

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

November 21, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Follow-up from the November 14, 2007, Public Hearing on the
FY 2009–2014 Capital Improvements Program

11-14-07-01

Mr. Abrams requested information on the implications of the reduced scope of Redland and Ridgeview middle school projects in terms of other improvements that may be scheduled or needed. Also, was there consultation with the community on the reduced scope?

Response

Implications of the reduced scope for Redland Middle School are as follows:

- The existing floor plan layout will remain in current configurations, leaving narrow widths of existing hallways and the need to access a few areas through another space.
- The existing administrative suite will remain in its current location and will not have direct oversight of the bus loop, student drop-off, and parking areas.
- The new addition will no longer be needed to match the number of teaching stations that currently exist.
- While the bus loop will be separated from the student drop-off loop, the existing configuration for on-site traffic circulation will remain in its current condition.
- The existing mechanical equipment, such as the boiler, chiller, cooling towers, air handling units, and piping systems will remain.
- The existing electrical, data, public address, fire alarm, and phone systems will remain.

Implications of the reduced scope for Ridgeview Middle School are as follows:

- Other than the administrative suite, the existing floor plan layout will remain in its current configuration, leaving narrow widths of existing hallways, interior classrooms without natural daylight, and interior circulation that is confusing.
- Existing mechanical equipment, such as the boiler, chillers, cooling tower, four of nine air handling units, and duct and piping systems will remain.
- The existing electrical, data, public address, fire alarm, and phone systems will remain.

Prior to the development of the superintendent's recommendations, opportunities were not available to consult with communities on the reduced scope. Subsequently, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff met with the Redland Middle School and the Ridgeview Middle School communities on the reduced scope of these projects. After the budget is finalized in May 2008, staff will meet with both communities to gather additional input on the reduced scope of work.

11-14-07-02

Mr. Barclay requested information on emergency lighting at Diamond Elementary School.

Response

Division of Construction staff toured Diamond Elementary School with the principal and determined that the classrooms do not have the appropriate emergency lighting to be code compliant. To bring the facility to code compliance, emergency battery pack lights will be installed in 21 spaces, including classrooms, instructional support spaces, and bathrooms. This work will be completed during this school year.

11-14-07-03

Ms. Brandman requested information on how many schools with Learning for Independence (LFI) or School Community Based (SCB) programs do not have kitchen facilities.

Response

Our elementary sites do not have classroom kitchen facilities (6 LFI sites and 13 SCB sites). Kitchen facilities that are adjacent to or part of the SCB or LFI classrooms at middle schools and high schools are described below.

At the middle school level:

- Four LFI sites with in-class facilities
- Five LFI sites without in-class facilities
- Three SCB sites with in-class facilities
- Six SCB sites without in-class facilities (at three of these sites, SCB students have regular access to a Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) classroom)

At the high school level:

- No LFI sites with in-class facilities
- Twelve LFI sites without in-class facilities
- Three SCB sites with in-class facilities
- Nine SCB sites without in-class facilities

LFI and SCB programs are collocated at 11 high schools and at 5 middle schools.

11-14-07-04

Ms. Brandman requested information on why Jones Lane Elementary School was selected for the Elementary Learning Center (ELC) program, and what were the alternatives?

Response

The decision to reassign the Elementary Learning Center from Rachel Carson Elementary School to Jones Lane Elementary school was made after a review of space availability at schools in the area and the number of special education programs at these schools. It was considered important to retain the program in the Quince Orchard Cluster so that students now served would not be reassigned to a more distant location. With the addition of two Pre-K autism classes at Fields Road Elementary School next fall, every school in the cluster will have special education programs.

Jones Lane Elementary School currently has three classrooms dedicated to the Learning and Academic Disabilities (LAD) program. The transition to the Home School Model by the 2010-2011 school year will free these classes for use by the ELC students. It is anticipated that by that time, the ELC will require only three classrooms. This program operates on a model where kindergarten and Grade 1 students are served together, Grades 2 and 3 students are served together, and Grades 4 and 5 students are served together. Therefore, the impact on Jones Lane Elementary School will be no greater than the current LAD program.

