



Groton School Facilities Initiative

Educational Programming

June 13, 2013





Introduction

- Focus Groups with Central Office and Administrators
- Issues and Implications for Space Utilization
- Group Discussion & Prioritization of Key Issues to Address
- Consensus on Additional Meeting Dates for July/August



Program Changes/ Expansion

Central Office Anticipated Changes

- Self-Contained Special Needs Classes will Expand by Two Classrooms
- PreK Should be Expanded to Increase K Readiness
- New High-School-to-Work Transition Program Needs Space and More Community Partners
- Need to Look at Alternative School Models
- Some Support for Expanding IB Program for 9th and 10th (Currently 11-12th Only)



Program Changes/ Expansion

Administrators Anticipated Changes

- More ELL and SPED Needs
- More PreK Needed to Improve School Readiness
- More Suitable Space for OT/PT Needed
- Space for RTI Needed
- World Languages at Earlier Ages
- Programs for Talented and Gifted



Program Reductions

Central Office Anticipated Program Reductions

- Consumer Sciences May Be Reduced and May Need to Shift to Culinary Arts

Administrators Anticipated Program Reductions

- Function of Media Centers in the Future?



Space Assets

Central Office Considerations of Existing Space

- Need to Upgrade Security
- Old Schools Need Upgrading
- Some Schools Limited in Types of Space for Various Programming

Administrators Considerations of Existing Space

- Function of Media Centers in the Future?
- Classrooms for Autistic Undersized



Space Assets

- Elementary Schools Lack Adequate Conference Rooms
- Sharing of Classrooms for Multiple Functions Creates Scheduling Issues
- Security Needs to Be Upgraded
- Need Food Service in Each Building Instead of Off-Site Kitchens
- Need Dedicated Music and Art Rooms for All
- Need More Storage Space
- Need More Space for Special School Functions



School Consolidation

Central Office Anticipated Community Reaction

- Mixed: Cost-Savings Vs. Loss of Neighborhood Schools
- Enclaves/ Neighborhoods within Community with Strong Geographic Preferences for Where Children Go To School

Administrators Anticipated Community Reaction

- Mixed: Cost-Savings Vs. Loss of Neighborhood Schools



Long-Range Planning Issues

Central Office

- Need to Better Educate Community on Facilities Needs
- Many Residents without Children in School
Need to Understand Problems and Benefits of Solutions
- New London Model of Magnet Schools –
Applicability to Groton?



Long-Range Planning Issues

Administrators

- Parents Will Resist Change
- Many Residents without Children in School
Need to Understand Problems and Benefits of
Solutions
- Magnet School Model Would Require Significant
Investment – Community Support?



Facilities and Programming

- Studies Show that Facilities Can Impact Student Attendance, Behavior, Health and Academic Performance
- Must Remain Cognizant of Direct or Indirect Impacts on Students and the Learning Environment in Facilities Planning



Facilities Impacts - HVAC

- Indoor Air Quality, Ventilation, Thermal Comfort
 - Respiratory irritations/ infections
 - Improper Ventilation Builds Up Carbon Dioxide - > Drowsiness, Headaches
 - Mold Potential
 - Optimum Temperatures for Performance: 68-74 at 40-70% Humidity



Facilities Impacts - Noise

- Acoustics
 - Higher Student Performance Associated with Schools Having Less External Noise
 - Classroom Noise (Including Background HVAC Noises) Can Be Detrimental to Listening and Learning



Facilities Impacts - Lighting

- Lighting
 - Appropriate Lighting Improves Test Scores, Reduces Off-Task Behaviors, and Can Contribute to Student Achievement
 - Daylight Fosters Higher Student Achievement



Facilities Impacts - Building

- Building Age, Quality and Aesthetics
 - Newer and Renovated Schools Contribute to Higher Standardized Test Scores
 - Student Discipline Better in New Schools
 - Generally Higher Teaching Quality in Higher Quality Facilities



Facilities Impacts – School Size

- School Size
 - Literature is Split on Whether Smaller School Size Associated with Higher Student Achievement
 - In Poorer Communities/Neighborhoods, Smaller Schools Associated with Improved Student Achievement
 - Often Greater Parent Involvement in Smaller Schools
 - Parents Often Prefer Smaller Schools



Facilities Impacts – Class Size

- Class Size
 - Teachers Feel Smaller Class Size More Important than School Size
 - Research is Mixed on Optimum Class Sizes
 - Need to Ensure Classroom Can Be Reasonably Managed and Taught



Facilities Impacts - Teachers

- Teachers
 - Teachers Affected by Same Facilities Factors
 - Impacts of Poor School Conditions on Learning Compounded by Sub-Par Performance of Teachers and Students



Summary

- Groton Public Schools Facilities
 - Building Ages
 - Maintenance Needs
 - Committee Walk-Throughs

- Consider Opportunities for Improving Learning Environment



Questions?



Group Discussion

- Divide into Groups – Identify Key Facilities Issues & Areas of Concern to Address
- Prioritization of Facilities Issues - Mid-term & Long-Term



Next Steps

- July – Planning Criteria; Preliminary Alternatives Discussion
- August – Public Survey Tool Review; Analysis of Preliminary Alternatives; Narrowing/ Prioritization of Options
- September – Public Survey; Deeper Analysis of Preferred Alternatives