



Master Facilities Committee Meeting 10/13/2015 Feedback (Questions, Comments, Suggestions)

Questions:

Q: What is the capacity impact on other schools with opening Harcourt?

A: If we reopen Harcourt, it will be with the enrollment capacity of 650–700 students. This means that the trailers will be removed from elementary schools and some overcrowding will be alleviated. It will not take care of all future enrollment concerns, but will be an improvement.

Q: What is the long-term cost of trailers compared with building equivalent academic space?

A: The long-term cost is not having our students in facilities that are providing an optimal learning environment. However, as the members of the Master Facilities Committee are aware, most of our facilities are not currently providing optimal learning environments.

Q: What was the savings for closing Harcourt? Was it a good decision financially?

A: The savings from closing Harcourt was estimated at the time to be \$790,000 per year. It was a very fiscally sound decision at the time as the district was struggling financially and other elementary schools were not at capacity and could house the displaced students from Harcourt.

Q: What would the maintenance cost be for a renovated vs. a new Harcourt?

A: Maintenance costs on a brand new school vs. a fully renovated school should both be relatively modest during the first few years. However, a renovated building will likely cost more to maintain over time since parts of the original structure are still present in a renovated building. Original sections of even a renovated building could require some higher maintenance costs that a new facility may not incur.

Q: What is the opportunity cost of doing nothing with Harcourt? (In answering this question, we define opportunity cost as the loss of potential gain from other alternatives when one alternative is chosen.)

A: Doing nothing with Harcourt means that we will continue to spend funds on providing trailers to accommodate enrollment needs instead of providing funds for program needs or building renovations. Trailers cannot be funded from debt service funds.

Q: What are options for other parcels of land owned by MSDWT?

A: A land report will be presented to the Board on Wednesday, October 21st. After that meeting the full report will be available on the website.

Q: In looking at costs to reopen Harcourt or build a new facility, what are the estimated costs for additional staffing required at the building?

A: We believe that cost will be estimated at \$700,000 - \$750,000 because of additional personnel required (building administration, “specials” teachers, student support personnel).



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Questions Continued:

Q: Harcourt was discussed, what about the other closed facility – Wyandotte? What is the initial thinking on the future of this asset?

A: Discussions about reopening Wyandotte as a 650– 750 student capacity elementary school have occurred. Wyandotte will be a part our overall discussion when we look in depth at all elementary schools.

Q: Why are we so focused on reopening a small school with only a 500-student capacity when all our already opened schools have issues effecting students now?

A: The current capacity of Harcourt is 500, but we would not open a 500 capacity school. If the decision were to renovate Harcourt as an eighth elementary school, it would be designed for a capacity of 650-700. If the decision were to build a new elementary school, the design would be for a capacity of 650-700.

Q: What is happening with the middle schools, NC and JEL?

A: We have initially focused our committee work on the elementary level due to the current crisis with space and capacity. Secondary facility improvements will be one of the agenda items in upcoming meetings.

Q: To create more space, flexible space, support space, etc., in the middle schools what would have to happen – remodel or new? Is there enough space to remodel?

A: We believe that renovating with some additional new space would take care of the middle schools' needs. We will spend some time looking at recommended options for the middle schools after the start of the second semester.

Q: Has there been consideration of creating K-3 buildings, 4-6 buildings, 7-9, and 10-12 or some other configurations?

A: Yes. We have had discussions with MSDWT administrators about this. District administrators feel strongly that current configurations are the most effective and least disruptive to the students and their families.

Q: How do we combat opinions that we just need to add more trailers?

A: We will continue to need input from the community and this committee. Trailers are designed to be a short-term solution and not a long-term educational facility for students. Adding more trailers does not improve the conditions of our aging buildings, nor improve property values for the community.



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Comments:

- New construction – gives boost to neighborhood values and shows priorities focus is on education. Progress.
- I like the idea of schools making money. I took my children to Pike over the summer and paid for creative writing classes. They were not offered in the summer through Washington Township. People in district would pay for enrichment.
- New school is the best option overall.
- To maximize facilities usage, go to flexible class system with different stop/start times during the day, especially with middle school and high school. Also, offer online courses for middle and high school classes.
- Focus on building systems first, but technology within schools and create more resource space for students not just in the high school, but in the middle and elementary levels as well.
- Sound proofing of classrooms needs to be taken into consideration. Learning in the classroom is not quiet and this causes distraction issues for students throughout the buildings. Too many times students in my class get distracted by the activity, sound, noises, etc. coming from nearby classrooms, hallways and even the Cafeteria.

Suggestions:

- Please try to provide as much background information as possible during discussions (e.g.: why was Harcourt closed in the first place?)