

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMO #112
Jamestown School District #1
2024/2025 School Year
December 16, 2024

RE: Operational Discussions and Facility Needs

FROM: Superintendent Robert Lech

BOARD FOCUS: Information

The purpose of Board Memo #112 is to detail the process taken, and the progress made, towards making operational changes made necessary due to declining enrollment as well as potential long-term facility changes at the elementary level.

Enrollment and Facilities Task Force

In October 2022, the Jamestown School Board established the Enrollment and Facilities Task Force to: 1) Analyze enrollment trends and existing facility need to determine if additional planning should be considered to ensure appropriate space, programming and funding, and 2) Engage in a solutions-oriented dialogue and work to build consensus on potential recommendations to make to the Jamestown School Board.

This group of 17 individuals representing parents, teachers, administrators and school board members met 6 times between November 2022 and May 2023. Along with an analysis of facility needs and enrollment trends/projections, the group conducted various small-group activities that led to 16 proposed solutions. Through discussion and deliberation, the groups came to consensus on 5 solutions and further prioritization and discussion whittled those solutions down to 3 recommendations. These recommendations were shared with the Jamestown School Board in June 2023.

School Board Response to Task Force Recommendations

The Jamestown School Board engaged in a board retreat in November 2023 to analyze and discuss each of the Task Force recommendations. Through a prioritization exercise, the board directed Central Office administrators to create a detailed proposal and cost analysis related to an elementary-focused facility option.

The Jamestown School Board and Central Office administration created the following problem statement to identify the primary issues of declining enrollment that necessitates operational changes along with facility needs.

Despite a commitment of \$7.9 million in grants and special federal funds to address facility needs, the Jamestown School District is encountering critical issues that threaten its ability to deliver high-quality education and maintain operational stability. The district must address a significant funding shortfall to meet the extensive facility needs. Concurrently, declining enrollment trends are impacting funding and resource allocation, which necessitates strategic intervention.

An effective approach includes a detailed financial analysis, efficient enrollment management strategies that consider the declining student population, flexibility in resource allocation, and active community and stakeholder involvement focused on the immediate and long-term future of the Jamestown School District.

The Facility Committee of the Jamestown School Board met between November 2023 and June 2024 to analyze the impact of options using a 10-year projection analysis of 4 potential options for greater consideration by the full board. These solutions are:

Option 1: Status Quo – Remain with 5 elementary buildings with 8 sections per grade level with existing staffing levels.

Option 2: Tourniquet Option – Shift from 5 elementary buildings to 4 (7 sections at each K-5 Grade Level).

Option 3: New Construction (2-Section School) – Retire a single-section building and double-section building and build a new two-section building (7 total sections of each K-5 grade level).

Option 4: New Construction (3-Section School) – Retire both single-section buildings along with a double-section building and build a new 3-section elementary school.

Along with the Central Office administration, the school board identified Washington Elementary and Lincoln Elementary as the elementary facilities that should first be considered for retirement due to cost per square foot to address operational, safety, and maintenance needs. New construction would include building on the current Washington Elementary campus. To help detail the options and suggested implementation cadence as noted below:

Option 1: No Change

Option 2: Retire Washington Elementary and redraw boundary lines and move students across K-5 into appropriate boundary schools

Option 3: Retire Washington Elementary, redraw boundary lines and move students into appropriate boundaries, build a new 2-section building on Washington campus and, when complete, move Lincoln staff and students to this new facility and retire Lincoln Elementary.

Option 4: Retire Washington Elementary, redraw boundary lines and move students into appropriate boundaries, build a new 3-section building on Washington campus and, when complete, move Lincoln and Louis L'Amour staff and students to this new facility and retire Lincoln and Louis L'Amour Elementary.

To further engage the broader school community and to best inform the school board's decision-making process, the board commissioned an additional community group, the Community Committee on Facilities. This is a representative group of parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and school board members and their function is to review the work of the Enrollment and Facilities Task Force, central office, and school board and to make a

recommendation to the board on the existing options. The purpose is to ensure the recommended option aligns with community expectations. The work of this group is current and on-going.

Timeline of Activities

While more attention has been drawn to the discussions around facility planning recently, it is crucial to understand the work of the district as it relates to facility planning over the past 4 years. This includes:

Fall 2020: Renovation of Jamestown North Building to Support Transition House Students and Corresponding Removal of Old Transition House from the Lincoln Elementary Campus

September 2021: Open of the \$11.5 million Charolette and Gordon Hansen Stadium and Completion of Erstad Field - Note: This Included \$9.5 Million in Fundraising

November 2022: First Meeting of the Enrollment and Facilities Task Force

Spring 2023: Finalization of Career and Technical Education Capital Projects Grant and Matching Funds for \$1.9 Million for CTE Expansion and Renovation

June 2023: Presentation of Recommendations of Enrollment and Facilities Task Force

November 2023: Board Retreat to Discuss Recommendations and Give Formal Direction to Central Office

December 2023: Board Approval of Updated Strategic Plan, Including Goal 5.1 – Creation of Action Plan to Address Enrollment Changes and Facility Needs

February 2024: Approval of Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP) Grant for CTE Expansion and Renovation, Specifically for Expansion of Child Care Program for JPS Staff

April 2024: Annual Review and Revision of 10-Year Capital Projects Plan

June 2024: Board Retreat to Review Central Office/Facility Committee Options

July 2024: Annual Review and Revision of Strategic Plan and Continuation of Goal for Action Plan to Address Enrollment Changes and Facility Needs

