

**Garrett County Public Schools
Facilities Strategic Plan
Preliminary Recommendations to the Board of Education: Capital Projects and Other Actions
September 3, 2019**

The Strategic Facilities Committee is pleased to submit preliminary facility recommendations for the consideration of the Board of Education of Garrett County. This document presents an outline of recommendations for capital projects as well as related actions that will support the goals that the Committee established through a series of workshops:

To spend limited capital dollars to:

- A. Address the largest number of the 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*

The recommendations presented herein represent an effort to balance the four goals, while maximizing the impact of the operational and capital funds that are available for facility improvements and related actions.

BACKGROUND

Garrett County Public Schools faces a broad spectrum of facility needs, with no single category of work that dominates the others. These categories include:

- Enhanced security;
- Educational support program spaces, specifically spaces to address disruptive behaviors;
- Community support spaces, specifically spaces for expanded Head Start, for community activities, for before-and-after school activities, and for day care;
- Aging building systems;
- Open space classrooms in several schools;
- Overcrowding or near-overcrowding in the southern area elementary schools;
- Schools with extensive facility deficiencies, specifically Crellin Elementary School, Southern Middle School, Broad Ford Elementary School, and Swan Meadow School.

The committee also recognizes that there are substantial disparities between the schools in the southern part of the county and those in the north. In addition to over-crowding, disparities are evident in the age of the facilities, in the number of educational spaces that are either deficient or lacking altogether, in the number and intensity of deferred maintenance items, in the differences in utilization, and in the average class sizes at all levels.

Operating under the guiding principles of educational excellence and equity, and concurrently recognizing that severe fiscal constraints limit how many facility concerns can be addressed during any single fiscal year, the committee has formulated a strategic plan that addresses the entire spectrum of needs in a tiered, well-balanced manner. The recommendations fall into four distinct categories:

- I. Redistricting to balance enrollments and better utilize existing capacity;
- II. Capital improvements to address a broad set of facility deficiencies;

- III. Relocation of the Board of Education offices in order to develop the fiscal resources to pay for many of the capital improvements; and
- IV. Study of the long-term implications of consolidating the two high schools into a single high school facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. REDISTRICTING

The SFC finds that redistricting approximately 115 students from the southern area elementary schools to the northern area elementary schools will relieve over-crowding in the southern schools. Specifically, it will reduce the maximum utilization of the school that is projected to be most over-crowded in 2023, Crellin Elementary School, from 119.7% to 102.2%, a reduction of 17.5%. While 102% still represents over-crowding, it is a level of utilization that most school administrators find acceptable. To achieve further reductions in utilization at Crellin Elementary will require some of the interventions that are outlined under “Future Actions” in this section.

This result can be achieved without closing any school and without additions to any of the receiving schools. The redistrictings proposed include:

- a. Reassign approximately 59 students from Broad Ford Elementary School to Accident Elementary School, and approximately 6 students from Broad Ford Elementary School to Grantsville Elementary School.
- b. Reassign approximately:
 - a. 19 students from Yough Glades Elementary School to Broad Ford Elementary School;
 - b. 11 students from Crellin Elementary School to Broad Ford Elementary School;
 - c. 8 students from Accident Elementary to Grantsville Elementary School; and
 - d. 11 students from Accident Elementary to Friendsville Elementary School

In order to maintain the alignment of elementary, middle, and high school attendance areas, these redistrictings of elementary school students will be accompanied by the following secondary school reassignments:

- a. Reassign approximately 50 students from Southern Middle School to Northern Middle School.
- b. Reassign approximately 80 students from Southern High School to Northern High School.

The changes outlined here will result in the following approximate adjustments in utilization of the schools:

School	SRC (revised Spring 2019)	Actual P3/PK-12 Enrollment 2018 (FTE)	Percent Utilization 2018	Projected P3/PK-12 Enrollment 2023 (FTE)	Percent Utilization 2023
Accident Elementary	327	259	79.20%	314	96.02%
Broad Ford Elementary	506	566	111.86%	491	97.04%
Crellin Elementary	137	143	104.38%	140	102.19%
Friendsville Elementary	294	147	50.00%	148	50.34%
Grantsville Elementary	294	191	64.97%	241	81.97%

School	SRC (revised Spring 2019)	Actual P3/PK- 12 Enrollment 2018 (FTE)	Percent Utilization 2018	Projected P3/PK-12 Enroll- ment 2023 (FTE)	Percent Utilization 2023
Route 40 Elementary	190	129	67.89%	139	73.16%
Swan Meadow School	69	50	72.46%	35	50.72%
Yough Glades Elementary	334	323	96.71%	320	95.81%
Northern Middle School	742	349	47.04%	387	52.16%
Southern Middle School	828	531	64.13%	419	50.60%
Northern Garrett High School	903	439	48.62%	552	61.13%
Southern Garrett High School	1450	715	49.31%	624	43.03%
Totals	6,074	3,842	63.25%	3,811	62.74%

While detailed studies have shown that the above redistrictings are feasible, precise new attendance areas are not proposed. Rather, if the concept is approved by the Board of Education, the Transportation Director will work with the consultant to identify the exact areas to be brought forward to the Board and the community.

