CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FACILITY ASSESSMENT & EDUCATIONAL VISIONING

DORE & WHITTIER
ARCHITECTS, INC.

Visioning #2 - Outcomes & Findings

Mar. 9, 2016, 4:00PM – 8:00PM

Purpose

This visioning session was the second of four visioning sessions as part of the comprehensive facilities assessment that Dore & Whittier is conducting in the Town of Chelmsford. D&W presented multiple forms of analysis completed to D&W also presented enrollment projections and analysis conducted by NESDEC. Participants explored master planning issues including full day kindergarten, location of pre-kindergarten, grade configuration, school size, school count, neighborhood schools & school location.

Intro: comprehensive facilities assessment process and MSBA process
Presentation of analysis
- Overall building gross square footage capacity analysis (including Westlands)
- Room-by-room comparative analysis (including Westlands & Middle Schools)
- Classroom count capacity analysis
- Enrollment Analysis

Large Group Analysis Questions and Comments
Homework Preliminary Findings
Key Issues Presentation
- Full day kindergarten
- Location of Pre-k
- Grade Configuration
- School Size
- School Count
- Neighborhood Schools/ School Location

Small group discussion and reporting out
Next Steps

ITEM NO.	NOTES	ACTION BY
1	Introduction of the Facilities Working Group (WG) a. D&W introduced the team and gave a brief presentation addressing the scope of the comprehensive facilities assessment, timeline, and MSBA process.	
2	Presentation of Analysis a. D&W shared analysis for the enrollment capacity of each school in the District including the Westlands School based on gross square feet. b. D&W shared analysis comparing classroom size and other programmed spaces against MSBA guidelines for room sizes. Analysis was shared for all of the elementary schools, the Westlands	

ARCHITECTS
PROJECT MANAGERS

260 Merrimac Street Bldg 7
Newburyport, MA 01950
978.499.2999 ph
978.499.2944 fax

212 Battery Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802.863.1428 ph
802.863.6955

www.doreandwhittier.com

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	School, both Middle Schools, and the high school. c. D&W shared an analysis based on classroom count and full day kindergarten, half day kindergarten, 71% classroom utilization, and 85% classroom utilization for all schools. d. D&W shared enrollment analysis for the district, Pre-k population, K-4 population, 5-8 population, and 9-12 population. D&W shared enrollment analysis for each individual school compared against capacity based on classroom count.	
3	Large Group Analysis Questions and Comments – D&W invited the group to ask questions or offer comments about the analysis performed to date. Participants posed the following: 1. Q: Is the physical condition of the buildings considered? A: No. This analysis does not include the condition of the buildings. 2. Q: Why are the pods excluded from these analyses? A: This study is to help identify long term (50+ years) solutions to the school buildings. Pods have an expected life of 15-20 years and therefore are excluded. They may be considered as part of a short term solution during options development. Many students have their home-base classroom in pods. 3. Q: Does this data communicate Chelmsford's schools are not equipped for the next 50+ years? A: These buildings were designed for a different time and educational environment. The district is doing the best with the infrastructure available. This data highlights areas that may become the focus of a capital project 4. Q: Does the enrollment for Westlands consider Lion's Pride? A: No. The enrollment projections only show students enrolled in the Chelmsford Public School system. 5. Q: Why is there such a discrepancy between GSF capacity and classroom count capacity? A: Both of these analysis look at different metrics. Gross square footage only looks at the building size as a whole and does not consider the way the interior of the school is divided. Classroom count only considers the number of spaces being used to deliver the regular education curriculum. Therefore, if core spaces are oversized or in access to MSBA guidelines, they will be contributing the the GSF capacity but not the classroom count analysis. Similarly, if a school is deficient in support spaces, core spaces, or administrative spaces, the classroom count analysis would likely show that the school may be able to support more students than the GSF analysis.	
4	D&W presented Homework Preliminary Findings. Few people responded and Jay Lang will send out an announcement to encourage participants to respond the Educational Effectiveness Survey. Participants will fill out the School Transformation Development Map in the next Visioning Session.	
5.	D&W presented additional information, consequences, and considerations about full day kindergarten, the location of pre-kindergarten, grade	

