

**WEBSTER GROVES SCHOOL DISTRICT
BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Facility Report Presented to the Board of Education

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Creation of the Ten Year Capital Improvements Plan

In 1998 the Building Advisory Committee developed a ten year capital improvements plan for the Webster Groves School District. This plan analyzed the age and structural needs of each building as well as the instructional needs within each facility. The committee found the district had significant infrastructure needs that would cost more than \$100 million to meet. The committee made its first recommendations regarding this plan to the Board of Education in December, 1999.

The 1999 report to the Board acknowledged the balance between facility improvements, fiscal responsibility and the historical preservation needed for many of the facilities. The recommendations encouraged the Board to divide the necessary work into phases. The first phase was a \$10 million bond issue approved by Webster Groves School District voters in April, 2000. Safety and security needs topped the list of priorities for that phase.

In April, 2006 the district went back to the community requesting a \$0.00 tax rate increase bond issue of \$40 million to support phase II of the capital improvements plan. The community overwhelmingly supported this bond issue. Phase II provided money for improvements at the elementary schools, Steger Sixth Grade Center and Hixson Middle School which met programmatic needs of students. Reconfiguring the use of existing interior space in conjunction with multi-purpose room additions at specific elementary school sites provided additional space for instructional needs and eliminated the temporary trailers within the district. Almost half of the \$40 million bond issue was dedicated to cooling all of the facilities. Hixson Middle School received a much needed renovated auditorium and kitchen/cafeteria. Due to extensive renovation needs at the High School, limited work was completed at this facility. However the district was able to partially cool the building and provide a new competition gym, additional physical education instructional space along with renovated locker rooms. The district did utilize some of the phase II bond issue dollars to develop a master plan for the High School. This master plan provides a road map for future renovation of this historic building. Other districtwide facility renovations included new roofs, new gym performance floors and upgraded lighting.

With a comprehensive master plan developed for the Webster Groves High School, the district's next successful bond issue proposal occurred in April, 2010. This initiative prioritized a new 110,000 sq. ft. addition built onto the north side of the high school. This three story addition provided 21st century learning for science, social studies, fine arts (visual and musical) and industrial

technology. The north addition also created much needed instructional space to address future enrollment growth. Remaining 2010 bond issue proceeds provided additional security measures for all school buildings, a new roof for the high school, completed cooling the high school and the purchase of a new warehouse. The new warehouse allows the district to make bulk purchases and will provide storage for food service as well as the development of professional development space for staff. The facilities department and the technology department plan to move into the warehouse freeing up office and storage space in other locations throughout the district.

Age of School Buildings within the District

While other districts within St. Louis County were building new schools, the Webster Groves School District was carefully preserving and upgrading its existing buildings. District school buildings range in age from over 100 to 54 years old. Webster Groves High School is the district’s oldest building. The front of this school was built in 1907. The district’s youngest building, Steger/Computer School, was built in 1960. In keeping with the historic nature of the community, the district has carefully restored and maintained the unique qualities of the schools. The district also diligently worked to seamlessly blend new construction with the historic look of each school building.

School	Original age of current building	Age
W. G. High School	1907	107yrs
Bristol Elementary	1909 (current bldg.)	105 yrs
Avery Elementary	1920 (current bldg.)	94 yrs
Central Office	1924 (business office)	90 yrs
Hudson Elementary	1948	66 yrs
Clark Elementary	1949	65 yrs
Edgar Road Elementary	1951	63 yrs
Hixson Middle School	1955	59 yrs
Bristol Primary	1955	59 yrs
Steger/Computer School	1960	54 yrs

District-wide Facilities Committee

During the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years a thirty-member committee met to study existing and future facility needs for the school district. The committee included parents, staff and administrators within the district. Members studied enrollment projections, considered current research regarding 21st century learning spaces and investigated the current infrastructure needs within each school building. The committee quickly recognized the enrollment growth since the 2007 school year was causing classroom shortages in the elementary schools. Projected enrollment through 2018 estimate these challenges will continue.