Option B does require exchanges both in and out of the attendance areas for Broad Ford and Accident Elementary schools. This is necessary to meet capacity criteria and avoid unreasonable transportation assignments.

These reassignments are proposed to go into effect beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. The Board may wish to consider phasing in the student assignments in order to allow current secondary school students to finish their academic careers in the school where they began.

Estimated Costs:

It is not expected that the changes will require new bus routes or additional transportation staffing. However, if the student reassignments are phased, there may be a need for double bus routes in some situations, resulting in higher costs until the full redistricting is complete.

Minor renovations may be required in some spaces at the receiving schools to accommodate the additional students; however, these spaces will be identified following Board approval of the redistricting actions, and at that time the renovation costs will be known. Some of the costs may be eligible for funding under the State of Maryland Aging Schools Program (ASP) or might be carried out in conjunction with other capital projects that are outlined in this report.

Future Actions:

Since enrollments tend to fluctuate and are unpredictable, the Committee also recommends that the Board re-examine the utilization annually. If future enrollments indicate that the measure will be exceeded, the following actions may be considered:

- a. Further redistrict from elementary schools in the South to elementary schools in the North;
- b. Examine the out-of-area transfer policy (which partially accounts for the over-crowding at Crellin Elementary School).

- c. Utilize available capacity at Southern High School to establish an 8th grade academy, and reassignment of 5th graders from the elementary schools to Southern Middle School (noting that this action may be incorporated into the academic program for the renovation/addition project described in Item II.F below; and that the Board will need to determine if a similar grade reconfiguration is warranted in the North for consistency); and/or
- d. Build capacity at Crellin Elementary School, in addition to the additions for programmatic purposes that are described in Item II.G.

The Board may also wish to consider relocating the Special Education program located at Yough Glades Elementary School to the newly renovated/expanded Southern Middle/Broad Ford Elementary School facility (Item II.F). This will provide capacity to relieve over-crowding at Yough Glades Elementary School and will facilitate redistricting to relieve over-crowding at Crellin Elementary School.

II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

NOTES:

The project categories listed below are *not* shown in priority order with respect to annual funding requests. The priorities in each budget year will need to be developed separately.

A critical factor to be considered in the development of the recommendations is the ability of the school system to manage a substantial number of concurrent projects. Staff capacity will affect planning, procurement at several stages, construction, and occupancy operations. The current capacity of some functions, for example project management, can be readily augmented by contractual services. For other functions, for example financial accounting and procurement, given the long-term need of the school system for capital improvements and the applicability of skills to tasks other than capital projects, the Board may wish to enhance the permanent central staff of the school system.

The costs shown below, and the breakdown of anticipated State and local funding, are based on certain assumptions:

- The costs are for project implementation only, and do not include life cycle costs related to operation of HVAC equipment, maintenance requirements, etc.
- The basis of cost is provided with each category of work.
- Unit costs shown are for work that will begin construction in the summer of 2020. The unit costs are escalated for projects that will be executed in later fiscal years.
- Construction costs account for sitework, design contingency, and construction contingency; these factors are calculated as percentages of the base construction costs, with the percentages varying by project type.
- Construction cost escalation is estimated at 4% per year, compounded, and is applied to all factors in the estimate (construction costs and project development costs).
- Project development costs include architectural/engineering services, permitting, survey, and any unique services that may be required (e.g. acoustic analysis). These costs do not include furniture, furnishings and equipment (FF&E). Project development costs are typically calculated at 15% of total project costs for major projects, and are adjusted for smaller or simpler projects.
- State funding participation is based on the current requirements and regulations, including eligible costs, eligible project categories, and the recent and current State-local cost share formula applicable to Garrett County Public Schools.
- Smaller projects are recommended to be funded using only local resources, in order to preserve State funding capacity for larger and more complex projects and to streamline the delivery of these relatively simple projects.

II.A SECURITY

Install security vestibules in all ten (10) schools that currently do not have them.

The SFC recommends installation of 10 security vestibules, all in schools that do not currently have them, over a two year period. In light of recent school events, there is an urgent need to make the school building as secure as possible while still meeting the obligation to serve as an educational institution and as an accessible and welcoming community asset. A security vestibule allows school staff and administrators to control and monitor the entry of visitors into the school building. These installations will require all visitors outside of the morning arrival and afternoon departure times to be monitored through a card reader system.