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	configuration, school size, school count, school location & neighborhood schools.	
6	D&W asked participants to answer guiding questions in small groups of 6 people. Tables were asked to respond to questions which focused on a designated set of issues. The issues and corresponding questions are listed below: 1. Full day kindergarten, location of pre-k, and grade configuration a. Kindergarten • Describe the advantages and disadvantages of providing full-day kindergarten. b. Location of Pre-Kindergarten • Describe the advantages and disadvantages a centralized model for Pre-Kindergarten Center, not associated with an elementary school. (Current condition at Westlands School) • Describe the advantages and disadvantages a decentralized model for Pre-Kindergarten, Pre-Kindergarten distributed around the District into each of the elementary schools. (All elementary schools would become PK-4.) • Describe the advantages and disadvantages of a blended model for Pre-Kindergarten, centrally located but associated with an elementary school. (Three elementary schools would be K-4. One elementary school would become PK-4.) • Describe other models, if any, and their advantages and disadvantages. c. Grade Configuration - Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each of the grade configurations identified below. • PK, K-4th, 5th-8th, 9th-12th • PK, K-4th, 5th-6th, 7th-8th, 9th-12th • PK-4th, 5th-8th, 9th-12th • PK-K, 1st-4th, 5th-8th, 9th-12th • PK-K, 1st-4th, 5th-6th, 7th-8th, 9th-12th • PK-K, 1st-4th, 5th-7th, 8th-12th Identify other variations of interest and document their advantages and disadvantages. 2. School size, school count, & school location & neighborhood schools	

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	a. School Size - For purposes of this discussion, School Size refers to the number of students housed in a school facility. It does not refer to its overall gross square footage. Participants should assume that square footage can be aligned to number of students. • Elementary School sizes vary across the District. Should the District's Elementary Schools all be the same size? Why or why not? • If the Elementary School sizes should all be the same, what is the appropriate size? Why? • Middle School sizes vary across the District. Should the District's Middle Schools all be the same size? Why or why not? • If the Middle School sizes should all be the same, what is the appropriate size? Why? b. School Count - For purposes of this discussion, School Count refers to the number of schools at each grade level. School Count is inter-related to School Size, the concept of neighborhood schools, and Grade Configuration. • What are the advantages and disadvantages of the District's current School Count: One centralized PK, four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school? • Are there other possibilities the District should consider? • Five elementary schools – even if they are not all the same size • One PK, four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school • One PK, three elementary schools, one middle/high school • Others • If there are other possibilities, what are their advantages and disadvantages? c. School Location & Neighborhood Schools • How strong are local opinions about the concept of neighborhood schools at the elementary level? • How strong are local opinions about the concept of neighborhood schools at the middle school level? • What are the current perceptions about parity between elementary schools? • What are the current perceptions about parity between middle schools? • Are there other organizational models the District should consider? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the following?	

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	• School Choice and Thematic Elementary Schools? • School Choice and Thematic Middle Schools? • Sequential Elementary Schools? • Sequential Middle Schools? • Early Childhood Center housing PK and K? The responses from tables are listed below: 1. <u>Table 1: Full day kindergarten, location of pre-k, and grade configuration</u> a. Location of Pre-K: i. Centralized Advantages: • Transportation – age appropriate groupings • Critical mass of staff, esp. with the early intervention professionals ii. Centralized Disadvantages • Not a neighborhood school • Transportation costs iii. Decentralized Advantages • Neighborhood school • Buses wouldn't change ($) iv. Decentralized disadvantages • Space • Staff – may need more specialists v. Blended advantages • Amount of staff vi. Blended disadvantages • Lots of change of schools (transitions) only one group of students will stay on at the same elementary school • Space b. Full Day Kindergarten i. Advantages • Conformity • Attracting young families • Continuation of educational process ii. Disadvantages • Space cost • Longitudinal advantages are short-lived c. Grade Configuration preference: • PK; k-3; 4-6; 7-8; 9-12 • PK-K; 1-4; 5-8; 9-12 2. <u>Table 2: School Size, School Count, School Location</u> a. School size • No enrollment flexibility if all school need to be of	

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	equal size • Size parity would mean redistricting and loss of neighborhood schools b. School Count • Disadvantage: Some schools are drawing a larger population • Advantage: Connecting Pre-K to a neighborhood school • Disadvantage – Duplication of programming • Possible Grade Configuration: K-4; 5-6; 7-8; 9-12 • K-5; 6-8; 9-12 c. School Location & Neighborhood Schools • 1-4 – Very strong opinions about neighborhood schools and parity at middle school • 5. No call for thematic schools and could produce students with a lack of exposure at the elementary level • Sequential model – more transitions • Pk-K – transportation 3. <u>Table 3: Full day K, location of pre-k; grade configuration</u> a. Full day K i. Advantages • Increase on time on learning • More opportunities for students to meet state standards • Improved curriculum development • Increased opportunity to meet social/ emotional needs of students and provide social curriculum • Better prepares students for first grade • Attracting families to the town • Early intervention for all students ii. Disadvantages • Increase in cost • Impact on school facilities b. Location of Pre-K i. Centralized advantages: • Services in one location • Allows for collaboration • Nurturing environment • Sharing of resources ii. Centralized disadvantages • Staff has better understanding of kindergarten expectations • Transition to kindergarten can be challenging • Lack feeling of school community	

