

District Facilities Committee May 19, 2004 Meeting Minutes

The May 19th meeting of the Facilities Committee started at 7:00 PM. We were welcomed by Dr. Kevin Baughman. He asked that we go around the room and introduce ourselves and tell in what capacity we are serving on the committee. In addition to Dr. Baughman, committee members present were David Wetzel, Bob Rossi, Richard Mathews, Chris Lindsay, Bill Wilkerson, Barbara Mauro, Matt Bourgeois, Lynn Macan, Frank Yunker, Fran Reinl, Annette Romano, Jamie Brooks, Britnie Gregory, Allison Sylvetsky, Paul Scott, Edward Alston, Kent Burchill, Alfred Sive, Mary Wade, Charlie McCambridge, & Dave West.

Dr. Baughman instructed us to consider three options when looking at proposals: R – we will recommend, C- we will consider or NA – we will not take any action at this time.

Paul Favata, Director of Science started the evening's presentation by introducing members of the department in attendance to the committee. They were Patricia Black, biology teacher; Sherra Johnson, chemistry teacher; Christopher Jennings, biology teacher; Joe Samascott, physics & earth science teacher; Jill Wright, chemistry teacher; Marna Lehnert, earth science teacher; Ankie Meuweissen, physics teacher; Meagan Hughes, chemistry teacher & Joe Spollen, earth science teacher.

Paul gave an overview of the science department needs and criteria. He emphasized the need for large, bright & welcoming rooms, adequate windows & wall space to display charts, posters, etc., lights that are bright, but have the ability to be dimmed. In a combination lab/lecture room, with 28 students per class, the rooms should have 60 s.f. of room per student or 1600 s.f. of class space (per state guidelines). The rooms should have ample storage space that is specific for each discipline (e.g. chemistry rooms – chemical storage, biology rooms – room for microscopes), there should be ample sinks and they should be large enough for glassware & equipment, gas jets, internet drops, DVD, VCR, projectors & air conditioning.

Dr. Baughman interjected and asked Paul for the rationale for air conditioning. Paul explained that when considering safe storage of chemicals, temperature plays an important role. Many of the chemicals react to heat/light, etc.

Paul went on to further explain that classrooms should be clustered to encourage an exchange of disciplines & ideas. Departments should have easy access to one another to collaborate.

Paul then turned the meeting over to the teachers. Meagan Hughes went on to explain that they made visits to several schools who recently remodeled their science classrooms, namely Saratoga, Guilderland, Shaker, Voorheesville, Ballston Spa to name a few. She reported that the design for biology & chemistry rooms are very similar as well as the design for earth science & physics.

Marna Lehnert spoke on the proposed size of the classrooms according to the state mandates. Her present classroom is the smallest one in the department, only about 900 s.f. It poses a problem trying to move the desks around to facilitate group learning & discussion. Also, there isn't anyplace for the students to put their backpacks, creating a safety hazard, especially during fire drills, etc., as students are tripping over them. It would be ideal to have locking wheels on

the bottoms of the tables to reduce the noise level & eliminate disturbing teachers/students in adjoining classrooms. Also, having projectors mounted on the ceilings would be ideal as now the electrical cords are mounted near the sinks & the cords could easily get wet, which is another safety hazard. The earth science students use a personal response system. They are unable to use it as much as they would like to because the location of the outlets is near the water. If the system was wired in, there would be instant access to the internet, being able to move from one venue to another. Also, the outlets and internet connections should be evenly spaced across the wall, not bunched together in one area.

Dr. Baughman asked Bob Rossi if all the outlets near water were G.F.I. Mr. Rossi answered yes, that that was mandated by state law. Hannah (architect) verified it.

Ms. Lehnert went on to say that the sinks in the new classrooms are too shallow. Water splashes out onto the floor causing another safety issue whereby students are in danger of falling into the tables which all have sharp corners. As for wall space, it shouldn't have cabinetry along every wall, but allowing space for projects & posters. Windows are needed for natural light, but black out curtains should be available for physics & earth science.

Jill Wright spoke about the chemistry classrooms. For adequate safety, there should be separate lab space and student lecture space. The student desks and chairs should be away from the lab stations. In the biology classrooms, seating should be double while single is preferred in chemistry classrooms. The teacher demonstration station should also be separate and away from the student area. Gas, electrical, hot & cold water, network drops, & emergency shut-offs need to be easily accessible. Sinks should be on the wall, between the lab stations. This keeps water away from the computers and other technical equipment used during labs. There should also be a working fume hood in each classroom.