The vestibules in most cases will use the existing exterior doors but will add an additional set of interior doors. Both sets of doors are kept locked except during school arrival and departure times. Visitors are required to announce themselves at the outside doors before being admitted into the vestibule, and then undergo an identity check and receive a visitor's badge before proceeding beyond the vestibule into the school building proper. The vestibules are of two types:

- For schools where the administration area is adjacent to the entry, the security vestibule requires visitors to pass in front of the reception desk to receive their badge before entering the school.
- For schools where the administration area is distant from the entry, the security vestibule involves a teller-type window where the identification check is conducted and the visitor's badge is issued before the visitor is admitted to the rest of the school.

In some cases, it will be advantageous to replace the exterior doors as part of the project. The door installations must be fully coordinated with each school's security and communication systems, and must be fully compliant with the requirements of the fire code.

A security vestibule was included in the scope of the Northern Middle School renovation/expansion project completed in 2009, and a security vestibule has been installed in Southern High School in summer 2019. The total number of projects recommended includes security vestibules for Southern Middle School and Broad Ford Elementary School. Both schools are addressed through the major project shown as item II.F below, which would normally include security vestibules in the scope of work. However, the urgency of addressing security is so great that the projects at these schools should not depend on the very lengthy timeframe that will be needed for planning, design and construction of the new Southern Middle/Broad Ford facility. Consequently, it will be necessary:

- To master plan the security vestibule in the Southern Middle facility so that it does not interfere with the future renovation (which will likely include relocation of the administration area for one or both schools to the front of the current facility); and
- To determine how the existing Broad Ford Elementary facility can be made secure pending the demolition of the facility and opening of the newly renovated/expanded Southern Middle facility.

Implementation will involve an evaluation of the physical arrangement of each school; development of design requirements by the Board of Education; architectural/engineering design; construction. In addition to funding from the State and local Capital Improvement Program, the projects may be funded through the State of Maryland Safe School Grant Program (SSGP).

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
State:	NA	\$448,000	\$448,000
Local:	\$159,000	\$448,000	\$607,000
Total:	\$159,000	\$896,000	\$1,055,000

Basis of Cost: Current experience in other school systems: \$70,000/vestibule, construction only

Implementation Schedule:

FY 2021 – FY 2022

II.B DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Provide spaces in every school to support the needs of disruptive students. With the growing incidence of disruptive behaviors in schools, there is a need for a separate space where disruptive students can be excluded from the regular classroom in order for their needs to be attended to while allowing the educational process for other students to continue uninterrupted. The goal is to enable the disruptive student to return to the regular classroom as quickly as possible. In accordance with the requirements of COMAR 13A.08.04 and Board of Education Policy JKE “Student Behavior Intervention,” the space will be monitored and will not involve physical restraint or seclusion, except as needed under emergency conditions. Policy JKE states: “School personnel shall only use exclusion, restraint, or seclusion after less restrictive or alternative approaches have been considered and attempted or determined to be inappropriate.”

The specific location and design of each space will depend on the age and number of the students and on the existing configuration of the school. All spaces will be acoustically isolated from adjacent spaces to reduce distraction. The spaces will typically involve installation of a “calming” space to allow students to de-escalate without harm to themselves or others. Special attention should be given to door and cabinet hardware, to furniture and equipment, and to other classroom features that might pose hazards during episodes of escalated behavior.

While physical space for this function is critical, it cannot by itself address the complex needs of disruptive students. It is essential that the Board of Education continue the effort that has already begun to increase the number of staff and to provide training to teachers and administrators in methods to address disruptive behaviors.

Prioritization of the projects will be based on need and the feasibility of assigning space to the program. A likely scenario is to begin implementation with the elementary schools and then proceed to the middle and the high schools. Since Broad Ford Elementary School has a dedicated space for the STARS program, and Grantsville Elementary School is scheduled to receive a STARS space in the 2019-2020 school year, 10 schools remain to be improved. The program will be funded solely with local funds.

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
Per Classroom:			
State:	NA	NA	NA
Local:	\$9,000	\$53,000	\$62,000
Total:	\$9,000	\$53,000	\$62,000
Program:			
State:	NA	NA	NA
Local:	\$100,000	\$573,000	\$673,000
Total:	\$100,000	\$573,000	\$673,000

Basis of Cost: Facilities Department experience with similar projects; \$42/sf

Implementation Schedule: 2 classrooms/year, 10 classrooms total, FY 2021-FY 2025

II.C HEAD START

Provide spaces in every elementary school for the Head Start program. The Head Start program has been effective in preparing children for entry into kindergarten. It is particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and is found to work best when the program is co-located in the school that the children will eventually attend as students, allowing coordination among instructors and facilitating the transition into the classroom environment. This program will address the elementary schools where the program is now lacking, largely involving renovation of existing spaces but in some cases requiring an addition. The number of spaces and their sizes are based on information provided by the Garrett County Community Action Committee (CAC).

