

BCSD Facilities Discussion Questions

January 2018

Academic

- **Are we looking at academic equity and human capital?** One of our goals is to create better academic and staffing equity across the district elementary schools. We believe a new 3-section building will help the district improve equity across the elementaries.
- **Please explain the priority list: what are needs and wants, academic vs. athletic priorities?** The facility and infrastructure needs were identified through an analysis of Legat Architects and other facility specialist. Principals then identified their top three or four priorities based on the needs of their buildings. Due to safety concerns, particularly at the high school, some athletic upgrades were prioritized over academic needs. [Future Ready List & Priorities in the Nov. 6 presentation.](#)
- **How does a 21st Century building really impacts student achievement?** The term "21st-century skills" is generally used to refer to certain core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that advocates believe schools need to teach to help students thrive in today's world. A school designed with spaces that allow teachers to work with students in a variety of learning styles and needs will help facilitate 21st-century learning.

Do New Schools Improve Test Scores?

"Shiny new schools do improve student test scores! The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that student attitudes about education directly reflect their learning environment. Specific building features related to human comfort (e.g. building age, climate control, indoor air quality, lighting, acoustical control) have been shown to influence student achievement." [American School & University 2009](#)

- **If you don't have a two or three-section school are the students not getting the best education?** Many factors are involved in educating a student including facilities, instruction and programming. You can get a great education in any size school. We feel that a 3-section gives us better equity in staffing and collaboration.
- **If you want a 21st century school, why not spend money on programs and teachers instead of more buildings?** Those dollars come from different funds that school districts are legally obligated to spend for specific purposes. The money used for facilities cannot be used for staffing. We believe that new facilities can help improve the teachers' ability to create a variety of learning opportunities for students. Our analysis of operating costs shows anticipated cost savings of up to \$575,000 per year when operating a three-section school compared to operating Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson over the past five years. The Bettendorf Community School District is in a strong, healthy financial position. Our current ratio of general fund cash compared to general fund operating expenses, or solvency ratio, was about 20% at the end of fiscal 2017. Our goal is to invest resources in our district to reduce the solvency ratio to a long-term goal of 17%-18%. This ratio remains higher than the state of Iowa's recommended solvency ratio. The district is committed to utilizing any cost savings to invest well while maintaining the district's excellent financial health.

- **Wasn't NA on watch list and had to send letter to parents to see if they could choice out after new building?** Yes. At one time Neil Armstrong was on the No Child Left Behind Watch List and parents did receive a letter that they could Choice Enroll their students to another school.

Collaboration

- **Why do you care when teachers collaborate?** The district has built in time for collaboration, Wednesday early release, in response to teachers' requests for time for collaboration.
- **Why does TJ go to PN to collaborate?** The decision to have Thomas Jefferson and Paul Norton elementary schools collaborate for PLCs was based on the schools' shared instructional coach.
- **Grant Wood and Thomas Jefferson are 1 mile apart. Why can't we connect the faculty to work together – helping the buildings for neighborhoods?** The decision to have Thomas Jefferson and Paul Norton elementary schools collaborate for PLCs was based on the schools' shared instructional coach. Grant Wood and Thomas Jefferson are 2.5 miles apart.

Costs/Finance

- **What are the future-ready savings for consolidating?** We estimate a cost of \$9.6M for the facility infrastructure need and future ready facility improvements for Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson elementary schools. The future ready projects were estimated at \$2.7M for Mark Twain and \$2.9K for Thomas Jefferson. I.e., updated & expanded office areas, gym additions, and renovation of gym ares to commons. Facility upgrades needed for the buildings are are estimated at \$3.2M - Mark Twain and \$1.6M - Thomas Jefferson; including items like roofs, mitigating water infiltration, bee/intercom system replacement, window/soffit replacements, fire rating concerns, and ceiling concerns. [More detail can be found in handout C from the Jan. 8 board meeting.](#) The recommendation to consolidate aligns with the recent board of education position of building a new elementary school focused on the needs of our current and future students instead of investing significant money into aging infrastructure with limited extended life and flexibility for learning.
- **What are the transportation costs to bus students to a new 3 section school at new location?** District transportation costs are dependent on the distance from homes to a school location. As we have not made a final determination on a site for a three-section elementary school, we cannot determine the number of students that would qualify for transportation and how many students would pay for transportation. The district's general policy is that students living more than two miles from their "home school" qualify for free transportation, assuming the student does not meet the requirements for free or reduced fees.
- **How will consolidating TJ & MT impact childcare?** Family situation are greatly varied. While this addition of a new school may create challenges for some families, it may also reduce child care concerns for others. Mark Twain currently has a federal grant-funded after school program. There are after school programs in the community and at some of our other elementary schools as well.
- **What are the financial costs and projects as a whole and how will this be paid for?** The total cost of the district facilities plan is \$62.7 million, based on the study Legat & Associates performed. The costs of the projects were provided as part of the board of education presentation on November 6th. The project will be paid for with a combination of bonds paid

