



Summary of Findings

The vision of this plan is to create a new generation of schools and to continue the improvement of education in the Cincinnati Public Schools. This new generation of schools will be state-of-the-art educationally and will address the deteriorated and obsolete physical condition of the current school facilities.

Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) currently operates 74 elementary, preK-8, middle and high schools (not including the Virtual High School). AVG, Triad and Burgess & Niple conducted building condition assessments at a total of 79 facilities during 2001. Sixty-two of the assessed schools exceeded the OSFC's 2/3rds Guideline, which is the initial mechanism to recommend consideration of replacement.

More than 70,000 school-age students live in Cincinnati Public School's attendance area. In the 2000-01 school year, Cincinnati Public Schools served about 42,600 students. Public charter schools served 4,200 students. Historically, enrollment has declined more than 7,000 students in the last decade. Over the past 10 years, there was an approximate 10% decline in the number of children born to parents living in the Cincinnati Public School District. Other issues impacting enrollment include no significant housing starts for the past 10 years and a large numbers of school-age children within the District whose parents have chosen schools elsewhere.

Cincinnati has experienced a steady increase in charter school enrollment over the past five years. Fourteen (14) public charter schools operate in the Cincinnati Public Schools District with combined enrollment of 4,200 students. As new charter schools open, increased demand and competition for space suitable for educational purposes emerges. While that demand has grown in the past few years, it is anticipated there may be a stabilization of the effect of charter school enrollment on the local public school district.

Currently, there is a disconnect between the size of the existing school facilities and their enrollments. Based on current enrollment and existing building square footage, the District needs to reduce its facility inventory and construct new schools to create a more efficient operation.

When all the variables are analyzed, it is evident that the District should consider full modernization of all educational facilities through building replacement or renovation. This plan proposes to phase the facility improvements in segments so that new construction and/or renovations will be evenly implemented throughout the District. Since not all schools can be modernized simultaneously, this will allow the District to re-evaluate demographics and facility priorities at the beginning of each segment.

Master Plan Funding

This Facilities Master Plan is detailed and comprehensive. It proposes that the Cincinnati Public Schools complete this modernization in a 10-year period at a total estimated cost of \$985 million, which includes about \$69.3 million dollars in local initiatives.

With the support of the community and Cincinnati Public Schools, the implementation of this Facilities Master Plan will fulfill the vision of creating a new generation of schools for the children of Cincinnati. In partnership with the State of Ohio, the Cincinnati Public School District will share in the cost of this project. Currently, the OSFC will fund 23% of the project and the District will fund 77%, plus local initiatives. The Cincinnati Public School District has identified funding sources that will help offset some of the District's costs. These various funds are not indicated on page 9 of the executive summary.



Recommendations

The Facilities Planning Team submits the following Facilities Master Plan to the Cincinnati Board of Education. These recommendations form the basis of a long-range comprehensive plan that will require the cooperation of various public and private entities with the District over the next 10 years. The Facilities Planning Team recognizes that many of these recommendations have significant policy implications and that several recommendations will require further refinement.

This document illustrates the overall master plan concept for developing a new generation of schools for Cincinnati Public Schools. It is important to note that a long-range master plan is a living document, and modifications may be incorporated at various stages during this implementation.

Modifications may be required due to factors such as changes in the funding mechanism from state or local sources, demographic changes that affect enrollment projections and future educational program needs. Ultimately, the goal of the District is to create school environments that are conducive to efficient and effective learning, teaching and community activities.

Facilities will need to:

- ❑ Meet or exceed all applicable health, fire safety codes and comply with all local, state and federal mandates.
- ❑ Provide appropriately sized, attractive spaces for education, administration, special education and community uses with flexibility to meet the ever-changing needs of the students and community.
- ❑ Contain the latest in technology tools.
- ❑ Be flexible, adaptable and expandable to allow for future modifications.

It is with these goals in mind that the Cincinnati Public School District embarks on a process to redefine and modernize educational facilities. By assessing current facilities, gaining input from the community and incorporating assistance from the Ohio School Facilities Commission, Cincinnati Public Schools will set the standard for education in urban settings.



