

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

Begin Restructuring the Capital Program: Scale Back and Phase Modernizations

We appreciate the extraordinary effort that has gone in to this Capital Improvement Program as well as the fact that in the second version, particularly Option C, allocates more for the buildings that are not scheduled for replacement or modernization.

Nevertheless, we ask that the Board return the CIP for further revision. DCPS could start immediately with a thorough restructuring of the scope, scale and focus of the program. This will require that the scope of some of the tier 1 and tier 2 projects be scaled back. We realize how difficult it will be to do this, but we believe that it is the right thing to do.

Informal Sampling of Principals Reports Widespread Need for Immediate Improvements

To provide some background for this request, we have attached responses to an informal e-mail survey of principals that we conducted last week, asking them to name their school's three most critical facilities needs. We received responses from 33 schools, roughly one-fifth of the total. While the problem areas most frequently cited are painting, heating problems, window replacement, roof leaks, electrical upgrades and air conditioning, the needs are so various that it is difficult to provide a generalized report. Consequently, we have attached the responses to this testimony, listing the schools by number rather than name and editing out identifying information. The list provides a snapshot of the kinds of facilities constraints that principals face at most of our schools on a daily basis. It is against this backdrop that we call for an overhaul of the capital improvement plan.

Increase Component Replacement, Maintenance & Repair with a Planned Program

Over the past four years since the adoption of the Facilities Master Plan, we have relied primarily on whole-school replacements and modernization to resolve massive system-wide deferred maintenance problems as well as excess space, poor early childhood spaces, insufficient classroom storage, inadequate special education space, to name just some of our schools' facility short-comings. During this same period we have also carried out hundreds of component replacement projects that address the most severe conditions as well as emergency breakdowns.

Unfortunately, we do not have the level of funding, nor the time to use the modernization program to solve the systems' facility problems. We do not have the capacity in planning, design, procurement or project management to move projects fast enough to provide safe, clean, educationally adequate space for the vast majority of our students. Less than 4% of our students are in new or renovated space; only 5% of our schools have been modernized. At this rate we will continue to relegate almost all of our students to very substandard conditions for decades to come.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

Reconsiderations

Basic assumptions need to be reconsidered, such as:

- the focus on whole-school modernizations vs. an incremental but integrated phased approach;
- the continued demand for schools, including enrollment changes;
- how major design deficiencies - such are open plan schools - are taken into consideration;
- the need to plan for co-locations, school closings and consolidations;
- the need to encompass charter school facility pressure as part of capital planning;
- how possible public/private partnerships should be factored in;
- the need to review design guidelines and the flexibility of those guidelines;
- how urgent health and safety issues are factored in;
- coordination with operating funds for increased maintenance and repair as well as maintenance coverage and staff training for new schools;
- the need to coordinate with the operating budget to augment capital asset management (leasing, co-location, etc.);

Formulaic Approach May Not Be Equitable

Finally, there are substantial concerns that the formulaic approach to allocating capital monies is insufficient as a means to parcel out limited resources to the schools with the greatest need. This approach treats schools roughly the same based on square footage and past building expenditures. Equal distribution is not necessarily equitable, and it certainly is not the most efficient approach.

The Preliminary Facilities Master Plan called for “making our schools engaging, compelling, effective and efficient environments for learning and teaching.” This must continue to be our goal, but we won’t get there fast enough without an assessment of the current path.

Nancy Huvendick
DC Programs Coordinator
21st Century School Fund
1816 12th St., NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20009
202-745-3745
nhuvendick@21csf.org

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

The 21st Century School Fund recently e-mailed DCPS principals requesting that they respond with their schools' three most critical facilities concerns so that we could report generally for all the schools at the Board of Education's second hearing on the capital budget for 06'-11 on November 4. We also encouraged them to testify individually for their schools.

We received responses from 33 schools. However, in attempting to quantify the responses, it became clear that, except for a few categories, the needs were so various that it is difficult to provide a generalized report. Immediate concerns range from bathroom repairs, carpet replacement and filthy auditorium curtains to and fences and security lights. The problem areas that were most frequently cited were:

Painting – 14 (includes repair to holes in walls and ceilings)
Heating problems - 12
Window replacement – 10
Roof leaks – 10
Electrical upgrade – 9
Air conditioning – 8

We have provided the responses listing schools by number rather than name and editing out identifying information. Scanning these lists provides a quick snapshot of the kinds of facility problems principals are dealing with on a daily basis.