As for the biology classrooms, walls of shelves are important for storage of supplies and any chemicals that may be used. Microscope cabinets are very important. There should also be a fire extinguisher & fire blanket in these classrooms. Adequate ventilation is very important for proper air quality. Hannah interjected regarding the possibility of separate air controls in these classrooms. State regulations dictate that air turnover is 6 times per hour. It was also mentioned that the air exchange units must not be loud as the students can't hear over the sound of the motors.

Ankie Meuwissen was next to present. She spoke on storage and prep room needs and said that there should be a prep room between every two classrooms with a separate locked access from the hallway so as not to disturb a teacher who may be teaching in the adjoining classroom. According to state regulations, teachers should have access to a set-up area away from students. There should be ample room for the storage of electronics, VCRs, DVDs, laser discs, etc. Right now, there isn't enough storage area. There should be at least 250-300 s.f. to comply with state guidelines. There should be a separate storage area for chemicals and for the lab assistant to work.

Mr. Favata summed up things, stating that with the level of expertise the science teachers have, they want to be involved in every step of the process. With new state standards -3 years of science- we should have additional space beyond the classrooms. The Science Research Seminar students should have a separate space to meet and to keep their projects, etc. Dr. Baughman asked what this program was. Paul explained that it is a 3-year program out of SUNYA which involves in-depth research. Each student is paired with a mentor who is a scientist from GE, R&D or RPI for example. The student produces a final document, and can qualify for the INTEL Talent Search. Dr. Baughman also asked how many time the class meets. Paul further explained the accommodations and they meet one a week with their advisor. He also mentioned DNA work and cell culture would work well for electives in this space.

Paul discussed that the need for a greenhouse is essential. It should be facing south and be climate and temperature controlled. This would be ideal for botany and horticulture- either for classes or clubs.

The science department will need more than 14 classrooms next year. Two teachers will have to share next school year.

Dr. Baughman then made a chart clarifying the present number of classrooms and what our needs will be.

Subject	Now	Need	Subject	Now	Need
Earth Science	3	4	Greenhouse	1	1
Physics	3	3	Research Seminar	0	1 - 1000 s.f.
Chemistry	4	5	Storage/Prep	1	1 - 300 s.f.
Biology	4	4			
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	14	16			

The department resource room should be at least 1000 s.f. Dr. Baughman asked what is the current size. Bob Rossi answered 900-1200. Hannah said State Ed. requires 1200 s.f.

Richard Mathews asked what the current utilization of the science classrooms was. John Rickert reported 12 out of 20 were low while 18 or 19 out of 20 were considered high.

Science is different than other disciplines as they meet every day. One day it is a full block while the other day it is a half block.

Paul Scott explained how the mods work with the science classes. He further explained that the teacher office space is in their classroom, not in the resource rooms as it is with the other disciplines.

Utilization will be based on current enrollment. We will be thinking of another 200 students. Paul Scott interjected that will another 100 students, we will need at least 1 more classroom. With the new enrollments, we will need 16.5 classrooms. With combination class/laboratory, there is one set of guidelines, while with separate class/laboratory settings, there is a completely different set of guidelines.

Lynn Macan added that if we build to enrollment only, we wouldn't have enough room as soon as the structure was built. Paul Scott interjected that we don't have any electives with this availability. With extra classrooms, maybe we can attract seniors who may not want to take AP classes.

Barbara Mauro said that with the current enrollment, many students will not be able to get into certain science classes.

Paul Favata added that some of the classes are already closed.

Chris Lindsay asked about specifics and brands of cabinetry. Paul said that in the 8 schools visited, that some were already falling off the walls. Those we would steer clear of.

Charlie McCambridge asked about electives & what type of facilities would be needed. We should look at how current classes being taught in 20 years & how space and facilities may change.

Joe Samascott said he doesn't want to make any specifics in case things drastically change in the next few years- but to concentrate on large rooms first.

Dave West asked if the size of classrooms is commensurate with the growth of students.

Paul Favata brought up the old design which was an amphitheater separate from the classroom. The change is the combination lab/classroom. Nanotechnology, Geophysics and DNA Research should not only be a dream, it could be a reality. A reasonable design would be a spoke with a hub & the spokes radiating out from a central hub. It was asked of Paul if he thought the current space could be utilized – he feels it could be. The number of students has gone from a low of 902 to a high of 1300.

