

Rockford Public Schools, District 205
Facilities Master Plan 2025 – 2030
Program Meeting – 4-2-1
Meeting Minutes

Teams Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

DLR Group members present:

Korey White, AIA, pK-12 Planning Leader/Senior Associate
Keri Vansant, AIA, Project Manager/Senior Associate
Leanne M. Meyer-Smith, AIA, K-12 Education Leader/Principal

Rockford School District Staff Present:

Mike Phillips, Chief Operations Officer
Greg Brown, Chief Financial Officer
Heidi Dettman, Chief Academic Officer
Scott Jenson, Director of Design and Construction
Adam Cengiz, Secondary Special Program Principal
Scott Sevey, Director of Career/Technical Education
Dustin Printz, Roosevelt High School Assistant Principal
Morgan Gallagher, Chief of Schools
Ryan Nachreiner, Auburn High School Principal
Kourtnei Gray, Kennedy Middle School Principal
Bridget French, ED College and Career Readiness
Gus Carter, Guilford High School Principal
Jeff Carlson, Eisenhower Middle School Principal

Ms. White opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Ms. White: The format of this meeting is just a little different than some of the other ones you may have joined, knowing that we have the introduction of the CCEC into this conversation. For the purposes of today, we really want to focus on some of the 4-2-1, College and Careers programs that are embedded in the academies and pathways at the high schools, and then the spaces that may be left vacant when programs move to the CCEC. So for the purpose of the conversation, that is how we framed some of our questions. If we have time at the end, we can jump into some of the other considerations, particularly around the programs that might be moving to the CCEC. But if you're curious, or have questions about that, we wanted to make sure we took the opportunity to talk about your programs that are embedded in the high schools. We've also structured it by the academies.

I think we'll go ahead and start with the Business Academy. A document was shared with us by Bridgett and Heidi around the Business Academy pathways that will continue to exist at all four high schools and Roosevelt. Our question around that is, do all of the spaces to support these exist today or what is needed to better support them as you think about the next five years in supporting the Business Academy pathways?

Ms. French: For the Business Academy, all of the structures are already in place. For full transparency, I don't think anyone in this Zoom has seen those documents except for Scott and Heidi, so I want to clarify to everyone that these are just our ideas and not set in stone. Most of the facility recommendations do not ask for new facilities at the existing high schools. I'm not sure if that is what you are asking. Most of the recommendations were to alleviate space needs at the home high schools for more classroom space.

Ms. White: That is very helpful, thank you for clarifying that. I think the other part of the question is, we understand that there are existing classroom spaces and no additional need for that, but are there any support spaces that might be needed at the home high schools? Are there any missing spaces that may exist today for any of these academy programs?

Mr. Nachreiner: Are we talking like a redesign of a computer lab, a lab with a more up-to-date design of the actual space? Is that what you're asking?

Ms. White: Yes, so let me give you an example from some of our other meetings. We met with student support services, and we heard that small group rooms were a big need for places to meet with an interventionist or do certain things. We also met with special programs, and they mentioned having different sized rooms for people to meet or educators to get together and meet. That generally is what our question was, just opening the conversation about any spaces that you may not have, but are needed to support your academies and pathways if that's helpful context.

Within the Health Academy, thinking about the pathways that service the Health Academy at the five high schools. Are there any support needs today to support those at the home schools that are not there or that we need to consider?

Ms. French: I think all of the Health Academies are pretty limited on space right now. One of my recommendations was to put BioMed at the CCEC to alleviate the science lab needs in the high schools. There are some needs for refrigerated chemicals, some supplies, and the things that the health occupation teachers use like CPR dummies, or things like that where storage is currently tight.

Ms. White: That's helpful. One question we had around this, is there a need for students to have access to changing rooms at the home schools as it relates to the pathways within the health academy? No? Okay, any other thoughts on the Health Academies at the home schools?

Jumping into the Production Academy, any thoughts around what is needed at home schools that don't currently exist? Anything similar to Health Academy storage needs?

Mr. Sevey: Yes, what I shared in the last meeting, for a lot of those introductory and some of the engineering courses that we have, storage space, and enough space for students to work and actually be doing the things they need to be doing. Depending on what happens as far as what spaces are opened up, that may open up opportunities for space in some of those buildings for that storage and functional space for students to work and do team work.

Ms. White: Is that across-the-board Scott? Could you clarify further?

Mr. Sevey: To some degree. Since we haven't gotten into our Service Academy yet, but with our Public Safety Pathway, some of those courses are law enforcement oriented, Doing a demonstration, you don't want to step out into the hall to do that demonstration. So, I think that is true, it is to a greater extent in certain pathways and the Production Academy pathways is one where there is a greater extent of the need for that space.

