

FORWARD

Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates is pleased to present this Facilities Study Report to the Elizabethtown Area School District. This report has been developed to assist the School District Board of Directors, staff and community in the decision making process regarding the future utilization and disposition of its educational facilities. Additionally, the report will provide an update as to the current overall status of the school district, with respect to demographics and enrollment, as well as the current status of district wide facilities.

As such, this report should be viewed as a starting point, or benchmark; providing a framework from which both a short and long term facilities master plan can be implemented for any recommended or desirable facility improvements. Any recommendations that result in upgrades to the present facilities should be structured to align with the Elizabethtown Area School District's Mission, Beliefs and Educational Programs.

Principles of the Report

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Departments of Education, Environmental Protection and Labor & Industry have established guidelines for school programs, school sites, buildings and supporting facilities needed to provide a well-rounded, complete and safe educational experience for the students. These guidelines include:

- Curriculum regulations, including Chapter 4 standards that will continue to impact facilities.
- School sites must be of adequate size to provide for the safety of the students, provide outdoor play areas, bus loading and unloading and parking for staff and visitors.
- Learning environments should be learner-centered, developmentally and age appropriate, safe, comfortable, accessible, flexible, and equitable, in addition to being cost effective.
- School facilities should meet the educational, physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students and create an environment that will encourage students to learn.
- Flexibility, including spaces to provide for the various teaching and learning styles, is essential to educational facilities.

Assumptions

General

- The citizens of the Elizabethtown Area School District desire to provide an educational opportunity for all students and will support the limited funding required to maintain quality educational environments at all levels.
- The goal of this report is to provide the Elizabethtown Area School District with an overview and evaluation of the current district educational facilities, including an evaluation of school district demographics and enrollment, as well as a review of each physical plant and any educational related needs, and a comparison of options that address any identified needs.

ELIZABETHTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Wide Feasibility Study

Demographic

- The student enrollment in the District is likely to continue to increase over the next several years. PDE enrollment projections for 2020 indicate a K-12 increase of about 7.9% over the next eight year period.
- An analysis between regional and local historic trends in the Elizabethtown Area School District indicate the potential for student enrollment to increase with the possibility of moderate growth over the long term.
- Enrollment projection models include basic limitations such as: internal school district policy changes, external factors, and other considerations such as emerging and changing housing and population trends, all of which can have an effect on the accuracy of the program.
- Construction of new housing, annual live birth data and the status of the District's total parochial, private and home school students will have a direct effect on the enrollment projections and should be monitored annually. Although it is apparent that while the student enrollment of the school district may begin to increase over the next eight years, there is no anticipated significant decrease in overall district population expected in the near future.
- For planning purposes, reviewing and updating annual live birth and retention ratios, as well as monitoring census data, housing data and changes in local land development is important. Using recent historical averages as a planning tool is recommended.

Organization / Academic

- Providing space for special programming, social services, special education and "pull-out" programs such as art, music, reading support and other resource activities will reduce the functional capacity of the school buildings.
- The class size guidelines of the Elizabethtown Area School District will have an effect on the functional capacity of the facilities.
- The Elizabethtown Area School District maintains a half day kindergarten program at the K-3 facilities.
- As teaching strategies change and programs are adjusted to meet the different learning styles of students, facilities are affected. Some students learn best in large groups, while others learn best in visual presentations or through written or spoken communications. Having a school environment that allows for these various types of learning and demonstration of competencies, requires flexibility and adaptability of physical space.

ELIZABETHTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Wide Feasibility Study

Facilities

- The District's school facilities should be safe and accessible to all students and adults, be adequately sized to meet educational planning standards and criteria, and provide for a comfortable environment to facilitate year-round use and the inclusion of technology as a teaching tool.
- The District's school facilities should include a variety of learning spaces such as instructional classrooms, small and large group learning areas, specialized instruction space and laboratories.
- The facility sites should be safe and accessible and provide for efficient and safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Adequate parking and bus drop-off areas should be provided and ideally separated to insure safety and efficiency. Athletic fields and playgrounds should be provided to reinforce the educational program.
- Each school should be a permanent part of the community. The potential use of temporary classroom units should be considered as short-term solutions only.
- The District's elementary schools should provide opportunities for students to have hands-on experiences as part of the learning process, which requires adequate space.
- The Middle School experience is intended to provide a transition from the self-contained, nurturing environment of the elementary school to the departmental configuration of the high school. Students are introduced to departmental teaching, interdisciplinary teaching, flexible scheduling, collaborative learning, and flexible grouping. As an educational facility the Middle School should support and enhance the needs of young adolescent students such as, diversity in experiencing teaching, curriculum and scheduling, self exploration and self definition, meaningful participation in school and community, need for physical activity, positive social interaction with peers and adults, and the need for structure and clear limits.
- The High School is dedicated to the concept of group instruction, however must have the facilities to reinforce the emphasis on individualized learning that has emerged. New courses of study and expansion and development of educational curriculum offerings in the high school have created the need for more specialized rooms, often requiring larger, more flexible space. The High School facility should be efficiently designed, with clearly delineated paths of travel. This building needs to accommodate large numbers of students in an efficient and safe manner.
- The appearance of the District's facilities provides a first and lasting impression of the school system to both children and adults. The quality of the educational opportunities is inferred. Continuing efforts should be made to maintain the interior and exterior of all school facilities.