2014-2015 Enrollment compared to Desirable Capacity

Avery – Desirable capacity = 456 students/24 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 550 students/27 classrooms

Bristol – Desirable capacity = 418 students/22 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 452 students/25 classrooms

Clark – Desirable capacity = 304 students/16 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 337 students/18 classrooms

Edgar Road- Desirable capacity = 361 students/19 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 372 students/21 classrooms

Hudson - Desirable capacity = 228 students/12 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 234 students/13 classrooms

Computer School – Desirable capacity = 132 students/6 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 132 students/6 classrooms

Over capacity at elementary schools = 180 students/12 classrooms

Steger - Desirable capacity = 330 students/15 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 325 students/15 classrooms

Hixson - Desirable capacity = 700 students/28 classrooms
 Current enrollment = 678 students/28 classrooms

WGHS - Desirable capacity = 1,500 – 1,600 students
 Current enrollment = 1,344 students

Facilities Committee members agreed early in their meeting process that there was an immediate need to create additional classrooms for the 2013-2014 school year at Avery, Clark and Edgar Road. The committee asked that the Board appointed Building Advisory Committee consider this need and recommend an immediate option to address this space issue. The Building Advisory Committee recommended placement of two-classroom modular units at the three schools. The modular classroom units were built and installed during the summer of 2013. While not ideal for the instructional programs, these units were necessary to meet an immediate demand for additional classroom space and provided a good temporary solution. The Building Advisory Committee made it clear this should not be considered a long term solution. Enrollment projections continue to indicate a permanent solution must be considered to keep all instructional classrooms inside the school buildings. As indicated above all five elementary schools are currently over the desired enrollment capacity. This concern doesn't consider future enrollment growth. The Board of Education agreed with the Building Advisory Committee's short term recommendation and modular classroom units were built and placed at the three elementary schools by August, 2013.

The Facilities Committee researched many scenarios to determine the best possible options to meet current and future enrollment needs as well as opportunities to create flexible learning spaces. Committee members considered best instructional practices for students and worked with architects to creatively consider many possible facility options to meet long term space and instructional needs. Tours of each school were provided through this process. The committee agreed there were certain facility options that should be considered in any future construction efforts:

- ❖ Implementation of the remaining proposed improvements at the Webster Groves High School as outlined in the WGHS master plan;
- ❖ Moss Field improvements including but not limited to track and athletic field improvements, stadium renovations and creation of support facilities;
- ❖ Interior ADA improvements to Clark, Edgar Road, Hudson and Steger/Computer School;
- ❖ Consideration of a new pre-Kindergarten school if enrollment demands require it;
- ❖ Address district-wide warehouse needs.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the school district recently purchased a warehouse. It is also the committee member's understanding there is currently not a waiting list for the pre-Kindergarten program. After significant dialogue the Facilities Committee narrowed multiple options to address elementary and middle school needs to five scenarios. These five scenarios are outlined in the Facilities Committee Report dated November 11, 2013 (see attachment A). Committee members spent their final meetings discussing the pros and cons of the five scenarios and reviewing broad conceptual costs. The final task for the committee was to determine the top two options to recommend to the Board of Education.

Facilities Committee First Choice:

The option recommended as the Facility Committee's first choice would convert Steger/Computer School to an elementary school. By doing this, the facility could provide space for 350+ elementary age students. This would eliminate the crowding in the other elementary schools. Steger/Computer School could also provide for additional pre-Kindergarten classrooms if a need for this exists.

As Building Advisory Committee members discussed this option, members discussed the possibility of grandfathering the current 131 elementary school students into the new Steger Elementary facility. This would allow approximately 225 or more students from other elementary attendance areas to be assigned to this elementary school. Committee members did not discuss how to select students to attend the new elementary school but felt it was important to make the minimal amount of transitions as possible for students. Members acknowledged the work of the Collaborative Committee studying the concepts of innovation. Members discussed the possibility for the new elementary school to implement concepts from this collaborative/innovations work as the new school develops their own identity.

Sixth grade students would move to Hixson Middle School, making the facility a sixth through eighth grade center. This would involve creating additional classrooms and expanding and adding additional ancillary and elective spaces to adequately house sixth grade students. There were several positive instructional outcomes noted with this recommendation. Moving sixth grade to Hixson would eliminate one transition for students. The creation of a sixth through eighth grade school would allow strong collaboration among teachers to implement an enhanced middle school concept. Architects from Dickinson Hussmann provided

a broad conceptual cost of approximately \$12.2 million for the costs associated with this plan. The Facilities Committee also recommended this option should be further studied and the conceptual costs should be closely evaluated.

