

OFFICE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES MODERNIZATION

DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS MASTER FACILITIES PLAN

2010

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MAYOR ADRIAN M. FENTY



SAVOY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

The District of Columbia Public Schools are now in the midst of the most massive transformation of a public school district in the country. As recently as three years ago, many considered the possibility of providing educational excellence in D.C. public schools an unattainable goal. Years of neglect left the District's public school facilities in a truly deplorable state. The District of Columbia Public Schools Master Facilities Plan (MFP) is the action plan that will deliver classrooms that support educational needs and provide safe, positive learning environments to the children of the District.

The 2010 MFP builds upon the foundations established in the 2008 MFP and information garnered over the past several years for the development of earlier MFP drafts. This MFP also benefits from the extensive public engagement process conducted from 2006 through 2009 and from the exhaustive analysis and documentation of DCPS facilities' existing conditions completed during those years. Moreover, this plan responds to lessons learned by OPEFM in its implementation of the most aggressive modernization program in DCPS history, conducted during 2007, 2008 and 2009. The "real-world" experience resulting from this program informs the plan and shapes its approach.

At the heart of this plan is the premise that the quality of the learning environment significantly impacts student achievement. No child should wait 15 years or more before they are taught in a modernized classroom and their school is brought up to a standard of excellence. This plan will bring the benefit of modernized schools to as many students as possible, as soon as possible.

Using academic principles grounded in sound policies, the MFP plans for modern, well-maintained, and efficient facilities. The MFP is driven by the "Guiding Principles" established by the Office of the Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools (OOC), in order to align educational programs with facilities. The resulting facility plan will be implemented by the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM), the District agency charged with central management of the planning, design, construction and maintenance of school facilities.

Building on the success and lessons learned from the school renovation projects of the last three years, it is now known that with targeted modernization investments a school facility can be dramatically improved in just one year. With a strategic approach, it is possible to modernize the core academic components of every DCPS school in the next five years. By utilizing such an approach, the 2010 MFP will fulfill the goals of the School Modernization Financing Act within the anticipated budget and meet every parent's vision of being able to send their child to a safe, welcoming and supportive learning environment.

Moreover, the 2010 MFP envisions modernization as a continual process. By making substantial investments in the components of our schools on an ongoing basis and implementing a comprehensive maintenance program, the District will maintain the level of quality and sustain the functionality of each building, maximizing the benefits to the learning environment and its long-term investment. Finally, the MFP delivers both an immediate response and a long-term strategy to address the central issue of serving the present population while simultaneously preparing for growth as DCPS' goals are achieved and families return to the system.

Taking Action

Upon assuming responsibility for the modernization of DCPS facilities in mid-2007, OPEFM encountered a situation of severe need. Not only had many anticipated modernization projects incurred years of delays and budget shortfalls, but the deferred maintenance problem across the entire system had grown so severe as to present serious health and safety concerns for students, teachers and staff. Symptoms of these problems were evident in the fact that, in many prior years, school buildings were threatened with closure by the fire marshal at the beginning of the school year for fire code violations, or were "cited" at the beginning of the heating season as boilers and distribution systems failed, leaving many students with little heat in their classrooms.

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Therefore, OPEFM immediately structured a "Stabilization" effort that would allow, from late -FY 2007 through 2008, for a rapid series of "blitzes" to address major problems immediately. The overriding objective of the Stabilization program was to ensure healthy, safe and comfortable environments, and the areas addressed ranged from heating and air conditioning to fire code violations, life safety, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the summer of 2008, this program grew to include improvements to those schools receiving new students as a result of consolidations. The 2008 effort informed the eventual "Phase 1" modernization scope of work initiated in 2009.

One extremely important feature of the "phased" modernization approach is that each phase can be completed during the summer months prior to school opening. The 2009 Phase 1 modernizations of Brent Elementary School, Burroughs Education Campus, Ferebee-Hope Elementary School, and Tubman Elementary School confirmed that significant classroom modernization could be completed over the summer months. This virtually eliminates the need to "swing" most schools to temporary sites that are often times not located in their students' neighborhoods. Eliminating the need to "swing" students helps schools sustain academic momentum, retain students, and avoid the intense stress and effort of relocating. From an economic perspective, eliminating the need to "swing" students thereby avoiding costs associated with logistic support, busing, and preparing temporary school locations.

In 2009, OPEFM began implementing a program scheduled to bring this type of improvement to every school within 5 years. Based upon the experiences and lessons learned from the Phase 1 modernizations completed in the summer of 2009, the 2010 MFP program has been improved and expanded in scope. The Phase 1 modernization program remains on schedule for all non-modernized elementary and middle schools to receive core academic component modernization by 2014.