Ms. French: Specifically at Jefferson High School, they are limited for space for their construction pathway. Guilford and East have space to frame out walls prior to taking them to a construction site and Jefferson is having a lot of trouble trying to physically fit that into the building. They have to do a lot of it outside.

Ms. White: Anything else on production before we go to the Service Academy? We will move to the Service Academy then. Any other needs that exist today as they relate to the space for the home schools?

Ms. French: I think what Scott said, in particular for the Public Safety pathway, we would like to see a temporary space, maybe a rotating space that the different pathways could use at the CCEC. So like maybe for a month a mock crime scene can be set up where all the schools can rotate through for a week and teach a unit there. It's not something we need all year round, but the fact that there is a need for different demonstrations we don't have space for at the home schools. Obviously for culinary, hospitality pathway, we are in dire need of space for that pathway as well.

Mr. Sevey: Yes, and I think the answer in the home high schools for that is primarily a set space for those classes to live, which would have access to refrigerator, freezer. They don't do a lot of cooking, but they do some food labs where they're making smoothies, they're making granola, they're not making burgers, they're not using ovens, but just space where that can be done. Those classroom spaces right now are just standard classrooms. It would be nice if they were a classroom where they had a few stations to do things. It would be ideal if they had a sink, which not all of our classrooms right now have. Those are some of the things at the home schools that would be beneficial to have.

Ms. White: Very helpful. That bridges us to the next question that we had, and I think this is an opportunity to get a little bit creative here. We are curious, knowing that some of the pathways in their entirety, or at least portions of them, will move out of the high schools and into the CCEC, we would like to hear from you what some of the highest and best use for those spaces left over at the home high schools could be. We're sort of thinking outside of general classroom needs, but if there is a need for that Scott, we can put that on the table as well. We just wanted to get some thought on how those things could best be used with the move to CCEC.

Mr. Carter: The high schools need more science labs.

Mr. Gallagher: More study hall spaces would be good as well, but some courses we have in the pipeline are just larger spaces. I would also say spaces that would be conducive to social and emotional learning work. Maybe it's not necessarily a classroom, but at the elementary level we have calm classrooms and Reset/Restore classrooms that serve complementary purposes, so also moving that direction at the secondary level.

I'm not sure if this is part of your agenda or not, but jumping ahead, the reciprocal of that too is having a need for how we could have more Roosevelt students getting access to all those courses at the CCEC because we know that the Roosevelt facilities, being such an old building, it's not a real car shop that they have for their transportation pathway. Thinking too, that at Roosevelt on any given day we have roughly 500 – 550 students that are there, which is about 7% of our total high school population. We need extended opportunities, more than 7% of our kids need access to adaptive learning environments. So not just housing more pathway courses at the CCEC, but also having a satellite at Roosevelt.

Ms. White: We also know that some of the examples you gave Morgan were really helpful, for study halls, larger spaces, all of that. To me maybe using flexible spaces in different ways probably makes sense, knowing that the needs may change. When you think about that, what might be the aesthetics to make it as usable as possible for your students when you think about some of your future needs like SEL or study hall spaces. Is there anything coming to mind that we should just take note of?

Mr. Gallagher: It's kind of tricky, because a lot of the space that might be centralized at CCEC is going to be space that necessarily has to be specialized space for whichever respective pathway is working in that space. I think those spaces left at the high schools; you can't do SEL in an auto shop so that is not going to be an ideal, multipurpose space for doing something like that. I think you would really need to prioritize classroom space, utilized by the pathways, that would have a much more universal functionality.

Ms. White: Hi Jeff, welcome. Just to catch you up, we are spending a little bit of time talking about high schools and some of the programs as they leave the high schools to go to the CCEC in the future; what to do about that left over space. Any other thoughts on that before we jump to another question?

Ms. Meyer-Smith: I had a question about some spaces that may go to CCEC relative to AP classes or dual-credit classes. There was conversation that some of those may come to the CCEC or be duplicated. Would that leave some space that might be available at these high schools if that happens?

Ms. French: Potentially, I don't think we have the answer for that yet, but I think in order to make this work with transportation, we will likely have to offer some core content classes there as well. Because I don't know the feasibility of busing kids out for every hour of the day without having some core content classes there that would allow them to spend half a day there to alleviate the need for transportation.

Ms. Meyer-Smith: Bridgett, do you see those core content classes being more focused for junior/seniors, or would there even be freshman/sophomore core classes that would be duplicated at CCEC?

