

Rockford Public Schools, District 205
Facilities Master Plan 2025 – 2030
Meeting Minutes

Steering Committee
Thursday, March 7, 2024

Ms. Vansant, DLR Group opened the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

DLR Group Members Present:

Korey White, AIA, pK-12 Planning Leader/Senior Associate
Keri Vansant, AIA, Project Manager/Senior Associate

Committee Members Present:

Board:

Paul Carpenter
Tiana McCall

Principals/Teachers:

Dawn Myelle-Watson – Science, Jefferson HS

Students:

None

External:

Brent Pentenburg – YMCA
Antonio Ramirez – Alignment Rockford

Internal:

Misael Nascimento – ED Bilingual and Multicultural Department
Bridget French – ED College and Career Readiness
Dawn Williamson – Director of Athletics, Activities, and Program Development
Heather Psaltis - ED of Schools, Southeast Quadrant
Susan Uram – Director of Education Technology
Tessa Huftalin – Director of SPED

Committee Members Absent:

Principals/Teachers:

Joshua Tatman – Science, Auburn HS
John Schmelzer – Principal Ellis ES

Students:

Jessica Garcia – Auburn Superintendent Student Advisory Committee
Emmanuel Edwards – Roosevelt

Internal:

Melissa Wolf – Director of Fine Arts
Jason Pope – Director of Recruitment

External:

Angela Hite-Carter – Former RPS 205 teacher, principal, administrator
Ron Clewer – Gorman & Company

Administration Present:

Michael Phillips – Chief Operating Officer
Greg Brown, Ed. D – Chief Financial Officer
Scott Jenson – Director of Design and Construction

Ms. Vansant reviewed the Agenda and Steering Committee meetings schedule.

Agenda:

1. Recap of engagement to date and how it connects to proposed projects.
2. Review Scenarios using the prioritization method.
3. Discuss and suggest adjustments to scenarios.

Ms. Vansant: This slide recaps the engagements we've had prior and how they connect with some of the proposed projects that we are going to discuss. We've created a couple of scenarios that we want to run past you all. You have some of the data on the sheets in front of you. Korey will go over those in a little more detail. Then, of course, this is a discussion, and we want your input and feedback. We want to understand what might be necessary to get through this process, because again, it's all preliminary, nothing is set in stone.

I won't read these (Steering Committee Agreements), I think you have all been very respectful thus far on giving comments and input, you've been awesome. Tonight we're talking about plans and scenarios at a high level and getting reactions. Then our next series of meetings will be refining those scenarios as we go along and start to look at costs. Some of the projects and such that are floating above the line, looking at the budget, and then what might be left for some of the items that we know are still needed, because there are a lot of needs in the District, and how do we prioritize those.

Getting to the scenarios, just a reminder that we looked at a number of different components that the District had already done and the items that we feel our group had done as part of the process, from condition assessments, to capacity utilization, to enrollment and demographic studies, general information on the neighborhood input sessions, different programming session needs with teachers, and staff, and industry leaders, to really build that and understand the vision for the future.

Now we're at scenarios and coming up with scenarios that can ultimately be cost out and brought to the Board as a recommended five-year plan. Proposed prioritization thus far, there are some projects that have started to rise to the top. We've looked at 4-2-1 College and Career Education as one of those, and as that happens, then these programs might be moved

to the College and Career Education Center and then what does that mean for the other spaces and how it will impact them; Newcomer Center; Early Childhood Center; and then Functional Building requirements. These might be buildings that don't have walls and aren't as secure as a typical classroom might be; modulars, really working to get those out of the District and move those programs back into buildings; and then student support services, and through our programming sessions we looked at what that looks like at each cohort level, elementary, middle, high and Pre-K and what does that mean for impacts on those buildings, studying that further.

Then looking at those projects remaining. Remember, we have a \$180 million budget, so we have to consider these items that rise to the top, and then how do we prioritize the items that remain and layering several different facets from facility conditions to capacity of the buildings, to the Equity Index and enrollments. Is everybody good on those so far?

We'll start with the first one. Again, this is just an overview of the strategy for the College and Career Education center, the CCEC and 4-2-1 programs that Dr. Jarrett explained a couple meetings ago. Really looking at the strategy of locating a career and college program at a single facility and keeping lower-level coursework at the four high schools. Really utilizing those programs that have heavy infrastructure needs that can't really be replicated cost effectively at every school, kind of focusing on this capstone program at the CCEC. Then how do those spaces get backfilled and types of spaces to support the college and career coursework in pathways academies at the different high schools, how do those get filled in for those programs that get relocated? In each of these slides you'll see that strategy and you'll see what we heard that supported that strategy from the different engagement sessions. So that is how these slides are structured. We've heard at Steering Committee meetings, community workshops, that students want access to the high-quality career and college opportunities. This was really prevalent during the student engagement and visioning workshops. They know what they want, and it was really wonderful to hear from them directly. We heard from the community the desire to have opportunities to support filling the local workforce's needs. We know we have all the different industries that are here around Rockford. Community members also indicated that it was important that they have access to computer programming, and different types of maker spaces and career tech with global perspectives. That was from that very first introductory workshop we did. Any questions on that?

Next one is the Newcomer Center. The strategy is to locate the program in an existing building. Really looking at intending four to five classrooms with supporting services for student and families that are coming into the District. We heard from Steering Committee, from programming meetings and the information submitted to the District through Let's Talk, about strengthening and clarifying support for students who are English language learners; having dedicated space for students who are new to the District; and the need to better support families of students given the population is increasing, especially for those that are coming to the District, and the need for additional supports.

