

Mansfield Public Schools



Developing a Vision & Goals for Mansfield Public Schools' Learning Spaces

A Facilities Planning Report

2017 (Revised 2-23-18)

Light the Future

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Acknowledgements

The following Mansfield Public Schools stakeholders were involved in the creation of this document at varying points throughout the process.

Mansfield Steering Committee

- Joe Briody, Community Stakeholder
- Allen Corson, Facilities Management Director
- Kathy Dorgan, Community Stakeholder
- Maggie Ferron, Early Childhood Service Coordinator / Parent
- Julie Hodgson, 8th Grade Teacher- Mansfield Middle / Parent
- Karen LeFevre, 1st Grade Teacher - Vinton Elementary
- Kelly Lyman, Superintendent
- Candace Morell, Principal - Mansfield Middle
- Mike Seal, Principal - Vinton Elementary
- Paul Shapiro, Mayor
- Ravit Stein, Parent
- Lynn Stoddard, Chair - Mansfield Sustainability Committee
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In partnership with



District Management Group

Helping Schools and Students Thrive

Dear Parents, Staff, Students, and Community Members:

In the winter of 2017 the Mansfield Public Schools resumed the process of planning for the future of our schools. A facility needs study and recommended school design project completed in 2013 was put on hold for several reasons. In the years since that work, the school district has focused on maintaining the school buildings while more clearly articulating the mission and goals of the district. The current study began by examining a multitude of data about our schools, the work that occurs in the schools, and our fiscal status. Focus was given to considering the district mission and vision for learning and gathering input from the community about current facility strengths and limitations. Working with our partners from District Management Group, solutions were identified that complement the mission and vision and address the limitations identified.

A district and community-led Steering Committee met this past spring to begin the visioning process for the district's learning spaces -- not just the brick and mortar buildings, but also other aspects of how space is used within the building to promote learning. The vision and goals in this report were developed by the Steering Committee based on input from a wide range of stakeholders. Moving forward, this vision will serve as a foundation for a broader conversation about the next steps for our facilities themselves.

Mansfield Public Schools is a high-performing district that consistently holds its students to high expectations. Our students are successful, not only on standardized tests, but as energized and engaged learners actively pursuing their interests through academics, the arts, music, sports, and extracurricular activities. However, we know in a rapidly changing world and workforce, we must continually develop our teaching and learning practices to ensure our students are prepared for future success. To this end, we look to exceptional districts across the country that focus on the development of 21st century learning skills (including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and global citizenship). School environments and learning spaces have been reimaged in many of these districts to better support students' learning and attainment of these skills. Our ultimate goal is to ensure Mansfield's schools are designed to meet the learning needs and expectations of today's students, providing them with the education needed to compete in today's global world.

Mansfield is a close-knit community that prides itself on maintaining small class sizes, neighborhood schools, and a rich educational experience. It is also a community faced with the challenges of declining enrollment, aging facilities, and reduced State revenue. For example, our student enrollment has decreased by 2% annually over the last five years and is expected to further decrease 3% annually over the next five years. Additionally, our buildings are aging and the current facilities' operating budget and maintenance needs in the upcoming years are projected to total over \$23 million. Finally, state revenue to towns and schools will decrease this year with no expectation that the funds will be restored. We need to be thoughtful in how we use our district resources and we may need to do some things differently. Undertaking this study allowed us to clarify our vision and define our priorities. As we work together to make decisions about the future of our schools we will stay focused on creating environments that maintain a small community feel and promote the development of 21st century learning skills.

We are excited to continue this process of ensuring our learning spaces meet the needs of Mansfield's children for many years to come. We invite you to remain engaged throughout this process and will regularly provide updated information.

