

Facility Utilization Study

Frequently Asked Questions

Will Cooley sidewalks be addressed?

This would require a discussion with the Charter Township of Waterford as the Waterford School District does not build or maintain Township sidewalks.

Why are we accepting cross district enrollments?

We have always allowed residents to select schools outside their assigned school boundaries.

Have we considered the infrastructure of the roads in the Township? (Increased traffic, sidewalks)?

Yes, we have reviewed the infrastructure and the District is confident that the infrastructure will not be compromised.

How is the District going to be a magnet for students from surrounding districts?

The District will continue to analyze enrichment opportunities for students. This may draw students from private and parochial schools. Expansion of the Schools of Choice program would have to be approved by the Board of Education.

How do we address getting more tax money?

This requires action from the State Legislature. Please see the Waterford School District website for legislator contact information at www.waterford.k12.mi.us/budget/government.

Did we check to see if we could move into the Oakland County administrative offices/Oakland Schools?

There is no need to seek facilities outside the District. We have space to accommodate our administrative offices and this would be an added expenditure.

Will the Crary athletic fields, gyms be available for community groups?

Yes, we currently allow community usage in all our school facilities. We will continue to do so at Crary.

How will the wings be configured at Mason (7th – 8th grade)? Mason is divided into two “houses”, A House and B House. Seventh grade students receive their core instruction (science, social studies, math, language arts) on the main floor of A House and B House. Eighth grade students receive their core instruction upstairs in A House and B House.

Will Crary be underutilized with only 400 administrative staff?

No, the facility will house a number of programs and District departments that will fully utilize the Crary building. In addition, the District has 56 administrators. The total number of District personnel that could be relocated to Crary is approximately 97. The programs that will be relocated to Crary will also include approximately 190 adult education students, 130 Michigan Works customers (per day), 23 Life Tracks students, community education customers, and approximately 250 alternative education students.

Can we get union concessions or more taxes?

We are required by Michigan law to follow existing collective bargaining agreements and any concessions would have to be bargained.

Why will we have a “segregated” middle school and one traditional school?

Although being housed in separate facilities, the instructional delivery for Mason 6th grade will be equivalent to that of Pierce. *Students at both Mason and Pierce will have equal access to advanced classes, intervention classes, and core elective.*

Will current school selection students need to reapply?

Only in situations where boundary changes affect your student.

Does school of choice takes precedence over school selection?

No, we review all applications for space availability.

Why not take all sixth grade students in District and put them at Grayson?

There is not enough space at Grayson to house all sixth grade students.

Has the District considered moving sixth grade back to elementary?

The District has considered moving the sixth grade students back to the elementary and there is not enough room to do so.

Why not open up school of choice to boost enrollment and revenue?

This has been discussed and would require separate Board of Education action. The District made the decision a number of years ago to move to School of Choice Kindergarten-only in order to have the opportunity to educate the child throughout their entire K-12 experience.

How much did this entire process cost?

\$15,000 has been allocated to this process.

What are we doing for sixth grade students to excel and have the same opportunities? What are those parameters and how will it be gauged?

Students at both Mason and Pierce will have equal access to advanced classes, intervention classes, and core electives. Currently, advanced math classes are offered to sixth grade students. This will not change.

Why can't the community make up the proposal A difference?

Proposal A prohibits school districts from going to the taxpayers for the purpose of increasing mills for operational purposes.

Why is Manley moving to Crary?

It allows the District to realize cost savings while improving the instructional facilities for Alternative High School students.

Who will police the area at Crary?

The Alternative High School administration and the current school safety coordinator will ensure the safety and security of the students, staff, and facility.

Are we required to have an alternative high school? Why don't we cut it? Are they paying for themselves?

The District is not required to have an alternative high school but does so to meet the educational needs of all our students. The Alternative High School promotes student success through small class sizes. Teachers identify individual student strengths and weaknesses and the teaching methods they use are often modified to meet individual student needs.

Are there any plans to open up another way in and out of Kettering?

There are no immediate plans to provide another way into the campus at Kettering. Future expansion of the Kettering Campus, which includes demolition of Manley, would include this consideration.

Will class size go down at the high school level (AP classes)? Can you reduce class size?

Class size is based on contractual obligations, which is an average of 20.7 students. On occasion, two classes with low enrollment will be combined so that the class will not be cancelled and students will continue to have the opportunity to take the class.

How will this recommendation save the District money?

The budget specifics related to this recommendation will be given to the Waterford Board of Education on February 4, 2010.

How are you saving money on repurposing buildings?

The District will realize a savings through staffing and utility efficiencies and the reduction of overhead costs. In addition, the District will aggressively seek revenue generating sources.

