

Fairfield Board of Education - Facilities Planning Principles

Revised and Adopted on December 13, 2022

1. **Core facilities** – *Additional classrooms shall not be added without addressing the core facilities that they will impact.* With any new classroom additions at our schools, we must equally incorporate relative additional space to expand core facilities when necessary. More children may bring more space needs in the cafeteria, library, gymnasium, bathrooms, and hallways. Consideration should also be given to outdoor traffic flow, patterns, and safety as well as the need for additional outdoor recreational improvements.

2. **Class size** – *Facilities planning, whenever possible, shall have a goal of providing adequate space to enable educational guidelines to be met.* Class size should not be viewed as a variable designed to simplify facilities and budgetary problems. Class size should not be used as a means to fit students into the limited space we have, wherever it may be. Instead we should endeavor to provide appropriate facilities that meet educational specifications throughout the district. BOE class size guidelines for both general and special education will be adhered to.

3. **Specialized curriculum** – *We must provide, whenever possible, appropriate and dedicated spaces for specialized curriculum needs.* In particular, space must be provided for art, music, technology, and special education services, including but not limited to OT/PT, speech and language, and student support centers. These critical components of our curriculum cannot be effectively delivered “on a cart,” in a closet, or in similar inappropriate spaces.

4. **Enrollment projections** – *A long-term plan should account for and accommodate peak enrollment projections.* We should not ignore the new dynamics that play a role in school population changes such as in-migration, zoning density, regional economy, or the addition of high-occupancy developments. When determining space needs, we should endeavor, to use projected enrollment figures that account for these factors and that compensate for the fact that recent projections have at times underestimated actual enrollment.

5. **Stability** – *We should strive to create district plans that provide stability for the district’s students.* We should endeavor to plan for stability in our educational system. Whenever possible, redistricting should not be revisited every 3-5 years, especially without a major event or significant population shift.

6. **Headroom** – *To ensure stability, we should leave headroom in each school; the maximum number we should plan to is 85% of capacity at all levels.* We should ensure that headroom is built into our calculations for school planning. Because enrollment projections are not an exact science, district planning must account for the statistical variance between projected and actual enrollments. As such, whenever possible, schools should be operated at a utilization level that accommodates year-to-year fluctuations in enrollment without resorting to inappropriate measures such as redistricting or buying and installing portable classrooms.

7. **Commitment to adding space where students are located** – *At the elementary school level, we strive to maintain the concept of “neighborhood elementary schools” and/or allow students to attend the elementary school which is reasonably close to their homes whenever educationally feasible and possible.* When possible, we should not be busing students past or away from their neighborhood school (or a school which is reasonably close to their home) because there is an open

seat in another school located in different part of town. Therefore, the planning process must evaluate where the population centers are and build or expand in those areas.

8. Temporary Solutions (Portables) – The Town will not rely on temporary portable classrooms as a permanent substitute for brick and mortar classrooms.

9. Commitment to providing a safe, secure and healthy learning environment – Future planning should prioritize improving indoor air quality and security by implementing modern mechanical codes when upgrading systems. In cooperation with emergency management personnel, we should endeavor to maintain existing security systems and continuously evaluate for upgrades and improvements.

10. Sustainability – We will strive to reduce our carbon footprint by improving our equipment's operational efficiency, replacing aged equipment with high-efficiency building management systems, and using sustainable energy sources such as photovoltaic systems, fuel cells, etc.