with revenue from the 1% sales tax and general obligation bonds. The information we are currently using for our analysis was presented during the January 4th board work session. The Board of Education and the district administration will begin the bonding process very soon and will continue to update the community.

- **What are realistic cost estimates for a new 3 section school based on a confirmed site, site preparation, transportation costs & other costs?** We are basing our estimate of the cost on the new Grant Wood Elementary currently under construction. We do not have a confirmed site yet. If the board decides to build a three-section school, we will begin the process of refining cost estimates.

We have reviewed operating costs for Thomas Jefferson, Mark Twain, and our two current three-section elementary schools (Paul Norton and Herbert Hoover) for the previous five years. Based on average operating costs over the last five years at the four schools referenced, annual operating cost savings from a new three-section school are estimated to be approximately \$575,000 per year. Once a site for a new elementary school is confirmed, we can then review the incremental costs or savings associated with transportation costs.

- **Why is cost effective considered to be the most important criteria?** Cost effectiveness is one of many criteria used in making the recommendation. Others considerations include academic opportunities, staffing, 21st century learning environments, and collaboration.
- **Clarify the reason over 50% cost of a new building is a valid reason to build new.** The recommendation aligns with the recent board of education position of building a new elementary school focused on the needs of our current and future students instead of investing significant money into aging infrastructure with limited extended life and flexibility for learning.
- **What are the community-student costs per building at each elementary?**

Elementary Cost Per Student - 2012-13 through 2016-17

	<i>2017 Actual</i>	<i>2016 Actual</i>	<i>2015 Actual</i>	<i>2014 Actual</i>	<i>2013 Actual</i>
Neil Armstrong Elem	\$7,481	\$7,546	\$7,568	\$7,345	\$6,296
Grant Wood Elem	\$6,180	\$6,019	\$5,922	\$6,069	\$5,508
Herbert Hoover Elem	\$6,084	\$5,961	\$5,731	\$5,261	\$5,046
Thomas Jefferson Elem	\$6,593	\$7,062	\$7,307	\$7,038	\$6,869
Mark Twain Elem	\$7,690	\$7,024	\$6,551	\$6,034	\$5,963
Paul Norton Elem	\$5,743	\$5,493	\$5,506	\$5,237	\$5,062

ie. Costs include staffing, instructional and building costs. Neil Armstrong costs are higher in part due to the building's electric HVAC system installed during construction because initial costs were less expensive.

- **If TJ and MT will be repurposed, what are the costs including staff and how much is there in savings?** Costs and savings would be determined by how the buildings would be repurposed. At this time no decisions have been made to repurpose buildings.

Decision Making

- **What long term system tool did administration use or what is in place to use to help make decisions?** The district administration used a decision making process involving curriculum and other district decisions – outlined on slide 15 of the [Jan. 8 presentation](#). In addition they used the Fist to Five process to help identify consensus among the group.
- **How will the district get elementary students' input on this plan?** If there is a decision to consolidate the schools, students will be encouraged to participate in the process. Grant Wood has involved students in a number of ways for their building that is currently under construction. In the beginning, they used the tools provided by their architect. The GW student leadership group was able to design what they would like to see in their new school. Additionally, they have used the blueprints by integrating them into math and language lessons. Currently, students are “test driving” some furniture options that are being considered. The construction has allowed for students to learn through observation. Kids have so many questions about what they see happening and making sense out of what they see. Grant Wood has had the construction management team visit classrooms. They are also are planning to have students visit the site and complete walkthroughs of the new building.

