

## Long Range Educational Facilities Planning Work Group

### Meeting #6

City Hall – City Council Workroom

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 – 6:30pm

### Meeting Summary

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*Meeting notes are recorded by City Staff to provide a written record of principal items of discussion, key comments, decisions of the Work Group, and comments from the public. They are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of the meeting.*

#### Meeting Attendees

##### LREFP Work Group Members

Ken Billingsley  
Ronnie Campbell  
Debra Collins  
Judy Noritake  
Melynda Wilcox  
Justin Wilson

##### Members not in attendance

Herb Berg  
Alvin Crawley  
Mark Eisenhour  
Mayor Euille  
Yvonne Folkerts  
Karen Graf  
Chris Hartman  
Tammy Mann

##### ACPS

Andrea Fineak  
Laurel Hammig  
William Holley  
Chris Lewis, Vice Chair, School Board

##### City of Alexandria

Chris Bever  
Susan Eddy  
Pat Mann  
Karl Moritz  
Dana Wedeles  
Katherine Carraway

##### Brailsford & Dunlavey

Jay Brinson

## Community Members

Jim Durham

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Karl Moritz, Deputy Director Planning & Zoning, City of Alexandria, welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the meeting's agenda, and asked for guidance from the work group on the remaining project schedule and scope of work.

### **Facility Capacity Needs Analysis Subcommittee**

Laurel Hammig, Facilities Planning/GIS Specialist, ACPS, provided an update on work completed to date by the Facility Capacity Needs Analysis Subcommittee, as well as an overview of work scheduled for the summer. Staff is tasked with completing a zoning analysis of existing and potential school sites. The project to inventory existing conditions will continue over the summer with the exterior site inventories, with assistance from technical experts. The scope includes an evaluation of open space and recreational features, conditions of playgrounds and their age appropriateness, natural resources, storm water management facilities, and site accessibility and traffic issues.

Group members asked for clarification regarding the identification of potential school sites within the City. Justin Wilson asked that while conducting an inventory of all existing sites, staff also look at potential sites elsewhere in the City including new development and publicly owned properties. Mr. Moritz explained that staff plans to undertake such an inventory partly in the context of exploring urban school models, since two potential sites have space constrictions – parcels in north Potomac Yard and near Simpson field. These sites provide an opportunity to determine how/if an urban school model can accommodate the City's needs.

Ms. Hammig reported that the Subcommittee reviewed several methods for calculating capacity and ultimately decided to primarily recommend a programmatic methodology based on School Board approved class size caps. Secondary to that methodology would be that of core capacity. This approved capacity methodology will be reviewed annually and updated based on new information.

The group discussed two additional concepts reviewed by the Subcommittee – utilization factor, which is the percentage applied to the optimum capacity to account for the uneven distribution of students across grade levels and cohort groups; and level of service, which is the goal for the acceptable level of service provided by a facility based on the operational characteristics. A capacity example was provided to illustrate these concepts, applying the School Board approved class size caps.

Ms. Hammig asked that in addition to concurring/or not with the Subcommittee's recommended capacity methodology, the Work Group determine if the Subcommittee should move forward with the level of service concept in its next phase of work. Group members considered the level of service concept as it relates to core space usage (i.e., cafeterias, gymnasiums) and where existing schools might fall in this example. Ms. Hammig explained that next steps will include finishing the inventory of school sites and applying the recommended methodology and level of service concept to existing schools as part of a gap analysis. This analysis will compare the site inventory data with benchmarks for the future.

Chris Lewis asked that science and computer lab spaces be included in the full-size classroom discussion of this analysis, as well as the possibility for higher need special education students to have separate space available to them in addition to the inclusion program. Mr. Lewis also asked that two options be shown for class size caps – the current School Board approved caps as well as those from three years ago.

The Work Group approved the recommended capacity methodology for the purposes of applying it to the next part of the subcommittee's analysis. Once the methodology is applied to existing schools and site specific results are reported, Work Group members will have the opportunity to make adjustments.

### **Ed Specs/School of the Future Subcommittee**

Ms. Hammig apprised the group of the Subcommittee's work to date, including work performed by the project team who met with more than 30 subject matter expert groups, including programs/services, transportation, community partners, subject matter teachers, facilities department, and building security. Judy Noritake asked if consideration was given to including 'safe places' in the security discussion, specifically with regard to weather emergencies. Jay Brinson reported that they are not currently included, but can be incorporated in the process.