Once the Facilities Committee completed their work, a new committee, the 6 – 8 Grade Dream Team, was formed. This committee included district teachers, middle school and district level administrators as well as interested parents. District officials chose to use the services of Jim Riddle, Riddle Design, to develop more detailed conceptual costs regarding the Hixson expansion to include sixth grade. After listening carefully to middle school teacher, administrator and parent input, the new conceptual design included an additional 20,000 square feet of new construction and approximately 4,800 more square feet in existing renovated construction. Cost consideration was also included to provide two new elevators for the facility. Finally, exterior site preparation included a new road and two new parking lots to traverse behind the Hixson building. This will provide a much needed pick-up and drop-off loop around the building and increase the parking spaces necessary to accommodate staff and parent needs. The estimated cost to accommodate the additional design doubled the original broad concept costs considered by the Facilities Committee.

It should be noted this option would require work to be done on Moss Field to provide a year-round field due to reducing the size of the practice field next to Hixson. The district would also need to relocate home/visitor locker rooms and the athletic training and offices to Moss Field. The current locker rooms are connected to Hixson. The modifications necessary for Hixson to house sixth grade will require transforming the varsity locker rooms for sixth – eighth grade use.

Finally, Clark Elementary School would still need a four classroom addition built to handle future enrollment projections.

Estimated Conceptual Costs for Option 1:

- **Hixson Middle School:**
 - Classroom Additions (Including specialists & electives)
 - Installation of 2 Elevators
 - New Library
 - Modify Old Library to Admin. Offices
 - Build a Second Physical Education Space
 - Create Additional Support Services Rooms
 - Total: \$18,000,000**

- **Hixson Road and Parking Lot Improvements: \$ 1,130,000**

➤	Steger Elementary School:		
	○ Interior Renovation for Elementary Needs		
	Total:		\$ 425,000
➤	Clark Elementary School		
	▪ Four classroom addition		
	Estimated Total:		\$ 1,755,000
➤	Address ADA issues at Clark, Edgar Road, Hudson, Steger:		
	▪ Clark Elementary School	\$ 340,000	
	▪ Edgar Road Elementary School	\$ 245,000	
	▪ Hudson Elementary School	\$ 225,000	
	▪ Steger Elementary School	\$ 550,000	
	Total:		\$ 1,360,000
➤	Moss Field Improvements:		
	▪ Turf Field & 8 Lane Track		
	▪ Practice Field Renovations		
	▪ Complete Renovation of Stadium Seating & Press Box		
	▪ Build Athletic Facility (Locker Rooms, Restrooms)		
	▪ Replace Visitor Bleachers		
	▪ MSD/Testing/Engineering & Contingency		
	Total:		\$ 6,000,000
	Grand Total Estimate for Option 1:		\$28,670,000

Facilities Committee Second Choice:

The option recommended as second choice by the Facilities Committee was to keep grade levels within their existing buildings and build classroom additions to Clark, Edgar Road, Hudson and Hixson. This option recommends moving Computer School students back into their existing home schools. By doing so Steger would have sufficient classrooms to meet future enrollment growth. The suggested additions recommended by Dickinson Hussmann were:

- ❖ Clark Elementary School – *four core classroom addition;
 - ❖ Edgar Road Elementary School – *seven classroom addition;
 - ❖ Hudson Elementary School – *two core classroom addition;
 - ❖ Hixson Middle School – *three core classroom addition.
- *additional space needed in addition to core classrooms is outlined in Option 2 cost details.

The strengths of this plan included being the most conservative option and most cost effective. The plan keeps neighborhood elementary schools as a

priority and creates the least amount of change to the grade designations. Identified concerns centered on if the plan lacked foresight for future needs. There would be a need to redistrict to decrease enrollment at Avery and Bristol. This plan eliminates the Elementary Computer School to provide additional classrooms for Steger Sixth Grade Center.

As Building Advisory Committee members considered the recommended classroom additions suggested by Dickinson Hussmann, it became apparent the number of core classrooms did not include the additional 131 students moving from the Elementary Computer School back into their neighborhood schools. The estimated classrooms and costs listed below would consider the impact of adding these students back into their neighborhood schools.

