

MILTON FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMUNITY TEAM – (FACT)

FACT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 30, 2016

Milton High School LMC – Room 121

6:00 – 8:30 PM

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Jeff Adee, Mike Astin, Barry Brandt (co-chair), Michael Dorn, Gary Groelle, Lesley Hammer (co-chair), Dan Honold, Leo Johnson, Tina Keller, Wilson Leong, Joe Martin, Bill O’Leary, Steve Quade, Eric Richards, Jill Schuerman-Fons, Bonnie Stalker, Danielle Stivarius, Lucille Vickerman, Patrick Weberpal, Daniel Weitzel, Brendon Wilkinson

Member Absent: Scott Storlid

School Board Members Present: President Jon Cruzan, Shelly Crull-Hanke (Liaison to FACT), Bob Cullen, Janet Green, Tom Westrick, Betsy Lubke

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING TOUR – 5:00 – 6:00 PM

Over the past several months, tours of the high school have been conducted to discuss and show the building facilities’ needs. Prior to the FACT committee meeting, another building tour was completed for interested FACT members as well as community members. **Brian Kvapil, Jim Naughton, and Wade Hallett** were citizens who also participated in the building tour. **Lance Fena, Carl Schultz, Brian Kvapil, and Wade Hallett** attended the FACT committee meeting. A sincere “thank you” is extended to all community members who participated in March 30th’s FACT activities.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – BARRY BRANDT AND LESLEY HAMMER

Barry Brandt welcomed FACT members and discussed how the current March 30th meeting would again be a “data dump” of presentations reviewing facts and figures from previous work conducted on the School District of Milton’s facility needs. He explained that the focus for this meeting would be on educational space needs at the middle and high school, grade level configuration, capital improvement/maintenance budgets, and school finance information.

Lesley Hammer expressed the importance of the building tours and welcomed anyone else from the committee or community at large to call and request a tour of the high school in order to see the building's space needs and limitations.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FACT Meeting Minutes of March 16th, 2016. A unanimous committee vote approved the minutes.

EDUCATIONAL SPACE ADEQUACY AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACES – DISTRICT ADMIN. STAFF

The middle school principal and associate principal and high school principal began this presentation with space limitations determined by science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), co-curricular/extracurricular, and classroom and building layout needs.

Middle school principal, Laura Jennaro, conveyed how STEM classrooms/labs are spread throughout the building; whereas, the current research on student-centered learning calls for cross-departmental communication and instruction. She also specified how physical education/athletic practice and music/drama classes must share one gym and small practice/performance space respectively which, at times, provides unsafe and less than ideal conditions. Ms. Jennaro further discussed how all academic classroom space is crowded and does not provide for flexible seating or differentiated learning. The total building layout, including the cafeteria and hallways, are crowded due to increased student enrollment. Associate principal, Matt Biederwolf, summarized how the total middle school learning environment poses academic, behavioral, and safety concerns.

High school principal, Jeremy Bilhorn, addressed how science labs, and career and technology education labs are small, and like the middle school space, does not provide for integrated teaching and learning which is a requirement of STEM. In both buildings, lab classes must utilize hallway space. In terms of classroom layout, Mr. Bilhorn noted how there are currently 32 classrooms, including all special education classrooms, with no access to natural light. Band room space does not support current enrollment either. Classroom size, across the high school, does not provide for interactive, collaborative learning. Building layout is also a challenge, especially for security purposes. The ag/Tech building is accessed by out-of-doors or through other classrooms. The special education classrooms present American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues. Mr. Bilhorn lastly clarified that all high school students do not have their backpacks in the hallways or classrooms due to congestion. Passing time between periods is 4 minutes, and this is challenging with many students in the narrow hallways trying to get to their lockers.

Brian Hammil, Director of Athletics and Activities, reiterated (from the March 16th meeting) that gym space cannot hold the current student body. All co-curricular/extracurricular areas pose safety and ADA concerns. Students are involved in sports practice and athletic activities from 3:00 – 9:00 pm every day of the week as well as on weekends. Phy. Ed. Classes must rotate to meet programming needs, and the music/drama space is extremely limited, requiring constant movement of equipment.

The Directors of Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services next provided educational programming considerations with connections to district goals as well as the current research on flexible learning spaces.