11-14-07-05

Ms. Brandman requested information on the status of lead in the water compliance.

Response

1. Two hundred eight schools/centers have completed the data review. (The initial round of sampling continues at some recently renovated/constructed schools.)

One hundred three schools/centers are now out of the program:

- Eighteen schools/centers where no fixtures needed remediation
- Eighty-one schools/centers where the remediation program is complete and post remediation testing was passed
- Four schools/centers were removed from the program due to renovation and will be sampled when the facilities reopen

Remediation plans in process for 102 schools/centers:

- In Post-Remediation Phase (sampling after fixture replacement):
 - Five schools waiting for first round of post-remediation testing
 - Ninety-five schools in second (or beyond) round of testing
- Two schools awaiting repairs (scheduled for Winter Break 2007)

2. Three schools pending remediation plans (data review not complete):

- Fairland Center—no release from flushing
- Seneca Valley High School—filter program/release from flushing
- Northlake Center—bottled water for now because there is only one hallway cooler in the building and most classroom bubblers need to be replaced

Note: Bathroom/Science Lab signs installed, regardless of the results, stating that water in these areas is not intended for drinking purposes (141 schools).

11-14-07-06

Mr. Barclay noted that testimony stated that there were critical systems at Paint Branch High School and that fire alarms were out-of-date and requested an update.

Response

This question was answered at the table.

11-14-07-07

Mr. Barclay requested a break-out of the security cameras planned for elementary, middle, and high schools, and the number that will be installed inside and outside of the schools.

Response

The plan is to place digital, network recorded, CCTV systems in all middle schools as a new initiative and replace the existing analogue systems in the high schools. There are no plans to have CCTV systems in elementary schools. The number of cameras in the middle and high schools will vary by need. We will look at the size of the school, the number of different corridors, exterior doors, hidden view locations, stairwells, and other factors in designing these systems. Outside cameras are expensive. We will look at many different factors to determine the need for and benefit of outside cameras.

11-14-07-08

Mr. Barclay requested information about the request for a change in the bus drop-off at Roscoe Nix Elementary School.

Response

Last year, Department of Transportation staff reviewed this complaint and believes the parking lot, bus lot, and parent drop-off area are appropriately designed. However, some parents appear to be impatient and are circumventing the designed traffic patterns. Ms. Annette Ffolkes, principal at Roscoe Nix Elementary School, confirmed that the existing bus loop operates as designed, and agrees that the confusion may be caused by a few parents not following the designed pattern of on-site traffic circulation.

11-14-07-09

Ms. Cox requested an update on the mold at William H. Farquhar Middle School.

Response

The Indoor Air Quality team last responded to a mold-related complaint at William H. Farquhar Middle School on August 3, 2005. The team has not received any mold-related inquiries or complaints since that time. The building service manager also confirmed that there is no longer a mold problem in the science wing of the school.

11-14-07-10

Ms. Brandman requested a list of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) projects that have been scheduled for FY 2009.

Response

The HVAC projects included in the FY 2009 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) are as follows:

Tilden Middle School—Converting the steam system to a hot water system and replacing air handling units, unit ventilators, and controls

Westbrook Elementary School—Replacing existing fan coil units

Tilden Center—Replacing 30 unit ventilators and 3 air handling units

Argyle Middle School (Phase II)—Replacing 12 air handling units, 21 fan coil units, and 1 rooftop unit

Eastern Middle School—Replacing branch lines of the existing pipe system

Poolesville Elementary School—Replacing the existing split system at the instructional media center and the air handling unit at the gymnasium

Cedar Grove Elementary School—Replacing the existing chiller

Rock Terrace—Installing air conditioning in the gymnasium/assembly area

11-14-07-11

Mr. Moskowitz requested information on the issues with the Beall Elementary School gymnasium floor and its ability to be cleaned.

Response

The gymnasium at Beall Elementary School has a poured synthetic floor. Many schools throughout the county have this type of gymnasium floor. These floors are deep cleaned and sealed on an annual basis. Throughout the school year, the floors are wiped down on a daily basis with a bleach solution. Department of Facilities Management staff is not aware of any problems with the ability to clean this floor. The floor is scheduled to be cleaned and resealed during the holiday break this year.