1.

- Windows do not open and many panes are broken or cracked)
- Painting of entire school (We have peeling paint, crumbling plaster and many colors of paint have been used for patching)
- Floors need repairing (missing tiles, broken/cracked tiles)

2.

- Grounds are in poor condition; this includes playground and parking lot.
- The fence that surrounds the school is without supports and is falling apart.
- The cafeteria walls have not been completely resurfaced or painted. The library has several holes in the ceiling that have been left after previous rewiring was completed.
- The hallway floors have ripples from one end of the corridor to the other.
- Classrooms have unsightly pipes that are not encased.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

- Flood lights are not working; these lights are on the exterior of the building.
- Interior building needs major facelift, (i.e. walls painted, carpet replaced).

3.

(1) HVAC system & Cooling Tower needs to be replaced.

(2) Windows replacement for Pre K & Kindergarten areas.

4.

- Carpet- total building. Reason: old, worn, torn, odor in some areas, soiled from use and leakage from ceiling, drains, air handlers.
- Leaks - Need replacement of leaky sky lights (during rain and snow. Maintenance of new air conditioning system and air handlers to stop leaks and control temperature for heat and air conditioning.
- Playground Equipment New and Maintenance - Primary Playground was removed in 2001 and never replaced. Intermediate playground is in need of repair to the surface for safety.

5.

Severe roof leaks - even though roof is less than 5 years old?

Every room on the top (3rd) level has a minor to severe leak, crumbling ceiling, falling plaster on ceilings and walls, 5-10 inch diameter holes in ceilings, to name a few.

6.

1. Heating system needs to be replaced on the third floor
2. Parking lot needs to be redone so that children do not need to cross the parking lot to get to the playground - - precautions are now being taken
3. Air conditioners are needed throughout the building
4. All windows need to be replaced
5. Elevators are needed for the new special education students
6. Health Suite needs remodeling to have separate rooms.
7. Front facade facing needs to be remodeled.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

7.
 1. Asbestos is located in the attic and in the flooring in the auditorium. Due to this, many needed repairs have been delayed due to the cost of removing the asbestos. The renovation of the auditorium was been put off due to the asbestos discovered under the floor. Roofing repairs also have been delayed due to this. Although safety factors have been put in place to prevent exposure, there is always the chance that students and staff may be exposed. The flooring, chairs and curtains in the auditorium are a disgrace.
 2. Electrical upgrade is needed throughout the school. This is needed in order for the air conditioners, computers, internet, cable and other electrical may operate correctly. This also required for new lights to be installed, especially in the cafeteria and classrooms.
 3. Plastering and painting are greatly needed on the inside and outside of the building.
 4. We need to replace/repair the windows.
 5. New lockers are needed.
8.
 1. Leaky Roof
 2. Bathroom Stalls
 3. New Cafeteria Floor
 4. Carpet Replacement for Some Classrooms
9.
 1. Walls and ceilings are cracking and plaster is crumbling, causing cracked walls and ceilings throughout the building. We depend on community volunteers to come in and make basic repairs to our building (filling in cracks, painting, and performing general maintenance).
 2. Cabinets, shelves, desks, and classroom furniture is falling apart due to old age and lack of adequate repair. Instructional materials and computer technology, is seriously lacking, and we are dependent upon donated materials from local business partners.
 3. We do not have a school library, causing a serious challenge to our ability to provide our students with library books. The closest public library is a mile away from the school, so our students are at a great disadvantage, especially since most of our families cannot afford to buy books for their children.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

10.

1. **WINDOWS** - In the old building, window panes are missing; windows are separating from the window frames. In the addition there are brown plastic windows that need replacement.
2. **DOORS** - The classroom wooden doors are old and hard to push open, some are off the hinges.
3. **FLOORS** - first and second floor surfaces needed to be resurfaced or tiled.
4. **CARPET** - Carpet needs to be installed in **ALL CLASSROOMS**. Children spend more time doing projects which requires movement and is noisy; carpet would mitigate this problem.

11.

1. Little or no heat during cold weather
2. Lack of working lights throughout the building (especially in classrooms)
3. Leaks as a result of condensation from air conditioners that ruins ceiling tiles

12.

- (1) Replacement of the Univents (HVAC installation);
- (2) New Roof Installation (excessive roof leaking during rainy and snowy weather;
- (3) Interior/exterior door replacements; 8 exterior and 20 interior doors. The replacement of the interior doors will then meet Fire Code Regulations.
- (4) Replacement of floor tile on the 1st and 2nd floors.

