Multipurpose Room / Gymnatorium for EL Frierson Montessori SIC Ad hoc committee A3 report (Last updated 04.24.2024)

Re: This report was created by an ad hoc committee of the School Improvement Council (SIC) for Edith L. Frierson (Montessori) Elementary School (aka EL Frierson & Frierson). It details the history, issues, and status of the school's campaign for a gymnatorium or multipurpose room to enhance both school functions and community engagement.

1) Purpose Statement: from ad hoc Committee and ELF SIC Meeting minutes (2023-2024)

To engage diverse stakeholders with CCSD Leadership to voice the need from their perspective and answer relevant questions to the project. To gain clarity on status of project funding and prioritization.

2) Background Statement: *Thought it was approved for Phase 3.*

Edith L. Frierson Elementary School and the greater Wadmalaw community, of which Frierson is the only school, have required a Gymnasium-Auditorium space since the school's inception in 1953. Several years have elapsed of repeated requests and attempts to secure funding and finalize a plan that works for the school and community needs. Specifically, the request remained dormant on the Fixed Cost of Ownership (FCO) budget list of "additional projects requested" since 2019 through present day under work order, WO# 539611, with little chance for prioritization or updates regarding status. Several key stakeholders (school staff, D9 constituent board members, Friends of Frierson, etc.) report to have been told the project was approved for the phase 3 construction transition to a Montessori program, which occurred from 2018-2022, yet the Gymnasium-Auditorium space remains unfulfilled. Documents from Frierson's School Improvement Council (SIC), the CCSD Board, and D9 district board meetings reference the request and its approval, yet the project never received required attention or funding. Retrieving information has proved challenging due to a lack of continuity from the school, the CCSD Board of Trustees, CCSD's Operations Department, volunteer school SIC and the PTA levels, allowing for the project to fall through the cracks for several years during multiple leadership and member transitions. With this assumption of being provided in phase 3 Montessori improvements in 2018-19, there was not a school and community prioritization to vocalize this need during the Sales Tax Program preparation community input sessions of 2018-2019 nor was it a suggestion or clarified by CCSD capital projects department.

3) Report Format: A3 Problem Solving Report

1) Purpose Statement
2) Background Statement
3) Report Format
4) Team
5) Objectives
6) Scope
7) Current Situation
8) Future Situation
9) Action Plan
10) Appendix: Stakeholders / Photos / Etc

4) Team: Ad hoc Committee Members

- Ross Anderson – SIC Parent (Committee chair)
- Bridget Beggs – Parent
- Audrey Mack – SIC Community, Friends of Frierson
- Monica Smith – SIC Community, D9 Constituent Representative

See list of other key stakeholders in the appendix

5) Objectives: These are the targets the ad hoc committee is working towards.

- Schedule meeting with [CCSD] County Leadership to gather information - Status: Task Complete
- Obtain a Status Update / clarification on "approved" WO# - Status: Task Complete
- Understand different methods to allocate funding based on this project - Status: Ongoing
- Meet with, communicate to [CCSD] board leadership about need and committee's findings - Status: Ongoing
    - This report will be posted publicly, and updates will be made as needed.
    - At this time, due to increased coordination & project momentum with capital programs, SIC will not encourage public comment but reserve the right if the project should become stalled or delayed.

6) Scope: What is included in the boundaries of our work.	**Excluded:** What is NOT included
• Gather and Organize information and documentation • Communicate the need with appropriate board members • Gain Clarity on Status of funding and understand prioritization • Understand clearly the need from the school and the community • Schedule Meetings and Communicate with Key Stakeholders • Make a report-out of the committee's findings and recommendations	• Managing the planning, fundraising, or construction project • Determine the best design or plan for the facility

7) Current Situation Analysis: Current Situation Highlight of key information.