Sincerely,
Kelly M. Lyman,
Superintendent, Mansfield Public Schools

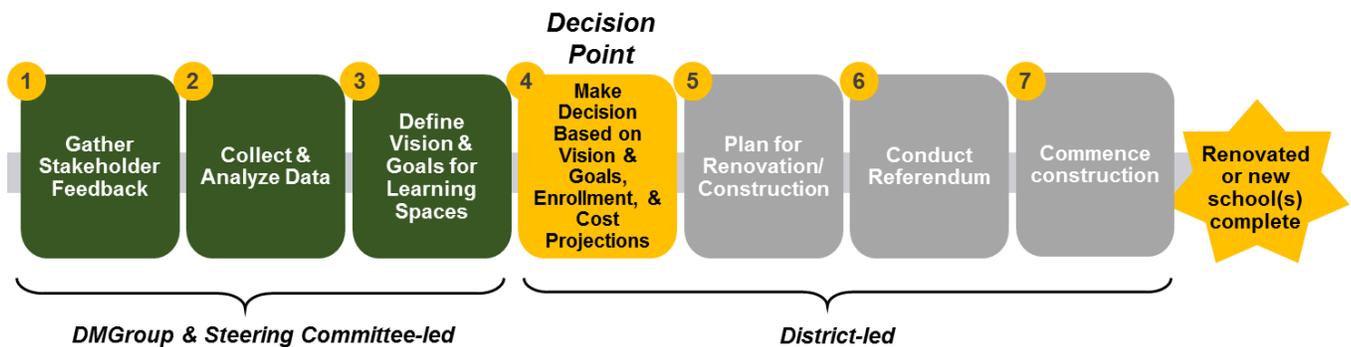
What Were Our Objectives?

There were four main objectives for developing a vision and plan for our facilities and learning spaces:

- ✓ Develop a detailed understanding of the district's current performance, needs, and facilities.
- ✓ Develop a clear vision of long-term aspirational goals for the district's facilities and learning spaces supporting the district's strategic plan.
- ✓ Communicate this vision with key stakeholders and the broader community for feedback.
- ✓ Identify next steps for successful implementation of the vision and goals for the district and facilities.

What Is Our Process?

We are following a 7-step process to develop the vision and plan for the district's learning spaces; steps 1 – 3 have already been completed.



1 Gather Feedback

As a key component of the data gathering phase, focus groups and interviews with key district and community stakeholders were conducted at the onset of this process. Central office members, principals, district staff, parents, students, and key community members were invited to participate and engage in conversations focused on their experience with and vision for Mansfield Public Schools and its' learning spaces.

2 Collect & Analyze Data

The information gathered during interviews, focus groups, and Steering Committee meetings, combined with quantitative data provided by the district, was used to identify Mansfield Public Schools' areas of strength and growth. Quantitative data included district data, community surveys, enrollment projections, and facilities expenditures.

3 Define Vision & Goals for Learning Spaces

Findings from the analysis were presented to Steering Committee members and used to help inform the development of the vision and goals. The Steering Committee engaged in a multi-step process to synthesize key themes from district stakeholders and data, discuss emerging approaches to designing learning spaces, and conduct a design charrette to inform the vision for the future of the district's learning spaces. The Steering Committee also provided feedback on draft vision and aspirational goals, which was further revised prior to being shared with the Mansfield community at-large.

What Is Our Vision for Our Learning Spaces?