Bringing Modernization to All Schools Sooner

Since the earliest recommendations of the 2001 Master Plan, the reference for a "facility modernization" denotes both the process that takes a facility from current condition to a completed renovation and the resulting condition of the building once all construction activity has been completed. A "modern" facility is expected to have operational and efficient building systems, clean and maintainable interior finishes, and bright and "healthy" classrooms and public spaces. They should be flexible, functional and focused on both school and community needs. These are the same expectations for "modernized" facilities as envisioned by the 2010 MFP.

The 2008 Master Facilities Plan introduced the phased modernization approach, organizing modernization into three categories based on the kind of building component being modernized: Academic spaces, Support spaces, and Systems. Following this strategy, modernization is to be implemented through a phased approach, building on the investments already made during the stabilization initiatives through the summer 2008 and allowing more buildings to be modernized at one time. The 2010 MFP continues this strategic phased approach, now further enhanced by the lessons learned over the course of implementing the program in 2009.

In the first phase of implementation, OPEFM will focus on the Academic Components; aggressive improvement of the learning environment is the immediate priority. Support and Systems Components will be prioritized for the second and third phases. Pre-planning and coordination among various modernization projects will be an important task in OPEFM's work plan to ensure that the order of work and the relationship between projects is coherent and efficient with resources. The law requires that the MFP be updated every three years. This review-and-revision process provides a systematic way to ensure that the approach is continually evaluated.

Academic Components

As a priority, school modernization will be completed first in the areas of a school where students spend the majority of their time - classrooms. With such investments, the impact on student achievement will be realized sooner; by approaching it in a targeted, system-wide manner, the impact also will reach more students. Academic Component modernization consists of targeted improvements and small capital projects designed to improve a student's educational environment. The baseline scope of work for a

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Phase 1 modernization includes core academic classrooms, corridors, entry lobbies, and restrooms. For example, a particular school may lack certain classroom facility supports, such as ample lighting, comfortable climate control and access to the Internet. The 2010 MFP details a strategy for ensuring these academic components meet a certain standard, in every school, within the next five years.

Support Components

The second phase of modernizations focus on strengthening the support components within school facilities. Shared classroom space such as computer labs require the same attention as regular classrooms, particularly in high schools where non-core classes and extracurricular programs are a key component of a well-rounded academic program. Other school space such as auditoriums, grounds, gymnasiums and locker rooms currently reflect some of the most serious neglect in our schools. These spaces must be renovated to support a full range of extra curricular offerings that help create a well-rounded educational environment. Modernization of these Support Component features in school buildings is important to the overall educational environment and must be addressed with the same strategic approach, focusing on those most in need in order to support the academic program and to complement the modernization work for core Academic Components.

System Components

With the Stabilization initiatives complete, most systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, etc.) in schools are functioning. The 2010 MFP leverages the work already completed on those systems components, allowing the immediate focus to remain on the Academic Component modernization. As the second phase is completed, the scope of the modernization work will turn back to a Systems Component modernization in order to upgrade and extend the life of each school facility. For some schools, Systems Component modernization may involve targeted small capital projects needed to update or replace components of a facility that is otherwise stabilized - increasing the school's electrical capacity to support computer labs or repairing or replacing a broken chiller that no longer adequately cools the gymnasium and auditorium, for example. In some cases, like in the Coolidge gymnasium, the facility may lack air conditioning, and Systems Component modernization will rectify this issue. Coordination among Academic, Systems, and Support Component modernizations will be key with respect to projects that overlap.

High School Modernizations

All high schools and other select facilities will receive a comprehensive modernization which combines all components over a three-year planning and construction cycle.

A System of Excellence

Thankfully, the many residents of this community who remain dedicated to the fundamental principle that every child deserves a first-rate public education did not give up on wanting more for District children. Today, due to the commitment by the Mayor, the Council and the residents of the District who refused to settle for a broken system, a new day is facing the students of the District of Columbia Public Schools. The strategic, phased approach of the 2010 MFP allows OPEFM the opportunity to target improvements to every student's educational environment that under the old approach would have had to wait upwards of fifteen years for their place in line.

By focusing on the learning environment first, the 2010 MFP will position the District and its school system to reach beyond dealing with deferred maintenance, backlogged repairs, and crumbling buildings. Every classroom, and therefore every student, will be impacted in the first five years of this plan. The MFP presents an aggressive plan and a radical new approach to modernizing schools - one that will meet the expectations of parents and teachers across the District by providing bright, welcoming, supportive learning environments for every student.