Educational Vision

The Cincinnati Public School District presents a clear direction in its strategic plan, *Students First*, with a mission to “educate all students to meet or exceed the District’s defined academic standards.” The vision — to redesign a relatively low-performing, bureaucratic school system into a system of high-performing, independent public schools — centers on the entire organization focusing on the core business of teaching and learning. By meeting the District’s stated goals, each school will reach high academic standards, provide safe and orderly learning environments and provide a customer-friendly atmosphere where the focus is on meeting the needs of students, parents and the public.

To achieve CPS’ mission and vision, it is imperative to provide classrooms and school facilities that reflect the same high standards students and staff must meet. The District is committed to rebuilding and renovating District facilities to meet high standards over the next ten years, its “Decade of Renaissance.” The next decade will provide Cincinnati Public Schools’ students an opportunity to learn in environmentally safe, educationally adequate and equitable buildings across the District. Through partnerships with the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, local agencies and businesses, and the State of Ohio, the District took on the task of making Cincinnati Public Schools the “best city schools in America.”

The following educational framework developed by Cincinnati Public Schools provides guidelines for the District to continue the mission of rebuilding Cincinnati schools:

Pre-Kindergarten Program

A commitment to providing preschool (PreK) facilities within each kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school ensures students are adequately prepared for K-8 programming. These preschools would be operated either by the CPS Early Childhood Department or by outside providers. This also allows for preschools to be located close to home for children attending neighborhood schools.

Grade Configuration

In December 1996, the Cincinnati Board of Education adopted *Students First*, a strategic plan that includes a predominant grade configuration of PreK-8 and 9-12 schools. District research shows that seventh- and eighth-graders attending PreK-8 schools have better attendance and discipline, and they perform better academically than their counterparts in traditional middle schools. Younger students often benefit from the K-8 structure, too, as CPS schools that have converted to the model have discovered.

Five of CPS’ neighborhood high schools will emerge as vastly different places under a restructuring program begun in 2001. This program’s goals include creating smaller schools with nurturing environments where no student gets lost in the crowd. The restructured high schools enroll about 600 students and are divided into two linked components — preparatory academies, where students stay with the same group of teacher until they achieve competency in core academics, and senior institutes, each with a program focus such as technology, foreign language and career-technical programs. All of the high-school programs prepare students to pursue college or other form of post-secondary education.

Optimum Class Size

After voter approval of Issue 33 in November 2000, CPS instituted a policy for lower student/teacher ratios for students in kindergarten through third grade. The District is committed to primary class sizes with an average of 18 students per teacher, allowing students to have a better opportunity to master early reading and mathematics skills that are a key to success throughout their school years.

CPS also is committed to maintaining smaller class sizes in grades 4 through 12. The District will strive to maintain a 25-to-1 student-teacher ratio for students in all of these grade levels.



Educational Vision cont'd.

School Size

The *Students First* plan also addresses the optimum size for the District's schools. To support the Standards Based Model, the District adopted an optimum school size at the PreK-8 level of 650 students, with a minimum practical size of 350 students. The District is committed to restructuring neighborhood high schools into 600-student populations, meaning the District may house two high schools within the existing large high-school buildings. These are the desired ranges for planning purposes, and the District will determine the final student count at each school after consideration of transportation, where students live and other factors.

Programs and Services

The Standards Based Model is designed to provide optimal support for the work of teachers and students. Each group of four classrooms holds 90 to 100 students and is linked to an extended learning area (ELA), which provides flexible space for project-based instruction, grouping and re-grouping students, plus additional support and storage space for the team of teachers working with those students. Every school will determine the use of additional space provided for parent and community use, with the goal of supporting the social and academic needs of the students.

Federal law and the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) require that students with disabilities be educated in the least-restrictive environment. Consistent with the laws, all schools are expected to integrate students with special needs and to provide programs and services within neighborhoods. The space requirements for students with special needs should be included in the programming for each school site.

School Type

Cincinnati Public Schools offers a wide variety of school types, providing multiple opportunities and avenues for students in the District to be educated to meet the same high academic standards. Students are able to attend their choice of neighborhood, quadrant magnet or districtwide magnet schools.

Neighborhood Schools

Neighborhood schools offer students the opportunity to attend a school that is located in close proximity to their homes. Neighborhood schools serve as a center for the community and give each community a sense of uniqueness within the large district.

