

Presentation to the Board of School Directors

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools:**  
*Administrative Recommendations for  
Wissahickon School District Facilities*

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# Background

- Two Studies Initiated and Public Presentations at School Board Meetings
  - PA Economy League: Enrollment Study (2010)
  - D'Huy/Breslin: Facilities Study (2011)
- Facility Tours (January & February 2012)
  - Wissahickon School District
  - Great Valley School District
  - Souderton School District
  - Upper Dublin School District\* *District Administration Tour*
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Facilities Alignment Presentation (March 2012)
- Financial Presentations during Finance Committee (April 2012)
  - Oppenheimer
  - Public Financial Management

# Items to be considered when evaluating options for the future...

- Educational Program, Achievement and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill Preparation
- Enrollment Projections/Space Considerations
- Infrastructure/Maintenance  
*(General Condition of Facilities)*
- Cost Effectiveness: New Construction vs. Renovation
- Debt Level/Available Funding
- Community Impact

# Essential Questions guiding the recommendation.....

- Does the enrollment trend in Wissahickon School District over the next 5-10 years appear to be declining and if so, how do we accommodate for decline?
- Are our buildings equipped to accommodate for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning skills necessary to train our graduates for the future?
- What is our current level of debt and borrowing capacity?
- How environmentally sound are our current facilities? How technologically equipped are they? What is the status of safety features in each building?
- How do we assess “community” support for the facilities recommendations?

# Factors influencing the Administrative Recommendation

- The high school has gone through a significant number of add-ons creating problems in the building. D and I Hall corridors at Wissahickon High School are below grade and have had significant flooding problems over the past several years.
- Enrollment in the secondary buildings are also on a smaller scale decline with approximately 100 less students in the middle school compared to the last 10 years and 50 less students in the last 5 years at the high school. This trend will continue as the elementary student's progress through our system.
- An area of impact with regard to the middle school is that the existing pool is approximately 40 years old. The high cost of repairs and the difficulty in maintaining ventilation and air quality is and has been extremely problematic.
- The ages of the elementary and secondary schools will require extensive facilities work necessary to keep them functional in meeting 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning standards. Reference: Facilities Report by Breslin, D'Huy – December 2011.

# Factors influencing the Administrative Recommendation

- The lack of an auditorium at the middle school has been problematic for many years. The only large space in the building is the gymnasium and that venue is completely inefficient for performance. Therefore, the only large area in the District for the many performances is the high school thus, the heavy usage by the middle school and elementary buildings has had a substantial impact on the high school facility for both usage and scheduling.
- Enrollment in the District is and has been declining in the elementary level. Since the 2001-2002 school year until now, enrollment has decreased by approximately 156 students. In looking at the capacity of our existing elementary buildings, this will yield an excess capacity of 592 students. In addition, live births in the community have continued to decline.
- Attendance boundaries are not commensurate with elementary school locale, thus creating inefficiencies in the transportation of elementary school students.
- Traffic pattern concerns continue to be a problem of major significance on the Houston Road campus at the high school, middle school and Lower Gwynedd Elementary School.

# Administrative Recommendation

- **Secondary School Program**
  - Construction of a new high school facility on a site proximate to the existing high school so as not to disturb any athletic fields and with a traffic pattern that provides a safer environment than the existing facility.
  - Inclusion of a pool/natatorium at this site.
  - Retention of the existing round gym, incorporated into the design specifications.
  - Conversion of the existing middle school pool into an auditorium.

# Administrative Recommendation

- **Elementary School Program**
  - Close Mattison Avenue Elementary School at the conclusion of the 2012-13 school year.
  - Plan for future elementary school consolidation consistent with projected enrollment trends.
  - Evaluate elementary school facility upgrades consistent with consolidation/enrollment trends.



# Administrative Recommendation

- **Facilities Plan Community Input Group**
  - Immediately establish a Community Input Group to provide stakeholder perspectives relative to the enrollment and facility feasibility studies and the future impact on the Wissahickon School District.
  - The Facilities Plan Community Input Group will be comprised of up to 20 members of various stakeholder groups which represent the Wissahickon School District community.
  - Applications for participation on the committee should be submitted to Mr. Wade Coleman, Board Secretary through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Applications must include a resume.
  - Committee will be appointed in July 2012.

# Questions/Comments

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