- CCSD stated 13 schools are waiting for "multi-purpose rooms" (several are Title I). Plans to fund rooms for 5 schools are in place via the Phase V Sales Tax Program for 2023-2028. Operations stated if current budget projections hold true, then funding should be able to be identified for the remaining 8 schools. In summer 2024, CCSD plans to reassess the situation based on budget projections.
- Since 2019, WO# 539611 each year has fallen below the "cutoff," a term used by Operations staff yet still requires further clarification.
- The 2025 budget does not specifically allocate for a Frierson multipurpose room.
- The Frierson community is uninformed whether prioritization will be given to fund the 2019 FCO WO#539611, from summer 2024 budget projections.
- WO# 539611 was sent to capital projects for review, but never made capital project list.
- The Edith L. Frierson School principal, SIC leadership, and former CCSD Superintendent who initially worked on the WO#539611 no longer hold their positions. COO / Operations /Facilities has remained.
- CCSD stated there is no detailed [floor]plan for WO# 539611 despite certain stakeholders' recollections of reviewing early plans during in-person meetings.
- There remains confusion about what is a Gymnatorium, what is a multi-purpose room, what was requested, and what should be requested to meet the needs of the school.
- Phase 3 for ELF Montessori renovation construction was approved money for multipurpose room.
- Current gatherings at school may be approaching or exceeding occupancy limit for current space. See photos.
- CCSD Facilities / Operations team and Principal Smalls are planning for Montessori primary expansion, which could contain 2 classrooms and programing for exploratory rooms for fine arts, music, and PE.
- Community members and parents have stressed the need for an athletic and performance facility.
- Principal Smalls' main priorities are education performance and primary EL growth, which will create a larger funnel and lead to a larger, more robust upper EL and future adolescent program as students matriculate.
- Stakeholders contacted Charleston County Parks & Recreation (CCPR) to schedule a meeting to explore partnering with Frierson. CCPRC advised that discussions were already made with the District and there was no interest at that time.
- Third Serve Foundation shared interest to fund an athletic facility to accommodate expansion of a tennis program as part of a larger athletic program at Frierson.
- The recent, largest fixed cost of ownership (FCO) project approved to date is about $800,000.
- The Capital Budget process will begin a new cycle but earliest availability for Gym/multipurpose room is 2028
- Until 2023, constituent district D9 did not have a representative on the Citizens Steering Oversight Committee, which is another avenue for recommending community needs to the district.
    - Enter More Here

8) Future Situation: This is the desired or target situation the committee aims to achieve with this project

- Frierson's facility plan and price estimate should be clarified and shared by CCSD to the SIC & committee leaders by no later than May 9th 2024.
- An SIC Officer Parent Representative is involved to observe the planning process.
- A documented, fair prioritization process, considering various need factors is established.
- The 2025 Budget should specifically allocate funding for a Frierson Gymnatorium to be built by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
- Public / Private Partnerships should be seriously explored since interest was expressed by credible organizations to partner together and fill any funding gaps. It was also expressed generally as a "positive" when there is funding from a committed private donor or partnership.
    - Enter more here

9) Action Plan: Covers events leading up to the formation of the Gymnatorium ad hoc committee.

- Interview Outgoing Principal - Complete
    - June 2023 - Ross Anderson / Mr. Brian McClure / Taylor Bensinger / Dr. Davis Cummings
- Request project update from CCSD - Complete
    - November 2023 – Ross Anderson / Latrice Smalls / Kristi Harvey / Josh Roberts
- Research Publicly Available Board Documents - Complete
- Meet with Friends of Frierson - Completed
- Request specific WO and Project plan Information - Waiting – due 5/09
    - Requested in January 2024. Re-requested at April 9, 2024 SIC meeting with CCSD's COO [JB] and Superintendent [AH] present.
    - Jeffrey Borowy and CCSD Operations Team to deliver plan and price within a month of 4/9/23 SIC meeting.
- Host Information Booth at ELF Community Block Party - Complete
- Form a SIC Ad hoc Committee with reporting – In Progress
    - Identify Funding Sources and Pathways (In Progress)
    - Identify Key Stakeholders for invitation to meeting (In Progress)
    - Meet with CCSD Board of Trustees (In Progress)
    - Make Ad Hoc Committee Report-Out (In Progress)

Findings:

There have been many project missteps between key stakeholders involved since the onset of this requested need. There have been unnecessary gaps in communication and information sharing which have further delayed the funding and construction. To avoid further issues and keep stakeholders positively engaged, the ad-hoc committee recommends the following actions.