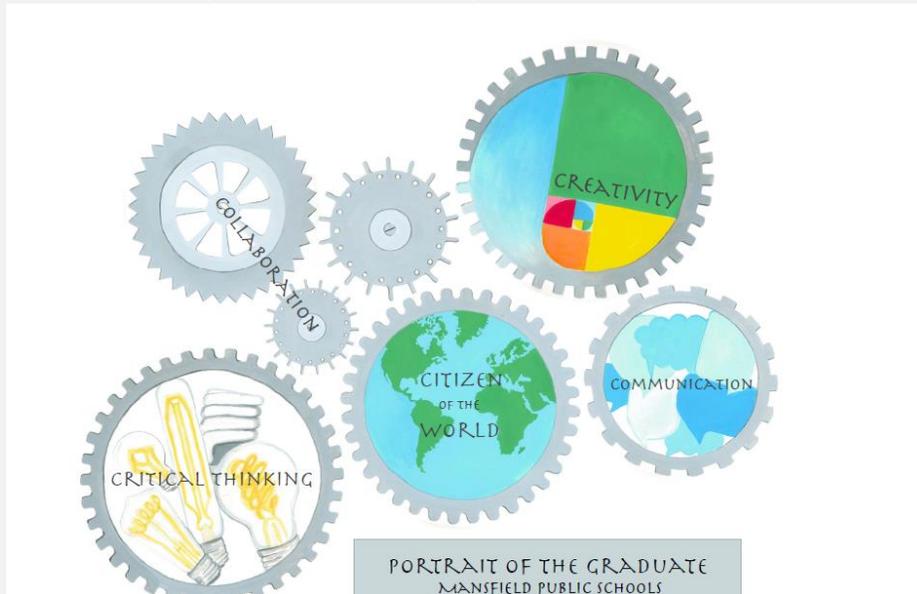
Mansfield Public Schools' vision for its learning spaces is grounded in the district's mission and goals for students, as depicted in the district's "Portrait of the Graduate". The Portrait of the Graduate includes the five key traits we aim to develop in all students to promote success in the 21st century, also known as the "5 Cs".

District Mission

It is the mission of the Mansfield Board of Education, in partnership with the Mansfield community, to ensure that all children acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes essential for personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our global community.

Portrait of the Graduate

The Mansfield Public School student develops a love of learning rooted in a strong academic foundation. Students grow within a safe and respectful environment while contributing to the local and global community. This educational journey encourages risk taking, builds perseverance and resiliency, and celebrates individual growth. Skills and dispositions across five elements interact with each other and with content standards to support the development of a learner prepared to face future learning and career challenges.



CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Students recognize their role and responsibility in the larger world seeking understanding of others while demonstrating empathy and respect. They actively contribute to their community for the benefit of all.

Students will:

- Build appreciation for diverse cultures and beliefs present in our global society
- Develop elements of strong character such as sound decision making that considers the effect on many
- Demonstrate respect and responsibility for self, others, and the environment

COMMUNICATION

Students deliver coherent, organized messages through a variety of mediums tailoring their communication to the intended purpose and audience.

Students will:

- Connect and share ideas with others
- Engage in active listening and respectful discourse
- Inform, influence, motivate, or entertain

COLLABORATION

Students demonstrate the ability to interact within a group to set and achieve common goals.

Students will:

- Engage with others
- Participate in thoughtful discussions
- Analyze and reflect on ideas shared by others
- Respect and accept diverse perspectives
- Work toward consensus

CREATIVITY

Students exhibit originality, imagination, and inventiveness. Through the creative process, students engage in productive struggle and build resilience as they persevere to reach intended goals.

Students will:

- Engage in imaginative thinking
- Exhibit divergent and flexible thinking when solving problems
- Put new ideas into practice

CRITICAL THINKING

Students engage in analysis, evaluation and reflection to build understanding, solve problems, and identify alternative solutions.

Students will:

- Ask meaningful questions
- Use prior knowledge to analyze and understand
- Synthesize information from multiple points of view
- Describe one's thought process and justify position/decision

The vision for the learning spaces is rooted in the district's mission and goals for student learning, and serves as a foundation for what we as a district hope to accomplish with any future changes to our learning spaces.

Vision for Learning Spaces

Mansfield Public Schools' learning spaces will be...

Flexible, Inclusive, and Interactive

...to support the district's mission to develop

Global citizenship,
Communication,
Collaboration,
Creativity, &
Critical thinking

in **ALL** students.

What Is the Current State of the District & It's Learning Spaces?

Before determining a path forward to achieving this vision, we must first consider the current state of the district's learning spaces.

Feedback from district stakeholders and an analysis of district data revealed the district has a number of strengths to build upon.