As part of the development of the Draft Ed Specs, the Subcommittee hosted community meetings and provided an online feedback opportunity. The community participated in discussions surrounding classroom learning versus learning throughout the school, the importance of community use, high-quality architecture, how each school is unique to its community and should therefore reflect the needs of the neighborhood, and security. Members of the Work Group suggested an outreach plan that includes visiting community events, such as civic association or PTA meetings, in addition to hosting community meetings.

Ms. Hammig described the Draft Ed Spec documents as being general guidelines for future school renovation and construction projects, emphasizing that they are not site specific. Prior to any major undertaking, they will be reviewed and tailored to each site. Ms. Hammig noted that the Ed Specs will be delivered in a spreadsheet format so they can be engineered to target any number needed for a school.

Jay Brinson, Brailsford and Dunlavey, led a discussion of some of the specifics of the Draft Ed Specs in an effort to help group members conceptualize how these documents will look and function. Mr. Brinson first described the Draft Elementary Ed Specs. Mr. Lewis asked for further explanation regarding the lack of science lab, special needs/education, performing, and health care space. Mr. Brinson explained that these drafts are based on the ideal as described by the input received from subject matter groups. Science would be 'pushed in' to individual classrooms at the elementary level and therefore wouldn't require a separate space – the goal is to provide easy access to the science curriculum for each class. The Draft Ed Specs instruct the architect to inquire about the special education needs for the individual school, as each site will not have the same requirements.

Members of the group discussed the specific concern that the PreK – 8 Ed Specs included a school – based community health center, whereas the Draft Elementary Ed Spec includes a school – specific health clinic. The school – based community health center normally includes other providers that deliver a higher level of service than a school nurse can provide. It can also require additional federal and state funding. As a result of the discussion, the Subcommittee agreed to look further into including a similar guideline as the PreK – 8 Ed Specs. Mr. Brinson explained that to best utilize space within the school, the performance area/stage at the elementary level is located within the cafeteria (i.e., 'cafetorium') and will be a bit more elaborate at the middle school level. Choral and instrumental music will each be assigned their own space within each school.

The Draft Middle School Ed Specs are similar in theme and process to the elementary. Mr. Brinson noted that the Brailsford & Dunlavey project team met with a group of middle schools students to discuss with them their concept of an ideal school. The feedback was very much in line with the other needs gathering data. Having both quiet spaces as well as those providing a more vibrant experience, and not just classroom space, was important.

The Work Group continued to discuss whether the Draft Ed Specs were accommodating the current and potential needs of the City. Mr. Brinson pointed out that the advantage of this model is its flexibility. The model is an interactive spreadsheet, so it can be modified for any school of the future.

Discussion concluded with no specific action required of the Work Group.

## **Enrollment Forecasts/Demographics Subcommittee**

Mr. Moritz updated the group on enrollment forecasting work performed since January, including the implementation of measures to check the approved forecasting methodology against real world data. These ‘reality checks’ include analyzing students per 1,000 population, student generate rates, small areas within the City, and a mid-year status update. These measures afford multiple opportunities for course correction throughout the year.

Mr. Moritz reported that there is one indicator that could point to a change in the enrollment trends over the last few years; the kindergarten capture rate decreased in the past year, but it’s too early to determine if this is the beginning of a trend. Pat Mann continued with an in-depth explanation of how the reality checks are applied to the forecasting methodology. Discussion touched on the forecasting inputs and how they’re related to housing stock and generation rates, the timing of state birth rate and school enrollment data, and the current approach to student assignment using the 10-year forecast.

The Work Group was asked to endorse the continued application of the approved forecasting methodology, which includes analysis of the inputs (population forecast and birth rate, kindergarten capture, and cohort survival by grade) in conjunction with the reality checks. No objection was raised.

## **Outline of Final Plan Document**

The Work Group reviewed the draft outline of the final Long Range Educational Facilities Plan, which will be comprised of enrollment trends and forecasts, facility conditions, capacity and utilization, proposed educational specifications, a gap analysis, recommended capacity improvements, and shared use and land use issues related to how the development and small area planning process informs school capacity.

Mr. Lewis raised a concern about the timing of the Plan’s recommendations for schools, specifically with regard to any potential benefit to the Patrick Henry project. While the final document may not yet be complete, Mr. Moritz suggested that pertinent information can be made available beforehand and suggested that the Work Group schedule a meeting to specifically address the Patrick Henry project.

## **Next Steps**

Upcoming work during the summer will include the gap analysis and urban school analysis, involving researching models, testing them against potential sites in the City, and reviewing how similar jurisdictions are addressing the issue.

During the fall, staff will organize work sessions with appropriate commissions (i.e., Park and Rec Commission, Planning Commission, School Board, City Council) and community meetings to report findings and ask for feedback prior to the publication of the final report.