Early Childhood – a new facility that meets the needs of the population, likely at the Summerdale location. It would be 25-30 classrooms and support spaces for Early Childhood and also potentially being able to have the Home Visit Program there. It would provide

guidance and standards for future investment to other early childhood buildings. Once those components in that program are implemented into a new facility, how does that then translate to the other early childhood schools within the District? Supporting information – Student support conversation that we had specifically during the programming meetings for additional support at the Early Childhood level. Hearing from teachers about needing spaces for like gross motor spaces needed to support that specific program, also discussion with the Board about co-locating the Home Visit program.

Functional Building Requirements – this one we've heard, kind of resounding throughout all the engagements, departments, surveys, Let's Talk, etc., really addressing the inadequate components of classrooms that don't have walls, don't have doors, it's not only an acoustic issue but also a security concern. And then addressing the modularity, and also making sure we get those student support services in place at the schools, primarily looking at the elementary school level, but identifying that it is a need at the middle schools and high schools. Again, multiple different engagement opportunities from the survey, global perspectives, teacher survey and Steering Committee.

Are there any questions or comments?

Ms. White: We want to spend a little bit of time showing you where some of those rose to the top based on some of the engagements that we've done. We meet weekly with Michael and his team, and from some of our different programming meetings, and some of the conversations that have come up, we wanted to just ask you all how you are feeling about those projects that are in the blue, do you think there is anything critical that we should be thinking about that may be missing? One of the topics of discussion that we've had is really around K-8, particularly with the Special Programs. Is that something we should be considering here? Because as we've done this prioritization method, we started to see some of those facilities come to the top anyway, so we wanted to open that up as we start to take back any of the feedback you are giving in refining scenarios to bring back to you again. Any thoughts, questions, additional considerations we should be thinking about for what we've been calling the 'above the line' projects? If there is any, this is the time to throw it out.

Committee Member Ramirez: On the slides you mentioned who you all heard from, and I know it might be a lot to ask, but is there a way to get a breakdown of who you heard from such as Let's Talk, the Community Meeting that you had?

Ms. White: We would have that for Let's Talk because those come in individually. For meetings where we have a large group of people, we really just have the summaries of all of the comments, we really don't have those specifically who they're from.

Committee Member Ramirez: At least show how many parents were in attendance?

Ms. White: Yes, I believe we have the attendance from the community workshops, but our data is as good as who signed in. I do know in the one group we had twelve participants and at the other one we did in January we had four participants. At the global one we had about forty people, a mixture of parents and teachers. Let's Talk submissions are on the website now.

Committee Member Ramirez: There are still some doubts . . . I just feel that we haven't heard from enough people. I don't know how many are just here as a parent or representing an organization. Based on the last facilities planning, I think I saw more parents involved in that.

Ms. White: Ok. Follow up question for you. Knowing where we are in this process, what do you feel would be the right question, questions, way to engage the community in that?

Committee Member Ramirez: I know you all have your planned meetings, is there still more time to offer more meetings for the parents and community leaders to give more input on where we're at on these proposed projects?

Ms. White: So, giving the information around the scenarios of where we are, to take that back?

Committee Member Ramirez: Yes

Ms. White: There is one meeting we have scheduled for when we have the recommendation scenarios, we're planning to take back to the community and get that input. That is something we are planning for. I think it's about figuring out when that right timing is, to make sure we're really getting that and then being able to incorporate it.

Committee Member Carpenter: For the College and Career Education Center, what does the college part of that look like?

Committee Member French: Is it okay if I jump in? We will have pathway classes there for the kids, the college component comes from offering some AP and Dual Credit courses. As far as logistical transportation concerns, it doesn't make sense for us to transport students there for one class and transport them back to their high school. So we're thinking that we would transport a student there for, let's say Culinary, because we know that that is going to go there, and then they would also be there for let's say English or Math. They would have the opportunity to take Dual Credit English, or if they're not ready for that, they can take Transitional English which is a course that allows students to enter into college level coursework without having to go to remediation when they get out. So, we're working on putting together a mock schedule to see how that will all flush out, but we will have opportunities for AP, Dual Credit, and transitional coursework. There will be classes that sometimes won't be able to run because there isn't a teacher at every school to run it, or not enough students. Like AP Calculus C sometimes doesn't run because we only have two students that want to take it at one school, so unfortunately, they don't get to take it. So we can take that to the CCEC and students from all around the District can go there and take that.

Ms. White: Any more thoughts or questions, clarifications? That was a great question. We want to make sure you all feel like you have enough information.

Committee Member Psaltis: I feel really good about the projects above the line.

Ms. White: You feel good about those? Yes, I see some head nods. Just so you know where we're headed next, we're going to take the feedback that we've gotten and start to look at some high-level costing around these. As Keri said, we basically have a bucket of money, and we are working towards understanding what that bucket is costing above the line and then what does that leave for us to look at across the rest of the needs in the District. That does take some time, so we want to make sure that we are identifying the right programs and spaces so we can get the right understanding of renovation or cost associated with an addition or new build, whatever it may be given the nature of the project there. Just so you are aware of what's happening next with some of these items that you are seeing above the line. Any other questions before we move on?

You were sent the matrixes that are printed out and sitting in front of you ahead of time. The rest of the time today will be spent diving into that, taking a look at the data, questioning the factors and how they are coming together, what we're seeing. We'll walk through it and then we want to leave a lot of time for you all to chat, and then we can discuss as a group as well. Just a reminder, the prioritization factors are coming together in the three layers. First being around the facility condition information that was collected in 2020 and that's really looking at what are those immediate needs; what is the amount of immediate need at a certain building; what is needing to be replaced within five years; and then, is there a great need exceeding what the replacement cost would be. That's just an industry way of understanding what sort of condition it is in overall relative to the other buildings in the District.

