

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Background

INTRODUCTION

Seattle Public Schools continues to respond to changing environments and educational trends. The Facilities Master Plan outlines the current status and future use of District facilities, and also guides the development of future capital levies. This update to the 2010 Facilities Master Plan will be used to guide facility decisions for the next four years. The current version that was adopted in 1999 was based on then-current demographics, teaching trends, changes in the student assignment plans and building inventory. Planning for future capital levies relies on the planning assumptions and planning principles that need to be brought into alignment with the current Board direction, enrollment data and teaching methodology. A complete evaluation and update will be scheduled for 2008 looking forward to the next 10 years for planning of facility use.

In 2004 and 2005, the Seattle School Board successfully completed several long-range action plans that facilitated the advancement of a comprehensive vision for Seattle Public Schools. These actions included:

- Adoption of the Board's vision, belief, values and mission statements
- Completion and adoption of the five-year plan: and
- Academic Actions plan

These projects set the tone for future policy development regarding facilities and building utilization and how Seattle Public Schools will respond to changing demographics, teaching methodology and school construction.

The Planning Assumptions and Planning Principles were updated to reflect the adopted Board Goals:

- Improve the effectiveness and relevance of instruction and support services for all students.
- Eliminate the achievement gap.
- Eliminate all systemic barriers to student achievement.
- Build leadership capacity for accountability, inclusivity and effectiveness.
- Manage resources and set priorities using principles of equity and sustainability.

Changes have happened to the key planning components identified in the 1999 FMP. These changes to the underlying demographics impact facilities:

- Enrollment over the past five years has been flat to slightly declining.
- Enrollment in the South cluster has reversed from a growth model into a slow decline; enrollment in the Southeast cluster is now projected to decline.
- Enrollment in the North and Northeast clusters is now increasing.

In addition to the population changes, more than a third of the 100 buildings in the District's current inventory are over 50 years old. Since 1999, 12 properties have been or will be sold, BEX I replaced, totally renovated or newly added 16 facilities, and BEX II has or will by 2007 replace or totally renovate eight sites. This still leaves 37 buildings that were constructed during or before 1956. Many are in poor condition, and with outdated and problematic plumbing, heating and ventilating systems, as well as deteriorated interior and exterior finishes, and limited flexibility to meet the educational demands of the next 20 years.

The Facilities Master Plan provides direction for the strategic use of all District facilities. A capital construction plan (tentatively referred to as BEX III) will be prepared to propose actions to facilities necessary to fulfill the goals of the plan, and will be prepared as a separate document.

The 2006 update is a modification to the 1999 update for the following areas:

- Chapter 3 - Planning Assumptions, Principles and Classifications: Revised to reflect the Board's adopted methodology and recently adopted plans. The Building Classifications have been revised to reflect property transactions since 1999 and inclusion of a new building classification of "Essential-Interim".
- Chapter 4 - Demographics, Enrollment Projections and Capacity Analysis: Revised to reflect the most recent census and enrollment data and information. No update to the student assignment plan descriptions is included since no significant modifications have been implemented since 1999.
- Appendix B - Public Comment Addendum
- Appendix C - School Size and Characteristics (including the Facilities Matrix): Revised to reflect building renovations, additions, property sales and property additions since 1999.
- Appendix F - Enrollment: Revised to reflect current enrollment and projection updates through 2010.
- Appendix G – Deleted due to new projection methodology.
- Appendix H (New) – Board Beliefs

The remainder of the 1999 FMP update will remain intact until the complete review is concluded in conjunction with the update to the Study and Survey in 2008.

BACKGROUND

The following is a summary of past and current capital levy programs. It is useful to review the history of facilities planning efforts before undertaking updates. The Seattle School District began the modern era of comprehensive planning in 1980.

CIP I

The first step of a long-term approach to facilities rehabilitation began in November 1983 with the adoption of "Phase I Capital Improvement Program: Building Better Schools." At that time, it was recognized that many of Seattle's public school buildings were in poor condition due to age and lack of major maintenance. As of 1983, more than a third of the buildings were over 50 years old, and 10% of those were over 70 years old. Building codes had changed considerably, particularly seismic and life safety requirements.

The goals of CIP I were threefold: to provide a safe and educationally adequate instructional environment; address the backlog of deferred major maintenance on buildings; and support the program placement strategies and educational delivery system that were in place in the District.

A declining enrollment contributed to the closure of many schools and reduced the active building inventory. By the time voters approved the CIP I bond in 1984, 28 schools had been closed and 409 portables had been removed. A rehabilitation program was developed to address inadequate facilities that would need to be retained for active educational use.

In the end, CIP I provided the modernization or replacement of one high school, Franklin, and 14 elementary schools. Analysis done for the planning for Ballard High School improvements indicated replacement of the school was the preferred option and that additional funds would be required beyond the \$6 million that was provided in CIP I.