13.

1. The expansion joints on the outside plaza that runs the entire width of the school leaks every time it rains. This affects the ceiling and flooring of all the rooms and walkways in the adjacent areas: the textured flooring and ceiling in the armory; the ceiling in the main ground floor corridor by the pool; the pool office ceiling has fallen due to the many leaks; the boys' locker room ceiling leaks; and worst of all, the athletic training room has flooded and the ceiling is so bad we can no longer use it. Mold and mildew has appeared in these areas because of the moisture.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

2. The air handler units and damper controls need replacing, as do the busted coils in the auditorium, armory, gymnasium, boys and girls locker rooms and kitchen areas. The busted coils in the motors of these units mean that there will be no heat in these areas which are occupied by students and staff.
3. The drains in the cafeteria area and custodial closet areas won't drain.
14. This 100 year old building; requires a complete electrical overhaul. We operate on 120 volts of electricity, frequently blowing out circuits, destroying brand new ballasts, and causing power surges.
15. The school **DESPERATELY** needs new windows; many have panels that are broken, latches that do not work, are nailed shut, do not close, etc.
16. Roof and gutter work are required to address leakage issues on the third floor in classrooms, stairwells, halls and auditorium.
17.
 1. Adequate and dependable heating and cooling
 2. Upgraded electrical load capacity throughout building for adequate technology access
 3. Re-inspection/replacement of all building fire extinguishers
 4. Remove and replace cafeteria dry storage room shelving
 5. Removal/replacement of ceiling and floor tiles containing asbestos
18.
 1. The present electrical demands of the school far exceed the actual electrical capacity of the building. Turning on heating/air-conditioning units or other heavy duty equipment frequently results in blowing up electrical fuses, or initiating electrical fire/smoke and some major electrical failure. Electrical fuses blow up erratically, and hundreds of dollars are spent monthly on replacing electrical fuses.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

2. The classrooms are not air-conditioned, and the building is excessively hot during the months of May through September. The building was designed to be heated by three boilers, of which only one or two may be operational at any given time. During a good portion of the school year, the classrooms are not conducive to either teaching or learning.
 3. Plaster peeling and ceiling holes abound. As the ceiling disintegrates in several classrooms, these rooms are rendered not only unsafe but also aesthetically unpleasant and unsightly.
 4. Some classrooms still have broken tiles that have not been repaired or replaced for fear of disturbing asbestos content.
 5. The building experiences infrequent but serious roof leaks and blockage of the drainage system
 6. Steam leaks in the tunnel of the school continue to ruin the walls and structure of the building.
19. Fortunately, I am in a new school building. There are no major needs at this time.
- 20.
- *The boiler needs to be calibrated. It is steaming during the winter months. There is no way to regulate or adjust the temperature. **IT IS UNBEARABLE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.**
 - *I have been told by our engineer that a new compressor is needed.
 - *Identified classrooms have chipping paint hanging and falling from the ceilings.
 - *Balasts are needed.
 - *The lights fixtures need to be replaced in the teacher's lounge.
 - *Paint is needed in order to do internal painting of walls, doors, etc.
 - *Bathrooms floors need to be tiled or resealed. (The cement floors in identified restrooms are cracking and need to be repaired and painted.)
 - *The auditorium's tile walls, stage and window curtains are filthy and need to be cleaned.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

*Air conditioners are scheduled to be placed in identified classrooms during the spring.

*Wall tile need to be replaced in identified areas of the hallways and auditorium.

*Slates need to be replaced at the base of the wall in the auditorium.

21.

One of the greatest needs is that of upgrading the electrical system. Without it, our building is extremely hot in the early fall and late spring months. Additionally, we can not effectively use the technology in the building due to insufficient electrical capacity of the current system.

22.

1. Boy's Bathroom- Bradley Basins; No water on 1, 2, 3
2. 1st Floor Boy's bathroom light fixtures- Main lobby, 3rd Floor front & back hallway (light fixtures)
3. Outside Security Lights- No security lights are functioning; Need to be replaced immediately

23.

- Windows
- Heating/Air
- Boilers
- Lighting fixtures
- Doors
- Tiles
- Broken Steps (marble)

24.