The second one is looking at capacity and how the buildings are used, or what some of those issues are. From you all we heard that getting modulars out of the District is a top priority. Obviously, that is included in the above the line and also has an impact on how we're prioritizing the projects and where we're focused. Because we know that if they come off the sites, what is in them has to go somewhere, unless there are any empty, which we know is not the case. That also looks at the buildings that are over-utilized in some way, and then Special Programs. We've also had a lot of discussion in this room around the impacts of Special Programs, how it is impacting how the rest of the school building gets used, if it's in a shared location in the school. As well as hearing a lot around some of our K-5 Special Program schools, or the K-8's and how they don't have access to the right size gyms or classrooms that they need to support those Special Programs.

The third layer is really looking at the student in the neighborhood, it's coming from that equity index and enrollment, schools that have been identified as intensive. That's potentially calling attention to, even if it is being underutilized, there might be a need to have more support in place, so that means additional ways in which the building is being used rather than trying to fill out the classroom. Looking at the census track information on the National Neighborhood Equity Index, whether it's high or very high. And then the percentage of students that are enrolled in a special program, bilingual program, or special education program.

We did send out the definitions, I know there are a lot of words on this screen, but if you need me to come back to them at any time they're here. Just let me know and we can pull that back up.

What we have for you are two scenarios today. If you didn't get a chance to look, we'll go through it really quickly, but you did receive this in advance, it's the same information that you received. This is all of the schools in the District that we are looking at and then those three lenses across the top in the purple, the orange, and the yellow and then how those schools are scoring relative to other schools in the District. We used a quintile approach here, meaning we looked at the numbers and then broke it down into very low, low, moderate, high, or very high, just an easier way for us to digest all of the complicated numbers. What that means is that if you are seeing very high, that means it's in the top fifth of the District of having a high amount of facility condition need. Very low, it's probably in one of the best shapes of the buildings within the District. We took a yes or no approach on the center group related to capacity, mostly because it's either over utilized or it isn't, it either has a special program or it doesn't, and it either has a modular or it doesn't. Where you see yes on this it means it does have a modular, it does have a special program, bilingual or SPED program, and if it says yes, it is over-utilized.

Committee Member Psaltis: Can I ask a question? I'm just looking at the number for the Gifted Academy at Marshall Elementary. It is a special programs facility, but I was really surprised to see that towards the top. It is a remote school, so maybe that NNEI was high because there is not anything nearby I'm assuming, and the students are bused from all over the city, but I'm in a lot of buildings, that is one of the schools I supervise, and I was really surprised to see it at the top of the list. I know they have some issues with not having doors on some of the classrooms, but I don't know.

Ms. White: It's a great question. This was not designed to make the decisions for us, it is just to guide us. It's one piece of the puzzle, so there may be questions or surprises that come up on this. That's fine, let's note those so we can make sure to dive in. But I think we needed a starting point, so identifying those that feel like outliers or were maybe surprises as to why they are popping up will be good to understand and then we can take that back.

Committee Member Psaltis: So we will have an activity to go through this?

Ms. White: Yes, once I get through this, then you'll be open to discussion and there are sticky notes, and you can mark those down.

Committee Member Nascimento: For the bilingual column over there, everyone should be a yes because every building has either a bilingual program or TPI program, ESL service, all of them. There is not a building in our District from preschool to high school that doesn't have ESL services.

Ms. White: Michael, correct me if I'm wrong, but this is separate from the ESL locations. This was specific to the work Flo did on the bilingual programs

Committee Member Nascimento: Because a lot of these don't have bilingual TBE programs. There is confusion here between TBE and bilingual programs. Just to know.

There were additional questions, clarifications on TBE and the Special Programs column on the Prioritization Factors Table from various attendees in the meeting.

Mr. Phillips: Misael, I understand what you're saying. Right now, this column is not an all or none, it just says it has one of the services. I understand what you're saying, so we'll rethink how to

Committee Member Myelle-Watson: I've forgotten, what is the RI Score?

Ms. White: It's called Requirements Index and that's basically the total amount of need over the whole life, not necessarily immediate, not necessarily over the next five years, but total need. Again, we're here to answer questions.

At the end, what you see are the amounts of times it was either very high or yes. So, it is sorted at the top if it had the most very highs or yes's, at the bottom those would be the ones that have the least amount.

Scenario 1 is looking at, basically going down this order, so the buildings on your Scenario 1 map, we have a few different indicators going on. This is where we start layering on a lot of information, so I know it can be a little confusing. In our bubbles that are 1,2,3, or 4, those are representing those above the line items. So we're starting to identify, if it has a building associated with it, where it is on the map. Something like the Newcomer Center, if we don't know where that is going to be, we just plopped it in the middle of the District. Anything you're seeing with a four on it represents those three issues under functional building requirements. So you are going to see a lot of fours on the map. If you see an orange circle, and sometimes we're combining the number with the orange, like Auburn and Haskell, that's because it was popping up towards the high end of our priorities here when we applied those factors, but it also has a need for the functional building requirements. So what is circled in orange is basically everything that is going to reside above here. We're not necessarily getting into what are the specific strategies or things that would happen to that building, we're just looking at; if we were to say, where might the priorities be across the District, these are coming to the top when we are looking at these factors. Given your comment that maybe there isn't that need, that's what we want to write down, and that's part of the discussion today. Do we feel that this is off; what adjustments do we need to make that might shift this, so we feel more comfortable with what we are seeing coming to the top as priorities. Any questions there before I talk through Scenario 2 really quick?

Scenario 2 is effectively the same thing, but it is looking at it through a quadrant approach, other than district wide. We want to just give you two different things to look at and compare so that you can understand. Frankly, we have seen in other districts where the need is all concentrated in one location within the district and then you leave a whole swath of the district without getting any attention, any priorities, or whatever it may be. In the case for you all, we're actually seeing somewhat of a distribution, so you may not see all that much difference between the two scenarios, and that's okay. I will call attention to the southwest (quadrant). If you identify the buildings that are in the southwest, we did not have any sixes there, we had a number of fours. So I went ahead and just highlighted all of those because that is something to

think through. Once we get to the point where we're seeing the same level of need, what does that mean? Should we start to think about distributing equally, are there other factors we should be looking at? Does weighting something more than something else come up? Those are all things we want you to think through and provide some feedback to us on, so we may take that forward and adjust how these scenarios might play out. And just to clarify, the one, two, three and four have not changed from map to map.