Estimated Costs for Option 2:

- **Elementary Classroom Additions**
 - **Edgar Road Elementary**– Add 140 students **\$ 5,700,000**
 - 13 classrooms (including specialists)
 - Restrooms
 - Expand/renovate kitchen/café
 - **Clark Elementary** – Add 80 students **\$ 3,575,000**
 - 8 classrooms (including specialists)
 - Restrooms
 - Expand/renovate kitchen/café
 - **Hudson Elementary** – Add 30 students **\$ 400,000**
 - 2 classrooms
 - Renovate café

- **Hixson Middle School** – Add 75 students **\$ 3,400,000**
 - 6 classrooms (including specialists)
 - Renovate kitchen/café

- **Address ADA issues at Clark, Edgar Road, Hudson, Steger:**
 - Clark Elementary School **\$ 340,000**
 - Edgar Road Elementary School **\$ 245,000**
 - Hudson Elementary School **\$ 225,000**
 - Steger Elementary School **\$ 550,000**
 - **Total:** **\$ 1,360,000**

- **Moss Field Improvements:**
 - Turf Field & 8 Lane Track
 - Practice Field Renovations
 - Complete Renovation of Stadium Seating & Press Box (necessary)
 - Build Athletic Facility (Locker Rooms, Restrooms)
 - Replace Visitor Bleachers

▪ MSD/Testing/Engineering & Contingency	
Total:	\$ 6,000,000
Grand Total for Option 2:	\$20,435,000

As Building Advisory Committee members discussed Option 2, members discussed the possibility of grandfathering the current 131 elementary students at the Steger facility. This consideration would eliminate the need to expand other elementary schools by the 131 students, reducing the total number of additional classrooms to be built at Edgar Road Elementary School, Clark Elementary School and Hudson Elementary School. The estimated savings would be approximately \$3 million. This option would also reduce the number of students impacted by school transitions. This consideration would require a two classroom addition to Steger Sixth Grade Center to accommodate the increased enrollment in sixth grade

Committee members acknowledged this scenario would eliminate the possible future expansion of preschool programing in the Steger facility.

Long Term Debt of the District

The estimated un-voted debt margin for April, 2015 is approximately \$47,000,000. The total amount of any new initiative would cost approximately one penny for each million. Additional analysis of the district's general obligation debt is found in Appendix B.

Building Advisory Committee Recommendations

- There is insufficient instructional space to meet current and projected enrollment growth in all of the district's K-8 grade schools. The Board of Education should consider a bond referendum in April, 2015 to address the necessary expansion of instructional space;
- The Building Advisory Committee reviewed the district-wide Facilities Committee study and final recommendations (Appendix A). The two proposals discussed in this report were recommended through this study. After significant review, Building Advisory Committee members recommend the Board of Education consider Option 1, a \$28 million bond referendum, to address the facility space needs due to current and future enrollment growth within the district.
 - Committee members unanimously agreed Option 1 provides greater flexibility for instructional programming, including possible space for future enhancements in early learning opportunities. This option also provides a better long-term facility renovations solution district-wide;
 - Should the district successfully pass a bond issue to implement Option 1, additions and renovations would take place at Hixson Middle School to include sixth grade students. The Steger facility would be renovated to support 350+ elementary students. This would allow the district to relieve enrollment crowding at the other elementary schools;
 - Option 1 would still require a four classroom addition at Clark Elementary School to fully address the projected enrollment needs;
 - Option 1 includes interior ADA improvements at Clark, Edgar Road, Hudson and Steger schools to provide access to all instructional programs within each of these facilities;
 - Plans to address significant safety concerns with the Moss Field stadium are also outlined in Option 1. Board members are encouraged to consider addressing the structural cracks within the stadium seating, providing an 8-lane track and upgrading the existing field. Moss Field renovations should also include a locker room facility which would provide concessions and appropriate restrooms;
- Should a bond issue supporting Option 1 pass, committee members recommend the current Elementary Computer School students be grandfathered into the new Steger Elementary School. This recommendation would reduce the number of students transitioning to a different elementary

facility and would reduce the size of additions needed at Clark, Edgar Road and Hudson Elementary Schools;

- While continuation of the construction work outlined within the Webster Groves High School Master Plan is important, addressing the instructional space needs in the elementary and middle schools should be considered an immediate priority. Should receipts from a successful bond referendum remain after the implementation of K-8 grade enrollment priorities, the committee members recommend these funds be used to continue the master plan work at the high school.;
- Any future facility construction should create flexible learning spaces and, where appropriate and cost effective, implement “green” design and construction practices as recommended by the U.S. Green Building Council;
- Due to the age of the school district facilities (the district’s youngest facility is 54 years old while the oldest facility is 107 years old), ongoing maintenance and preventative maintenance must remain an operating budget priority to support quality instructional programming;