



Green Bay Area Public Schools – December 1, 2016

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## Introduction

The Green Bay Area Public School District Board of Education is focused on ensuring excellence and equity for all students. As the board endeavors to continue raising the bar to ensure that all the district's graduates are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, it is also striving to develop and expand educational and career pathways for all students, as well as to seek greater efficiencies in the future.

As the board has engaged in these efforts, it has found that several facility-related issues must be addressed. These issues, detailed in this report, include overcrowding in some schools, inequality in facilities and educational spaces that, while having served the needs of generations of Green Bay students in the past, are becoming increasingly inadequate as the needs of students and education change.

Considering these challenges, the school board developed a process for studying its facility needs and engaging the entire district community in finding thoughtful and long-term solutions to facility-related challenges.

The board began its efforts in the spring of 2016 when it distributed a request for a proposal for an architecture firm to conduct a district-wide facility study. Through a competitive process, Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP (PRA), was selected. Last school year, a study took place to document all current facilities needs, inventory existing space and identify deficiencies and opportunities regarding modern learning spaces.<sup>1</sup> This document also included a plan to address future enrollment fluctuations. A report drafted by PRA was presented to the school board on August 15, 2016.<sup>2</sup>

After receiving the report from PRA, the board sought to engage community members in the district in three ways. First, a series of community listening sessions were held in September at each of the four high schools. During each of the meetings, community members were presented with information from Nick Kent,<sup>3</sup> a partner with PRA. Participants were then asked to provide feedback on a series of focus group-type questions.<sup>4</sup>

While board members and district-level staff attended the community listening sessions, they did so as resources and they did not provide feedback.

As a second phase of its engagement effort, the school board then sought the assistance of a community-led facilities task force. The task force conducted five meetings, evaluated the needs of the district and considered solutions. Between the fourth and fifth meetings of the task force, the results of a community-wide survey were shared. Based on information presented, the task force developed a set of solutions that will be formally presented to the board on December 6, 2016. After receiving the task force report, the school board will determine whether to address the needs—using some or all the solutions the task force presented—through an April referendum.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that additional information on the study may be found here: <https://goo.gl/zB4vuJ>

<sup>2</sup> The full report presented to the school board may be found here: <https://goo.gl/yvk9nC>

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Kent's final presentation may be found here: <https://goo.gl/X5S6oF>

<sup>4</sup> All community feedback, including responses from community members and minutes of the meeting, may be found on the district's website: <https://goo.gl/9TLVp4>

This document is a final report of the task force's work. This report continues by outlining the needs that were considered, the process the task force used to conduct its work, information on the community survey and, finally, a prioritized list of solutions that was unanimously agreed upon by task force members.

This document was drafted by Joe Donovan of the Donovan Group, LLC. The Donovan Group is a communications and community engagement firm that focuses on education. Mr. Donovan and the Donovan Group have no formal or financial connection to any solution presented in this report. The Donovan Group's fees have been paid directly by the district.

It is important to note that the board is not bound by the recommendations of the task force, but expects to use the recommendations as it pursues next steps.

## Task Force Processes

In creating a facilities task force, the school board sought to assemble a group of community leaders who would review the needs of the district and create a set of solutions that would be presented to the board.

Starting in August 2016, board members submitted names of district residents who board members felt would represent the district's diverse community and who could work with other leaders to evaluate needs and prioritize solutions. A total of 44 residents were invited to participate; 30 accepted the invitation and joined the task force. A complete list of task force members is included as an addendum to this report.

As invitations were being distributed to potential task force members, the school board created a formal charge that outlines what it wished the task force would do and what is acceptable in relation to the work of the task force. The charge is included as an addendum to this report.

In developing this charge, the board intended for the task force to operate separately from the board and the district. School board members attended the task force meetings, but did not participate. Similarly, like the community listening sessions held earlier, district staff members presented information and were available to the task force as resources, but they did not vote as part of the task force. Instead, staff members answered questions and ensured that solutions proposed by the task force were actionable.