Enrollment

- **Would elementary boundaries change?** The recommendation would not require any boundary changes.
- **Will the district redistribute the free and reduced population amongst all elementary schools?** The district has no plans to redistribute students based on family enrollment in the federal free & reduced program.
- **If TJ and MT combine, will they have a balance in demographics?** December enrollment numbers show that Mark Twain is at 42% low SES (socioeconomic status) with 124 students, Thomas Jefferson is at 43.7% (63 students). Combined, they would be at 42.5% (187 students). Their combined projected numbers would be at about the same as Grant Wood Elementary and still below Neil Armstrong Elementary (a two-section school with 221 low SES students). The district would staff the building equitably based on student needs.
- **Has the district considered changing Choice Enrollment?** Choice enrollment has been a long standing option for parents, any change would need to go through the board and involve community discussion.
- **What are the enrollment projections?** [BCSD Enrollment TrendLine Data 2008-2022 Cohort Survival Enrollment Forecast by Forecast5 Analytics, Inc.](#)

This tool is a Cohort Survival model, which projects future students by grade. The Cohort Survival model is considered very reliable and is utilized by several Departments of Education in their student projections and the U.S. Census Bureau for their reports. The model uses an “aging”

concept that moves a group, or cohort, of students into the future and increases or decreases their numbers according to past experience through history.

The Cohort Survival methodology relies on historical enrollment and live birth data to capture the effects of in and out-migration, housing changes, and natural trends in population. In essence, the model derives a growth factor or ratio for student survival matriculation to the next grade based upon previous survival numbers to the same grade of students in each district. This model derives the growth factor by applying a non-weighted average survival rate over a historical period.

- **Would like more information on the data provided on the maps.** The 5 Maps System was introduced at the Jan. 8 meeting as a possible tool for the board to use in looking at student distribution across the district and based on school boundaries. The tool could also be used for analyzing boundaries.
- **How many students have applied to go to school in Bettendorf and denied?** The only time we have denied students is for open enrollment special education requests.
- **Please share data that supports that statement that 20% of BHS is open enrolled.**

	BHS Open Enrollment	BHS Total Enrollment	HS % of Open Enrolled	District Open Enrollment	District Total Served	District % of Open Enrolled
2017- 2018	322	1,509	21.3%	719	4,607	15.6%
2016-2017	316	1,530	20.7%	719.4	4,613.8	15.6%
2015-2016	301	1,533	19.6%	725.8	4,556	15.9%
2014-2015	276	1,467	18.8%	645.5	4,412.8	14.6%
2013-2014	253	1,477	17.1%	608.5	4,400.1	13.8%
2012-2013	248	1,444	17.2%	621.6	4,441.4	14.0%

HS and district numbers from certified enrollment reports. District enrollment for all but 2017-2018 available on [Iowa Department of Education - Education Statistics, Financial Data - Certified Enrollment by District](#)

Edison

- **What is driving the decision to relocate Edison Academy for five years?** The suggestion to move Edison is based on deferred infrastructure needs and costs of those projects. A 5-year lease gives the district flexibility as we continue to implement a facilities plan as well as move toward regional career and technical education centers.
- **What is a long term plan for Edison including costs to renovate & maintain its current location vs another location & improvement costs?** The board facilities committee has been working on options and potential costs.