Heather Slosarek, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, translated the research in regard to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NCSS). How students best learn is brain-based - students no longer sit in rows and listen to a lecture to learn important information; instead, they engage themselves in learning by collaborating with one another and the teacher, they apply and analyze information as opposed to just acquiring it. This type of active learning is a progression across grade levels and the English/language arts, math, and science standards require the “push” for additional space. Ms. Slosarek emphasized how this educational shift to small group and differentiated instruction is based on data-driven evidence which includes more supplemental services and spaces for optimal learning. She defined “flexible learning space” as outlined with 5 example diagrams for small-group breakout not only to support STEM, but also humanities, visual and performing arts, physical education and special education.

Susan Probst, Director of Student Services, provided additional parameters for space in order to accommodate Response to Intervention (RTI) and more diverse intellectual, social, behavioral, and medical educational needs. She indicated how 12% of students in the MSD are supported in special education programs and another 20-30% of students receive Tier II or Tier III supports through RTI. Teachers work hard to get 80% of all students at the universal (general classroom) level. Ms. Probst concluded that Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is needed to promote inclusive settings, so classroom space and location as well as hallway barriers must be addressed. Physical and transition needs of these students must be taken into consideration so as to not lose instructional time. The needs of 370 special education students in the district are involved, and the special needs of students has increased, not necessarily the numbers. For example, two students require a nurse’s one-to-one attention and autistic students have sensory needs which are not accommodated for in classrooms with corrugated walls.

QUESTIONS ON FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACES AND SECURITY

At this point, questions were addressed from FACT committee members concerning flexible learning spaces. Student needs are now addressed around instruction and programming, not around the bricks and mortar of the physical layout of classrooms and buildings. Teachers now teach “soft skills” such as perseverance and responsibility; it can no longer be assumed students automatically learn these skills. This type of programming has been going on for 5-8 years within the confines of facility limitations. The need for flexible learning spaces also applies to K-6 classrooms. This is a challenge across the district.

A question on security issues across the district was also synthesized. Harmony is the only building in the district where visitors must pass through the office in order to get to other parts of the building. Visitors are not required nor can be forced to sign in. This is a definite problem

at the high school where office personnel cannot see by the security camera who enters the building if they do not come into the main office first. At the middle school, a security camera does show office staff who is entering, but all visitors do not necessarily sign in at the main office.

GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION – HEATHER SLOSAREK AND TIM SCHIGUR

Heather Slosarek interpreted current and future grade level configurations regarding literacy and math curriculum in comparison to scheduling/staffing. The Common Core State Standards drive English/language arts and math curricula and provide learning outcomes as anchors to what students should know and be able to do. Grade level curricula must be aligned to the CCSS because the Department of Public Instruction provides a district report card which shows learning trends through assessments. The common language provided by the CCSS ensures a strong PreK-12 curriculum no matter what the grade level configuration in the district buildings. Students will continue to receive additional supports, interventions, and extensions in literacy and math in special education, speech and language and English language learner services.

According to Ms. Slosarek, SDM is interested in maintaining a K-4 homeroom-based model; however, a Grade 5-6 schedule and staffing is being evaluated based on the CCSS and programming. There is some desire for Grade 6 to become fully departmentalized; although, the building layout at Northside supports a transitional model. The school district desires to maintain a departmentalized schedule for Grades 7-12. CCSS do have increased expectations between Gr. 3-4, Gr. 5-6, and Gr. 8-9. Ongoing professional development is currently assisting teachers in thinking about a Grade 6-8 middle school model.

It is significant to note that all buildings are limited in areas for individual and small group space for supports, interventions, and extensions. Classrooms, no matter what size, are all utilized for universal instruction.

QUESTIONS ON GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATION

A FACT committee member asked, “Given a clean slate, what grade level configuration would be most desired?” The answer is to keep a 9-12 departmentalized model, possibly provide a 6-8 middle school model, and look at a K-5 or a K-3, 4-5 model.

A question was also asked about how a PreK configuration should/would look. Mr. Schigur informed the committee that currently some Pre-K programs are in the schools and some are in the community. This is a good configuration because some parents need wrap-around care, so the community classes are helpful in that day care is provided. The district would not advocate for a Pre-K Center or building Mr. Schigur noted.

