



State College Area School District

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To: Curtis Johnson
 From: Randy Brown and Mike Fisher
 Subject: MNE Project and Districtwide Facilities Master Plan Update
 Date: March 6, 2024

Since the last Board update, the design team has been busy working on the Mount Nittany Elementary project as well as the Districtwide Facilities Master Plan (DWFMP).

MNE Project

The design for the MNE project continues to move forward. The design team continues to review and consider comments from the building stakeholder group. Updated images will be shared in this presentation. There are still several outstanding items regarding room sizes and appropriate space for delivering services to students which should be finalized for the April update. The interior team is expected to follow up with the building stakeholders again during March. The calendar timeline continues to look promising for documents to be completed by the end of summer for bidding during the upcoming fall.

We have asked the architects from Crabtree Rohrbaugh (CRA) to respond to an inquiry which has surfaced several times during this design process. The question surrounds being able to prepare for additional student growth in the district, primarily in this attendance area within the scope of this project — specifically, whether the new addition will be built with the possibility of expanding to a second floor.

As we discussed previously, the enrollment growth which we have experienced in the MNE attendance area is not expected to continue in the projection period. The proposed addition will provide one additional classroom per grade level, as well as multiple classrooms of varying size for direct special education and other student support services, a separate cafeteria, and a classroom for STEM and instrumental music. Even if the MNE attendance area enrollment does not increase, the building should have capacity to absorb an overflow of students from neighboring elementary schools if necessary.

When completed, MNE will have the capacity of Park Forest and Radio Park Elementary schools. This master planning process is following the direction of prior ones, to provide neighborhood schools of approximately 500 students.

CRA has provided a response related to these inquiries as well.

DWFMP

The Steering Committee held its first meeting on Feb. 20. Minutes from the meeting are attached for your review, and also are available on the [DWFMP Steering Committee webpage](#). In addition, the first two community forums were held on Feb. 27 and 29. Feedback from the [community forums](#) can also be found on the DWFMP site.

At all three sessions, the design team provided a brief update of the proposed addition for the MNE and the purpose and work to date on the DWFMP. The primary work for these sessions was to gather input surrounding the three sites proposed for a Park Forest Middle School (PFMS) project.

The proposed sites have been:

1. Additions and renovations to the existing PFMS facility
2. New construction on SCASD property across Valley Vista Drive
3. New construction on SCASD property adjacent to PFMS and Park Forest Elementary

The next community forums will be held on April 24 at Gray's Woods Elementary and April 29 at Park Forest Middle. Tours are being planned prior to the forum, at the Park Forest Middle event only, beginning at 5 p.m. Please plan to arrive by 5:30 p.m. if you are interested in participating in the tour. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on April 18 at 6 p.m., with tours available also.

Down Select Process

As discussed previously, the administration is prepared to recommend a down select process for the PFMS site. The work of the design team as well as input from our steering committee and the community forums held in February have also proved helpful in this recommendation.

The administration's recommended site for the PFMS project is the site referred to as number 2: new construction on SCASD property across Valley Vista Drive.

Rationale in support of this recommendation:

- A new facility allows for flexibility to fully integrate the district vision for educational programming.
 - Natural light, spaces that are well-suited and appropriately sized for instructional plan
- The construction would be remote from students, allowing for an improved construction schedule and more attractive project for potential bidders; project phasing around students won't be necessary.
- Fewer unknown circumstances found in renovations, which is also attractive to potential bidders and usually provides a more consistent timeline.
- Ample space for laydown and staging area.
- A multi-story building will compress the building footprint, allowing for more efficient use of the campus.
- Future use of the current facility is yet to be determined, possibly meeting district needs which may be identified in DWFMP.
- Use of SCASD owned property.
- Possible opportunities for cooperative use with Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority.
- Site allows for improved field and parking facilities than currently available.
- Resources needed for transporting current students assigned as walkers less than expected.
- Fewer direct impact on natural resources and neighbors.
- Ability to expand building in the future.

Concerns regarding this recommendation:

- Land development costs related to this campus, including site access.
- Development of the site, including tennis courts and fields, is yet to be determined.
- Cycling and pedestrian impact.

Neither Sites 1 or 3 have this amount of opportunities and rationale to support moving forward in this process.

Although additional geotechnical and site evaluation remains to be completed, down-selecting to this site at this time allows the design team to focus on a single project. This recommendation will be included as an action item on the Mar. 25 agenda.

CRA will be presenting cost estimates for each site option in terms of order of magnitude as well. In addition, the district facility assessment status will be discussed.