Facilities

- **What are the end-of-life estimates for the schools?** The board has decided in the past that 50% off the building cost is the turning point, which Legat Architects has determined in their facility study. Finance Director, Dallon Christensen is working with an appraiser to get an appraisal for Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson.
- **What is the maintenance plan for all buildings?** [2018-2014 Maintenance Projects Exceeding \\$200K](#) | [2018-2024 Estimated Annual Maintenance](#)
- **What is the definition of an obsolete facility?** An obsolete building is a building that for one reason or another has reached the end of its current useful life.
- **How do MT & TJ fit or not at into that definition/What are the costs of new vs. remodel?** Past school boards have made the decision to close a school if the cost of remodeling/adding onto a building exceeds 50%. The decision to building a new Grant Wood Elementary (currently under construction) was due in part to the remodel/renovate costs. Costs for the renovations/additions to Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson were shared in Legat’s presentation. The initial cost analysis for updates to infrastructure and future ready improvements for the two elementary schools came in at \$9.6M. Administrators estimated a new school could be constructed at a price similar to the new Grant Wood Elementary currently under construction, \$14M. [See list of facility improvement needs on pages 17-20 of the Jan. 8 presentation.](#) The administrative team recommended a new school rather than remodels. The board is considering which direction the district will take.
- **What the heck does “future ready” mean anyway?** The future ready projects identified in the Legat study and Jan. 8 board meeting presentation are our building principals requests prioritized to help their school meet their immediate and future needs.
- **If you have the land at Jefferson to build behind and not interrupt school, why not build there?** Though not part of the recommendation, it is still a possibility and past boards have looked at the scenario. The recommendation of the administration is to build a school that would consolidate Thomas Jefferson and Mark Twain on a neutral site to help create a new identity for the combined students, staff and families.
- **Did we consult others outside Legat about remodeling older buildings that may be experienced in older buildings?** During the process of choosing Legat for the Grant Wood building, which was a renovation at the time, other architects also presented to the board. Legat did work with a variety of trade specialist to determine infrastructure needs and costs – identified in handouts B & C from the Jan. 8 board presentation.
- **Why is \$ being put in admin office?** All facilities, no matter the age, require updates and improvements with the change of need/function. As staffing has changed at the administration center, including a reduction, the administration center has needed to reconfigure interior office modules.
- **What ongoing maintenance would be required after full remodels would be completed at TJ & MT?** The proposed projects do not include full remodels. See [Handout B](#) and [Handout C](#) from Jan. 8 board presentation.

Neighbors/Community

- **How is the district considering neighborhoods that have more affordable housing and the impact of closing schools would have on them?** The district would work collaboratively with City of Bettendorf to creatively and purposefully repurpose or sell district grounds (TJ & MT) to add value to neighborhoods.
- **Do you have research that show that new facilities attract new residents?**
*“We find that school construction had substantial **positive effects on home prices** in affected neighborhoods, and led to **increases in the population of families** with children attending public schools.” [C. Neilson & S. Zimmerman, The Effect of School Construction on Test Scores, School Enrollment, and Home Prices](#)*
- **Were home values/neighborhood statistics considered in the recommendation?** The administrative team did discuss the impact of closing and concerns of neighborhoods regarding home values. Ultimately, they decided to make the recommendation that they thought was in the best interest of students and fiscally responsible.

Previous FAC Work

- **What has been the recommendation of previous facility advisory committees?** [2009 FAC recommendation](#) | [2016 FAC recommendation](#)

Recommendation

- **What was the process for the administration to address or discuss potential negative consequences of consolidation?** The district administration used a decision making process using curriculum and other district decisions – [outlined on slide 15 of the Jan. 8 presentation](#). In addition they used the Fist to Five process to help identify a consensus among the group.
- **Why are the administrators the only group presenting ideas for this situation?** The board facilities committee charged the administrative team to prioritize and recommend a district facilities plan. The infrastructure facility needs were identified and prioritized by the architect and its facility assessment team of trade professionals.
- **What are disadvantages of plan/recommendations?** The availability of a neutral site equally placed between Thomas Jefferson and Mark Twain.
- **If the administrator’s plan is not enacted will another group be formed to try and close these schools again?** The administrative team task was not to close buildings it was to prioritize facility recommendations. Within that discussion, the administrators decided to ask the board to consider the consolidation of Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson due to benefits to students and teachers as well as fiscal responsibility.

Repurpose or Sale

- **What are buildings being repurposed for, and what, if any, cost savings or additional costs to those possible programs housed there (moved to Cost/Finance)?** That will be determined through the board process. The administrative team recommends that planning efforts would

be made to repurpose or sell the properties for a positive community investment including the potential of working with the City of Bettendorf.