Implementation will involve removal of the Head Start program from the Dennett Road facility. The specific sequence of Head Start projects will be based both on community needs and the availability of existing space in the schools.

The program will be funded solely from local sources (although there is precedent for the State to fund stand-alone Head Start projects under the community use provisions of the Public School Construction Program). The double set of figures below for individual classroom costs reflects the different sizes of the required spaces. **The program will be funded solely with local funds, which may include contributions by the Head Start program.**

<i>Estimated Cost:</i>	<i>Project Development</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Total</i>
Per Classroom:			
State:	NA	NA	NA
Local:	\$7,000/\$10,000	\$40,000/\$58,000	\$47,000/\$68,000
Total:	\$7,000/\$10,000	\$40,000/\$58,000	\$47,000/\$68,000
Program:			
State:	NA	NA	NA
Local:	\$87,000	\$500,000	\$587,000
Total:	\$87,000	\$500,000	\$587,000
Basis of Cost:	Modest renovation, including some mechanical and plumbing work; \$50/sf		
Implementation Schedule:	1 to 2 classrooms/year, 9 classrooms total, FY 2021-FY 2025		

II.D BUILDING SYSTEMS

Undertake major building system upgrades. These projects are required due to the age of the building systems in many schools. The projects have been identified and prioritized by the Department of Facilities (February 2018). Implementation of these projects will improve the health, safety, and effectiveness of the learning environment, reduce operating and maintenance costs, and extend the useful life of the buildings. Projects have been included only in those schools that are not considered for closure or replacement. The projects are as follows:

<i>School and Project</i>	<i>Estimated Total Project Cost</i>
Friendsville Elementary School – Drop Ceiling Replacement	\$266,000
Grantsville Elementary School – Electrical Switchgear Replacement	\$391,000
Northern High School – Boiler Replacement	\$1,013,000
Northern High School – Pavement/Parking Lot Replacement	\$724,000

Route 40 Elementary School – Boiler Replacement	\$870,000
Southern High School – Front Building Envelope Upgrades and Repairs	\$3,082,000
Yough Glades Elementary – Pavement/Parking Lot Replacement	\$2,061,000

NOTES:

- Costs are escalated to the fiscal year in which the project is anticipated to proceed.
- The Broad Ford Elementary Roof Replacement project is estimated to cost \$2.3 million. This project will only proceed if the Southern Middle School/Broad Ford Elementary School renovation/addition project described in II.F below is not approved.

Implementation will involve annual re-evaluation of building needs; projects currently identified may change in future years in terms of scope and priority.

The projects will be funded under the State Systemic Renovation category.

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
State:	NA	\$3,783,000	\$3,783,000
Local:	\$841,000	\$3,783,000	\$4,624,000
Total:	\$841,000	\$7,566,000	\$8,407,000

Basis of Cost: Facilities Department February 2018 estimates, with sitework, contingencies, and construction cost escalation added. **These totals do not include the Broad Ford Elementary roof replacement project.**

Implementation Schedule: 1 to 2 projects/year, 5 schools total, FY 2021-FY 2026

II.E OPEN SPACE CLASSROOMS

Enclose open space classrooms to create conventional instructional spaces. The open space classroom, a design concept that was popular in the 1960s and 1970s, has acoustic and spatial characteristics that are detrimental to student achievement. Where classrooms have been enclosed, student achievement and behavior have improved and teacher satisfaction has increased. These projects typically involve installation of permanent partitions that incorporate the acoustic properties of new construction, along with reconfiguration of the mechanical, lighting, electrical, and data systems.

Implementation will involve development of educational specifications and design guidelines for each school, architectural/engineering design specific to the school, and construction.

Although the total number of open space pods is greater than the number indicated below, the program is limited to four fiscal years in order to reserve local and State funding capacity for the large Southern Middle School/Broad Ford Elementary School project describe in II.F (a project that will resolve the open space classrooms at both schools). The projects will be categorized as Open Space Pod Enclosures for purposes of State funding.

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
Per 2-Classroom Pod:			
State:	NA	\$309,000	\$309,000
Local:	\$109,000	\$309,000	\$321,000
Total:	\$109,000	\$618,000	\$727,000

Program:

State:	NA	\$2,626,000	\$2,626,000
Local:	\$926,000	\$2,626,000	\$3,552,000
Total:	\$926,000	\$5,252,000	\$6,178,000

Basis of Cost: Partial renovation at \$225.00/sf

Implementation Schedule: 2 projects/year, 8 pods total at 2 schools, FY 2021-FY 2024

NOTE: Enclosing the open space pods at Broad Ford Elementary School is included in the scope of the Southern Middle School/Broad Ford Elementary project described under II.F.