11-14-07-12

Mr. Barclay requested clarification on the difference in duties between a site coordinator and a project manager.

Response

This question was answered at the table.

11-14-07-13

Ms. Cox requested information on the status of Maryvale Elementary School in terms of meeting the fire code.

Response

Currently, there are no outstanding citations for fire code violations at Maryvale Elementary School.

11-14-07-14

Mr. Barclay requested information on the cost of installing artificial turf fields at high schools and the long-term benefits.

Response

The estimated cost for installing high-quality artificial turf is \$1 million per stadium field. A high-quality artificial grass infill surface field needs to be replaced after approximately ten years at about one-half the cost of a new installation.

There are many benefits associated with artificial turf infill surfaces on MCPS stadium fields for both school and community groups. These benefits include the following:

- Safer, competitive surfaces—More than 300 MCPS athletic teams share the stadium fields, and an estimated 600 community athletic teams will gain access to stadium fields.
- Additional on-site practice opportunities for MCPS athletic teams—For the 2007–2008 school year, 132 MCPS athletic teams share the stadium field for games and will practice off-campus because of limited practice space on-campus. Artificial turf infill surfaces would accommodate practices for at least six teams per high school (150 teams across the school system).
- High-quality, additional fields for community-user athletic practices and contests—Approximately 1,775 annual community-user hours will become available at each high school stadium field, potentially creating a total of 44,375 hours annually for community use at 25 fields.
- A greater degree of compliance to Title IX—Field hockey contests are not played on the stadium field at approximately half of the MCPS high schools because of adverse field conditions. All field hockey games would be able to be played on the stadium fields, primarily at night.
- Minimal cancellations—Prevailing weather conditions in the fall and spring force many cancellations, disrupting parent and student schedules. The only weather conditions that would cause a postponement on a stadium field would be lightning or abnormally severe weather.

- Significant savings in maintenance—Savings include not only seed, grass, fertilizer, and water, but also an enormous savings in time and effort. Synthetic surfaces require minimal maintenance work and minimum maintenance costs.
- Creation of a facility to enhance the educational program—Physical education classes would have access to a safe, all-weather surface for activities during the school day.
- Conservation-friendly environments—Attention has been focused on conserving resources and reducing pollutants to the Chesapeake Bay. Artificial turf infill surfaces will create 25 fields which would require no fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, or water.
- Creating a greater degree of equity among schools and across the county—The most immediate, visible difference among school athletic programs is the condition of practice facilities and the stadium field. Schools located in comparatively affluent areas of the county tend to have stadium fields and practice fields that are far more attractive and that are in far better condition than fields in less affluent areas. Artificial surface fields will result in comparable surface conditions and aesthetic appeal for all high school stadium fields.
- Hosting semifinal and final athletic contests—With synthetic surfaces, Montgomery County high schools would be assigned to host many athletic contests, adding to the prestige of the county and the school system.

11-14-07-15

Mrs. O'Neill requested a summary of the liability, insurance, and renewal issues associated with artificial turf fields.

Response

For MCPS students, all liability beyond manufacturers' warranties for quality workmanship would come under MCPS self-insurance. Permitted users outside of the school system must agree to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the county, the Montgomery County Board of Education, the individual members thereof, and any school or Community Use of Public Facilities officials or employees from any loss, cost, damage, claim, or other expense, including attorneys' fees and litigation expenses incurred during or as a result of the use of the field, including any loss or injury of any kind alleged to be the result of any negligence by Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Board of Education, or any of its agents, employees, or officials.

A high-quality artificial turf infill surface field needs to be replaced after about ten years at approximately one-half the cost of a new installation because only the surface layers are replaced. The foundation of the field remains intact. Although ten years is the minimum lifetime, some of the surfaces will last longer than ten years. Fieldturf Tarkett, for instance, installed its first 17 artificial surface fields in 1994. The original surface at 16 of the schools is still intact and one has been resurfaced. The firm offers an eight-year warranty on the product.

11-14-07-16

Ms. Brandman asked if staff could propose a way to balance the priorities between maintenance funding and capacity project funding.