August 2024: Staff Review of District Facility Options and Rationale During Superintendent's Address

October 2024: Commission by Jamestown School Board to Create the Community Committee on Facilities to Explore 4 Options

November 2024: First Meeting of the Community Committee on Facilities

November 2024: Commission by Jamestown School Board to Conduct an Enrollment and Boundary Study to Inform the 4 Options

November 2024: Individual Meetings with Washington Staff to Discuss Timeline of a Decision, Decision-Making Process, Perspective-Gathering Process to Understand Staffing Preferences if Washington is Retired, and Allow for Question and Answer

Future/proposed activities include, but are not limited to:

Board Receipt of the Enrollment and Boundary Study by RSP & Associates (December 2024/January 2025)

Board Receipt of Rough Estimates and Recommendations from ICON, Such as Rough Estimates for Different Facility Options, Including Repairing Existing Buildings, Energy Savings Estimates on New Construction, and Recommendations on Cost Effectiveness of Repair versus Rebuilding (January/February 2025)

Survey to Community on Various Components of Options (January - March 2025)

Completion of Community Committee on Facilities (January - March 2025)

Selection of the Appropriate Option by the Jamestown School Board (January - March 2025)

Broader and Community Targeted Communications To Inform on Impact of Selected Option and Implementation Timeline (February - April 2025)

Staff Prioritization Survey to Support Personnel Shifts (February - April 2025) – Note: The Board and Central Office Administration Have Already Pledged to Support Attrition Over Non-Renewals in Any Operational Change

Board Resolution (if appropriate to selected option) to Bring Referendum to Community (TBD)

Facility Conditions and Process for Facility Maintenance

While more attention has been drawn to the discussions around facility planning recently, it is crucial to understand the historical efforts in the creation of the facility plans that the procedures used to prioritize funding for facility needs.

In 2016, DLR Group, who was hired by the district for architectural services, conducted a facilities plan. This included engineers covering multiple disciplines reviewing systems across each of the existing buildings across the district. This plan was utilized, in part, by Consolidated Construction, in 2017, to create the Capital Projects Plan. Additionally, Consolidated Construction also sent their own engineers and consultants. This plan provided by Consolidated Construction was combined with existing JPS facility planning documents and updated and revised over time to the current Capital Projects Plan that is reviewed and approved annually by the Facilities Committee and the Jamestown School Board.

The Capital Projects Plan include ranked strategic priorities of: 1) Facility Availability and Preventative Maintenance, 2) Facility Safety and Quality, 3) Facility/District Efficiencies, 4) Technology and Expanded Capability, as well as Design/Risk Contingency. These priority areas are further categorized in each activity targeted in the Capital Projects Plan on a rolling 10-year period. Further, the district’s strategic plan, within the area of Resource Management and Planning, includes the goal to annually approve a plan to address existing facility needs that allocates 100% of available funding to the highest priority areas. Over the past 5 years, the district has allocated \$13,459,491.83, inclusive of one-time special funds, from the district’s building fund to these priority areas over the past 5 completed school years (2019-2024).

To augment the Capital Projects Plan, an annual review process begins with building leaders beginning in January/February. Each CPP need and tentative timeline is provided and building administrators are able to prioritize those projects, as well as any new needs. Annually, in February/March, the central office administration, including Business Manager, Facilities and Ground Director, and Superintendent, review each of the CPP priorities and building requests and prioritize recommendations based on available funding. These recommendations are reviewed by the Jamestown School Board’s Facility Committee in March/April, who review the priorities and annual plan and make a formal recommendation to the Jamestown School Board for approval in March/April.

Any intonation that funding isn’t being adequately appropriated to facility needs is simply not accurate. The options developed by the board would not be up for consideration if it included safety concerns in any building. With a focus on facts, extreme caution must be exhibited to rhetoric that any building is unsafe. JPS manages 5 elementary buildings, 1 middle school, 1 high school, 1 CTE center, and 1 facility for the Transition program. As noted in the chart below, many of these buildings are operating at an advanced facility age. With the exception of Louis L’Amour, our four remaining elementary buildings are between 95 – 59 years old (not including any additions). Every building in the district, specifically aging facilities, have areas that must be monitored. An area that is monitored does not denote a lack of safety. Beyond previous assessments and capital projects planning, the district’s existing architectural firm, ICON, has also toured facilities and have not expressed concerns related to safety in any building, including those that have been targeted for retirement depending on which option is selected by the board.

Core Facility Name	Date Built	Addition(s)	Capacity Based on Usable Classrooms
Lincoln	1955	2000	250
Washington	1929	1960 and 1989	150
Roosevelt	1958	1974	275
Gussner	1965	1971	275
Louis L’Amour	1990	N/A	150
Middle School	1953	1962, 1967, 2005	700
High School	2004	N/A	1000

Given the advanced age of some of our buildings the reality is that, despite \$13.4 million in expenditures over the last five years and a commitment of 100% of available funding to facility priorities, our capital projects outstrip our available funding. This does not denote ineffective facility management, but rather a desire to stay committed to fixing instead of replacing systems.

While that served the district well for a period of time, maintaining that infrastructure and those aging systems are no longer in the best interest of the district and Community of Jamestown.

Recommended Action:
Information