Facilities Task Force Makes Recommendations to School Board

The Facilities Task Force Committee, a working group of school district staff and members of the Hilliard community, has concluded its research and analysis of the future facility needs of the Hilliard City School District. The community-led committee presented its findings to the Board of Education on February 22, 2016.

The group, which met between November 2015 and February 2016, was charged with reviewing the current capacities of all schools in the district, as well as studying past enrollment trends and future enrollment projections, the impact of current and future housing developments, and facility maintenance and sustainability.

The task force also reviewed the age and condition of current school buildings, and the district’s current facilities maintenance plan. In addition, it studied the district’s day-to-day maintenance projects and projects falling under the district’s $4.6 million Permanent Improvement Budget.

“We are pleased our staff and the community were able to work together to analyze and make recommendations that will impact the future of our schools,” said Superintendent John Marschhausen. “Their input was invaluable as we plan for future needs.”

The increase is expected to have the greatest impact in the middle grade years. “While many districts experience a decrease in enrollment...”
District Needs To Increase Capacity For Expected Growth

Hilliard City Schools are growing, and the district may be required to build more schools to house the influx of new students. The school district currently serves 16,115 students. However, predictions are that by the 2020-21 school year, enrollment will reach 17,152.

“A projected increase of over 1,000 students in the next five years will have a significant impact on our district,” said Assistant Superintendent Mike McDonough. “The influx of additional students at the sixth grade level. Top capacity for the middle schools is 800 students and the maximum capacity for the high schools is 1,800 students.

“When buildings exceed those levels, overcrowding becomes a problem,” added McDonough. “Overcrowding has also been shown to significantly reduce one-on-one student-teacher contact, considered essential to a successful learning experience.”

The addition of 1,000 students over the next five years translates into almost two full elementary school buildings or more than one middle school. “Our buildings are already near or at capacity,” he said. “We simply cannot accommodate more growth in our existing schools.”

Task Force Findings

Aging Facilities

Hilliard City Schools have done an excellent job taking care of the district’s schools and buildings but they are beginning to show their wear and age. That’s according to John Marschhausen, superintendent, who is overseeing the work of the Facilities Task Force.

As part of the task force’s work, they reviewed the current school and building’s maintenance plan. Each year, there are limited funds that the district dedicates to building upkeep and maintenance. This helps ensure that the community’s investment in

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STASI TROUT, A COMMUNITY MEMBER
these buildings is maximized and extended for as long as possible.

“Our buildings, although well kept by our custodial and maintenance staff, are beginning to show their wear and age,” stated Marschhausen. “Despite our best efforts there are needs that simply become more costly as buildings age.”

Eight schools are between 47 to 59 years old, including Memorial Middle School, and seven elementary schools: J. W. Reason, Avery, Ridgewood, Brown, Beacon, Britton, and Scioto Darby.

“Unforeseen costs to aging buildings can be very difficult to forecast. We just don’t know when something may quit working but it happens. Luckily, it has not interfered yet with our ability to hold school in any one building such as the heat going out” noted Cliff Hetzel, Director of Business.

“We know that we have to do something because the need is that real,” stated Marschhausen. “The task force provided a tremendous service to the school district and I am very thankful to each one of the members – community and staff – who participated and helped research and develop options. Including the community on the planning and work of our schools helps ensure a better project and outcome for our students.”

The Facilities Task Force came up with three possible scenarios and presented their findings to the school board including:

**Building a New 7 – 8 Middle School by Bradley High School**

**Building a New 6 – 8 Middle School by Bradley High School**

**Building a New Elementary & Additions to Other School Facilities**

The scenarios presented to the Board of Education provide a solid foundation for future planning. The Task Force will continue to work with the Board on midterm and long-term facility needs, and meet on an ongoing basis.
The Hilliard City School District is committed to developing both the academic skills and life skills for each and every student in our district. This isn’t solely a district responsibility; it requires a partnership of teachers, staff, students, families, and community. Part of our planning and engagement foundation is the work of task force groups to advise and research specific topics important to district growth and improvement. Just this year we’ve had multiple groups meet to advise our administrative planning:

- Technology Task Force
- Gifted Task Force
- Facilities Task Force
- School Start Time Task Force

These groups – comprised of staff, parents, and community members – serve an important role in our planning and in support of our mission to ensure every student is Ready for Tomorrow. We will continue to seek opportunities to embrace, empower, and inspire active partnerships as we, the Hilliard School Community, embrace our passion for excellence and growth mindset.

Follow the Superintendent on Twitter @Drjcm #HilliardWay