Why are you keeping the property at Manley? What will you use it for? How will it enhance Kettering?

There are several needs that could be addressed through the expansion of the Kettering Campus. For instance, a marching band practice facility, tennis courts, and an access road would be among the opportunities that this site could accommodate.

Why are you keeping Covert and moving everything to Crary?

The Covert Center is the hub for the District's technology and provides numerous future technology opportunities for students because of its wireless and fiber capabilities.

Why doesn't the District rent facilities to travel teams?

The District does currently rent its facilities to many community and athletic organizations on a continual basis, including athletic travel teams.

Have you reconsidered rezoning the high schools?

The District did study the high school attendance boundaries and recommended, for next school year, to keep the same boundaries in place due to the complexities and challenges of changing them at this time.

How much more money would you save if you completely closed the buildings rather than repurposing?

A slight utility cost would be realized if the District completely closed buildings.

Why didn't you use a third party administrator to facilitate the study?

Many outside resources were used throughout this process including experts from French & Associates, who studied the current facility utilization and space allocation and Stanfred Consultants and Middle Cities Educational Association, who provided enrollment projections.

Why did we implement all day kindergarten last year when we were facing budget deficits?

All Day Every Day Kindergarten was implemented because it's what's best for our students. Studies show that students who attend kindergarten all day have a deeper understanding of concepts and have more time to develop social, emotional, and academic skills. Additionally, the State will mandate that students attend kindergarten all day in the near future.

**Are you going to expand the athletic program since we will have fewer opportunities for students?
Have you thought about implementing Pay for Play?**

There are no plans to extend current athletic opportunities within the District. Pay-to-Play (Participate) is a budgetary item that will be considered when the Board adopts the 2010-2011 budget.

Will you consider a security officer at Mason?

There is currently a school safety coordinator at each middle school, including Mason Middle School.

How will seniority work in regards to teachers?

Teacher seniority will be addressed through the process outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Why won't we keep Crary open and close Mason?

All schools were reviewed and Crary was selected due to the fact that it is the oldest middle school, lowest student enrollment, least utilized, has athletic fields that do not meet the District's standards, and the building and site have limitations that will hinder future options.

Was closing Waterford Village a consideration?

Yes, all buildings were considered. Waterford Village was not recommended due to its ability to house a large student population and provide services to the northwest population.

Did the parent group develop the plan?

From the onset, the draft plan was to be developed by District administration. All stakeholders (parents, students, staff, and community members) were provided an opportunity for input and improvement of the plan.

Are PowerPoint presentations available online?

Yes, all PowerPoint presentations will be available on the Waterford School District website, www.waterford.k12.mi.us.

How do we see the completed survey results?

Completed survey results will be made available to the public via the District website.

Are the transportation times realistic?

Yes. We feel an additional 10 minutes of ride time is accurate. We currently run a daily shuttle from Crary to Our Lady of the Lakes, which is further north, that consistently runs 12-13 minutes.

Are the programs moving to Crary essential to the general population? Can they be looked at to eliminate?

All programs being moved to Crary are essential programs and they do service the general population. Many of these programs are self-sufficient, being funded through grants and federal dollars.

What about staff reductions?

This recommendation will impact all employee groups.

Have you considered working with Waterford Township to move the Parks and Recreation department so that Pierce can use their facility as a 6th grade facility?

Township offices are not owned and operated by the Waterford School District. As such, we do not have the ability make such changes.

What is the point of an on-line learning center? This defeats the purpose of distance learning from home or other internet access sites.

The on-line learning center works in conjunction with distance learning. The on-line learning center would also be the service center for on-line programming/distance learning. Staff training would also be available and it would provide access to on-line capabilities to students who otherwise do not have access. Students will still have the opportunity to interact from off-site locations. In addition, learning opportunities will be made available to the community.

Can Kettering make use of the Manley facility?

No, in its present condition the existing Manley building would not provide any asset to the Kettering campus.

Have you considered offering all buildings for sale and then closing facilities based on buildings that could be sold?

While all buildings were looked at, each District facility has distinct opportunities in regards to functions, capabilities, location, and capacity. These factors make it necessary to evaluate and recognize those factors and take them into consideration.

What programs will be cut from each of the grades?

This plan provides a reduction of costs while maintaining programming and services to our students.

How will the costs of shuttles from Mason to Grayson be included in this “cost savings plan”?

We will not incur additional expense for daily shuttles at arrival and dismissal. Cost of shuttling students for special events has been offset by the elimination of a daily shuttle between Crary Middle School and Our Lady of the Lakes.

Has the District considered reducing number of school days by adding minutes to the day?

This will be taken into consideration when the District analyzes the budget for 2010-2011. Furthermore, recent legislative action could eliminate this option.