Committee Member Huftalin: Are the fours going to be Life Safety updates that are going to happen regardless, if we choose the orange circles on this one or this one? Are the fours like, we have to do this?

Ms. Vansant: Life Safety is different. I'm assuming you're allocating funds for those separately. These are more just maintenance related, like the classrooms that don't have walls, doors, etc. That's the category.

Mr. Phillips: You can think of bathroom upgrades across the District, locker room updates, auditorium updates that could potentially be in there.

Ms. White: The fours, just as a reminder, are having modulars at those sites, fixing wall and door issues, and then student support.

Committee Member Huftalin: Student support like in more individualized rooms for student supports?

Ms. White: Yes. Do you all want to discuss as a group, or do you want to take some time to discuss in smaller groups first? We are a smaller group tonight.

Committee Member French: I see that there are eight orange circles on this one and twelve on this one. So, if we were to choose Scenario 1, would that mean there would be more funding to go into other areas because there are less schools to be chosen?

Ms. White: Potentially, and I will say that the cutoffs were arbitrary just so we could have a conversation around it. Yes, you are only seeing six and fives on Scenario 1. But then some schools that were coming up as fours, are coming into Scenario 2 because there were not as many schools in that quadrant with a very high need.

Committee Member Psaltis: I can do post-its, but I continue to come back to the ranking and how we grouped things together. There are some schools identified that I would question. Ones with special programs, for example, . . . but that doesn't necessarily mean what it means because Rolling Green has five Plus classrooms, that's different.

Ms. White: I'm glad you brought that up because that was one I wanted us to dive into tonight.

Committee Member Psaltis: At Auburn, they have a special program for CAPA and Gifted and they probably have the worst auditorium for high schools, and they have a performing arts program, and they are an intensive school. It means that it is different things in different

buildings. Montessori has a beautiful facility. There are things I don't know about, like the purple category, I don't know about that.

Committee Member Huftalin: It's almost like you want to weight some categories differently.

Ms. White: If you were going to, which would you? The over-utilized, intensive and NEI?

The question was asked how the schools are rated (intense, etc.).

Committee Member Psaltis: The Illinois State Board of Education looks at student outcomes via the Illinois State School Report Card. They have exemplary schools, commendable schools, targeted schools that might have one sub-group that is underperforming, and comprehensive schools which, school wide, have multiple subgroups underperforming. If you've been comprehensive for an extended length of time, which means you're in the bottom 5% They need lots of supports from all directions.

Ms. White: There was a suggestion to perhaps weight over-utilization, intensive and NNEI scores more so than some other factors. Are there any comments from anybody else?

Committee Member French: Immediate repair.

Clarification was asked – overlapping comments: So NNEI, but not necessarily the programs where kids are being bussed. Like Haskell, kids come from everywhere. So that wouldn't apply, it's almost the same with the NNEI, right? It should only be zoned schools. I was thinking the opposite about NNEI for some schools versus others because of the nature of all the kids being bussed.

Ms. White: There is a suggestion then, just so everybody is on the same page and hearing the same thing, if it is a total special program where kids are coming from other parts of the District, we would not look at that NNEI category. (Question – it's neighborhood, right?) Yes, the census tracks them based on school zone. We would weight it less for those schools with fully dedicated special program locations.

Ms. Vasant: It's not necessarily a neighborhood school for those participating in that program.

Committee Member Psaltis: There really isn't a walk zone for that building because it is so remote. Haskell and Barbour do have a decent percentage of the kids in those schools that are from that neighborhood. So it is just a weird matrix.

Ms. White: Yes, and it is always weird when it gets to this point. The reason we are taking this approach is because it provides some transparency and a bit of a methodology as to why certain decisions are being made, but again, there's no perfect solution. That's why the discussion and you all are so critical to working the best to figure this out.

I don't think we had immediate repairs on Hillman, so I'll have to follow up with you on that one.

Committee Member French: So, are you asking for our recommendation between Scenario 1 and 2?

Ms. White: If you have a reaction, or if you have more conversation, or suggestions, or wonderings . . . And that's fine, we don't necessarily even have to pick one. The outcome of this meeting is not to necessarily say, yes, we all support Scenario 1. It could be that you actually want to see these suggestions first so that at the next meeting we're coming back and seeing those updates so you would feel more comfortable taking a look at what those are.

Ms. Vansant: It could also evolve into an additional scenario.

Ms. White: One question that I had for you all is, how are you feeling, given everything we've talked about, how are you feeling around the breakdown of elementary vs. middle vs. high schools that are popping up? Do you feel like it's leaning more one way than another?

Committee Member: I think it depends on how we are weighting things differently or not.

Committee Member Psaltis: Coming from a community standpoint, I like the idea of all the quadrants getting a little TLC. If we have some shift and prioritize them within, for your question earlier about the parents who gave input, and those that didn't have a voice. Yet I like the fact that it is still skewed towards the intensive schools.

Ms. White: Okay, that's good to know.

Board Member Carpenter: Early Childhood is not considered a special program, yes? (yes) Because like Nashold has zero, but it still has needs because it's an early childhood center.

Ms. White: Because of the facilities, okay.

Committee Member: They do have special programs, Nashold has . . . and Beyer has Plus.

Committee Member Ramirez: I'm really surprised that Barbour is not higher on the capacity side. Unless something has changed in the last year or so, I'm still under the impression that the teachers gave up their teacher's lounge for the library to make space for classes. And then special programs and after-school has to find space, so I'm very surprised they are not on the list for capacity. That place is packed.

