

## DRAFT REPORT OF THE FACILITIES COMMITTEE

For the past several months, the committee has discussed and vetted dozens of facility options. Given the 6 buildings, on 5 sites with 14 grade levels, the number of possible configurations are vast. Even prior to the findings of the auditor, our committee was of the understanding that one of our primary charges would be to reduce square footage, and to recommend a responsible long-range action plan to address the operational costs. Having experienced educators on our committee has allowed us to concurrently assess appropriate grade groupings affected by teachers' certifications and acceptable age interactions.

Having possession of the recently completed Performance Audit from David Yost's office, the Facilities Committee met again on March 13<sup>th</sup> - the evening after the public forum held the High School Auditorium.

We were provided with supporting financial information, enrollment projections, and expense trends from the administration and board, as requested. Key among this data were facility operating and repair costs at each facility.

**With the above noted background, the facility committee presents the results of our work, which has narrowed the options down to two...keenly aware that others may evolve from the two base options. They are as follows:**

**Option One:** Develop a phase-able long-term master plan for Poland Schools, which provides the opportunity for educational excellence, operational efficiency, a respect for our history/tradition and the safety of students/staff/public. **(After lengthy discussion and vetting, our committee believes that an appropriate long-term solution - and one that the community could support - will ultimately leave the district with TWO Campuses - one at the High School and one on College Street.)**

In the short-term: Close North, close Dobbins, locate grades 3-8 on the McKinley/Middle School site. PreK, K, and grades 1 and 2 to Union.

In the mid-term, consider absorbing grades 7-8 into the existing high school building.

The long-term configuration would involve the construction of a new facility (or facilities) to have grades 4 through 8 on the high school campus. Upon completion, that would allow the redesign of the Middle School/McKinley/College Street site to relocate PreK through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The expectation is that portions of the College Street campus would be demolished, with renovations and new construction as necessary, to be the "permanent" home of a technologically upgraded, secure PreK to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade campus. This would allow the district to close Union, and market it for reuse to an outside developer - ideally as upscale housing opportunity - although other "community compatible" uses would be acceptable.

Concurrent to the move toward two student campuses, with the High School site housing grades 4-12, and the College Street site housing grades PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the Dobbins Site would be repurposed to house athletic activities (including relocated tennis courts and practice fields) and a badly needed bus garage and maintenance facility. It is expected that this option would accommodate overflow parking, commonly in demand for various high attendance events. This option allows the Poland Schools to largely accept and implement the recommendations of the Performance Audit, through a phased and manageable transition.

**Option Two:** Re-analyze and fully develop the concept of placing pre-k through 8<sup>th</sup> grade on the High School campus. As part of this solution, all other Poland Schools buildings would be demolished, or sold. Within this concept is a possibility/probability that the new construction could be limited to a PreK – 6, with the existing High School absorbing grade levels 7 and 8. This option would reuse the Dobbins site as in Option One.

**(The committee is keenly aware of the similarity to the last issue which was soundly defeated at the polls. For this option to be successful would require much better clarity of intent and community education.)**

We believe that Options One and Two are both acceptable. Though accurate cost estimates are not possible without carrying out a schematic design and cost estimating process, perhaps with some expense, we believe that Options One and Two achieve the necessary long-term operating cost reductions and provide the District with technologically advanced learning space, appropriate curriculum/ grade level groupings, and security for our children.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**A SHORT SUMMARY OF WHAT THE ULTIMATE DISPOSITION OR USE OF EACH PROPERTY WAS A PART OF OUR AGENDA AT EACH MEETING. THOUGH CONCEPTUAL, THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS.**

### **AT THE HIGH SCHOOL;**

The long-term expectation is that the campus would house grades 4-12, using portions of the property currently the site of tennis courts, busses, and bus maintenance. The current building may for a time absorb grades 7 and 8. It is recommended that the ultimate grade configuration would remain flexible and determined at the discretion of the Board in consultation with the Educators. Factors will include but not be limited to: actual enrollment census - correlated at the completion of construction, the highest and best grade groupings - consistent with the curriculum at the time of construction, and licensing of educators. Tennis Courts, perhaps additional athletic fields, an appropriate, code compliant new bus storage and maintenance facility, and perhaps overflow parking would all be relocated to the Dobbins site...see below.