Similarly, Nick Kent, an architect with PRA, presented at task force meetings and was available to the task force to help describe the needs of the district and assist in considering various solutions. Joe Donovan (from the Donovan Group) assisted with the task force processes and was available to facilitate the task force. Mr. Donovan wrote this report.

As the task force continued its work, its process unfolded with great transparency. All the task force meetings were open to the public and, because board members had been in attendance, were publicly noticed as board meetings. Members of the public were welcome to attend as observers. Meetings' agendas, minutes and all presentations are posted on the district's website and linked in footnotes in this report.

## Task Force Meetings in Brief

Meeting 1 – October 6, 2016: The first meeting of the task force was held at Chappell Elementary School. The meeting included a review of the charge from the board, introductions, norms for how the task force would do its work, a review of roles and a review of task force deliverables.

Task force members received binders that included the needs described below, the names of all participants, norms for engagement and roles. A general, high-level review of the needs in the form of a presentation was made to the group, and Mr. Kent answered questions.<sup>5</sup>

Meeting 2 – October 13, 2016: The second meeting, held at Leonardo da Vinci School for Gifted Learners, included a deep dive into the needs of the district.

After the presentations, task force members had an opportunity to ask questions of district staff and to discuss various needs. By the end of the meeting, the co-chairs led a conversation to begin determining consensus about the highest-priority needs. This information assisted Mr. Kent in developing solutions for the needs within the parameters the task force specified.<sup>6</sup>

Meeting 3 – October 18, 2016: The third meeting, held at the district's administration building, provided an opportunity for task force members to deliberate on possible solutions to the needs.

Based on the needs presented in the second task force meeting, Mr. Kent created a series of possible solutions and presented them to task force members. During the meeting, members had a very robust conversation. By the end of the meeting, the task force's proposed solutions started to take shape, forming the basis of an earlier version of this report.<sup>7</sup>

Meeting 4 – October 27, 2016: At the fourth meeting of the task force, held at the district office, task force members reviewed an earlier version of this report. In its deliberation, the task force created a list of items that members agreed should be presented to the board as proposed solutions.<sup>8</sup>

Meeting 5 – November 29, 2016: Between the fourth and fifth meetings of the task force, a community-wide survey was conducted. The purpose of the survey was to inform both the school board and the task force about community members' feelings about various items under consideration. Results of the survey were reviewed with

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<sup>5</sup> A meeting agenda can be found here: <https://goo.gl/nQCojw>. Minutes from the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/w5Zh7Q>. A presentation given at the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/BkfFxY>.

<sup>6</sup> A meeting agenda can be found here: <https://goo.gl/EacYtt>, and minutes from the meeting can be found at <https://goo.gl/T5bMn2>. The presentations given at the meeting can be found here: (1) <https://goo.gl/NXYTTq>; (2) <https://goo.gl/JAA3jJ>; (3) <https://goo.gl/Boldl1>; and (4) <https://goo.gl/ctW8n7>.

<sup>7</sup> A meeting agenda can be found here: <https://goo.gl/ZAM23e>. Minutes from the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/cftb3Y>. A presentation given at the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/nlGDLC>.

<sup>8</sup> A meeting agenda can be found here: <https://goo.gl/4s1dH1>. Minutes from the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/rZkLeS>.

the task force at its fifth meeting<sup>9</sup>. Members concluded their work by voting, unanimously, on the proposed solutions.<sup>10</sup>

## District Needs

As noted earlier in this report, the facilities study report created by PRA outlines many needs across the district's numerous buildings. However, in discussing the various needs, the task force has identified groups of needs — or “buckets.” These include the following.

Elementary and middle school capacity: There exists a wide range of conditions within the many buildings in the district. At the elementary level, a distinct area of schools on the east side of the river are significantly over capacity. Conversely, several schools north, south and west of that area are either near or below their capacity. Projected enrollment within five years indicates a general continuation of that trend toward greater pressure at schools that are already beyond their target capacity.