Committee Member Psaltis: There are more issues around those kinds of spaces than classrooms . . . because the student to teacher ratio is actually lower than many schools in the district as the kids get older. . . so the facilities, like the general spaces for gym, for sure, but as far as actual capacity . . . Do you remember maybe five or six years ago, pre-pandemic, we had an issue where we were over and consciously making shifts, so it wasn't overcrowded. At that time, we pushed the library to add a couple more classrooms, so that's what you're remembering. Over time we've adjusted through attrition not being over full. Does that make

sense? But the main areas, for example, there's a full middle school, which I would argue that the gym is an elementary gym and is too small.

Ms. White: And that is why we posed the question earlier, because we heard when we met with all the special program administrators to talk about what some of those needs were, and we heard that resoundingly. So, I opened up the question if we should take that into consideration somewhere in here to elevate the needs specifically there. And for other K-8's in the District. They may have the right number of classrooms, or maybe not, but is there a need to pay more attention to appropriate support spaces like a gymnasium.

Community Member Ramirez: And even spaces like at Constance Lane, they have those extra spaces for group work and a place to meet with children. We wouldn't be able to do that right now (Barbour).

Community Member Huftalin: I guess I would be curious, since we're talking about special programs, that's been my jam for nine years. We're talking about everything tonight. But Barbour being below Montessori, Montessori . . . this year. They've been working on a ten-to-twelve-year expansion roll up. They have a full middle school gym, it used to be a middle school . . . and those kids are bussed in from all over the city, so I don't know about the Neighborhood Equity Index, but I would say put Barbour over Montessori.

Ms. White: I think we can look and work with their team on taking a look at those special programs specifically around those other spaces to see what the gaps are there that we may not be seeing reflected in these factors.

Committee Member Williamson: I have a question, why can't you put some things in Committee of the Whole, we've done some analyzing of the District and the Board thinking of the District and special programs, some of this stuff was saying because the gifted programs are so remote, moving them to a more central location. Was that included in this as a recommendation?

Mr. Phillips: Flo Analytics was at the last meeting and presented the same thing that was presented at the Committee of the Whole. Those were their recommendations when they looked at special program analysis; they looked at special programs, bilingual and special education. What they found was special education is probably our most accessible across the District. It's in the locations where the most students and where the needs at. Bilingual was second and then it was highlighted that our special programs primarily are in our northwest quadrant right now, and in the heat map it showed that in the southeast where we have a large group of students. A lot of those students attend the Marshalls, so they are being bussed the farthest right know. Those were recommendations from Flo Analytics for us to consider, but that is not in here.

Committee Member Uram: That was one of my questions when I saw that. And do we consider, like Conklin is adding sixth grade, and I'm assuming then adding seventh and adding eighth, and is Haskell going to be a K-8 school and are we supporting that in this?

Ms. White: That's a great question. I think it's probably something that we need to look at deeper and bring back to you all at the next meeting; about how does that fit in? Because it's been supported by what we have heard from parents and in the programming meetings and the Flo work as well.

Committee Member Williamson: I guess it would be nice to know if that's the direction the District is going and then move special programs to different buildings, it would be nice to know before we make decisions or recommend decisions.

Mr. Phillips: That's true, and I think some of these we're looking at a shorter duration plan than we did last time, ten years. So there may be some items that we're identifying that really need to be considered and thought out in the next, if we do another five-year plan. Once again, with a finite budget and an unlimited amount of needs, how do we prioritize some of those things? But I think the mention of the K-8's, Haskell, Conklin are definitely . . .

Ms. White: Especially with some of the suggestions you made as far as should we be looking at them differently in these factors? If we do, then it may fall down . . .

Committee Member Nascimento: Should we be thinking in terms of . . . looking at this, I think this is correct. Looking at this, this says immediate repair. It's like having a car with no brakes, I have to fix that. Is that what is first? Should we not even think about, oh, we've got to move programs. Let's think about fixing schools, right? We want to look at this and say, this is what we want to do first. Let's put brakes on the car first, then we talk about painting the car and other stuff. That's what I'm thinking when she said we should weight this differently. Then, because I think if we go that direction, then we're going to be talking forever. We're not going to be getting anywhere.

Ms. White: Yes, that's a good suggestion. I think as we start to think about costs, I think we can start to look and see what that immediate repair total looks like in the scheme of some of the other conversations we're having.

Committee Member Nascimento: Because those are what affects the kids most. We're talking about gyms, we're talking about libraries, we're talking about cafeterias, those are the immediate things that help educate the children.

Committee Member Ramirez: Not only that but keeps the families in their schools.

Committee Member Nascimento: If they have a nice building that is clean and safe and has the things that they need, the community will then appreciate those things.

Ms. White: It's a great suggestion. I think the next time we come back we can look at what that total amount is across the District. We can also have some information on what is included in those immediate repair needs if that's helpful.

Mr. Phillips: And to the other point, we may need to consider what we talked about; Barbour and the K-8's, do they need to be elevated above the line and does there need to be some consideration of something else? That's really what we're hoping that this . . .

Ms. White: And looking to you all to help us from your own communities, the schools that you're in, the people that you talk to, where are we looking for that priority? We probably can't do everything above the line, which is why we created this two-pronged approach. But when you think about what should be prioritized, we would love to hear that input.

Mr. Phillips: At this point, nothing has been solidified above the line. I think what the DLR Group did a good job of tonight was that the above the line items that are there now, connecting those to what we've heard with our workshops, whether they've been community workshops, whether they've been internal workshops, through Let's Talk, through our building level surveys we did. That I thought was important, we saw a connection with the College and Career Education Center, that was talked about at the student workshop, families and other workshops. Being able to connect that we heard a need we had from external sessions, as well as internal sessions, I think helps solidify that as a possible project for sure.