A question was asked about how teacher certification would work if some of the grade levels were reconfigured. Mr. Schigur assured committee members there is flexibility within licensures; however, at the middle school, some staff have received extra certifications, but a 1-8 licensure is common.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET – STEPHEN SCHANTZ

Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, Stephen Schantz, provided a handout of the SDM's 5-year capital maintenance plan stating that the budget for the year is \$450,000. The board approves a 1-year budget in February. He reported, in using budget monies, his department focuses first on major projects such as roofing needs, mechanical and HVAC problems, pavement, flooring, windows, hardware, and some aesthetic improvements. The budget is unable to take care of all needs in a given year, so budget transfers can be made to cover some projects. Many times, projects get carried over to the next year, and each year these project needs grow.

Mr. Schantz also discussed a small project handout and explained how some leftover monies (eg. A mild winter may save on fuel costs and snow plowing) could pick up some of these needs before the fiscal year ends on June 30. He explained the small project budgets for 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. Proposed June projects are estimated to be \$176,432 this year. A replacement schedule for vehicles and equipment was next presented, and Mr. Schantz mentioned how this schedule is prioritized each year.

Finally, Mr. Schantz defined "Extra" projects that can be completed outside of the \$450,000 capital maintenance budget. Items included in "Extras" are listed as the Milton East parking lot, security cameras, and possible door hardware such as fire doors at the high school.

THE BASICS OF SCHOOL FINANCE – MARY ELLEN VANVALIN AND JEFF SEELEY

Director of Business Services, Mary Ellen VanValin, advised the FACT committee that her PowerPoint presentation on school finance focuses on the School District of Milton's revenue findings. She first explained the district's revenue streams and the Revenue Limit formula.

A district's revenue limit is the maximum amount of revenue that may be raised through state general aid and property tax for the General 10 Fund, Fund 38 which is the non-referendum debt service fund where a fund balance may exist, and Fund 39 which is the referendum approved debt service fund. Prior to 2001-02, the Community Service Fund 80 was included in the revenue limit. SDM utilizes the Community Service Fund to support activities for the greater good of the total school community.

Ms. VanValin and Tim Schigur addressed questions from FACT members regarding equalization aid which affects the amount of dollars a district receives from the state. If MSD's debt is paid off, how does this affect the amount of state revenue the district might receive? Answer: If the school district debt is paid off, the district would lose equalization aid. Being debt-free is loss of state aid. With this aid lost to the district, such monies would need to be made up out of other funds. The wealthier a district is translates to less state aid.

Ms. VanValin's PowerPoint may be found on the District's website under Meeting Packet #2 for 3-30-16. The next two paragraph's information, pertaining to SDM's Revenue Limits, may be found under Financial Condition Reports, Financial Assessment on the website, pp. 16-22.

The maximum revenue limit is based upon enrollment changes and each district's prior year controlled revenue. A three year rolling average of a district's pupil enrollment is used in the calculation. In Wisconsin, there is a pupil count on the third Friday of September and the second Friday of January. The SDM has consistently been below the statewide average allowed per member. (Also, see one-page handout in your packet titled "Survey of Revenue Limit Formula Components: 2004-05 to 2014-15). The district has been able to mitigate the effect of revenue limits through continued growth, but this can level off.

Obviously, SDM's major source of operating revenues comes from State Revenue and Property Tax Revenue. Small percentages come from Federal and Local Non-Property Tax Revenue. In 2012, revenue limits were reduced 5.5% per student and state general school aids were cut 8.3%. A decreasing percentage of state support is certainly a negative indicator. State support for SDM has steadily declined from 59.7% in 2008-09, and the percentages of revenues coming from property taxes has increased. The SDM's tax rate has been significantly below the state average rate on a consistent basis. The charts within the Financial Assessment on pp. 16-22 clearly indicate the above information. Mr. Schigur also referred FACT committee members to a colored multi-district comparative cost chart using audited 2013-14 annual data.

Jeff Seeley, from Ehlers Public Finance, articulated the essence of municipal bonds as a financing tool for capital improvements within an operating referendum. Mr. Seeley's PowerPoint was comprehensive in helping FACT members think of the best financing solutions using collaboration and creativity. The following provides important statements about municipal bonds: usually need voter approval, are a general obligation debt of the District, payments coordinate with existing debt to control tax levy impact, usually the debt is set for 20 years, debt payments are part of the shared cost and are eligible for equalization aid, and debt payments are usually spread on a District's property value tax base. Mr. Seeley showed example debt schedules and indicated how a wrap-around schedule is somewhat like a home mortgage.