## **AT DOBBINS**

Built in 1964, now 54 years old, it is our recommendation that the sites highest and best use would be to locate the Tennis Courts (currently in need of total re-grading and re-construction) and Bus operations and Maintenance on the site. The demolition of Dobbins would provide room for these functions, and some needed overflow parking. If economical, the committee suggests exploring the purchase of additional adjacent property, to allow for buffering, and perhaps additional practice areas.

## **NORTH ELEMENTARY**

North Elementary, built in 1957 has large acreage, but is a constant source of expense, and is least central to the population base. It is believed that there is value to the property for residential development, as verified by our real estate consultant, Mr. Platz.

The recommendation is to sell the property for residential use (possible additional enrolled students) and donate or lease the ballfields. Poland Community Baseball is the current lessee.

## **UNION ELEMENTARY/PRE-SCHOOL**

Perhaps our most significant challenge, as the committee and many Poland residents have a bond with the property over the past 80 years. Its age is problematic, as its systems are a constant source of unforeseeable expense. Its location however, highly visible and a landmark in the community, is not one we would recommend for demolition.

It is the recommendation of the committee that the long term best use of the facility would require its sale to a pre-qualified developer. The possible re-use as a residential property is most desirable, and could justify the investment systems replacement, if a part of an upscale housing venue.

## **McKINLEY ELEMENTARY**

Built in 1961, the "modern" flat-roofed building is recommended for demolition after it's transitional use to address the Auditor's recommendation. Most Committee members felt that the quality of the building, though newer than most, was sub-standard by comparison, and not architecturally significant. In addition, it is crammed into a tight site, which would benefit from reconfiguration to address circulation and safety concerns. In addition to the demolition of the building, we recommend the demolition of the aging concrete stands at Baird Mitchell Field, while maintaining the track and infield for school and Community use.

## **JR. HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING (ORIGINAL POLAND SEMINARY)**

With little disagreement, our committee felt the need to maintain a presence at this site...Perhaps Poland's' most Iconic Public Building.

Portions of the building, however, are in significant disrepair, and provide little flexibility to educate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To upgrade the entire structure in terms of technology, systems, and code compliance would be a titanic and expensive proposition. Our committee felt that strategic demolition of the areas in need of greatest remediation, would allow for modest additions to accommodate the spaces, technology, safety and circulation which is now lacking. We would expect a long-term solution to utilize the core and most historic section of the Building, along with the recently completed Connector. Strategic additions, architecturally consistent with those pieces, would be added as necessary to the north, south and east, to accommodate educational space...likely to be the home of Grades Pre-K through 3. This would also allow for a reconfigured drop-off and circulation pattern around the building and eliminate the parking area which is a safety concern along College Street.

## **ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS**

### **AUDITORS RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our committee makes these observations/recommendations with the intent of complying with the spirit and intent of the Auditor's recommendations. Again, we emphasize that reduction of the total square footage under management and maintenance by the district is at the core of our work and required to balance the immediate and long term financial conditions that we (and the District) can reasonably expect. Support from the state continues to be reduced, costs of maintaining aging structures continues to increase, enrollment is not increasing, and may in fact continue to modestly decline.

### **IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The measures recommended, and those already underway, are predicted to save the district approximately ONE MILLION DOLLARS over the next five calendar years through the closing of North and Dobbins.

As the long-term recommendations play out, new spaces will be operated with less staff, better educational technology, lower operating costs (via improved building materials and systems), and the opportunity to improve security at both locations.

### **RESPECT AND UTILIZE TRADITION AS A TEACHING MOMENT**

We would also like to recognize, after input from the subcommittees, and our discussions in the facilities committee, that the History and Tradition of the Poland Schools has value to us as a Community. Of note is the Middle School site and Baird Mitchell Field. This is perhaps Poland most Iconic piece of Real Estate and is actively utilized by the Community throughout the year. With the Proximity to the Library and adjacency to the Poland woods, by location alone, the District can take advantage of these community assets as innovative learning venues within walking distance.

These facts are underscored and highlighted by having President McKinley as an alumnus. This property has been the home of Colleges, High Schools, Middle Schools and Primary Schools since 1845. The site has been a critical component of the quality of life, and fabric of our Community for 173 years. We feel a responsibility to improve and maintain that legacy.

Respectfully submitted 4/3/18

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Facilities Committee: Chairperson Gregg Hann, John Tullio, Greg Gett, Maria Hoffmaster, Bob Richards, Phyllis Richiutti, Charles Rumberg, Gregg Strollo, Mark Thompson

Contributors/Guests: Janet Muntean, Larry Dinopolous, David Janofa