Ms. White: We can probably do the same thing, pull what we've heard from the community and different engagements around K-8 and present those to you all.

Committee Member Ramirez: The K-8 model could be good. Actually, when Barbour first opened, I go back to Barbour because I was in the neighborhood when it first opened, my family started there from my siblings to my kids, my oldest is 23, and the biggest thing . . . was about the middle schools. That's when families had to pull them out of the school. And it will continue to be that way. We've got to offer them that spirit of middle school, not being bussed to UW for a gym because they don't have a space to use as a gym, not figuring out how many families can come and celebrate a graduation. Things like that go a long way, like Misael said. If we're doing that at Conklin right now, Conklin is going to need some extra spaces if they go up to eighth grade too. Right now we've got great high schools with spaces for gymnasiums and all that. For families committing to sports, our families are going away from the K-8 model because they don't have the same capacity, like the gymnasiums, to feel that they are a part of the school.

Committee Member Nascimento: But I think the first thing is, besides supporting the communities, that it really supports the kids. Maybe the answer is no, and here we are creating K-8 buildings that do not support K-8 and then we'll end up in a Barbour situation that is not a K-8 building. I know that and you know that for how many years? So maybe we take a step back and say, okay it is not a K-8, it's a K-5, 8 has to be someplace else. That's a conversation that community members have to have so the school district can then act on fixing those things, because they need to get fixed. So now, to go ahead and put a K-8 in a building that's elementary, no sense, right?

Committee Member: Is the over-utilized in collaboration with the projected next year's numbers?

Ms. White: Flo had recalculated it based on the enrollment. So it was updated from when the original capacity report was done, but they did it, I believe, for this school year.

Committee Member: There are certain buildings where the students will go down, then would it change what the next year looks like?

Ms. White: Yes, it changes year by year.

Mr. Phillips: We got ten-year projections, but it's not drastic.

Committee Member: It's not going to change this?

Mr. Phillips: No.

Ms. White: I'm trying to remember; we had a map for you all that had the enrollment increase and decrease over the ten years. But I don't think there was anything drastic.

Mr. Phillips: We lost approximately nine hundred students between 2018 and this school year. They are projecting another eight hundred student drop between this school year and 2033.

Board Member Carpenter: Are there kids not going to their zone school because their zone school is full?

Mr. Phillips: Correct, so if you think Spring Creek, Brookview that we're shifting out of their school to the next closest school. But some of that is because we're adding support service space. We're also looking at potential boundary adjustments to help balance some of that enrollment also. But a lot of times when we've seen a bubble go through and we've had an extra classroom for a strand, then all of a sudden, we've captured that classroom for support services needs and then it's no longer a classroom. So that is where support spaces in these buildings will go a long way. And in some cases, we may need to add a couple of classrooms, Spring Creek may be one of those.

Committee Member Myelle-Watson: I have a question. Other than Auburn, which appears to need a lot of things, . . . but some of the over-utilization, can some of that perhaps get resolved utilizing the CCEC more? And then perhaps we don't have bilingual science class teachers moving to all the science rooms because there aren't enough science rooms? That can maybe help with some of the over-utilization numbers at the high schools.

Ms. White: Yes, the way we have been thinking about the above the line, CCEC and 4-2-1, is that the programs that would move, then those spaces would get, if needed, would be recaptured by the high schools for whatever their specific needs are. In some cases we know already what that is, and Bridget and Scott have been talking to the principals to understand which spaces are being used for those programs that might move versus what would be shared and what would remain and then those would be recaptured to support the needs. We know at Auburn, they have a mobile as well, it also depends on the types of programs that are, you know it would be very hard to have an English class in an automotive center. So there's

some of those considerations too, that we have to figure out what's most appropriate to turn that back into a space.

Committee Member Myelle-Watson: So other than Auburn and the CCEC, it makes sense that the focus would be on the K-8 and all those needs. Then after this five-year plan when all that shifting happens, then maybe we can look at some of the other projects.

Board Member Carpenter: I'm just curious, do the principals at those schools have any concerns about that model?

Committee Member French: No, I think they're, some of the conversations have been about moving some of those programs out that we kind of pushed in and forced in there to accommodate the academy model. Now we're leaving some of that space where maybe some science classes are having to use non-lab spaces because there aren't enough science classrooms. They are glad to regain some of those spaces for their original intention.

Committee Member Ramirez: Knowing a principal or two, I was wondering what their thoughts are, that they'll lose families to that? Maybe having kids that don't want to be a part of that plan knowing that they are going to be away from their school more than their regular time. An example would be the dual credit program, kids might not want to do it because they aren't going to be attending their high school anymore, they have to go on campus. So a lot of kids aren't taking those opportunities because they think they aren't going to be around their friends anymore, now I want to finish traditional high school.

Committee Member French: So there will not be students that will be at the CCEC all day, every day. They will only be there for part of their day and then they will return to their high school. They will still play sports at their home high school, they will still be involved in activities and all that. So that will still be their high school.

Ms. White: Any thoughts, questions?

Committee Member Pentenburg: For me, looking at the information, and 95% of the conversation I really don't understand, it's just out of my world so I'm learning a lot, looking at the intensive schools, and then looking at that with all the other categories, I feel like that, to me, would communicate a high level of prioritization. And I realize that facilities are a determining factor of everything that happens in a school, however I think our environment and facilities play a more important factor, in my opinion, than I realized. There are eight or nine schools there, and I think that would show the area of need and prioritization.

Ms. White: So more weighting of those that are intensive. And the research supports what you just said. The environment is really important, particularly for students that have greater needs with support areas and not even just that but coming to a safe and comfortable place and feeling confident.

Committee Member Psaltis: Could you clarify functional building requirements also for like the middle schools?

