

Facilities Master Planning Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Long Range Facilities Master Plan?

The Facilities Master Plan is a document that provides a clear and current vision, based on an accurate assessment of our school facilities, for the essential upgrades needed to provide a 21st century quality education to the students and families we serve. With buildings between 49 and 101 years old, our aging facilities have tremendous needs. These are impacting teaching and learning. We have not had resources to address modernization or major needs since voters passed a Bond measure in 1998. We cannot count on the state for help - there are no state resources allocated to support local districts with facility needs.

In June of 2015, the District conducted a Request For Proposals (RFP), selected and then contracted with an architectural firm to assess our school facilities. This assessment took place throughout the fall. Since late fall, we have been soliciting input from our many stakeholders.

In the Fall of 2015, we also had a demographic study conducted to project enrollment for the next decade to inform our facilities planning. The study was made using current student data, feeder district student data, birth rates, inter-district transfer data and housing development planning in the city and county. Student enrollment in both our elementary and secondary districts is projected to decline over the next decade.

How is the District involving the community in the planning?

We are committed to hearing from all of our stakeholders about priorities and needs. Architects met with site representatives in the fall while conducting their assessments. Since January of 2016, we have held 12 community meetings at school sites that were advertised in the Sentinel and by local schools. The School Board conducted 7 Board Community Meetings this year to discuss both programs and facilities. We heard from almost 400 community members through these processes.

We have also conducted meetings with every faculty team to solicit their input on the facilities changes needed to provide a 21st century education to our students.

In addition to the above, we have conducted 11 surveys. Ten of those surveys have been site specific. One was focused on district wide facilities issues. All of the input collected is informing the development of the Facilities Master Plan.

How was the Facilities Steering Committee selected?

The committee was selected by leaders at each school site. The committee is composed of a staff representative and parent representative from each school site. This committee is charged with taking input from stakeholders to inform the final plan, which will ultimately be submitted to the Board for their final discussion, potential revisions and approval.

An Ad Hoc Committee was also formed to consider district wide facilities issues. This group is formed of representatives from site and central leadership, teachers, classified staff and a representative from the city of Santa Cruz.

What is the plan for Natural Bridges? Why are you not planning to open it as an elementary school?

The cost to operate a school site is not insignificant. It would cost \$795,000 in operational costs alone simply to **open** a new elementary school and we would be forced to make program cuts district wide to be able to afford the **ongoing costs** of operating another school over and above our current configuration of four comprehensive and one alternative elementary school sites.

We are mindful of the following facts:

- Currently, we have 34 students more than we did when we closed schools in 2004.
- A demographic study conducted last fall projects that we will decline in enrollment over the next decade.
- The architects' assessments of our buildings this last fall revealed that it would cost 75 to 80% of new construction to renovate the Natural Bridges Elementary campus. The quality of the original construction coupled with deterioration led the architects to conclude that renovation would not be a prudent use of tax payer dollars.

The District's Ad Hoc Committee has been soliciting input and ideas for next steps with the Natural Bridges campus. We will NOT make any recommendation that would preclude this site from being a school site in the future.

Why is the Board not discussing the plan at Board Meetings?

The Board gave staff direction last spring to conduct the needs assessment and develop the District's Facilities Master Plan. Individual Board members have participated in the various Board and Facility Community Meetings, and staff has brought updates to the Board on process throughout the year. The Board is committed to having this extensive stakeholder process to inform the plan. In fact, we have delayed our original timeline, in which we intended to bring forward a final draft in June, so that we could conduct more meetings with stakeholders. The Steering Committee will bring a final draft of the plan forward in August for Board approval.