Brittany Girigorie brought up the need for a separate prep room for lab make-up, etc. Allison Sylvetsky said there is definitely a need for overhead projections, citing the new classrooms in the new G hall.

Hannah asked Paul why he didn't advocate a separate lab/lecture room idea. His answer was the need to move from lab to lecture mode should be fluid – not to limit your space to be able to do only one thing at a time.

Dr. Baughman asked where we stand as a group – are the requests reasonable. He wants our initial recommendation.

Dave West feels that we definitely have to get with the program. We can't go into the 21st century with the 20th century facilities.

Ed Alston felt that the demands were not unreasonable and the space requirement is not outlandish.

Bill Wilkerson feels that a planetarium/theater combination is not unreasonable. The requests were not out of line; in fact he felt they were quite frugal.

Alfred Sive felt that the classrooms were really too small.

Dave West in general was quite impressed with the presentation. One prep room for every 2 classrooms could be used in every discipline. However prep rooms in some schools become a garbage dump. Will they be utilized as originally intended?

Paul Scott felt that 5 teachers for 4 rooms should be the maximum. The school will have to change blocks, mods & times teacher meet with students. With this schedule, it is not doable.

Alfred Sive recommended action to be taken.

Kent Burchill next presented for the Music department. There are large numbers of students together at one time (70 to 90 students). It is very equipment intensive – the movement of students & equipment. The program we have now is vastly different from those in the past 20 years. Ten years ago we had 2 choral groups, now we have 5 - & the program is growing. We have to think in terms of flexibility. Kent brought up some interesting points.

1. Proximity of instructional space is important
2. Optimal use of space – minimum damage to equipment
3. Number of hours used to move equipment (students, custodians, staff, faculty)
4. This is not just a High School musical program. Middle school music program concerts are at the high school as well as the district elementary concerts.

Kent went on to further explain that new seats were installed in the auditorium. However, we still need new lights and sound system. Air conditioning could be considered. Concerts held during the warm months are very uncomfortable. The auditorium, as it is now, is unable to hold the whole student body. It also cannot accommodate the parents of particular groups. The storage facilities are inadequate. With set construction materials, props, costumes, etc. we need at least 900s.f. Dr. Baughman asked where Kent came up with the figure of 900 s.f. Kent said he felt the choir room was originally designed as a storage room. He went by the s.f. of that room. Also, he would need 2500 s.f. for band rehearsal.

Richard Mathews asked about using the stage. Kent responded that it ties up the stage to use it for anything else.

Dr. Baughman asked Hannah what the state requirement was. She responded that large instrumental groups of 100 students need the same amount of space.

Kent went on to say that the height of the ceilings is crucial – at least 18 feet – to allow the music to move around. Also, choral groups are limited to 90 students. There isn't any security now. Kent mentioned that climate control is important. He spends ½ of his budget on strings due to the high humidity.

Dr. Baughman asked if sound baffling could be built into climate control. Kent said it is difficult to carry on rehearsal/class with sound from noisy fans. Climate control must be where any instruments are housed – humidity should not fluctuate.

Chris Lindsay asked if storage area should be separate from class/concert room.

Lynn Macan asked if middle schools had their own rehearsal area & were taken out of the high school, how that would affect requests. Kent feels it is important to have rehearsals in individual schools – keep them combined.

Lynn asked if the imbalance between schools would impact the program. Kent feels teachers would have to work to keep the balance.

Alfred Sive commented that if 1 middle school had the facilities, then there would be a transportation problem. There would have to be an innovative schedule to have music built into the program. Kent added that many of the parents bring the middle school students to the high school for rehearsals which add to the traffic problem.

Alfred then asked if 6th graders have a problem being at the high school. Kent feels that it depends on the particular student.

Dr. Baughman asked if the middle schools didn't practice at the high school, would it change his requests. Kent replies that it would impact his requests, but not by much. They lose a full block by having middle schools at high school.

Bill Wilkerson said that middle school students are bussed with high school students. Many parents bring students. It becomes a long day having middle school students take the high school bus.

Chris Lindsay said that middle school students have to take a very early bus to get to the high school on time for practice.

Dr. Baughman called the meeting to end at 9:00 PM & apologized to the department for the lack of time to be heard.

During the next meeting on May 26th, Music will finish their presentation. We will also hear from Physical Education, Art, Math, English & Health. On June 2nd, it will be Social Studies, Special Education, Foreign Language, Guidance & Media Technology

Minutes taken by:
Mary D. Wade
May 19, 2004