Ms. White: The three things in functional building requirements right now are modulars, the buildings without walls and doors, and student supports.

Committee Member Uram: When I look at this, there are only three schools, facilities wise, that have all three categories as very high, Eisenhower, Roosevelt, and Rolling Green. At what point does the tipping point happen that it is not the way to go in terms of pouring more money into that building?

Ms. White: That's a great question.

Mr. Brown: That's the question I was hoping someone was going to ask.

Ms. Vansant: That is a good question. So, there are different factors of that. Looking at the condition is one lens and once you get past that fifty percent facility condition index, if that reaches about fifty percent, in the work that we've done, is where we start to recommend that the District start divesting in that building. Because cost wise, repairing can actually be way more costly than reconstructing.

Committee Member Uram: So none of these three are in that category?

Ms. Vansant: I don't know that.

Ms. White: So, the RI here would be the equivalent of what Keri said. We have those numbers, which is something that we can provide, what that percentage would be, if that's helpful to see what the total is.

Committee Member Uram: Well I think that is something to consider. I love a beautiful building, and there's nothing like the water fountains at Roosevelt, but it just makes me kind of wonder.

Ms. Vansant: There are other factors that go into that though, there's historical nature, there's community context. We never look at it through just one lens. It depends on weighting, because through the process we know there are programmatic and functional improvements that are also very important to the success of the students and being able to teach in that facility too. So that's why the discussion on weighting is really good to start having. How do we weight this? What do we feel might be more impactful once you dive into and look at more of these? They're all good questions.

Mr. Phillips: And I would just point out Eisenhower might be slightly higher because that was one building that received very little work during the last facilities master plan, while it had some aesthetics, some painting, some flooring, it needs new windows. It didn't get new windows like Lincoln, or East, or West and it just was a newer building and that is why it didn't get touched like some of our other older buildings.

Ms. Vansant: That's a good point too, because it also depends, remember condition index is a snapshot in time. So, a building could be right in the middle of a major refresh cycle, your

mechanical system, your roof system, your windows, your doors, it might not mean throwing it out the window. It may just mean that's the culmination of what that snapshot is when all those things are needed, and it just happens to be on a thirty-year cycle or what have you. So those are things to consider when you're looking at condition assessment too.

Committee Member Uram: So is any of that part of the decision, or is that not part of the five-year plan?

Ms. White: I will say that there are buildings that are above the fifty percent, but I think it is a conversation within this district as to whether or not that's the appropriate, like where's the threshold that we would feel makes an impact.

Committee Member Uram: This five-year plan, that's money spent elsewhere, is what you're saying?

Ms. White: Well, no, well addressing facility conditions is a part of the five-year plan and addressing that will likely be how the money will be allocated for these prioritized buildings. But to build brand new buildings . . .

Mr. Phillips: We have not talked in this five-year plan about divesting from any buildings and building necessarily in new buildings like we did in the last ten-year plan.

Committee Member Uran: I understand that.

Ms. White: But it's a great question. It could be a consideration that maybe you factor in, we know we're not doing anything in this five years, but do we want to add on a brand new addition for all of these things if it is that high, or do we address some of the immediate needs that we know are impacting the day to day for the student.

Mr. Phillips: But I do want to say that is one of the reasons we did do the facilities condition assessment because this wasn't the in-depth data, we had the last time we did the last facilities master plan. It maybe takes a little bit of the emotion away, because you're really looking at purely data that makes some of the decisions. And much to your point, are we at the point where we're better off not investing in the facility and divesting it and possibly building something new.

Committee Member Psaltis: There are a couple schools now that are really high and at the last facilities plan were close to the top, and there are emotions and feelings and history and the whole thing, it gets very complicated. So are we talking about individual schools, or do you want us to use post-its?

Ms. White: I will take it however you want to do it.

Committee Member Psaltis: Because I've spent a serious amount of time in all of the schools. So like Whitehead, they're running tutoring out in the hallway with . . . every year. They have a

few that are five strands, they go from five to four, and they have three modulars. I would not have been surprised to see that as one of the top two.

Mr. Phillips: Whitehead is one of them that would fall under that functional building with support spaces.

Committee Member Psaltis: Thank you. Because when you look on one scenario, they have an orange, the other scenario they don't.

Ms. White: Just to give you a little preview, we've been working with the District to get a list of the top priorities for student support too, so the next time you'll see the specific schools that will be addressed, and more specifically, what each of these numbers is really meaning. We will start to fill in some of that detail. Any others that you have marked on there?

Committee Member Psaltis: Barbour was one of them, but you brought it up. Art spaces I think we've spent a lot of time on, athletics, and we'll continue to. I'm just looking for that and the feeder programs for arts as well; facilities for middle schools, particularly theaters are not great. Jefferson's auditorium isn't stellar too, it's newer, but that's more like lighting and all of that. And Auburn in particular. I spend a lot of time in a lot of our theaters.

Mr. Phillips: And that may be another thing we can look at is bringing forward some specific projects that could have an impact across the district. I mentioned restrooms, no restrooms were touched in any of the buildings at the last master plan. We know that our middle school auditoriums, as well as some of our elementary schools that have auditoriums, are in dire need of new seats, new flooring, those types of things. So it may be an opportunity to bring some projects that have been thought of during the last master plan and bring those forward to say, how would we rate these? We see that these would have the biggest impact across the District, impacting the most students potentially. Just as another . . .

Committee Member Psaltis: I know that it is not an unending program, but that is something that is an issue. There was a plan, and for Barbour, there was a turnover of a principal and a turnover of a lot of people. I saw an architectural drawing for Barbour that did have . . . for a middle school. It never quite made it into the last . . .

