

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 2009

Dear Mariemont School District Resident,

This school year, we have embarked on a comprehensive planning process to develop a long-term Facilities Master Plan (FMP) for our school district. The weak economy makes this very challenging, but at the same time, more important than ever. We have aging buildings with electrical, heating and plumbing systems overdue for replacement and need an overall plan to avoid waste. We cannot afford to replace a major system, and then later decide to replace or repurpose a building.

We've engaged our district staff and our community to ensure the guiding principles of any facilities plan will be instructional needs and community priorities. This process is well underway with hundreds of community members having already taken part. We believe it is a sound and responsible approach - especially for uncertain times. The state of the economy is being felt in our homes, our businesses, and in our schools. We understand and are sensitive to the impact this has on us all.

The FMP also prepares us in the event that the federal government steps forward with infrastructure stimulus dollars. At this time there are no guarantees, but a ready plan would position our district to take advantage of such an opportunity.

To date, we have assessed the state of our school buildings and are developing, with our community, a comprehensive, fiscally responsible plan to drive facility decisions for the next three to four decades. (*Information detailing an Ohio School Facilities Commission assessment study, district advisory committee findings, staff and community feedback and more are all accessible on our website, www.mariemontschools.org, on the Facilities Planning link.*)

Be assured any plan involving reconfiguration, renovation, and/or new construction would be phased in over many years, with funding broken into pieces over time. Furthermore, we would not implement such a plan without the community's consensus that the time was right.

Please plan to attend the next facilities Community Dialogue on Wednesday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mariemont High School cafeteria. (3812 Pocahontas Ave.) We will present a variety of facilities plan options - with price tags - developed by community and staff members along with our facilities professionals, SFA Architects and Turner Construction. These options will be available prior to the meeting - starting March 18 on our website, through local media, at the public library and all district school and community buildings.

If you haven't participated in this facilities planning process, we encourage you to get involved. There are multiple ways to participate and express your opinions:

- Join a building team (contact us or any school principal).

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- Participate in the March 25 community meeting.
- Email us (you can also use the feedback link on our facilities planning webpage).
- Sign up to receive e-mails on district news and updates at our website, www.mariemontschools.org.

Your opinions, ideas and concerns are important to the future of this district. Please feel free to contact any of us at any time.

As we determine a plan for necessary facility improvements, we also continue our commitment to evaluating ongoing operational costs. Last school year the Board of Education cut \$600,000 from the planned 2008/2009 budget. Preparing for declining state funds and tax revenue, we have incorporated into our forecast an additional \$1,000,000 in cuts from the planned budgets of 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 school years. We have voted to increase health care premiums for all of our employees which will result in a \$90,000 annual savings. We are committed to cutting costs while maintaining our excellent academic programs.

One hundred and thirty years ago, visionary community leaders established the Mariemont City School District, and, in the decades to follow, others continued to plan the course of this special district. Now as a community, we have the privilege and responsibility for guiding our schools into the next several decades. It is a challenge we are honored to accept with you. Thank you for your continued commitment.

Sincerely,

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Visit www.mariemontschools.org for additional Facilities Planning information and more District news and updates.