

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM PROCESS

The philosophy of the Harford County Public School System is determined by the citizens of the county and evolves through expressions and interactions of the various agencies, organizations, governmental bodies, individuals, and lay advisory groups within the county. The local philosophy is conditioned by constitutional requirements, legislation, and actions of the courts. The Board of Education, as the public's representative, gives voice to this evolving philosophy as it directs the Harford County Public Schools through policy development and enactment.

The educational philosophy evolves not only from the process described above but also from the students, parents, and professional personnel as they work together to effect improvements in the educational setting, in curriculum, in teaching, and in learning. Specific statements of philosophy have been and are developed by broad-based committees assigned for that purpose by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee.

The broad goals of education in the Harford County Public Schools are determined through the combined efforts of professional personnel, citizen advisory groups, students, and the Board of Education. Establishing the goals of specific educational programs is a primary responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and those professional personnel to whom such authority is delegated by the Superintendent.

It has long been recognized in the statement of educational philosophy that "the responsibility for educating youth in Harford County is shared by the entire community--the home, religious organizations, the school, and other agencies." Furthermore . . . "We firmly believe that each segment of society must assume responsibility to make a full contribution to its children and must simultaneously cooperate with all people and agencies to achieve this purpose." Consequently, the Board of Education and its professional personnel have cooperatively developed effective working relationships with the Health Department, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Human Relations Commission, Maryland Office of Planning and various agencies such as Juvenile Services and Social Services. Such departments, groups, and agencies assist in planning capital improvements.

When it has been determined that an existing facility should be renovated, additional capacity added, or that a new facility is required, an educational specifications committee is appointed by the Superintendent of Schools. This committee seeks recommendations from educators -- teachers, supervisors, associate principals, principals, etc. - and representatives of the State Public School Construction Program regarding space needs, characteristics and other facility requirements. Parents and other interested citizens are also involved in the planning process. The committee obtains recommendations from other agencies which might have cause to use the facility. From the comments of all interested parties, the committee determines the recommendations to be included and writes the specifications for the facility. The specifications are reviewed and revised by the Superintendent of Schools and her executive staff and are ultimately presented to the Board of Education for approval.

As the chronological age of existing facilities increases focus on modernizing older facilities must be balanced with capacity needs. These facilities have been evaluated on the basis of their physical and technical components as well as their programmatic status. The Board of Education recognizes that it must maintain and improve its current infrastructure while continuing to address system growth. Toward that end, the Master Plan provides a framework for the systematic modernization of its existing, older facilities.

Renovations and Modernizations

Planning the needed renovation and modernization of school buildings requires continuous study and evaluation of not only the adequacy of the building to accommodate a modern educational program but also for the structural and environmental features of the school. Priority of need, cost considerations, project timing, and school site evaluations are included in the overall study of each facility.

Adequacy of Core Spaces. Analysis of the adequacy of educational space requires an examination of the school and a comparison with the current standards for school facilities. Schools built a number of years ago include auxiliary facilities sufficient to accommodate the enrollments at that time. Subsequently, as enrollments have increased and classrooms have been added, the media center, kitchen and cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium or multipurpose area, teacher work areas, storage space, and other general use facilities have become inadequate.

Adequacy for Instruction. Changes in curriculum and paralleling developments in instructional techniques require educational buildings which will facilitate new programs and techniques. Some of the more recent and prominent changes which have had profound implications for school facilities include: (1) greater use of electronic teaching and learning equipment at all levels; (2) variable class size ranging from groups as small as two or three up to groups which combine two or more classes; (3) the addition of art specialists in the elementary schools; (4) more and wider varieties of instructional materials requiring more sophisticated installations in schools and greater amounts of storage space; and (5) the expanding role of the media center and its inclusion of all types of instructional media. Changes in staffing patterns also have noticeable effects upon facilities, especially in the provision of adequate administrative, guidance, special education, and health spaces.

Age of the School Plant. School buildings age during the same time that new educational demands are being made upon them. If it is determined that a school plant can be renovated to house a contemporary educational program, the feasibility of making these changes must be determined from an engineering point of view. Consideration in renovation projects includes the evaluation of roof, floor, window frames, ceilings, heating and ventilating systems, lighting systems, alarm systems, and the adequacy of electricity. The total structure of the building is also evaluated. When items such as roofs, floors, and ceilings are changed within an existing school building, the change must meet new code requirements rather than the old ones under which the original building was built.

Environmental Considerations -- Health and Safety. An elementary school pupil spends about one-half of his/her waking hours in a school building, and a secondary school pupil spends up to one-third of his/her waking hours in school. Therefore, the health and safety of the pupil are among the paramount factors to be considered in acquiring, developing, and improving sites and facilities. In the realm of health, the matters of heating, cooling, ventilation, and temperature control are considered as are lighting, water supply, sewage disposal, asbestos and other hazardous materials, air quality, and site adequacy. Also, such factors as the use of fire resistant materials within a building; traffic control and protective devices such as fences, guard rails, and sidewalks; play equipment and its location; conditions of the site including erosion; and traffic hazards on adjacent streets are given careful attention in the planning and development of sites and facilities.

Site Improvements

The school site is an important part of the total educational facility and must receive appropriate consideration. These considerations include: (1) entrance and turn-around requirements for school vehicles and service vehicles; (2) increased need for faculty-staff parking made necessary by changing staffing standards and modifications to buildings; (3) control of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic from the standpoint of efficiency and safety; (4) grading, drainage, and turf conditions of physical education fields; (5) screen plantings and other shrubbery; (6) construction of walkways; (7) erosion and storm water control; (8) increased demand for more student and public parking space; (9) adequate lighting to insure security for the school; (10) pollution control and environmental factors; and (11) equipment and facilities for physical educational and athletic programs.

Site Selections

The primary purpose of the site acquisition program is to provide the Harford County Public Schools with school sites in various areas of the County in advance of the need for new school facilities. Such advance acquisition is financially desirable since population pressures, with resulting residential and commercial development, inevitably lead to rising land values.

Location of school sites in an undeveloped area cannot be accurately determined until the future land use in that area is ascertained. Whether the area will develop as industrial, commercial, or residential land is an important consideration in site acquisition. If an area is planned as residential, the number of dwelling units planned per acre constitutes a major determinant of educational facility site needs. Early development of area master plans, therefore, is basic to intelligent site selection for future schools. Staff members of the Harford County Public Schools work very closely with staff members of the Planning Department in evaluating the impact of master plans on immediate and future school site needs. Effort also is made to work with developers and their land planners on the location of needed school sites in new subdivisions.

Serious problems can occur when applications for rezoning which result in higher density development than was approved in the master plan are granted. This often results in the need for additional school sites. In such cases, last minute acquisition of additional land may necessitate having to use the last available land in developed areas and can result in poor location, excessive costs, and limited acreage for school sites. It is, therefore, a goal of the Harford County Public Schools to continue to work cooperatively with all individuals and agencies involved in the overall work of identifying growth areas, which will require additional sites within the County.

School Site Size

<u>School Unit</u>	<u>Usable Acreage</u>
Elementary (450 - 800 students)	15 - 20
Middle (900 - 1200 students)	30 - 40
High (1000 - 1600 students)	40 - 50
Special (150-200 students)	15 - 20