Committee Member Nascimento: But I think to get to that level, you have to know the buildings on a daily basis or a weekly basis, whatever, Heather's out there. She knows the buildings because she's out there every day. But for someone who is not out there every day, my friend from the Y over there, he's not there every day. He's not going to be able to go to that level of detail and say, I think Eisenhower needs new bathrooms and stalls. You don't know that, do you? So that level of detail becomes a little bit complicated when you're grading something. But it's valid, it's very valid.

Mr. Phillips: I think what I was thinking more of were projects that could have a big impact across the District. Where we're thinking more holistically versus just this building. Where this could have a positive impact for our students across the District.

Committee Member Psaltis: From these two approaches, I just want to repeat that I think from a community lens I like the idea of the quadrant approach for distributing, as long as it is still skewed towards our intensive schools.

Ms. White: Okay. Do others support that?

Committee Member Williamson: What I did, because I'm a visual person, I circled all the schools that were zeros to ones, then I felt better about it, because the places that don't have the orange circles are zeros and ones. Apparently, they don't need as much work, so maybe they got that tended to in the previous plan.

Ms. White: Yes, you are seeing your newest buildings are in the zeros or ones and some things have been addressed or there's not as much need there.

Committee Member Pentenburg: Michael, is there anything within the previous master facility plans, that lists the projects identified in the plan that they didn't get to?

Mr. Phillips: I'll have to take a look Brent, if there is. I just know from a general facilities perspective what didn't get touched, not necessarily that it was talked about or not talked about, or prioritized out, like I said bathrooms, lockers, locker rooms is another one, elevators across our District. All of our buildings with multi-floors, they're getting to the age where they are past . . . and now we're starting to see more maintenance dollars going towards those to keep those up. Like I said, there's an infinite amount of projects.

Committee Member: I'm surprised we have any money left to talk about it when you think about all the needs.

Committee Member Huftalin: I'm surprised that RESA, it looks like the newest middle school, I realize that it is probably one of the ones that's over-utilized. But I'm just surprised that they are the newest middle school, and they're intensive, but at what point do we just move some kids? I've been there, it just feels very tight.

Mr. Phillips: Well I think you are going to see that because that is where your main TBE is. There is a plan to start rolling up TBE in the other middle schools which will then bring that population down.

Committee Member Nascimento: What he is saying, we just started this year, so the numbers are going to start rolling down. The TBE's are going to their zone.

Mr. Phillips: If you look at how many students actually reside in the RESA district versus . . . , all of that enrollment is really because of the TBE program.

Mr. Brown: And they are the middle school overflow too. So about 35 to 40% of the kids at RESA don't live in that home boundary. Almost 400 of the kids that go to that school don't live in that boundary.

Committee Member Nascimento: Jefferson is the same, TBE kids not in their zone schools. They belong to Guilford and East. We started that this year because it was over populated and with the audit that we had, we realized that.

Committee Member Huftalin: So why would it have been established as one of the schools that is a priority?

Ms. White: Because that level of nuance is not necessarily being factored into these factors. That's part of this discussion when we know there are other forces outside.

Mr. Phillips: But once again Tessa, because it was a newer building, it really had no attention during the facilities master plan. So again, when we start looking at this RI category, some of these bigger items; roof, parking lots, some of those things, then when we do one project, that starts bringing that requirement index down and more in line where it should be. That was a building, because it was newer, really had no work done. Some painting, some flooring, but very little work in the last facilities master plan.

Ms. White: As we start to determine where the funds will be invested and what for, that is then how we build up the case to communicate that to the community. We're handling some of the issues that come up with this one by rolling out this program and other places, it will address capacity through this mechanism. I'm not just going to go down the list and say addition, addition, addition.

Committee Member Pentenburg: I realize this is more RESA, but in terms of potential synergy, it's something to consider in terms of decision making. But if the Park District is making a \$7 million, \$8 million investment in Clarence Hicks Memorial Park, how does that impact RESA having a sports hub stationed near the middle school, potentially with all the turf and all the athletic fields right outside, how could that benefit the school, more importantly the students and the families? How could there be an alignment there if there is an investment?

Mr. Phillips: We have definitely partnered with the Park District in the past using Clarence Hicks, I definitely don't ever want to take that off the table. It's just that they've done such a wonderful job programming that space, it's become more difficult for our teams to get access because they have done a good job programming activities there.

Ms. White: Okay, we have five minutes left. Any other comments or thoughts before we take back all this wonderful feedback and input that you all have provided and make some updates? If you do have other thoughts, please feel free . . .

Committee Member Psaltis: (regarding Kennedy middle school) In the functional building requirements, it's very dark in that building. And I want to get back to the auditorium, there have not been a lot of those kinds of changes in a very long time in that school, and it's an intensive school, and you just want kids to walk in the building and . . .

Ms. White: There's been a lot of research around access to lighting and good student outcomes. Thank you for all the sticky notes. Truly, we are so thankful you all came ready to assess and asked some hard questions and pressed us on some of these things, we need that because it is only going to help make better outcomes for this five-year plan. If you do have other thoughts, you think, that would have been great to suggest, please send those to Michael and he'll make sure we get those so we can take them into account.

At our next meeting we'll bring back some revised approaches for you. We are going to start thinking about getting a little bit closer because we don't want to be costing multiple solutions here, multiple scenarios. We want to get as close as we can so we're giving you the most accurate snapshot of what that is. That's what we'll be doing for the next meeting, looking at some refinement, seeing if there is any other refinement we should be thinking about once we've adjusted some of the leading factors, and then we'll see some of the costs coming to light.

It's a lot. But I think this goes to show, we ask for your support and sharing, these are not easy decisions. There is so much that goes into it and that has to be considered. It's not possible to address it all. We appreciate you being the champions and letting people know that we've had good discussions to help inform what happens.

Thank you all so much, have a great week.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Next Steering Committee meeting is Wednesday, March 21, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Administration Building, Room 208.