Did you consider the children in 7th grade and the impact on them being moved to a new school for one year and then moving on to high school?

The impact on all students was considered.

What criteria was used to establish boundaries?

Student populations, bus routing, efficiencies, impact on feeder schools, and alignment were all factors used to establish boundaries.

What is the total number of children to be in Mason and Pierce?

Mason – 1,375 (with 468 at Grayson Campus)

Pierce – 1,074

Has the District considered adding on to Mason to accommodate the 6th grade students in order to have Grayson remain an elementary?

The District cannot currently access available bond dollars for such renovations due to economic conditions and the recommendation was not intended to increase expenditures or make large scale renovations.

Where did all the money the government just allocated for Waterford Township go and why can't these funds go toward expanding Mason?

Federal stimulus money received by the Waterford School District came with very limited specifications for use. These funds are not permitted for such a purpose.

Has it been considered to move 3 and 4 year old preschoolers out of the elementary buildings?

This option was reviewed and not determined to be feasible as no current facility has the capacity to house all 3 and 4 year old preschool programs and this was identified as an inconvenience to families.

Why not move Manley to Lutes and make Covert a Stepanski satellite program?

This does not maximize use of District facilities.

Can you provide the breakdown of direct and indirect labor?

84% of our costs are employees. Of that, 80% are instructional staff and 20% are support staff.

What about repurposing Burt Elementary?

There are not advantages to repurposing Burt at this time.

Will these questions be received by the school administration that was at the meetings?

All questions and comments are being collected and reviewed by the administration.

What about recesses? Most of the time only 1 adult is out with students...that isn't enough. How many will you plan for?

The District plans to maintain current staffing ratios.

How many new jobs will this create?

A loss of 450 students over the next five years is projected. This recommendation will not result in the creation of new jobs.

Do you plan on adding additional parking lots?

If and when the District is able to accelerate the \$55 million in bonds, a review of the District's needs will be reviewed and addressed at that time.

Will class sizes increase?

Based on projections, average class sizes for the 2010-2011 will remain 26-1 at Kindergarten – Fifth Grade and will decrease in the middle school core classes from 30-1 this year to 29-1, if the plan is implemented.

Will school selection still be allowed?

Parents, who reside within the Waterford School District boundaries, will still have the opportunity to participate in school selection, as space allows.

Is there a cost to dismantle Manley? Is there any financial recycle gain?

Based on prior dismantling of comparable buildings, it is estimated that it will cost \$50,000 to dismantle the building and another \$50,000 for asbestos removal. Prior to the District requesting proposals from companies, all equipment and other usable materials are removed and recycled for use in other buildings. Dismantling a building requires separate Board of Education action.

Will the 53 school of choice students currently at Grayson have a choice to attend any school?

They will be provided options as to the schools their school of choice student attends, based on space availability.

Will the District still offer school of choice to students outside Waterford school boundaries?

Yes, the District will continue with its current practice of offering school of choice to students entering kindergarten only, based on space availability.

What staff will be impacted?

This recommendation will impact all employee groups.

Are we addressing all of our options from a facilities standpoint? Are there plans for more changes due to more deficits?

Decisions to consolidate or close facilities are driven by current and/or projected enrollment and budget constraints. We will continue to address all feasible options that will ensure existing academic opportunities and maximize the instructional delivery system for our students.

When will the remaining deficit be addressed?

By law, the District must present a balanced budget to the Board of Education by June 30, 2010. All further deficits will be addressed prior to June 30, 2010 and after February 11, 2010, when the Board of Education is presented the Facility Utilization Study Recommendation for action. We are constantly looking at options that enhance opportunities for students while recognizing the realities of enrollment and funding.

Will the new boundaries cut transportation costs?

The District's study of boundary realignment and transportation costs concludes that the District will not realize any additional costs due to these changes. The changes in boundaries will provide an additional opportunity for the District to consolidate runs which results in maximizing bus capacity utilization. This consolidation will offset any additional operational costs.

Are displaced students able to apply for school selection to return to their home school?

Yes, parents may request that their student return to their home school.

Did socio-economic status play a role in the boundary realignments?

No.

Is there a "Plan B"

Only one plan has been presented and was developed intentionally to eliminate conflicts between stakeholders. However, the administration is reviewing input to improve the plan or determine other options.

Are preschool programs going to be affected by these changes?

We will continue to provide preschool in selected elementary schools.

Has there been consideration given to realign high school boundaries, which would result in aligning middle school to high school?

The administration is continuing to research this issue.

How long will we keep Lutes Campus open before we lose money or do something with it?