At the middle school level, a similar trend can be seen. Currently, only Edison Middle School is over capacity. Projected future enrollment matches that trend in the elementary schools, with continued growth toward the east and available space in the western buildings.

Overcrowding at Preble High School: Preble High School is very large and over its target capacity. The school is projected to continue to grow in enrollment into the future, while the other three high schools will continue to operate below their functional capacity. This condition poses a unique challenge for the district as a whole, as adjusting attendance boundaries to utilize available capacity may not be as simple as it would at first appear.

Baird Elementary School is obsolete and overcrowded: Baird Elementary School is an example of an “open concept” school. Originally built in 1968, the facility has long since been divided into more traditional classroom spaces. The unique geometry of the building does not lend itself to an efficient or effective layout, with many classrooms significantly undersized and oddly shaped. In addition to the physical challenges presented by the current facility, enrollment has been above capacity for many years, resulting in all 4K and some kindergarten students being located at Froebel Early Learning Center.

Leased spaces: Currently, the district leases space in the community for various schools and programs, including its Early Learning Center, Head Start and John Dewey Academy of Learning (JDAL). Challenges posed by the leased spaces include outdated learning environments, security challenges and a limited ability to modify spaces for the needs of programming. Additionally, programs housed in leased spaces (in particular, JDAL) face a constrained ability to develop and communicate their unique character.

Space for social services: As collaboration between Green Bay Area Public Schools and many community partners has grown in recent years, spaces that allow for greater interaction at the schools, while preserving security, are in need. Many services need to have locked storage, gathering space or other specialized facilities that are

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<sup>9</sup> The survey report can be found here: <https://goo.gl/GIzN1u>

<sup>10</sup> Minutes from the meeting can be found here: <https://goo.gl/lxR1W5>.

accessible to both the staff and students within the school during the day and families and other community members at other times. These spaces should have easy access from a clearly defined entry.

Flexible learning spaces: Learning spaces that support a more varied and personalized curriculum are needed, as is space that can be quickly adapted, through movable furniture, to different classroom needs. As noted previously, the variety and diversity of educational services being delivered daily in the district is increasing, as is the case in most districts across the state and country. This change — along with continually evolving educational practices focusing on more targeted, personalized learning — result in the need for more flexible and adaptable learning environments. These types of learning environments are often composed of several different types of spaces all working to support the students, staff and community they serve.

## Dialogue

During their time together, task force members engaged in dialogue that was thoughtful and covered a range of ideas and options. Although this dialogue gave way to the proposed solutions included later in this report, it is the author's belief that a summary review of the dialogue, given the considerable thought that went into task force members' contributions, should be included in this report so as to show the way in which solutions were formed.

The following are some of the ideas discussed during the task force meetings:

1) A staged approach: During the course of the meetings, task force members seemed to agree that the district has numerous urgent needs that require attention now — perhaps through an April referendum — and needs that should be addressed later. The need for this type of approach emerged several times during deliberations, including during conversations about needs at Baird Elementary School and Preble High School.

For example, in the discussion about Preble, task force members spoke about what is most needed at the school. It was noted that flexible learning spaces are important, and in fact, when the school was newly constructed, there were some flexible learning spaces. However, enrollment at the school has grown to a point where those spaces needed to be repurposed, to the detriment of student learning. Task force members who seemed to be most familiar with the school noted that flexible learning spaces are very important, but what the school most urgently needs is simply more space.

Likewise, the discussion of various needs in the district included programming task force members seemed to agree was valuable, such as career pathways. However, this discussion was overshadowed by what some task force members felt were urgent and necessary needs at Baird Elementary School.

2) Address the urgent needs at Baird Elementary School now: Task force members spoke at great length about the needs at Baird Elementary School, based on presentations by the district's architect and points made by task force members who are most familiar with the school. Concerns were raised about overcrowding and the school's obsolete nature.

Mr. Kent, the district's architect, explained in the third meeting that it is generally the case that, if the costs to renovate a building are more than 50 percent of the cost to rebuild, rebuilding is the better option. Mr. Kent

proposed that the cost to renovate the existing building would likely be far more than 50 percent of the cost to rebuild.

