

Frequently Asked Questions
Facilities Planning - “Building on Tradition”

What is a facilities master plan? A master plan is a blueprint for addressing the district’s facility needs driven by the educational program. By developing a long-term plan, the district will be able to make carefully considered decisions to use its resources with maximum efficiency well into the future.

Why now – with the uncertain state of the economy and of public school financing? Now more than ever, it is imperative to make every dollar count. Having a sound facilities plan for our district will help us make the most cost-effective spending choices that best serve our students.

Have decisions already been made? A resounding no. We are just completing the assessment stage, gathering critical information from faculty, residents and school facilities specialists which will then drive the issues to be addressed. Community input in this process is absolutely essential. To this end, we have met with parent representatives from each building, formed a Facilities Advisory Panel with members from Columbia Township, Fairfax, Mariemont and Terrace Park and held an open Facilities Community Dialogue on November 12 at Mariemont High School.

Didn’t we just conduct a facilities study? In 2006, a facilities report was compiled by a dedicated group of district residents. Their commission was to make recommendations for needed improvements throughout the district, many of which have been implemented. Their report is an integral part of the foundation for this current process which will take a much broader, long range view of current and future needs of the district – the development of a thirty to forty year master plan. A long-range comprehensive facilities study hasn’t been conducted since before the high school was built on Pocahontas in 1970. Thirty to forty years is a typical life span for a school facilities master plan.

The buildings look good to me, what’s wrong? Four out of five of our school buildings range from 70 – 95 years old. While some improvements were made through a bond issue and permanent improvement levies, much of the infrastructure (plumbing, electric, HVAC systems) is well past its useful life. As we consider replacement options, it makes good sense to review what other issues should be addressed – be they concerns about safety or of future instructional needs (such as security systems, technology support, etc.). We need to embrace the history of our buildings and traditions of this community while providing students with the skills they’ll need in the 21st century.

How will we pay for any improvements? In the final phase called Decisions, the district, in partnership with the community, will decide how to best implement the chosen plans.

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Why are we using an architect and construction manager? When developing a thirty to forty year master plan, the district wants to ensure we are making well-informed decisions. SFA Architects and Turner Construction are an integral part of this planning team, providing the knowledge and expertise from working with school districts and communities to maximize the use of buildings and resources. They understand our mission for academic excellence and our commitment to community.

How much will this process/study cost the district? During the planning process, these specialists are charging the district nothing for their services.

For more information on the entire facilities planning process, visit www.mariemontschools.org and click on the Facilities Planning link on the homepage.

For any direct comments or questions, please feel free to contact Paul Imhoff, superintendent at 272-7500 or pimhoff@mariemontschools.org.