Response

In developing recommendations for the capital improvements program each year, the superintendent balances the need for maintenance funds with the need for capacity projects. The superintendent develops the recommended funding levels for maintenance in consultation with staff who advise him on the level of need. Part of this funding is included in countywide projects in the CIP and part of it is reflected in the operating budget request. At the same time, the superintendent is advised of shortfalls in capacity and where the need for additional capacity is most pronounced. In both cases, more funding would be ideal, but revenues are limited. When the superintendent published his recommended FY 2009–2014 CIP, he indicated what he believes to be the most appropriate balance for funding in both of these areas.

11-14-07-17

Mrs. O'Neill asked if it would be possible to estimate the costs of what clusters request in their cluster comments in order to show how much of an effect this would have on the overall CIP cost.

Response

Most of the requests that are made in the cluster comments are related to accelerating school modernizations and providing funding for more maintenance projects. In August 2007, the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) requested information regarding the resources needed to accelerate the modernization schedule, as well as reducing the backlog of Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) and maintenance projects. The attached response to MCCPTA outlines the additional costs these increases would require.

11-14-07-18

Ms. Cox asked how the situation at Maryvale Elementary School—in terms of the restrooms not being within the classrooms for the Pre-K, Head Start, kindergarten and Pre-K autism classes—compares to accommodations at other elementary schools and what it would cost to provide these restrooms at Maryvale Elementary School.

Response

A majority of kindergarten classes are held in classrooms without bathrooms. However, special education prekindergarten classes should be located in a classroom with a bathroom. As with most prekindergarten autism classrooms, the prekindergarten autism classrooms at Maryvale Elementary School should have bathroom facilities accessible from within the classrooms.

However, due to space limitations, the FY 2009 Capital Budget has funds requested to create one bathroom adjacent to the prekindergarten autism classrooms that can be shared by all three prekindergarten autism classes. The work will be completed by August 2008.

11-14-07-19

Mrs. O'Neill asked why Rock Terrace School was not included in the superintendent's recommendation to study collocation of the Carl Sandburg Learning Center and Stephen Knolls programs.

Response

Rock Terrace School was not included in the recommendation to study collocation of the Carl Sandburg and Stephen Knolls programs due to a focus on collocation of these programs at elementary schools. The Rock Terrace program has a different concentration and would be more appropriately collocated with a high school. A high school study was not considered at this time.

11-14-07-20

Mr. Barclay requested a follow-up on the actions taken at Maryvale Elementary School regarding the daughter of Shar Harouna (as referenced in her testimony.)

Response

Mrs. Harouna's daughter, Amina, asked for permission to leave the room to go to the bathroom. Upon her return, the teacher immediately saw that Amina was injured. She was taken to the nurse's office by Ms. Kimberly Kimber, the principal. Amina told them she slipped on water in the bathroom, fell, and hit her head. The principal took Amina into the bathroom and asked her to show her where she had fallen and hit her head. The nurse cleaned the wound (she was bleeding in the forehead area), gave her a clean shirt, and called Amina's mother. The nurse said that she was not comfortable putting Amina on the bus, so Mr. Harouna picked up Amina and her sister from the health room at the end of the day.

Ms. Kimber and MCPS facilities management staff checked the bathroom. There is no rusty screw where Amina fell; however, there is a metal plate at the bottom of the stall. It appears from the investigation that Amina may have slipped on water that was near the bathroom sink and hit her head on the edge of the bathroom stall.

Mrs. Harouna inquired why the kindergarten classrooms do not have self-contained bathrooms for the safety of the children. Ms. Kimber's response was that Maryvale Elementary School was originally a junior high school; therefore, is not equipped with all the amenities that are installed in new elementary schools.

Following this incident, Maryvale Elementary School implemented a buddy system for kindergarten students when they go to the bathroom.

11-14-07-21

Mrs. O'Neill requested a summary of the health and safety issues associated with constructing the Takoma Park Elementary School addition with the children on site.

Response

This question was answered at the table.

JDW:vnb

Attachment

Copy to:

Mr. Bowers
Dr. Lacey
Mr. Bedford
Mr. Edwards
Mr. Crispell
Mr. Lavorgna