Rebuilding a school creates a set of challenges, including where to place the new school and how to ensure that the needs of current Baird students are met during construction. It was noted that Baird Elementary School is situated within easy walking distance to a large segment of the school's enrollment area, and that moving the school would be disruptive over the long term. Therefore, task force members tacitly agreed that Baird School should be rebuilt and expanded on or near its current site.

3) Moving boundaries: Task force members had a series of important exchanges about the possibility of moving school boundaries in the district. The simple fact is that some of the schools in the district are overcrowded, while there is capacity in schools in other parts of the district. Complicating this situation is the geography of the district and the fact that a river separates the community.

The easy solution, as noted by a task force member, is simply to redraw the boundaries to move students from one school to another. However, doing so would ignore the needs of students who would be moving schools. This led to a thoughtful exchange about the differences between equity and equality in school programming, a discussion described in greater detail below.

Ultimately, task force members seemed to agree that boundary changes may need to be made, and if done, should be conducted in accordance with established board policies.

4) "Equity is not equality": Throughout the task force's conversations, the word "equity" was spoken again and again. Students in the district, it was noted by task force members, differ dramatically in their needs. While some students in the district have access to everything they need for success in school, other students lack some of the most basic needs, including proper dental and other healthcare, transportation and basic food requirements.

With this in mind, task force members noted that in simply providing all students in the district with the same or equal services, the district would not adequately meet the needs of a large percentage of students. Instead, the district must continue to meet the needs of all students, providing additional services to those students who need it. By providing for all students, the district is being equitable.

There was agreement from task force members that the idea of equity should be one of the lenses through which any solution is created. Thus, simply changing boundaries (as noted above) may provide equal educational opportunities for students, but would fail to ensure equity.

5) Career and technical high school: Over the years, the district has created a series of successful career and technical education programs aimed at providing students with knowledge and skills in areas such as manufacturing, nursing and auto mechanics. The popularity and success of these programs seem to point to both an opportunity and a challenge.

The opportunity relates to ensuring that more students in the district have access to a greater variety of career and technical education programs. The need for graduates with these types of skills is very clear, and the district is seeking to meet the needs of students and employers who desire these programs.



The challenge is that these programs are currently spread throughout the district. Students in one school in one part of the community currently must provide their own transportation to the school where those services are offered. This creates inequities for students who do not have such transportation.

In the task force meetings, a recommendation was made that the task force ask the school board to address student transportation to ensure students would have access to the educational pathway they desire. This would be, as task force members noted, no small feat.

6) Address the urgent needs at Preble High School: Based on presentations by the district's architect, as well as points made by task force members who are most familiar with Preble High School, that school has a series of needs that should be addressed now. At the most basic level, the school is overcrowded and there is no sign that the school will be less crowded in the future unless something is done soon.

7) Ensure equity: As noted, the issue of equity arose multiple times in the task force's deliberation. Task force members suggested that simply providing equitable facilities to all students is not enough. Instead, the district must seek to meet the needs of all students to ensure true equity.

The task force members seemed to agree that, for those elementary schools, space must be provided for necessary social and health service providers. This may mean having space available for community partners to provide dental services or for local service agencies to provide necessary social services. Moreover, those spaces should be made flexible so they can be reused as the social and economic situation of the school community changes. However, this space should not take away from learning spaces at the school.

8) Flexible learning spaces: One of the tenets of the board's charge to the task force is to ensure that any new space is created so that there is flexibility in how it is used. Although traditional classrooms with rows of desks served students well for generations, education is changing. We must ensure the space is flexible so it can be changed from class period to class period, reflecting the needs of the curriculum as education changes from year to year.

There seemed to be tacit agreement among task force members that any new space should be flexible and that, like equity, flexibility should be one of the lenses through which any new space is designed. Moreover, like equity, there seems to be agreement that flexibility should be inculcated into any solution offered, either now or later.