- 1 Teachers and staff are talented, innovative, and dedicating to serving students well and promoting academic rigor.**
- 2 Students have access to an abundance of opportunities to explore their interests and passions through courses and extracurricular activities.**
- 3 At the elementary schools, some teachers have created more flexible classroom environments.**
- 4 The middle school has a flexible schedule with a daily "X block" where students access personalized intervention and enrichment.**
- 5 All schools have some environmentally sustainable systems and practices in place, including recycling, composting, and greenhouses.**
- 6 The district is dedicated to building teacher capacity through an ongoing initiative of targeted professional development.**

However, the current learning spaces also have three major limitations:

1. The current learning spaces could be better equipped to prepare students for future success and support the development of the “5 Cs”.

The design and use of materials within learning spaces can have a direct impact on the development of the “5 Cs” skills. However, the current state of the district’s learning spaces does not fully support instructional practices that develop these attributes in students.

For examples, some limitations of the current spaces include a greater need for spaces that enable students to...

- **“Learn by doing”:** Not all schools have space for project-based learning or hands-on experiments.
- **Collaborate with peers:** Teachers noted a need for more space to have small student groups.
- **Explore the environment:** Teachers and parents expressed a desire to see more connections between academics and the environment, where the outdoors serves as a living “learning lab” for student investigation and exploration.
- **Access information and technology:** Not all classrooms have access to digital tools and some libraries were noted as being cramped and cluttered.
- **Reflect individually:** Parents, teachers, and students expressed the importance of having spaces where students can quietly read and think independently.
- **Play and develop social skills:** Currently, there are limited spaces to facilitate play and socially interaction with peers, which is understood to positively impact students’ personal development.
- **Move more during the school day:** Teachers expressed that immovable furniture in classrooms limits student movement and the ability to promote exercise throughout the day.
- **Connect with the community:** There are limited spaces to facilitate interactions between the schools, students, and the larger Mansfield community.

2. The current learning spaces are not environmentally sustainable.

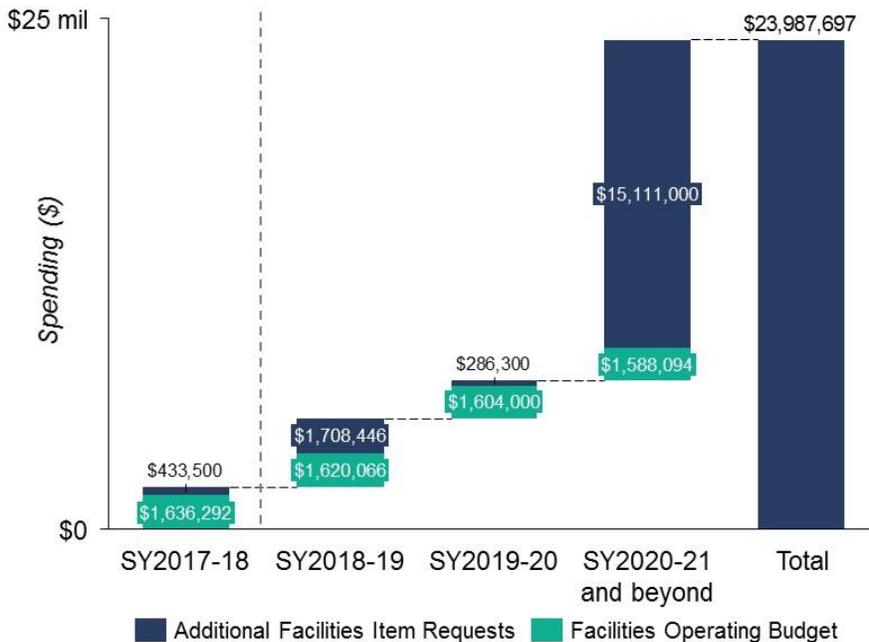
Although it is clear environmental awareness and sustainability are key priorities for the district and town of Mansfield, this is not embodied in the district’s current facilities. For example, while all schools have greenhouses, water is not always accessible and they are often underutilized. Further, with an average age of 63 years, our buildings are aging and will require significant renovations in order to incorporate best practice “green” elements. If we want to promote environmental sustainability to our students, it is important that our physical learning spaces embody these principles and make more efficient use of energy.

