



SIMSBUURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Back in October, I notified you of \$200,000 approved by the Board of Finance to develop a School Facilities Master Plan and Reconfiguration Study to assess whether or not we are making the best use of our school buildings. The plan consists of: 1) preparing a detailed inventory of all buildings; 2) identifying capital improvement and maintenance needs over the next 10 years; and 3) using this information to assist in the preparation of the BOE's 6-year capital improvement program.

The inventory phase is now complete. On April 23, 2019, a team of representatives from Tecton Architects made a presentation to the Board of Education (BOE) with their findings. Tecton has been meeting on a monthly basis with district leadership to compile data and record their observations. There were few surprises (we all know how hot it gets on that third floor at the high school!), but the benefit of having a consultant independently assess our aging school buildings became even more clear as the presentation went on. As school budgets evolve, developing a School Facilities Master Plan helps us establish priority to a multitude of projects, large and small, short- and long-term, thus ensuring that our buildings serve our students and teachers well into the future.

Besides preparing a highly detailed inventory of all seven school buildings, Tecton also completed the phase of identifying potential capital improvements and maintenance needs over the next 10 years. The team agreed that in general, the district has done a good job of keeping up with maintenance, and concluded that our schools are "well maintained." Some suggestions for improvements included updating some of our more "vintage" plumbing and mechanical systems, creating perimeter fencing to further increase our already comprehensive efforts to increase student safety, resolving classroom storage inefficiencies, improving flexibility of physical classroom spaces to enhance student learning, and removing outdated modular classrooms that still exist at Tariffville School.

In addition, the engineering firm of Milone & MacBroom presented their analysis of population projection, residential development, and geographic information about our existing student population. Their report was also highly detailed, again, few surprises, but they were able to present a far more precise picture of how the population of the town is likely to ebb and flow over the next 10 years. For many who reside in Simsbury, you have probably been wondering just how the new multi-family homes springing up all over town will impact our schools. We are fortunate to have experts that have the algorithms and experience to more precisely pin that down for us.

In mid-May the district's Facilities & Enrollment Task Force will convene to review the completed phases thus far in the process and a public forum and workshop is scheduled for June 5 at 7PM. All citizens are welcome to attend the public forum.

The work accomplished by the architect and engineering firms sets the stage for the most involved phase of this study, reviewing alternate school configuration concepts, scheduled to happen this fall. This information will assist the district in planning for changing demographics, developing strategies to align facilities with enrollment needs, and determining how to best position resources. A status report will be provided to the BOE regarding initial findings and recommendations relative to immediate needs. Next fall a public input session will be held for the community to consider potential school configuration options based on Milone & MacBroom's analysis.

Also in the works is the establishment of an email account to gather the input of the public as well as a webpage to dispense all the information that has been collected thus far. I will provide you with those details as soon as they are available.

Matt Curtis
Superintendent