Finally, task force members who have knowledge of Preble High School noted it had flexible learning spaces that were lost as enrollment increased. These members noted that care should be taken to ensure these flexible spaces are not lost in the future.

9) Create new elementary and middle school capacity: In addition to the aforementioned Baird Elementary, task force members discussed increasing elementary school capacity in areas where there is forecasted growth and where increased capacity is feasible.

The simple fact is that while not all the district's elementary schools can be expanded, some can. Their thoughtful expansion will allow the district to address capacity in a meaningful way.

Over time, the district could construct new elementary schools in areas where there is crowding or forecasted growth. One model with proven success is the K to Grade 8 model of Red Smith School. Research suggests that the K-8 model can be beneficial, and task force members who are most familiar with the school and its model approved of both.

Moving to a K-8 model also addresses middle school capacity.

10) Additional items: There are two additional items that, while important, do not fall easily within the categories outlined above. First, as security needs of our schools have changed, there is general agreement among task force members that all schools should be secured in accordance with best practices.

Moreover, the task force agreed that the district should move away from leasing space for schools. Instead, as the board proceeds with its planning, schools and programs currently housed in leased space should be moved to district-owned space. Doing so not only allows the district to ensure a standard level of safety and security across all its facilities, but also is likely to lead to greater cost savings over the long term.

As was discussed in the task force's third meeting, care must be taken so that the nature of schools and programs in leased space is maintained when moved to school-owned space. This includes John Dewey Academy, a school that is currently located in leased space and whose students benefit from a tight-knit educational community.

## Community Survey

As noted, a community survey was conducted to inform task force members on the opinion of community members regarding various solutions under consideration. The survey, which was conducted between November 9 and November 23, 2016, provided district residents with the opportunity to provide feedback through an online survey regarding facilities needs. A total of 2,990 surveys were completed.

The survey results, which were reviewed with the task force at its fifth meeting on November 29, may be found here: <https://goo.gl/GlzN1u>.<sup>11</sup>

In the fifth meeting, the proposed solutions were fine-tuned based on the results of the survey.

## Task Force Recommendations

In creating its recommendations to the board, the task force focused on three categories of recommendations. First, the task force created a series of overriding ideas or themes that are meant to be the lenses through which the recommendations should be considered and understood. The next category is a set of proposals the task force recommends to the board to do, both now and over time. The final category is a set of ideas the task force encourages the school board *not* to do. Each of these items are addressed in turn.

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note, as explained in the survey report, that the survey results are not based on research from a scientific sample, but rather a convenience sample. Therefore, it is methodologically inappropriate to conduct predictive analysis using the survey results.

The following are the overriding themes the task force encourages the school board to consider as it addresses facility needs in the district. These themes are the lenses through which the task force encourages the school board to consider its facility-related work.

### **Recommendations: Overriding Themes**

*The need for equity across the district should be the lens through which all future facility-related work in the district takes place. Equitable investments in facilities should be based on the needs of each school community.*

#1) Address overcrowding: Simply stated, the top priority is the need for *quality* educational space for students in the district.

#2 Provide the right spaces for programming: In addressing overcrowding, the board should ensure that all school enrollments are based on best practices and the needs of the students attending the school. An emphasis should be placed on ensuring *quality* educational spaces for all students across the district.

#3) Move forward: Move forward with an April referendum.

### **Recommendations: To Do**

Based on the overriding themes noted above, the task force submits the following items to the board as recommendations. It should be noted that the task force charge did not include consideration of finances. Therefore, these items are presented as a non-prioritized list, with the understanding that it is likely that not all of the items presented here may be addressed at one time.