Mr. Seeley discussed SDM's bond rating as identified by Moody's Investors Service. SDM is assigned a rating of Aa3 which is a strong rating based on disclosure of ongoing financial and statistical information. Please see the summary ratings rationale on Moody's handout dated January 2013. The last six slides of Mr. Seeley's PowerPoint (Slides 26-31) provide relevant sample data of SDM's existing debt, debt limit, and tax impact on bonds, along with an election and bond issuance timeline. This information needs updating to be relevant. Mr. Seeley's PowerPoint is on the district website under Meeting Packet #2 for 3-30-16. It is also provided on a separate link.

PREVIOUS FACT MEETING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Lesley Hammer and Barry Brandt addressed the following question brought up by FACT members on 3-16-16.

1. Has SDM conducted an analysis on the economic impact of the school district on the community? **No** What is the ability of the district to host additional events at SDM facilities and what is that economic impact? **This topic is put on "HOLD" for now, but Dani Stivarius will look into the timing of this question; this information would be good for the public to have. Could FACT possibly put together a proposal?**
2. What square-foot numbers are being used to estimate light vs. heavy renovation as options in the budget? **Structural modifications are considered light renovations and cost approximately \$75 per square foot. Such items as roofs and floors are considered heavier renovations and cost approximately \$125 per square foot. These are construction costs, not total product costs.**
3. What would change in design or programming needs regarding a current high school plan when compared to the 2008 plan? **The 2007-08 model is totally obsolete and is now a completely different entity. Currently, we need to start with STEM programming needs and also look at inflationary cost.**
4. What would it cost to build the 2008 high school plan today? **In 2008, the high school plan would have cost \$67.96 million; today, the exact same plan would cost \$82-\$83 million.**
5. Could a tax impact summary at various potential referendum levels be provided that shows impact for average home value as well as information on how tax impact on farmland is calculated? **Average home value has been discussed during FACT, see Ehlers' presentation Slide #30 from Jeff Seeley. Also, on the district website are two guides for your perusal: WI Department of Revenue Guide for Property Owners and WI Department of Revenue Guide for Agricultural Property Owners.**
6. Can an analysis be conducted on the cost impact (short vs. long-term) between maintaining/expanding current facilities (phased approach) vs. building new (single solution)? **Currently, this is premature; we need a plan first.**
7. If the district were to pursue a plan to maintain current facilities (eg. The \$25 million deferred maintenance option), what would that mean regarding future facility renovation and expansion needs? **Here is an example: In the fall 2015 the district was discussing perhaps \$36 million. In five years, \$36 million would be \$41 million; in ten years it would be \$46.8 million.**
8. Could the district present additional comparable data from other area districts concerning enrollment, mill rate, test scores, debt, etc.? **FACT committee members are asked to complete this as homework for the next meeting. Please read the last handout in the 3-30-16 packet titled "Academic and Financial Data Presentation" from September 23, 2014.**

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AND APRIL 13 REVIEW – LESLEY HAMMER AND BARRY BRANDT

1. Wednesday, April 13, 2016 – 5:00 - 6:00 pm – Tour Milton Middle School. FACT committee and community members are invited to attend.
2. Wednesday, April 13, 2016 – 6:00 - 8:00 pm – FACT Committee Meeting at the middle school (in the cafeteria?)
3. Be sure to check your FACT emails; co-chairs will answer questions from community members.
4. Milton East needs to be toured when students are present. The principal will get back to FACT regarding best times.
5. Discuss decision-making process – super majority vote vs. simple majority vote?
6. From here on, FACT members set the meeting agendas. How do we engage the community going forward?
7. Questions for April 13 Meeting
 - a. How many total classrooms are within the walls of Milton High School? (This question came up when Mr. Bilhorn presented the fact there are 32 windowless classrooms at the high school).
 - b. What is the debt level, specifically for facilities, of other area school districts? (This needs to be translated into mill rate).
 - c. What hypothetical referendum debt level would Milton be at if the district met the state average for spending on facilities? (In other words, how much \$ can the district borrow)?

Respectfully submitted,

Judith R. Schmitz, Ed.D.

FACT Recording Secretary