Ms. French: I see them as being more upper-level classes for juniors and seniors.

Mr. Gallagher: I think we would structure Roosevelt to align to where the current Roosevelt would be more focused on 9/10 and 11/12, more than the focus at the CCEC.

Ms. White: Okay. I do want to acknowledge that we also have our middle school principals here. Keri, I will start with the question we have in there, but then I do want to turn some attention to them and ask the same questions. I just wanted to give you a heads up before I do that. The next question is what type of spaces might need to be included in high schools to include blended learning with the CCEC? Our conversations with Michael and his team we've heard there is potentially some desire that if there is a course or something happening, that you could connect virtually with the home base schools. Specifically thinking about that potential, what would be needed at the home schools? It could be space related, technology, whatever. Any thoughts?

Mr. Sevey: We have plenty of people on this call who have more knowledge base than me, but I will jump in to say that we currently do not have the technology space in any of our high schools to facilitate that. So that would be a necessity. Then thought-out structure of what that would like as far as space on that campus for students to jump into a virtual class like that. That would be necessary things to think about, even things like audio. What do you do when a kid does not have a pair of headphones, or something of that nature, and they need to jump into a class like that?

Ms. White: Scott, just a follow up on that, that prompted a question for me. Do you see this working in both directions, that it would be a single student virtually joining a class at CCEC or having a full class of maybe ten students in the same room joining together? Have there been any conversations or consideration to one approach or the other? Or would we need to think about those?

Mr. Sevey: I will defer to the other minds.

Mr. Gallagher: I would say both.

Ms. White: Thank you. We will change up a little bit and I will pull in some of our middle school principals we have joining us. As we're thinking about this conversation as it relates to the academies, and pathways, and the 4-2-1. What are some of the thoughts and conversations that are coming to mind for all of you, if anything?

Mr. Cengiz: On the previous question, as a middle school principal and a high school principal, and it will be the same issue with a few people here, when or if we move to the CCEC model, the high-level science courses, AP physics, AP CAPA, and the Gifted Academy, just those few, they will need to be transported every day. Then you have the other final courses that will be similar issues. For other high schools, the percentage may be low, but in my case it's 50% of the kids. What I propose, for CAPA and gifted, especially for those that run our program and share our resources with other schools as part of the CCEC. And then for the middle school, if CAPA is not placed there, then they can afford some high level art classes and in high school, the same thing. One other thing, we do have labs, but my students are capable of doing high level and STEM projects, and research project, and the current facilities are not fully supportive of being able to do that research.

Ms. White: Thank you, are there any thoughts from our middle school folks?

Mr. Schrank: I would say adding more spaces for those one-to-one meetings. We're so stretched, I'm sure everyone is. So finding those areas we haven't turned into an office, or a conference room, or given to another employee that we've hired, to turn into a space to meet with the students one-on-one. Whether that be at the school level or an outside agency.

Ms. White: Speaking of outside partnerships, the next question we had was about strong community partnerships and schools. We were reading some of the documents, particularly about academies and pathways that mention partnerships and bringing in folks to do mock interviews, guest speakers, curriculum review with outside councils, equipment review, etc., do you have spaces that support these functions? How are they working if you do have them? Or is this something where you're using business partner facilities, and you would rather have them in your schools? What might be desired for these, not knowing if they exist, or to what degree does that exist. I just want to get some feedback on some of the partnerships as it relates to academies and pathways and what might be needed for meeting purposes.

Ms. French: For our advisories we currently meet in the Roosevelt library because it is one of the bigger libraries, and then we break out into classrooms. Our advisory board meetings are after school so that works out fine. Industry partners like coming into schools I think, and I do think it is important for teachers to get into industry as well, but we do that by way of teacher externships. So as far as space for those types of things, I think we're okay right now.

Mr. Sevey: I think it can be a challenge when we do work based learning experiences that are in the building, such as the mock interviews. That can sometimes be a challenge, but I guess for the most part we manage those challenges by utilizing classrooms we are using for that academy to do that. If there are other high school principals that want to weigh in, they can. If there were space, it would be wonderful, but we're not begging for a space where we could go in once or twice a year and use that for mock interviews and that type of thing. But a functional, versatile space that could be used for things like that would be nice.

Ms. French: Ideally it would be nice if the CCEC had some type of community meeting space that maybe the students in the Business Academy could help run and rent out and manager. That is just one of the ideas, but a space that could be used by us and used by the community, which is flexible, sort of like a conference room with multi-media equipment like we have in our central office rooms 208 & 209. Those new spaces are a pretty good example of what that space could look like.

