

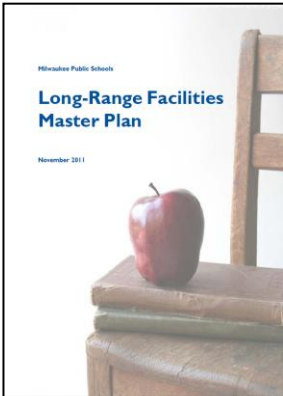


November 22, 2011

Milwaukee Public Schools

## District's Long-Range Facilities Master Plan completed

*Will provide data for research-based decision making for next 10 years*



The Milwaukee Public Schools' Long-Range Facilities Master Plan has been completed. The process to compile the Plan included many hours of input from parents, students, and members of an Advisory Committee, as well as a technical assessment tour of each of the 170 buildings that MPS manages. The 170 buildings include 139 school facilities, and 31 structures that are for administrative or recreational use, or are vacant. Combined, these facilities represent 17.7 million square feet of available space.

MPS has seen a decline in enrollment since 2004, and the trend is projected to continue in the next five years. The District sought the assistance of a planning team to help it chart a course to reduce the overhead burden of its excess capacity, while at the same time making decisions to place students in high-performing educational programs. "We asked our families to help determine the best sizes for elementary, middle and high schools," said Superintendent Gregory Thornton. "We asked for their preferences in class sizes, maximum walking distance for students, and how vacant buildings should be used. I am confident that as the District uses the Master Plan in years to come, decisions will reflect the needs and desires of the community."

The District began its facilities planning process in spring of 2011, with the assistance of Jacobs Project Management Company, whose planners have a depth of experience in school district facilities nationwide. With Jacobs' help, Phase 1 of MPS' process was delivered in June, and constituted an inventory of buildings, their age, capacity and physical condition.

Phase 2 of the Master Facilities Plan featured a public engagement process and the assistance of the Advisory Committee, on which representatives of 22 organizations were invited to serve. The process yielded an assessment of the adequacy of instructional spaces, the conditions of buildings, and how those buildings may fit the District's evolving Standard of Care – a set of core principles, including regional access to quality programming, school and class sizes, and equity in opportunities for students.



**Bethune, a K-8 school on N. 35<sup>th</sup> street, was built in 2005. Bethune and all the MPS schools were given a condition ranking in the Facilities Master Plan.**

*District's Long-Range Facilities Master Plan, p. 2*

Planners determined the average age of MPS facilities is 66 years. The average square foot per student ratio (using 2011 enrollment data and excluding vacant facilities) is 200 square feet, more than the average square footage six other large urban districts maintain.

The facility condition data show a total need for \$1.26 billion in improvements over the next 10 years. The needs include \$663 million in mechanical, electrical and plumbing modernizations, and \$38 million for handicapped accessibility. Many of the Plan's recommendations require capital funding, for which the Plan does not identify sources.

In the Facilities Master Plan, each MPS building was given a Facility Condition Index (FCI) that represents a number on a scale for overall condition. The Index reflects repair cost and educational adequacy. In general, the lower the FCI number for a particular building, the better is its condition. For instance, Bethune Academy, which was constructed in 2005 and requires very few updates, has a predictably low FCI of 6%. Compare this ranking to that of Hayes Bilingual School, built in 1906 and requiring more than \$5 million in repairs. Hayes' FCI is 48%.

Options for closures and relocations in year one of the Plan were made for each MPS Region. However, no *specific* recommendations were made for years 2 through 10; planners made only general recommendations on the number of closures or additional seats that may be needed in each region through the year 2021.

The year one recommendations in the Facility Plan included closing the following schools: 68<sup>th</sup> Street, 65<sup>th</sup> Street, Carver and LaFollette Elementary Schools. Also included are options to close the Burroughs Middle School and Kosciuszko Montessori programs. Most of these schools are significantly under-enrolled. The Plan also recommends relocation or expansion plans that increase the capacity of high-performing programs, namely Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning, Garland, Golda Meir, Hayes Bilingual, MacDowell Montessori and Maryland Avenue Montessori School.

In November 2011, the Long-Range Facilities Master Plan will be presented to the Board of School Directors as an informational item. Closings, relocations or expansions will be recommended by the Administration in the Board cycle in December 2011.

The Long-Range Facilities Master Plan final documents are available online at <http://www.dejongrichter.com/projects/mpslrfmp/>

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