Staff

- **Many schools don't have a full time nurse. Is that changing with a new building?** We are consistently evaluating the needs of our students in each of our buildings. Currently, our 3 section buildings are staffed at either .7 or 1.0 depending on student need. We will continue to evaluate the needs as we move forward in order to offer our students the best possible care.

- **What is the current nurse to student ratio overall and at each school?**

This year has been fairly unique in regards to our nursing staff. We started the year with each elementary nurse starting the day at TJ one day a week, however, due to the significant needs in some of our buildings this quickly became a safety issue. This caused us to re-evaluate and we currently have a .5 sub at TJ. The following information uses certified enrollment data for 17-18 and reflects the beginning of the year staffing, as well as where we currently sit in regards to nursing staff.

School	Beginning of the Year	Current Staffing
High School	1509 students to 1-8 hpd nurse	1509 students to 1-8 hpd nurse
Middle School	1092 students to 1-8 hpd nurse	1092 students to 1-8 hpd nurse
Herbert Hoover	452 students to 1-6.5 hpd nurse	452 students to 1-8 hpd nurse
Grant Wood	388 students to 1-6.5 hpd nurse	388 students to 1-8 hpd nurse
Paul Norton	444 students to 1-4 hpd nurse	444 students to 1-5.6 hpd nurse
Mark Twain	295 students to 1-4 hpd nurse	295 students to 1-5.6 hpd nurse
Neil Armstrong	289 students to 1-4 hpd nurse	289 students to 1-5.6 hpd nurse
Thomas Jefferson	138 students to 1-1.5 hpd nurse	138 students to 1-4 hpd nurse

Hpd = hours per day

- **When are you going to ask TJ & MT teachers their opinions, instead of GW?** The Grant Wood principal asked Grant Wood teachers because they are currently going through the process of moving from a 2 to 3-section school. The board may ask for other opinions including teachers as they move through their process. The administration was asked for their recommendation.

Site Work/Location

- **What land are you looking at for the new school?** The administration recommendation presented at the Jan. 8 meeting does include the possible locations of Edgewood Park and McManus (Rocket) Park. The board could decide to select another location including the Thomas Jefferson and Mark Twain elementary school locations.

- **Have we done soil borings at the parks if they have been offered to us by City?** The city indicated that the parks may be a possible location. The board has not yet decided to build a new school or a location. Soil borings are being taken at Edgewood Park and the district's property adjacent to the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency.
- **What would the timeline be for a new school?** A timeline would be established after the board determines this is the direction they would like to pursue. If a decision is made soon, the hope would be to open the new building in 2019-2020 school year.

Students

- **Are we looking at cost or the best needs for kids?** We are proposing the recommendation based on what we believe is best for kids while being financially responsible.

Other

- **Can a City representative come and visit about viable park options and the annex plan to discuss future plans of district?** If the board decides to pursue the option of a new school, then there will be a process of determining the location. That process would include conversations with the city.
- **How will online schooling, voucher and magnet schools impact our schools in the future?** We are already dealing with online schools. Some of our current residents are taking advantage of that opportunity. If vouchers or magnet schools do come into play it could impact our enrollment. This is speculative for now as those aren't currently options for families in our district.
- **Why not have three options?** The administrative team was asked for a recommendation. The board may come to consider other options.
- **Why is wrestling a no cut sport? Would it benefit the school to set a participant limit?** In a way, the varsity level of wrestling does cut, because only 14 participants are allowed to wrestle at the varsity level. Wrestling has never been a cut sport and in most schools wrestling numbers are way down. We are not aware of any school that makes cuts in participants in wrestling.
- **Why can't Bett Plex be used for feeder programs?** The current facilities requests are based on safety and programming needs for current BHS students. The Bett Plex may be a possibility for feeder programs. The operators of Bett Plex have informed the BHS Athletic Director they will not have wrestling mats. If the facility wants to be used for wrestling, the renter/user would have to provide the supplies, which means mats would have to be rolled up and put down every use as well as likely stored off site. The site would be perfect for other feeder programs such as basketball and softball.