- The greatest need is our windows. They are cracked, broken and do not close properly. Heating classroom becomes an issue due to the windows.
- Our second greatest need is the playground. More playground equipment is needed, a new fence is required to secure the playground, and lights to keep the gangs from placing graffiti all over the playground.

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

- Third greatest need is upgrade of electrical system in order to have computers and air-conditioning in all classrooms.

25.

1. We have needed windows and window guards replaced for over fifteen years. This work was originally scheduled for 1992, but never materialized. Window frames are broken and/or warped and do not close properly. Some cannot be opened at all. There is a serious loss of energy because of the broken window frames. Window guards are rusted and in serious need of repair and painting.
2. The interior and exterior of the building needs to be painted. We have not had a professional painting for over twenty years.
3. There is a serious need for the driveway to the parking lot, the parking lot and the playground to be repaved. The driveway has been damaged by trucks making deliveries and there is a risk of damage to cars. Part of the playground is off limits because of the large cracks and ruts in the surface and the risk of bodily injury to students.

26.

1. A concrete wall on the playground that is in imminent danger of collapsing as identified by DCPS Safety and our District of Columbia Safety inspector. Personnel have been advised since last Spring '04, to keep everyone at least 10 feet away (an impossibility and a liability issue for all parties).
2. Playground/Outdoor areas:
 - Ball field area has a large swamp that is complete with tall cattails and geese that rest there during their migration (dead ones have been found) preventing use of play area.
 - Large areas that pool with substantial amounts of water which prevent use of the play area and encourages the breeding of mosquitoes; liquid run off from dumpsters (trash) pool, stagnate, and produce unacceptable odors which especially permeate the Head Start classroom and cafeteria kitchen adjacent to it
 - Areas used by handicapped (driveway) to access ramp that provides for an entrance to building has large holes in concrete which can contribute to a wheelchair or scooter overturning, - Non ADA compliant.
3. Evacuation Challenges:

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

11

- Doors resistant to easy opening and closing; doors with loose fitting glass panes; doors separating from hinges; doors need re-keying (one master key) for easy access by administration.

- Floor outlets (10-15) in music classroom, over which students and staff constantly stumble and trip; also, students insert objects and materials into outlets.

27.

- A major facility concern is the open space concept for instruction. Studies have proven that open space instruction does not provide the social and whole school instruction that it was designed for. In fact it does just the opposite. Students have more auditory and visual distractions, and learning/teaching space is limited. I am asking for 8-10 ft partitions for my open space learning centers.
- Auditorium needs to be repaired: Stage/Chairs/lights/ceiling.
- Cafeteria needs major repairs to all of the walls.

28.

1) Plumbing throughout the building. Third floor boys' bathrooms are in need of repairs immediately. Not all the water fountains have been replaced.

2) Plastering is needed throughout the building. The ceiling below the roof was sealed. It needs to be repaired.

3). Windows need to be replaced. We are replacing ceiling tiles due to leakages from the windows. Air conditioning would be as asset (window units are okay).

29.

- Problems with water fountain,
- bathroom needs new floor,
- air conditions all need servicing,
- three doors coming off the frame,
- plastering.

30.

1. Air Conditioners for our auditorium/gym and classrooms on the 3rd floor.

2. Electrical outlet overhaul (replacement of lights in rooms, rewiring to accommodate new computer lab and four stand alones in each classroom).

Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004

3. Piping system (several water fountains do not work, bathroom toilets and sinks don't work, leaking pipes in the basement and ground floor).

31.

1) The building constantly leaks.

2) The carpeting is worn and has tears with unraveling string throughout the building.

3) The custodial shortage that the district is facing left the school with one custodian from August 28th until Oct 18th. We received a second custodian who lost a parent and went out on bereavement leave for a week three days after arriving. We are still waiting for a third to come on board.

32.

1. New tile for the Multipurpose Room
2. Removal of asbestos doors and installation of new doors
3. Painting of building (inside & outside)
4. major plumbing work

33.

Short List:

*The building is shifting; cracks are continuing to widen

*Two heating systems: hot water, steam, and forced air; must move heat from the 1921 building through the 1963 building with delicate adjustments of chains on pulleys; air handlers in 1973 Open Space building; few know how to operate these systems; extreme temperatures throughout

*Roof leaks

*Lighting and casement windows in the 1963 building need replacements

*Newer windows that drop with dangerous speed in 1921 building

*Electrical upgrade to support technology, AC

**Testimony
Board of Education Hearing
06-11 Capital Improvement Program
Thursday, November 4, 2004**