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	• Cost of transportation • Staff isolation iii. Decentralized pre-K advantages • Bus costs? • Possible for some families to be at neighborhood schools iv. Decentralized pre-K disadvantages • Isolation from other pre-k staff • Allocation of resources (staff, materials) • Outdoor recreation equipment may not be appropriate for pre-K • Placement issues – may or may not be available at your school • Space from year to year • Space costs • Transportation (car seats needed) v. Blended model – See decentralized model. No space vi. Early Childhood Center (pre-k – K) advantages • Sharing of resources/ expertise (staff & material) • Collaboration • Better transition to grade 1 • Developmentally appropriate • Increase opportunities for diversity / social interactions c. Grade Configuration • PK; k-4; 5-8; 9-12: Grade 5-8 is a challenging time and allows students to be in the same building for 4 years • PK-K; 1-4; 5-8; 9-12: See early childhood center for advantages of this model. (1-4) Maturity; (5-8) 5-6 group, 7-8 group; (9-12) can adopt a magnet model within school; appropriate transitions 4. <u>Table 4: School Size, School Count, School location</u> a. School Size • Range – proportional of approximate school size • Parity in class size is more important than school size • Facilities/ fields/ playgrounds/ science infrastructure should be equal • Cap on elementary enrollment • School size should have the ability to change based on demographics • More administration/ support at the elementary level	

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	b. School Count: current • Disadvantage – travel across town to middle/ high • Advantage – share facilities (fields/ snow removal) • Possibilities (PK-2/ 3-5 model) – linked feeder pattern, help with collaboration c. School Locations and Neighborhood Schools • Local opinions are strong about neighborhood schools at the elementary level • Consider special needs programs throughout schools – move students out of neighborhood schools • Ranking in our heads about parity among schools – not related to test scores 5. <u>Table 5: Full day K, Location of Pre-K, Grade Configuration</u> a. Full Day K i. Advantages • More accommodating of kids who are less developed • More peer models throughout the day for students on IEPs • Time to teach standards written for full day • No longer 1 of 3 towns that do not have full day K • Grant money currently available • More time on learning, pre-k currently has more time on learning than K • More time on learning for social/ emotional goals • Town motivated to adopt full day k • Increased property values • Kindergarten age is an optimal window for brain development • Slower pace allows learning by play, lower child stress levels, no "hurry up and learn" • Fewer transitions • Time to develop relationships with adults ii. Disadvantages • Cost – staff – start-up • KCC loses jobs • Space • Loss of $ from KCC programs • Parent concerns b. Centralized Pre-K • Advantages • Shared resources and expenses with Com. Ed • Sped staff in one space • Shared sense of community for Pre-K	

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	• Early Childhood/ Preschool Learning environment • Disadvantages • Staff feel isolated • Building is not accessible for preschoolers • Com. Ed brings non-school adults into the building c. Grade Configuration • K-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12 • Pre-K-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12 • Pre-K; K-5; 6-8; 9-12 6. <u>Table 6: Full day K; Location of Pre-K; Grade Configuration</u> a. Full day K i. Advantages • Time – spread out curriculum • Less transition based on current model which doesn't work • More specialist time and access • Keeping family who want full day in the district ii. Disadvantages • Limits options – some kids are not ready for full day K b. Location of Pre-K iii. Centralized advantages • Direct access to service providers/ staff… Few staff need to travel • All classroom teachers are together – resources are in the same place… enrichments are together • Certain classes can be modified to meet student needs • Saves space/ special ed equipment iv. Centralized disadvantages • No connection to school • Building utilization makes expansion difficult • Easy for pre-k to be an afterthought • Extra transition • Can't meet w kindergarten staff to assure smooth transitions v. Pre-k-4 Decentralized advantages • Access to older students • Potential access to resources • CHIPS is the gateway to sped; perception of a big gap between CHIPS & k-12 • Connect PK to K to make better flow • Branding – CHIPS is part of public school instead of community ed vi. Pre-k-4 Decentralized disadvantages	

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	• Increased traffic • Exposure to age range difference • Where does responsibility fall? PK Coordinator? Principal? c. Grade Configurations • PK-K; 1-5; 6-8; 9-12: 5th grade best served as the oldest vs youngest/ 5 is better prepared to move on • 5/6; 7/8 – more efficient staffing/ no breaking up relationships formed in elementary school • PK-2; 3-4; 5-6; 7-8; 9-12: Schools focus on appropriate age needs/ siblings & families likely wouldn't be together • PK-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12: early elementary literacy center, 3-5 can focus on testing/ applicably sized playgrounds and facilities/ where do they go?	
	D&W presented the next steps of the process which will include compiling the findings from the facilities assessments and reporting out, a public meeting on Mar. 22, and the next Visioning Session which will be April 6.	