II.F SOUTHERN MIDDLE SCHOOL/BROAD FORD ELEMENTARY

Locate the two schools within a single building. Both Southern Middle School and Broad Ford Elementary School demonstrate a broad range of deficiencies:

- **Southern Middle School:** Deficiencies include poorly executed enclosure of former open space classrooms, the inappropriate location of the administration area, acoustic interference among instructional spaces, and lack of modern technology and science instructional spaces. The cost to correct these deficiencies is estimated at approximately \$16.8 million (July 2019). Additional work includes upgrades or replacement of HVAC equipment, new emergency power, and partial renovation of the gymnasium, for a combined total of approximately \$2 million.
- **Broad Ford Elementary:** Deficiencies include open space classrooms, a gymnasium and multiple building systems in need of renovation, and over-crowding.

The roof at Broad Ford Elementary can no longer be adequately maintained; replacement is unavoidable if the school is to remain functional for educational purposes. The cost to replace this roof was estimated at \$1,679,000 in February 2018; taking into account construction cost escalation to the earliest time of bid as well as contingency and design costs, the total cost to carry out the work in the summer of 2020 would be approximately \$2.3 million.

With the expenditure of this large amount of funds, the school would still be educationally inadequate due to the open space pod configuration, and a number of other building systems would remain in deficient condition. Enclosure of the open space pods would require an additional expenditure of approximately \$8.7 million.

The total cost to correct deficiencies in these two schools would be approximately \$27.8 (July 2019). Escalated forward to the earliest possible start of construction in mid-2022, the total cost would be approximately \$33 million.

Locating the two schools in a purpose-designed facility would allow instruction to take place in modern spaces, would reduce the total footprint of the school system, and would achieve efficiencies through the joint use of certain core spaces, including the gymnasium, the media center, and the cafeteria. This arrangement will allow coordination among administrators and teachers in addressing the needs of individual students as they transition from elementary school to middle school. The schools would be operated individually, with separate administration areas, but with the potential for sharing facilities such as records storage and conference rooms. Proper attention would be given during design to ensuring the separation of age groups.

Implementation will involve development of an educational specification to determine the schedule of educational and support spaces, a feasibility study to identify options based on the educational specification, design, and construction. The cost estimate shown below is based on the Facilities Department February 2018 estimate to renovate Southern Middle School, plus the cost to expand the facility to house the projected number of both middle and elementary school students in school year 2025-2026 (the anticipated first year of operation). The cost assumes that the total footprint of the

renovated/expanded structure can be reduced by at least 18,000 square feet through the joint use of some of the spaces.

Planning for this project will need to consider the housing of the students during construction. Options include phased construction; temporary housing at Southern High School; and/or installation of a temporary classroom facility.

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
State:	NA	\$19,389,000	\$19,389,000
Local:	\$6,839,000	\$22,131,000	\$28,970,000
Total:	\$6,839,000	\$41,520,000	\$48,359,000

Basis of Cost: Partial renovation based on Facilities Department costs, with new construction at \$318.00/sf (FY 2020 escalated forward)

Implementation Schedule:

Educational Specification: FY 2021
 Feasibility Study/Planning: FY 2022
 Design: FY 2023, FY 2024
 Construction: FY 2025, FY 2025
 Occupancy: FY 2026

II.G CRELLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND SWAN MEADOW SCHOOL

Carry out targeted projects on an annual basis. Through analysis of the educational adequacy of the instructional facilities in the school system, it was found that Crellin Elementary School and Swan Meadow School have exceptionally large numbers of deficiencies in their instructional and support spaces. Moreover, each of these schools has a number of building system deficiencies.

- **Crellin Elementary.** Projects to correct the multiple deficiencies in the existing building can be undertaken while investigating the scope of additions for programmatic and capacity purposes is undertaken; classroom additions at this school could relieve overcrowding at nearby schools in Oakland if relief is not achieved through the redistricting outlined in Item I. Relocatable classrooms that will not be needed at Broad Ford Elementary School can be used to replace the two deficient relocatable classrooms at Crellin.
- **Swan Meadow School.** While the educational and building system deficiencies at Swan Meadow School are apparent, the Board must also consider the larger questions that are associated with this unique school. These questions will be more fully explored in the final report of the Strategic Facilities Committee, but they can be summarized as follows: Swan Meadow is a true community school, serving a unique student body. At the same time, it is very small school that presents a number of operational inefficiencies for the school system at large and requires capital improvements that will drain resources from schools that house larger numbers of students. Concerns have been expressed that the middle school program may be out of compliance with State of Maryland requirements, but senior staff members have met with the principal and developed a plan to meet the MSDE compliance requirements.