Magnet Schools

Begun in 1970, the District's magnet schools offer parents and students a choice among a variety of programs with special focuses and teaching styles. The magnet programs also help foster classroom diversity. Magnet programs include foreign language, creative and performing arts, math and science, college preparatory, fundamental, Montessori and Paideia. At the high school level, additional programs focus on such areas as the performing arts, the teaching and health professions, and zoo-related sciences.

High Schools

Cincinnati Public Schools' restructured high schools are designed with two linked components — preparatory academies, where students focus on core academics, and senior institutes, with special program focuses such as information technology, pre-engineering and college preparatory. Career Path (vocational) programs also add to the variety of curricula from which high school students can select. In August 2001, CPS opened the Virtual High School, which offers students coursework delivered via the Internet and other computer technology.



Educational Vision cont'd

Transportation

The Cincinnati Public School District contracts all transportation services with local school-bus vendors and the city's Metro bus service, at a considerable savings to the District as noted in a recent State Performance Audit. Within eligibility guidelines, transportation is provided to students living more than one mile from the student's neighborhood, quadrant or citywide magnet school. Metro provides service for high-school students and selected seventh- and eighth-grade students on a reduced-fare basis. Using the Metro service allows for an open-choice system for high-school students.

School Calendar Preference

CPS operates most schools on a traditional calendar (approximately late August to early June) but is moving toward extending school time for students who need it to meet academic standards. For three years, the District has assigned primary students who have not passed a reading-proficiency test to a summer extension of the school year. This supports extensive early literacy efforts established as part of the District's Third Grade Guarantee, which says all students will read at grade level before entering grade four.

Technology

In addition to classroom and school use of technology, CPS is in the process of purchasing an instructional management system. This system will dramatically improve tracking of student progress on academic standards and improve teacher use of technology to impact teaching and learning. Critical to the implementation and use of this system will be the technology infrastructure provided by facility upgrades.

Historic Significance

In May 1998, the Cincinnati Preservation Association completed a study of CPS' buildings to help prioritize them for preservation. The study included volunteers completing Ohio Historic Inventory forms for each building, including historical and architectural data, and current exterior photographs. The following is an excerpt from the study's introduction:

"Cincinnati's public school buildings represent civic architecture at its best. Many feature one-of-a-kind decorative embellishments, such as terra-cotta sculpture, art glass and Rookwood pottery, which elevate them above the merely functional, inspiring children and adults alike. Our public schools were designed by the Queen City's most celebrated architects, including Samuel Hannaford & Sons, Garber & Woodward, and Tietig & Lee.

With buildings ranging in age from 1876 to 1982, Cincinnati's school buildings span a century of the city's architectural history and exemplify a variety of styles. Many of the earliest buildings, dating from the late Victorian era, exhibit Romanesque Revival styling. The diverse school buildings built in the first three decades of the Twentieth Century reflect the return to classicism in architecture and the new prominence of academic styles such as Beaux Arts Classicism and the Colonial and Georgian revivals. Some illustrate the popularity of the Collegiate Tudor and Collegiate Gothic styles; a few take their inspiration from the picturesque Norman Revival and Jacobethan modes."

The Cincinnati Public Schools' Facilities Planning Team used the Cincinnati Preservation Association's study to develop compelling reasons to continue the use, once renovated, of the District's historic facilities. The Ohio School Facilities Commission recognizes the importance of maintaining and preserving facilities that hold significant architectural and historic value in each district.



Proposed Facilities Master Plan Projects

Building a new generation of schools during a 10-year span requires the construction of multiple new schools or school modernizations per year. During the 10 years, the District also will need to address ongoing component replacement and minor renovations such as roofs, boilers, HVAC, electrical and plumbing at schools not slated for immediate replacement or full modernization.

Determining the order in which buildings will be replaced or fully modernized will improve the investment strategy of the capital improvement program. For example, if a building needs a new roof, and the building is scheduled for replacement in year one, the investment in the roof should not be made. However, if the building is scheduled for replacement in year three, a short-term fix may be in order. If the building is scheduled for replacement in the later years, a roof replacement may be cost effective.