Recommendations:

- CCSD Facilities &Operations to deliver facility [floor]plans / price to principal / committee by 5/09/24.
- CCSD should prioritize, fund, and permit for this project to be under construction or completed by August, 2025.
- Updates to be provided to the principal / SIC ad hoc Committee monthly and upon request.
- Ad hoc Committee to make public comment at future CCSD Board of Trustees meeting should progress or communication be stalled.

Key Questions Remaining:

- What is an example of a Multi-purpose room we can visit for a common understanding?
- What is the site or floorplan / cost of a facility, in 2023 dollars? (5m in 2019)

10) Appendix

Key Stakeholder Analysis

Charleston County School District	Name	Specific Information Needs	Best Source of Information Needed
CCSD - Superintendent	Anita Huggins	Oversight of CCSD	
CCSD - Operations & Facilities	Jeffrey Borowy	Capital, Financial, and Operations	Capital, Financial, and Operations
CCSD - Associate Superintendent of Elementary Learning Community	Jennifer Swearingen	Elementary Learning CCSD	Elementary Learning CCSD
CCSD - Interim Executive Director, Elementary learning Community	Quenetta White	Elementary learning CCSD	Elementary learning CCSD
CCSD - Executive Director of Capital Programs	Jasmeen Shaw	Capital Funding	Capital Funding
Edith Frierson Key Stakeholders	**Name**	**Specific Information Needs**	**Best Source of Information Needed**
ELF - Principal	Latrice Smalls	Oversight of ELF	ELF Needs and Facilities Plan
ELF - Assistant Principal	Sophie De La Tour Du Pavillon	Oversight of ELF	Title 1
ELF - Principal (Former)	Dr. Davis Cummings		Initiation of the Gymnatorium Request
SIC - Chair	Kristina (Kristi) Harvey	Oversight of SIC	Oversight of SIC
SIC - Vice Chair / Gymnatorium Subcommittee Chair	Ross D. Anderson	Project Status	Project Status
SIC Community Member / Gymnatorium Subcommittee member / Friends of Frierson Liaison	Audrey Mack	Friends of Frierson	Previous Request History and Discussions
SIC Community Member / Gymnatorium Subcommittee member	Bridget Beggs	Research, information organization, documentation, Policy	Research, information organization, documentation, Policy
SIC - Parent Rep	Josh Roberts	Block Party Outreach	
SIC - (Former) Chair	Elizabeth Poole		Acting SIC Chair (Initiation), and Tennis Programming interest
SIC - (Former) Chair	Ashley Carrigan		
ELF - Physical Edu and Art Teacher	Taylor Bensinger		Physical Education Needs of school
SIC - Community Member / D9 Constituent Board Member	Monica Smith		Edith Frierson Liaison to D9. Social Emotional and Behavioral needs
Community Member	Deborah Grant	Friends of Frierson	Previous History and Discussions
Charleston County School Board	**Name**	**Specific Information Needs**	**Best Source of Information Needed**

District 8 Representative	Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson		D8 School Board Communications, History of WO#, school need
Architect - Yellow Box, 2019 Plans	???		
Citizens Oversight Committee / Parent	Tracae McClure	Capital Funding Process Oversight	Capital Funding Process Oversight
Other Stakeholders	**Name**	**Specific Information Needs**	**Best Source of Information Needed**
Third Serve Organization	Nicole Grogan	Tennis - Potential funding partner	Expressed interest for Potential funding partner - Tennis
Charleston County Parks & Rec	David Bennet		FOF contacted CCPR to discuss meeting about partnership. Advised that discussions with District already happened and no interest at the time.

Images:



Photo from a crowded holiday performance in the Cafeteria.



Picture from Cafeteria.



Frierson is the only school on Wadmalaw, a rural community.



Frierson campus has enough land.