Estimated Cost: (Crellin only)	Project Development	Construction	Total
State:	NA	\$339,000	\$339,000
Local:	\$153,000	\$667,000	\$820,000
Total:	\$153,000	\$1,006,000	\$1,159,000

Basis of Cost:

Crellin: Annual allocation of \$100,000 in construction value (FY 2020, escalated forward), plus allocation for movement and installation of relocatable classrooms.

Swan Meadow: TBD

Implementation Schedule:

Crellin: FY 2022-2026

Swan Meadow: TBD

Build additions at Crellin Elementary School. Crellin Elementary lacks programmatic space for Prekindergarten, Music and Art, and Special Education. The addition of a gymnasium would improve the scheduling of the cafeteria and would provide a needed community asset.

Estimated Cost:	Project Development	Construction	Total
State:	NA	\$1,033,000	\$1,033,000
Local:	\$383,000	\$1,136,000	\$1,519,000
Total:	\$383,000	\$2,169,000	\$2,552,000

Basis of Cost:

Crellin: State cost of construction, escalated forward, for approximately 4,100 gross square feet of new area.

Implementation Schedule:

Crellin: FY 2023, FY 2024

III. RELOCATE BOARD OFFICE

The Board of Education currently occupies office space in downtown Oakland. The Board spends approximately \$500,000 per year on utilities, maintenance, and custodial services. The Committee recommends that the Board relocate these offices to the Dennett Road Facility by the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Space at the Dennett Road facility would be made available if the Head Start program currently housed there is relocated under item II.B above. Modifications of approximately 16,000 square feet of the Dennett Road facility would be needed to provide a meeting space for the Board as well as offices for the Superintendent and central office staff (a number of whom are already located at this facility).

It is estimated that at current interest rates, an annual revenue stream of \$500,000 can support approximately \$10,000,000 in debt. This would be sufficient to cover the estimated local share for the Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects (see below).

IV. SINGLE HIGH SCHOOL

A subcommittee of the SFC has investigated the advantages and disadvantages of a single high school. The subcommittee findings will be summarized in the final report to the Board of Education, but the preliminary conclusion is that a single high school would significantly expand educational opportunities for the students of Garrett County. It is unclear, however, if consolidation would result in operational cost savings: the broader literature on consolidation of school districts and schools is inconclusive on this point, while earlier information provided for the RISE Plan indicated that there would be some operational savings resulting from single purchase of textbooks, reduced staffing, and more efficient bus transportation.

However, there is no question that a single high school would be a very complex and expensive capital undertaking. At today's cost, a high school with approximately 1,100 seats would require about 180,000 square feet and would cost approximately \$72 million to build; total project costs would be approximately \$85 million (exclusive of FF&E). If it is assumed that it would take approximately a decade to plan for, design, and construct such a high school, construction cost escalation would bring the total cost to more than \$115 million.

Given the large capital expenditure involved in a single high school, the SFC recommends that the Board establish a standing committee to fully investigate the consequences of this action. The committee would be responsible for the following step-by-step process:

- Developing an educational specification;
- Developing a professional feasibility study through a consultant;
- Locating a site;
- Investigating potential partnerships with the Garrett College, local businesses, nonprofits, and others;
- Investigating sources of capital funds outside of State and local government revenues;
- Developing project schedules and cost projections;
- Bringing final recommendations to the Board of Education, which would lead to implementation (funding, design, construction, occupancy).

The timeframe required for these actions would be approximately as follows:

Establish committee and develop the educational specification:	FY 2021-2022
Feasibility study and determine site location:	FY 2023
Recommendations to Board of Education, State and local approvals:	FY 2024
Design:	FY 2025-2026
Construction:	FY 2027-2028
Occupancy:	2029-2020 School Year

PROJECT TIERS

Recognizing that fiscal constraints prevent the implementation of all of the needed improvements that are outlined above, the Committee has developed three tiers of capital project recommendations, based on both urgency and feasibility. **The tiers provide a preliminary prioritization of the recommended strategic actions. In each fiscal year, projects and actions could be included for one, two, or three tiers, but their priority order would reflect the adopted tier schema. Put differently, the tier approach would ensure that all of the most urgent projects and actions are accomplished before less urgent (but still needed) projects and actions are undertaken.**

The costs shown below are estimates of the capital expenses involved. Suggested timeframes for the projects are shown in Exhibit [\[redacted\]](#).

1. TIER 1: NEAR-TERM ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

Redistricting to balance enrollments: Tier 1 includes the student reassignments described in item I. above.

Near-term capital projects in Tier 1 will improve the security of schools, enhance early childhood learning, address the increase of disruptive behaviors, and initiate replacement and upgrading of building systems.

