

Summary & Recommendations

Summary

The four schools that are currently being operated by the Brunswick School Department range in age from 1 year old to 57 years old. All of the schools, specifically the older schools, have been well maintained over the years through regular repair and maintenance programs. The focus of the recommendations, however, is on three of the schools, two that are in use, the Coffin School and the Junior High School, and one that is not in use, the Jordan Acres School.

Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School is the newest school in Brunswick having opened in the fall of 2011. Other than considering the possible relocation of the second grade to another school in the near future; there are no immediate needs for this facility. Of course planning for the future maintenance and upkeep of the school is the primary consideration at this time.

Brunswick High School

The Brunswick High School is the next newest of the Brunswick schools which will be 17 years old in the fall of 2012. With few exceptions as outlined in the assessment, the Brunswick High School has held up well and has limited needs. Like the Stowe School, systems and components need to be monitored and proper funding needs to be allocated for future maintenance and upgrades as the building ages.

Brunswick Junior High School

The Junior High School is one of two older schools currently in use at 53 years old. The facility has had two additions and two renovations since it was originally built in 1959; the last major renovations were done nearly 30 years ago and that was only done as a result of a fire. Like the others, the school has been well maintained over the years, but it is the one school with probably the greatest needs in terms of renovations and upgrades, along with possible additions, based on the assessments that have been done.

Coffin Elementary School

The Coffin Elementary School is the oldest school at 57 years old. It too has been well maintained and has many updates over the years to keep it functioning. It is basically the same school it was when it was first built with only a minor addition for storage. Interior modifications to the plan have been limited. From replacement of windows to upgrades in the ventilation systems it continues to serve the school department well. It can continue in use for many more years but is in need of additions and further renovations to adequately address the educational needs for an elementary school as described by the assessment.

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Jordan Acres Elementary School

In addition to the four operating schools, there is the Jordan Acres Elementary School which was closed by the school department in June 2011. Reopening the school or closing it permanently is a decision that will have the greatest impact on the Coffin School and to a lesser extent, the Stowe School.

The school, while only 40 years old, is small by today's standards, and was designed and operated as an "open concept" school. The educational climate has changed significantly since the time when open concept schools were first introduced and the result has been that the open concept did not work and most, if not all, schools built as an open concept school have been modified to provide the separation needed between teaching spaces. Attempting to close in the teaching pods, while addressing access to all spaces, would have a considerable impact on the usable area of the building making it very inefficient as well as reducing the overall capacity.

In addition to the issues associated with open concept plan, the building is not compliant with current building and life safety codes and is not ADA compliant. Furthermore, there are structural problems with the roof framing that have created safety concerns about using the building. These issues, among others outlined previously, would need to be addressed before the school would be allowed to reopen.

As has been stated earlier in other sections, the decision on Jordan Acres will have the most impact on the Coffin Elementary School. The Coffin School does require a small addition to meet current educational programming needs but any addition would need to be substantially larger if Jordan Acres is closed permanently. Even if Jordan Acres reopens, the selected grade configuration of both Coffin and Jordan Acres will affect the size of the additions needed at both schools.

Recommendations

In consideration of all the information presented in this report, there are two basic considerations that will need to be addressed – the elementary schools, specifically the Coffin and Jordan Acres schools, and the Junior High School. Regardless of the decision on the elementary schools, the Junior High School will require a considerable amount of work to rectify the deficiencies in programming, building systems and building components in the next few years so that it may continue as a viable educational facility for many more years.

The biggest decision has to do with the elementary schools and there are two feasible alternatives that may be considered as recommendations. Referencing the analysis that was done for the elementary grade configurations, the first alternative is Option 3 and the second alternative is Option 1.

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First Alternative – Elementary School Option 3

Option 3 would maintain the two elementary schools that are currently in use, Coffin and Stowe, and close Jordan Acres permanently. The Coffin School would be expanded from a grade K and 1 school to a grade K, 1 and 2 school or possibly a grade Pre-K, K, 1 and 2 school should the school department decide to offer a Pre-K program. The Stowe School would revert to a grade 3, 4 and 5 school as it was originally intended.

To accommodate the additional grade at the Coffin School an addition of approximately 27,800 sf would be required at an estimated cost of about \$8,270,000 for the addition and other renovations. The expanded Coffin School would eliminate the portables/temporary classrooms and would be able to accommodate up to 600 students.

To include a Pre-K program for 5 additional classrooms would require a larger addition by about 7,000 sf at an estimated added cost of about \$1,440,000.

Option 3 for a grade K-2 Coffin School would not have any impact on busing costs as the routes would remain as they are today. However, if a Pre-K program were added, there would be slight increase for 2 additional bus runs at mid-day for the half-day program. There should a minimal increase in staff over current staffing levels unless the Pre-K program is added. There would be slight increase in operating and maintenance costs due to a larger facility.

Second Alternative – Elementary School Option 1

Option 1 would keep the two elementary schools that are currently in use and reopen the Jordan Acres School, thus creating three operating elementary schools. Under this option, the Coffin and Jordan Acres School would both become grade K, 1 and 2 schools. As in the first alternative, the Stowe School would revert to a grade 3, 4 and 5 school as it was originally intended.

This alternative would require an addition at both schools, approximately 13,600 sf at the Coffin School and approximately 10,900 sf at the Jordan Acres School. The total cost for the additions and the renovations is estimated to be about \$11,296,000. The Coffin School would accommodate up to 400 students and the Jordan Acres School would accommodate up to 200 students.

To add a Pre-K program that is split between the schools, say 3 classrooms at Coffin and 2 classrooms at Jordan Acres would cost an estimated \$1,500,000 to the total above. Another option would be to add the entire Pre-K program to one school only such as at the Coffin School.

Option 1 would increase busing, staffing and operating and maintenance costs with the addition of a third elementary school to the system. Although most of

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the teaching staff would be reallocated among the three schools, there would be an increase for administrative staff, specialists and various support staff for Jordan Acres. As with the first alternative, adding a Pre-K program would increase staff regardless of where the program is located.

One last consideration for either alternative is the possibility of relocating the Bus Garage to another site. This would free up needed acreage on the Coffin/Junior High site to not only improve site circulation for both of the schools but to allow for the expansion of the Coffin School. Cost associated with relocating the Bus Garage would vary depending on whether a suitable alternative facility already exists, what the costs would be to purchase and renovate an existing building to accommodate the school department's needs or whether a new facility would need to be constructed on a new site.