

BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DRAFT

FACILITIES STUDY – INTERNAL FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Four focus groups were conducted on Wednesday, October 5, 2016 with administrators, teachers, classified employees and custodial/maintenance staff. Purposes of focus group discussions were to gain an understanding of desired or needed future programs and services, the adequacy of current facility assets to accommodate present and future programs, and how various trends are affecting the Brookfield schools.

The following summary highlights the more significant and frequently mentioned issues.

1. Changes in current programming:
 - Changing demographics results in more ELL attending schools at all levels
 - There is an increased demand for special education services at all levels
 - There is an increased need for preschool/daycare services
 - There is a need for specialized STEM spaces at all levels
2. New programs and services envisioned:
 - The growing ELL population may eventually result in requirements for bilingual programs
 - Bring back out-of-district special education placed students
 - World languages for all students, K-12
 - Daycare services for employees
 - STEM/STEAM programs formalized
3. Reducing or eliminating programs:
 - Not reductions or eliminations expected
 - There is a desire to reinstate programs previously reduced through budget cuts
4. Demographic changes:
 - While enrollments have declined, they have not done so at the rate of other school districts; new apartment complexes seem to be attracting families with school-age children
 - More English Language learners are enrolling in schools
 - More students are being identified with special education needs
5. Adequacy of facility assets:
 - More lavatories needed at the elementary school level
 - Play spaces and playgrounds need to be refurbished and expanded
 - Storage spaces needed
 - Remove modular classrooms; consequence is more cramped space use plans in the schools

- All schools require renovations of major systems, safety and security measures, repair of leaking roofs at HES & CES; parking and traffic patterns need to be studied and improved
 - HES gym/cafeteria scheduling conflicts need to be resolved
6. School organization preferences:
 - Grade five should be relocated to elementary schools
 - Consider two PK-5 elementary schools, possibly Pre-K in one or both
 - Need to consider the impact of a larger elementary school if there is one elementary school for PreK-5
 7. Community sentiments about closing an elementary school:
 - There is sentimental attachment to CES
 - Need to consider alternate uses for any school closings in collaboration with Town officials
 8. Communications:
 - There is a growing need for dual language communications
 - District have very good tools and procedures
 9. Other planning issues:
 - Resolve water intrusion at several schools
 - Meeting rooms and professional development capacity
 - Teacher and parent break rooms separate from workspaces
 - Technology infrastructure modernization
 - Handicap accessibility
 - Need to invest in energy efficiencies

Recommendations for further consideration:

1. *Determine future approaches to ELL and special education programs. Be more specific in the types of programs required and the spaces need to appropriately accommodate them.*
2. *Consider the ideas of preschool and daycare expansion or development in the school district. Define how the programs would operate and how much space would be required to do so.*
3. *Consider the implications for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) program development in the various schools. Define the program and the needs of “maker space” tools and equipment for implementation.*
4. *Determine which, if any, programs and students receiving out-of-district special education services can/should be brought back to the school district in a cost-effective manner. Identify the program and space needs for such programs/services.*
5. *Several focus groups and participants identified significant and varied repair, refurbishing, and modernization needs for all schools. It would be wise to consider a*

comprehensive “existing conditions” study to determine the short- and long-term improvement needs for each school. This is fundamental to determining the future use of facilities in terms of cost-benefit.

6. *Study the impact of relocating grade five to one or two elementary schools; determine the space impact, improvements, and additions required to do so.*