when they may be dependent on other subcommittee findings and recommendations. Dr. Lever stated they should still make the recommendation to start the process, as this will involve many planning steps, including finding the proper site and estimating all of the costs.

Most of the single high school subcommittee members are recommending a single high school and estimating the completion in 10 or more years. They will outline all options, including site (new or existing) and facility (new or renovation). They will provide research to support their decision, including studies regarding larger facilities versus smaller facilities. They will look at enrollments, student to teacher ratios, program offerings, etc.

d. Community School – Browning, Kauffman, Sorber, Yoder

The community school subcommittee met and is making the recommendation to create more space in overcapacity schools and preserve the community schools. They stated it didn't make sense to build a new school on the southern end, and some of their findings are overlapping with grade band configurations. A SFC member inquired about costs to maintain and improve the facilities and how the school system will come up with funding to support this. The subcommittee felt that the community would be in support of preserving the community schools through a bond initiative. The subcommittee stated that some of the funding could be gained from relocating the central office to the Dennett Road facility or Southern High School. They would be looking at various grade band configurations such as Pre-K – 4 elementary; 5 – 7 middle school; and 8 – 12 high school. This would alleviate some of the overcrowding at the schools on the southern end. The committee members were reminded that architectural changes would be required in the facilities for this type of grade band configuration. Ex. Playground equipment at the middle school or

more science labs at the high school. Dr. Lever asked the committee to consider all things needed to support this recommendation at all levels (elementary, middle and high schools).

The committee discussed Swan Meadow School and concerns that they were not meeting all of the COMAR requirements for curriculum. Mr. Paul Edwards, Director of Secondary Education, stated that Swan Meadow does not have a foreign language or a technology education offering for students. They did, however, adopt the computer science curriculum. Based on the low enrollment and joint classes, there is a rotating curriculum schedule. For example, Social Studies is on a 6, 7, and 8th grade rotating schedule. There are concerns that 8th grade students on this rotating schedule will not be ready for mandatory testing. The principal has stated that the school has found a solution for this but there are no test results yet to validate this statement. The committee members discussed whether it makes sense to add staffing to this school to meet the requirements. They will review costs at a later meeting.

III. Planning Options

a. Review of Facility Adequacy Matrix; Analysis of Findings

Dr. Lever reminded the committee of the process and the achievements of the June 18 and June 20 workshops. He showed the top three objectives survey from June 18. The top three objectives that emerged include:

- Quality of Education
- Safety and Security
- Educational Offerings

He mentioned that equity kept coming up in the discussions and is one of the main concerns of the committee. Based on these discussions, the facility adequacy matrix was created to analyze the schools and the architectural features of the facilities. The features were color coded and rated based on adequacy and urgency. The ratings were totaled, which provided an overall evaluation by school. It was discovered that schools on the southern end have the most deficiencies with a sum of 786 red points versus 231 on the northern end. All of the schools, with the exception of Northern Middle School, have a yellow rating which means they need improvement; none of the schools have a total score that places them into deplorable condition. The committee then evaluated the matrix by category, with Security leading with 160 red deficiency points, followed by Parking lots/bus loops (125 points), Before-and-after school, Community space, and Storage (120 points each).

Dr. Lever reminded the committee of the goals, with guiding objectives of educational excellence and equity. The goal is to spend limited capital dollars to:

- A. Address the largest number of most critical facility deficiencies
- B. Improve the learning environment for the largest number of students
- C. Correct inequities in the quality of facilities
- D. Improve the efficiency of operations (NEW)

The question before the committee is, “What combination of the projects will maximize all four goals?”

Dr. Lever shared analysis and policy implications for each of the goals (see chart below).

Goal	Analysis	Policy Implications
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A. Address the largest number of the most critical facility deficiencies	Security and Before-and-after-school have among the highest number of total points; occur in the largest number of schools; and accumulate the largest number of red points.	Target capital funds to Security as the first priority (i.e., vestibules). Consider relocating Administrative areas in schools where they are remote from the entrance.
	Parking lots/bus loops and Community space are deficient in four or more schools, and accumulate a large number of red points.	Expand Before-and-after-school and Community space facilities
		Address Parking lots/bus loops as a critical safety item
B. Improve the learning environment or the largest number of students	Crellin ES and Swan Meadow School show large numbers of red deficiency points and have an exceptionally high level of deficiency points/student	Targeting the critical deficiencies in a few schools would benefit a number of students.
	Southern MS and Broad Ford ES have a total of 1,097 students: 29% of the total enrollment. Both have a moderately high level of deficiency points/student	
	Other schools have a higher deficiency point/student score, but far fewer students are affected.	
C. Correct inequities in the quality of the facilities	Schools in the South: Have a larger number of critical (red) educational deficiencies: 60 vs. 18	Direct a larger proportion of funds to the South
	The total sum (points) related to these critical deficiencies is greater: 786 vs. 231	
	Have a larger deferred maintenance backlog: \$10.7M vs. \$3.9M	
	The deficiencies are more intensive: \$27/sf vs. \$11/sf	Direct the funds at the most critical facility conditions
	The deficiencies affect more students: 2,328 vs. 1,514	
	The impact on students is more severe: \$4,600/FTE vs. \$2,600/FTE	

b. Outline of Preliminary Planning Options

Dr. Lever then discussed the preliminary planning options. He provided a chart of the preliminary planning options with summary of description, educational adequacy, corresponding goals, pros, cons, # of students impacted, capital cost and comments. The options cover the final discussion at the workshop on June 20 but attempt to organize the options in straightforward, easily understandable way. The options are presented in three large groups: systemwide options, options for the south, and options for the north. There are seven subcategories, with multiple separate options under some of the subcategories. The effort was to cover all possibilities (recognizing that some possibilities would be eliminated early due to lack of feasibility, costs, or other reasons. Dr. Lever stated there are also narratives and corresponding workbooks for each of the options on the server for the committee to review further specifics. Operational costs will be provided to the committee by staff.

He asked the committee to review all of the options listed and select the ones that interest them. Also review those that don't interest the committee and could be removed. The committee will discuss this further at the next meeting. Dr. Lever noted that there are no recommendations for Hickory Environmental Educational Center or central office included in the options. These could be considered but are not part of the preliminary options. Also Swan Meadow School is not included in regards to educational impact. Because of the sensitive and complex issues involved, it needs to be a separate discussion of the committee.

IV. Discussion

Dr. Lever reminded the members that the preliminary committee reports are due on July 15th. He also discussed the July Board Meeting and questions he received from the Board members. The Board wanted to make certain that the committee was reviewing all of the public comments and considering these when considering their options and recommendations.

Dr. Lever also stated another face to face meeting is necessary for the committee to continue their discussions. A doodle poll will be sent to the members to complete so that this meeting can be scheduled before August 1, 2019.

V. Adjournment

Carissa Rodeheaver made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Kevin Null seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.