Mr. Sevey: I would also go back to our previous conversation about free movement in the classroom and visibility throughout the classroom, if we are accommodating those things, it allows for industry partners to come in and potentially work with a group of students. It allows them an area of the room where they can work, but still under the observation of the teacher. It allows them to work with a group of students, or assist them, or teach them something, whatever the case might be.

Ms. White: I'm curious about this in relationship at the middle schools. Is there is a need for anything like this? Do you have business community partners come into middle schools as it relates to these pathways? If so, what kind of spaces are you using?

Ms. Gray: I know at Kennedy we don't necessarily have community partners, but we have Auburn visit us every now and then from high school readiness, and our auditorium is extremely outdated. We have a speaker that sits on the stage connected to a microphone that goes in and out and wooden chairs painted a horrible green, probably asbestos in the ceiling, so that is something we would really like to have updated and then they could transfer to more community opportunities and student opportunities.

Ms. White: Any other thoughts on this question before we keep moving?

Mr. Carlson: For Eisenhower, a small meeting space is pretty hard for us to find too. As far as classroom space, we have one available room that is used as a rotating meeting area that is sometimes busy, sometimes not. We don't have a lot of extra classrooms hanging around and I feel we need a dedicated space for something. As far as large spaces, we do have an okay auditorium although there is a lot of . . . that needs to be done. We have a speaker system . . . but it wouldn't take a lot to update that. In a larger space we don't use it regularly, but we have certain things . . . Space is always a problem.

Ms. White: Thank you for that input. The next question is more on the support space side for pathways, and what we mean by that is space for administrator or educator supports for running the pathways and the academies at your high schools and middle schools. Are there needs that relate to that? Do they operate with the rest of the school's administrator and educator support spaces? Can you just share a little about how that is working and if there are improvements that are needed there?

Mr. Sevey: I'll just say back to a point made earlier, just making sure there is proximity for those within each academy in order to make that smaller community able to function.

Ms. White: Proximity would be for anybody associated with the health-related pathway, they would be proximate to that, not necessarily proximate to the other administrators in the other pathways?

Mr. Sevey: Correct. Gus may be able to weigh in on this a little bit too, but common space for teachers within those academies to intentionally connect to one another. We need space for our kids first and foremost, but secondarily, I think that would be something that would be beneficial. I guess I should add to that, as much as I want math teachers with math teachers, I also want math teachers and health academy talking to science teachers and health academy talking to English teachers. So when I say communal space, that's what I am focusing on.

Ms. White: Thank you for clarifying. Keri, on the notes, any gaps, or questions we need to follow up on?

Ms. Vansant: No, looking pretty good so far.

Ms. White: Okay, we had a general question that we thought may be public information, but we'll go ahead and ask it. We're curious about really understanding the number of classes that you are currently serving as it relates to some of the pathways and the courses as it relates to the pathways, and where we're seeing waitlists. We know you have numbers Bridgett from some of our Steering Committee meetings where we've had conversations about that, but since we have some time here today, we'd love to just hear from you all about where there is demand, where we might feel like the number of spaces available somewhat limits it.

Mr. Carter: We don't really waitlist kids for courses in academies. We've never really had students who were not getting the requested courses because pathway courses are general electives. It really comes down to teachers, not space. We need more space, but if we only have one teacher, we can only run six sections, we can only have 108 kids.

Ms. White: Okay, thank you. Leanne, did you have any follow-up questions that you were going to ask from your CCEC lens and conversations?

Ms. Meyer-Smith: Not yet. We're working on our second workshop which will all be the CCEC center focus. I'm letting you all go with more of what is happening in the high schools to back fill that space.

Ms. White: Okay, I think we've covered all the questions we had. Is there anything at all that you would like to share with us? Something you feel we didn't touch on; or you were hoping we'd touch on today? Anything we can spend the last few minutes on?

Ms. French: Just one thing to keep in mind is that basically it's within the high schools that we're looking to move programs out and moving them into the CCEC, and there might be some costs incurred in turning those spaces back into traditional classrooms. I just wanted to be sure that was a factor that was being included in this equation.

Ms. White: Yes, thank you. This is the first step in understanding what some of the needs might be. We will be discussing with Michael, Greg, and Scott on Thursday what the next steps are as it relates to those sorts of gap analysis of spaces at each of the high schools, and how best to proceed with cost information and what that program might look like based on their recommendations. Anything else to share with us today? We appreciate you all joining and giving your time, we know you are all quite busy, but this is helpful for our process. We'll let you get back to it and we'll probably see some of you soon.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.