The Tier 1 recommendations are estimated at a total cost of \$7.16 million, consisting of \$2.58 million in State funds and \$4.57 million in local funds. This group of projects affects the following facilities:

- a. Security Vestibules: Accident Elementary, Broad Ford Elementary, Crellin Elementary, Friendsville Elementary, Grantsville Elementary, Route 40 Elementary, Yough Glades Elementary, Swan Meadow School, Southern Middle, Northern High. See comment in item II.F above with respect to Broad Ford Elementary School and Southern Middle School.

State: \$448,000
 Local: \$607,000
 Total: \$1,055,000

- b. Disruptive Behavior: Priority order and scope of schools to be determined through discussion with Superintendent and staff.

State: NA
 Local: \$673,000
 Total: \$673,000

- c. Head Start: Priority order and scope of schools to be determined through discussion with Community Action Committee (CAC).

State: NA
 Local: \$587,000
 Total: \$587,000

- d. Building Systems:

- i. *Southern High School*: Building Envelope Repairs

State: \$1,387,000
 Local: \$1,695,000
 Total: \$3,082,000

- ii. *Northern High School*: Boiler Replacement and Pavement/Parking Lot Replacement.

State: \$781,000
 Local: \$955,000
 Total: \$1,736,000

Board of Education: Relocate Board offices to Dennett Road Elementary School, with modest level of renovation.

State: NA
 Local: \$105,000
 Total: \$105,000

Total:	State:	\$2,616,000
	Local:	\$4,622,000
	Total:	\$7,238,000

2. TIER 2: MIDDLE-TERM ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

Middle-term capital projects will focus on improving the learning environment at schools that have open space pods and at two schools with large numbers of educationally inadequate features, as well as continuing the replacement and upgrading of building systems:

The Tier 2 recommendations are estimated at a total cost of \$8.18 million, consisting of \$3.38 million in State funds and \$4.80 million in local funds. This group of projects affect the following facilities:

a. Open Space Classrooms:

- i. *Grantsville ES*: 2 classroom conversions in each of FY 2021 and FY 2023
- ii. *Friendsville ES*: 2 classroom conversions in each of FY 2022 and FY 2024

<i>State:</i>	<i>\$2,626,000</i>
<i>Local:</i>	<i><u>\$3,552,000</u></i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$6,178,000</i>

- b. Crellin Elementary School: Replace relocatable classrooms and carry out improvements to the existing facility; research and plan for additions as needed. Items carried out under the Security Vestibule, Disruptive, and Head Start initiatives are not included in the cost schedule below, but must be master planned to be coordinated with the renovations and additions.

<i>State:</i>	<i>\$339,000</i>
<i>Local:</i>	<i><u>\$820,000</u></i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$1,159,000</i>

- c. Swan Meadow School: The scope of work will depend on decisions made by the Board of Education regarding the future of the school.

<i>State:</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Local:</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>TBD</i>

d. Building Systems:

- i. *Yough Glades ES* Pavement/Parking Lot Replacement

<i>State:</i>	<i>\$927,000</i>
<i>Local:</i>	<i><u>\$1,134,000</u></i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$2,061,000</i>

- ii. *Friendsville ES* Ceiling Replacement

<i>State:</i>	<i>\$120,000</i>
<i>Local:</i>	<i><u>\$146,000</u></i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$266,000</i>

Total:	<i>State: \$4,012,000</i>
	<i>Local: \$5,652,000</i>
	<i>Total: \$9,664,000</i>

3. **TIER 3: LONG-TERM ACTIONS AND PROJECTS**

Single high school study: Investigate the advantages and costs of a single high school by developing an educational specification, soliciting community input, determining potential sites, developing a project schedule and budget, and researching the potential for State and local funding.

Long-term capital projects: Undertake major projects to consolidate Broad Ford Elementary School and Southern Middle School as separate schools in a single building and to construct additions to Crellin Elementary; and continue the replacement and upgrading of building systems.

The Tier 3 recommendations are estimated at a total cost of \$41.49 million, consisting of \$16.54 million in State funds and \$24.95 million in local funds. This group of projects affect the following facilities:

a. <u>Broad Ford Elementary School/Southern Middle School</u> : Educational specification, community engagement, feasibility study, design, construction		State: \$19,389,000
		Local: <u>\$28,970,000</u>
		Total: \$48,359,000
b. <u>Crellin Elementary School</u> : Additions as determined through the investigations initiated in Tier 2.		State: \$1,033,000
		Local: <u>\$1,519,000</u>
		Total: \$2,552,000
c. <u>Building Systems</u> :		
i. <u>Route 40 ES Boiler Replacement</u>		State: \$391,000
		Local: <u>\$479,000</u>
		Total: \$870,000
ii. <u>Grantsville ES Electrical</u>		State: \$176,000
		Local: <u>\$215,000</u>
		Total: \$391,000
Total:		State: \$20,989,000
		Local: <u>\$31,183,000</u>
		Total: <u>\$52,172,000</u>

FUNDING SOURCES

The entire capital program outlined in this report is projected to cost approximately \$69.1 million, with an anticipated participation by the State at \$27.6 million and by the County government at \$41.5 million. These are estimates for planning purposes only, and there are many factors that could change the costs as well as the proportion of State and local contributions: design requirements, unforeseen conditions in the field, variations in construction cost escalation due to uncertain market conditions, new code or regulatory requirements, and changes in State policy and procedure. The majority of projects are relatively small and will allow a fine-tuned adjustment of the annual capital improvement programs to meet budget limits.