The District will immediately seek out revenue generating opportunities (renting space) such as those currently in place at the Waterford Senior Center, Leggett Campus and at Lutes Campus to reduce operational cost and to provide additional revenue to the District. Although enrollment projections indicate a continued downturn, the Lutes Campus will be retained for future enrollment increases or for innovative

programming, such as a magnet school. If these plans do not materialize, the District will investigate further options including closing the building.

Why are so many more students going to Mason Middle School?

The DRAFT recommendation indicates that there will be 98 students transferred to Pierce and 419 students transferred to Mason. It was not possible to split 517 students equally due to transportation, boundary realignment, and space considerations. Sending the majority of students to Mason and utilizing Grayson as a sixth grade campus was considered the best solution at this time.

Why weren't the boundaries divided by main roads instead of by neighborhoods?

The boundary realignments were based on the number of students residing in the residential areas. Dividing boundaries by main roads would not afford the District the opportunity to effectively divide the number of students attending each school and maximize resource efficiencies.

Will the sixth grade students housed at Grayson next year have to cross the bridge to attend classes at Mason?

No. This option exists only for special events and some after school activities.

Will we become a one high school district?

There are no indications that enrollment will decrease enough at the high school level to warrant the elimination of one of our current high schools.

Why can't we have on-line learning opportunities at existing schools?

Some on-line learning opportunities already exist at the schools but those opportunities are limited. Creating an on-line learning center at the Covert Center is possible due to the fact that this facility is the hub for the District's technology. The Covert Center provides more opportunities because of its wireless and fiber capabilities, which are not available at each individual school.

Why hasn't the District reduced wages like every private company, which has cut 10-25% in the last two years?

The District's superintendent, administrators, and all union employee groups did reduce their wages by 2% this year after all were in agreement. In addition, all experience steps were decreased 67%. Certain district employee groups have also agreed to a two-tier salary schedule for new employees. Employee wage concessions are part of the collective bargaining process and cannot be implemented solely by the District.

If the economy is rebounding, how did the District come up with \$111 per student in retirement costs?

This increase in retirement cost is determined by the State of Michigan who operates the retirement plan in which all District employees are members. The District does not control this fund or its associated costs.

Why aren't some of the healthcare costs shared by the employees?

Through negotiations, the District has modified the health care plan to employees numerous times, which has resulted in larger co-pays to our employees and provided significant savings to the District. Employee healthcare coverage is part of the collective bargaining process and changes cannot be implemented solely by the District.

Can the Waterford Alternative High School students be absorbed into the high schools?

An alternative high school model promotes success through smaller class sizes and alternative teaching methods. In order to maintain the integrity of the alternative high school program, it is not possible to move this program to the traditional high school.

Are we doing enough now? Can we make a bigger, more aggressive change now?

The Facility Utilization Study specifically addresses the efficiencies within our buildings. The DRAFT recommendation reflects the changes necessary to not only reduce expenditures but to positively impact student achievement. Other considerations to reducing the deficit will be addressed after the completion of the Facility Utilization Study.

How will you ensure that the recommendation is aggressively implemented?

Plans to implement the recommendation will begin immediately following Board of Education action. The District will work to ensure that communication is timely and provides detailed implementation information.

Can you provide specific information as it relates to the \$1.6 million dollars in recurring savings?

The District has conservatively estimated the savings at Grayson at \$639,900; Crary \$654,000, and Operational \$423,000. Additional savings detail will be presented to the Board of Education on February 4, 2010. Approximately 84% of the District's budget is salaries and benefits, providing specific detail to the public will only lead to speculation regarding employee's jobs.

If the staff follows the students, where is the savings?

A cost savings is realized through reduced staffing levels and improved efficiencies.

Are classroom sizes comparable to Grayson and Mason?

General classrooms at Grayson are comparable to those at Mason.

Will we continue to close buildings as enrollments decrease in the future?

Decisions to consolidate or close facilities are driven by student enrollment. If the District continues to experience declining enrollment, it will be necessary to have further conversations regarding consolidation and/or closures.

How were buildings prioritized?

Buildings that provided maximized savings while protecting instructional services were identified.

Will there be a band program at Grayson?

Yes, the band program for sixth grade Mason students will be comparable to the sixth grade program at Pierce.

Will library services, physical education, and technology at Grayson resemble middle school opportunities?

Yes, the same services, programming, and technology for sixth grade Mason students will be comparable to those for sixth grade students at Pierce.

How will the sixth grade Mason students be given the same education as Pierce students (advanced classes, electives, social experiences)?

Comparable educational and social experiences will exist between Mason and Pierce.

How will this recommendation affect our children's long term relationships with teachers and peers?

The District has experience with previous building closures and has strategies to effectively assimilate students to their new learning environment. Student and parent orientations and visits will be scheduled.

February 5, 2010