**The task force encourages the school board to do the following:**

- Examine attendance boundaries at all levels and consider making changes to address overcrowding
- Address the needs at Baird Elementary School
- Create a new kindergarten through grade 8 school on the eastside of the district
- Create a new high school on the eastside of the district
- Ensure that other high schools in the district remain vibrant with flexible learning spaces and that enrollments in the schools equal 1,000 students or fewer
- Provide every school with community spaces for community partners, social service agencies, etc.
- Consider the creation of magnet schools
- Ensure that educational spaces are “right spaces” that are flexible and meet the needs of students
- Ensure that schools are customized to meet the students they serve
- Expand opportunities in existing schools for students, in accordance with market trends

### Recommendations: To Not Do

In addition to making recommendations to the board on what the task force feels the board should do, the task force would also like to submit a list of items it recommends the board *not* do.

The task force encourages the school board to not do the following:

- Expand Preble High School
- Fail to consider an operational referendum
- Fail to address transportation needs of students
- Create a separate technical high school
- Use leased space as a long-term solution
- Make improvements in one or more facilities or add new ones at the expense of any existing facility or programs
- Commit to only using currently vacant land when considering a new high school

## Addendum: Board Charge to Facilities Task Force

### District's Current Reality

- Crowding on the East side of the district
- Capacity on the West side of the district
- Potential growth opportunities on the eastside
- Lack of space for multi-levels of support in buildings
- Lack of space for community supports in buildings
- Changing educational landscape
  - Open enrollment
  - Intra-district transfer
  - Vouchers
- More than 15 percent of student body is mobile
- Rented spaces have limitations
- Lack of equity and access across the district
- Safety concerns - not all buildings have secure entrances
- Instructional practice and building space no longer align to current and future programming
- Lack of sufficient funding from the state of Wisconsin

### Board Charge

- Solutions aligned to the district's mission, vision and strategic priorities
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- Solutions are fiscally responsible
- Solutions are prioritized
- Solutions include community and parent spaces in schools
- Solutions provide creative ways to develop flexible learning spaces in schools to allow for multi-use 21st Century learning spaces
- Solutions consider the needs of adult learners for collaborate spaces
- Solutions allow the district to expand or contract with enrollment shifts
- Solutions that may include boundary changes adhere to board policy regarding length of time students are allowed to ride the bus
- Solutions ensure all buildings are safe, secure and welcoming environments
- Solutions will be considered only after all community input from engagement sessions and the website have been reviewed

#### Desired Results

- Equitable opportunities across the district, including the ability to attend a multi-cultural learning environment
- District capacity is flexible so it can expand and contract with enrollment shifts, including marketplace enrollment impacts
- Schools have enough properly sized learning spaces to accommodate all enrolled students (capacity)
- A building's character is warm and welcoming creating a place that students, staff and community want to be
- The building environment inspires while reflecting the culture of the institution
- History shall be honored in the spaces.
- All school buildings will offer modern, flexible learning spaces
- Furniture that is flexible, varied and engaging will be available at all schools
- Educational spaces support individualized learning
- Buildings will be flexible enough to change with evolving curriculum and enrollment numbers
- Indoor environments will be supportive of teaching and learning. This includes temperature, humidity, air quality, etc.
- All primary learning spaces will have natural light
- Properly sized and outfitted spaces will be provided for specialized program offerings
- Staff will have appropriate meeting and collaboration spaces
- Places for community will be provided and accessible
- Community partners will have proper spaces to support their services
- Facilities are able to meet needs for extended learning opportunities (number of hours/days per year)

## Addendum: Task Force Members

- Co-Chair - Anne Van Ess
- Co-Chair - Tim Weyenberg
- Patty Butcher

- Dennis Christensen
- Kathy Cornell
- Aurora Cortez
- Judy Crain
- Mark Flaten
- Wendy Fleury
- Amy Foote
- Emily Genrich
- David Harswick
- Kelli Horochov
- Sarah Inman
- Mike Kawleski
- Ron Metzler
- Natalie Nienhuis
- Julie Piton
- Patrick Quinn
- Ernie Remondini
- Hector Rodriguez
- Jayme Sellen
- Reva Shaw
- Amy Sieber
- Lori Suddick
- Yia Thao
- Eric VandenHeuvel
- Intra-City Student Council Representative
- Intra-City Student Council Representative



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