The largest single project is the Southern Middle School/Broad Ford Elementary School renovation/addition, with a total cost of approximately \$48.4 million. The costs given here are for the lowest cost option, a partial renovation of the existing Southern Middle facility with an expansion to meet capacity and programmatic requirements. The total size of the facility is based on the 2025 enrollment projections; should these projections change, the school may need to be either larger or smaller.

STATE: The State of Maryland has three funding programs that are applicable to public school capital projects in Garrett County. All funds are generated from the sale of tax-exempt General Obligation bonds, a condition that carries with it certain limitations in the use of the proceeds and timeframe in which the funds must be used.

- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** Funds major capital projects, including new and replacement schools, full renovations, partial and limited renovations, and systemic renovation projects. State funds cover eligible costs only, based on a formula developed for each school

system and currently adjusted every three years (to become two years in the next adjustment). Garrett County Public Schools State-local share is 50% of eligible project costs. The local government is responsible for the local share of eligible costs and for all non-eligible costs, which include project development costs, construction contingency, and furniture, furnishings and equipment (FF&E).

Projects in the CIP are evaluated on a per-project basis, with no pre-set funding limit for each LEA. Because the annual requests by Garrett County Public Schools have been relatively low or even absent since the completion of Northern Middle School in 2009, it is likely that a renewed capital program will be viewed favorably by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), the body which evaluates and approves funding applications. It is anticipated that the annual statewide allocation of funds for the CIP will exceed \$400 million in future years.

- **Aging Schools Program (ASP):** A program of relatively small grants that are allocated on a formula basis to each LEA. Garrett County is eligible for \$38,292 under this program in FY 2020 (out of a State allocation of \$6,108,990 in new revenues). There is no local match requirement.
- **Safe Schools Grant Program (SSGP):** A small program recently instituted to allow school systems to implement capital projects, security systems, and staff training to improve school safety and security. A local match is required.

LOCAL:

- **Paygo:** Direct payment of capital expenses from the operating budget revenues. This is the least expensive method of funding.
- **Debt:** Issuance of municipal bonds to fund capital projects. Bond issuances may be consolidated with those of other jurisdictions to lower transaction costs and achieve improved interest rates. There are two primary revenue sources to support bonds:
 - Local property taxes.
 - Avoided costs that are capitalized as a revenue stream (as in an energy performance contract, EPC).
- **Local grants:** These may include contributions from Head Start or from other nonprofit or for-profit organizations.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION: The SFC proposes the following five recommendations to fund the projects outlined in this capital program:

1. The Board of Education should work with the Garrett County delegation to adjust the State-local cost share formula, taking into account the unusual expenditures of the County government that result from its climate, its location and terrain, and its management of one of Maryland's most important recreation resources, Deep Creek Lake.
2. The Board should relocate the Board of Education offices to the Dennett Road facility and terminating its use of the property on 2nd Street in Oakland, generating a revenue stream of \$500,000 per year to support approximately \$10,000,000 in capital debt, sufficient funds to cover the estimated local obligation for all of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects in the proposed capital plan. Under this arrangement, it would not be necessary for the County to increase property taxes to pay for Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects.

3. The Board should work with the County Government to promote a modest increase in property taxes to support the local share of the Tier 3 projects. This Tier includes major capital expenditures that cannot be supported by the current tax base. It is estimated that a property tax increase of \$0. per \$1,000 of property value would support the debt needed for the Tier 3 projects.
4. The Board and County government should identify functions that could be conducted jointly in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Currently, information technologies (IT) are shared between the Board and the County. Additional possibilities might include finance and personnel services.
5. The Board, County government, and nonprofit organizations should collaborate to identify functions that can occupy under-utilized spaces in the northern elementary schools and in Southern High School. Spaces used jointly under a memorandum of understanding or other formal agreement, or that are used exclusively by a government agency or a nonprofit, are not counted in the calculation of State Rated Capacity (SRC); consequently, such arrangements will improve the overall utilization of the schools and enhance the ability of Garrett County Public Schools to access State funding for capital projects.

DRAFT