Alternative temporary locations termed “swing space” are needed for schools that will undergo extensive renovation or reconstruction. Providing for swing space was taken into consideration as the segmenting plan was developed for each neighborhood school, the high schools and the magnet schools.

To address the District’s capital improvement needs, proposed activities have been organized into three areas:

- ❑ Proposed new building replacements and modernization projects.
- ❑ Current building replacement and modernization projects.
- ❑ Component replacement/minor renovations.

1. Proposed New Building Replacements and Modernization Projects

All Cincinnati Public Schools’ buildings are in need of full modernization or reconstruction. The size of the task requires that priorities and an order of implementation be determined.

Facility assessments were completed by consultants with the Ohio School Facilities Commission. DeJong & Associates, in conjunction with URS/DNK Architects, Turner/DAG/TYS and Cincinnati Public Schools’ staff, reviewed this information.

The summary charts found on the following pages indicate the full modernization or replacement needs in each of the areas. Since all buildings cannot be modernized or replaced at the same time, the exact order of projects is indicated in the segmenting portion of this Facilities Master Plan document.

Using assessment information, research by the Facilities Planning Team and community input, the planning process guided direction on project recommendations. The priority of projects was established based on issues associated with building condition, educational adequacy, overcrowding and student distribution, grade organization of schools, potential community uses, educational programming, logistical considerations and coordination of swing space. The overall realization is that most schools need major attention and not all schools can be addressed at once.



Proposed Facilities Master Plan Projects cont'd

2. Grade Level Priorities

Preschool to Grade 8 Priorities

Following the District's strategic plan, "*Students First*", the District fully implemented the recommendation to create a combined elementary/middle school (preschool to grade eight) as the predominant (though not exclusive) elementary grade structure. Projects will occur in each of the neighborhoods and in the magnet schools throughout the District to distribute the implementation of the building program throughout the city. Because all of the construction projects are not concentrated in one part of the city, the District gains flexibility in the future. The plan can be adjusted for enrollment changes as projects beyond years four and five are identified. Swing space also is provided for student populations while renovation or rebuilding is occurring throughout the city.

High School Priorities

Because of the size and scope of modernizing or replacing a high school, the facilities team is recommending a multifaceted approach to addressing the high schools. A site-specific plan will be developed for each of the District's high schools that will help guide the modernization or replacement of each building. Each school will have a site-specific educational specification, a concept plan and a plan for phasing the modernization of each building.

3. Component Replacement/Minor Renovations

Component replacement/minor renovations refer to projects such as roofs, boilers, HVAC, windows, toilets, etc. During the past few years, with the start of projects funded with state money given to Ohio's eight large urban districts (Big 8 money), these replacements/renovations have been the District's approach to capital improvements.

This facility plan calls for this process to continue, especially in facilities not scheduled for short-term replacement or full modernization. However, as more of the schools undergo full modernization or replacement and as the District addresses more of the deferred maintenance and minor renovation projects, the intense need for this activity should diminish. An on-going maintenance program is an essential part of the Facilities Master Plan to ensure that District facilities function at optimal levels and remain sound for many years.



Recommendations

Facility recommendations were based on options presented to the Cincinnati Board of Education and the Cincinnati Public Schools community in a series of public meetings. Those options were based on the projected enrollment of students in the District for grade configurations in 2004 of PK-8 and 9-12. The projected enrollment for 2004 is 31,415 in grades PK-8 and 10,750 in grades 9-12, which includes a career technical education enrollment of 1,750 students.

The Facilities Master Plan Summary below indicates the scope for the PK-8 and high school facilities.

Cincinnati Public School District Facilities Master Plan Summary

The Facilities Master Plan will

- Build 29 new elementary schools and renovate 23 others
- Build two schools for grades kindergarten through 12 (a new building to house a merged School for Creative and Performing Arts and Schiel Primary School for Arts Enrichment; and a school in the East End to replace Linwood and McKinley schools)
- Build two high schools for grades 7-12 (a new Shroder Paideia Academy and a new Montessori high school on the district's west side)
- Build two high schools for grades 9-12 (a new home for Woodward High School and a military high school)
- Renovate four 9-12 high schools (Aiken, Hughes, Taft and Withrow)
- Renovate three 7-12 high schools (Clark, Walnut Hills and Western Hills/Dater)