3. The current learning spaces are not aligned with our current and future enrollment projections and fiscal reality.

As our current facilities age, we will need to invest more money into maintaining them as safe and supportive environments for our students. To put this in perspective, the current facilities’ operating budget and additional facilities requests for repairs and upgrades totals over \$23 million for the next 4 years and beyond.

Facilities Expenditures (Funded & Unfunded)

SY2017-18 to SY2020-21



What are the additional facilities item requests?

Some of the major items include:

2017-18

Bathroom updates (Mansfield Middle)
Outdoor painting (Vinton)

2018-19

Roof replacement (Mansfield Middle)
Floor tile repair (Southeast, Goodwin)

2019-20

Electric and hot water heater replacement (Mansfield Middle)

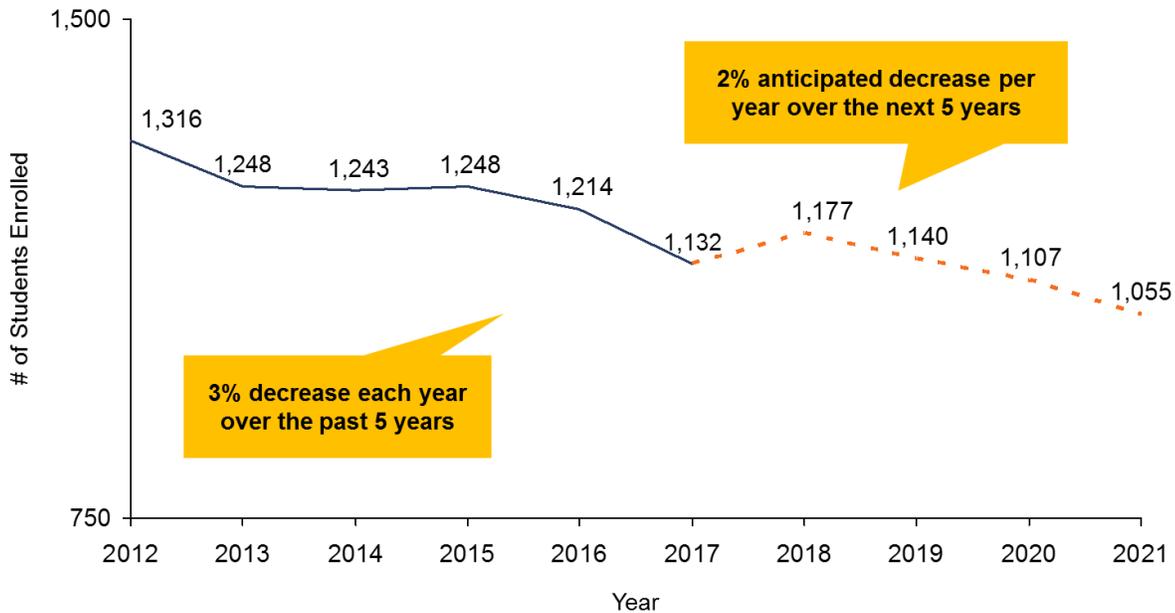
2020-21 and beyond

Window replacement (Mansfield Middle)
New elevator (Mansfield Middle)
Sprinkler System (Mansfield Middle)
Air conditioning (Goodwin, Southeast, Vinton)
Window replacement (Goodwin, Southeast, Vinton)

Further, total student enrollment has been declining by 3% annually in the last five years and is expected to further decrease 2% annually over the next five years.

Historic & Projected Student Enrollment (All Levels)

SY2011-12 to SY2020-21

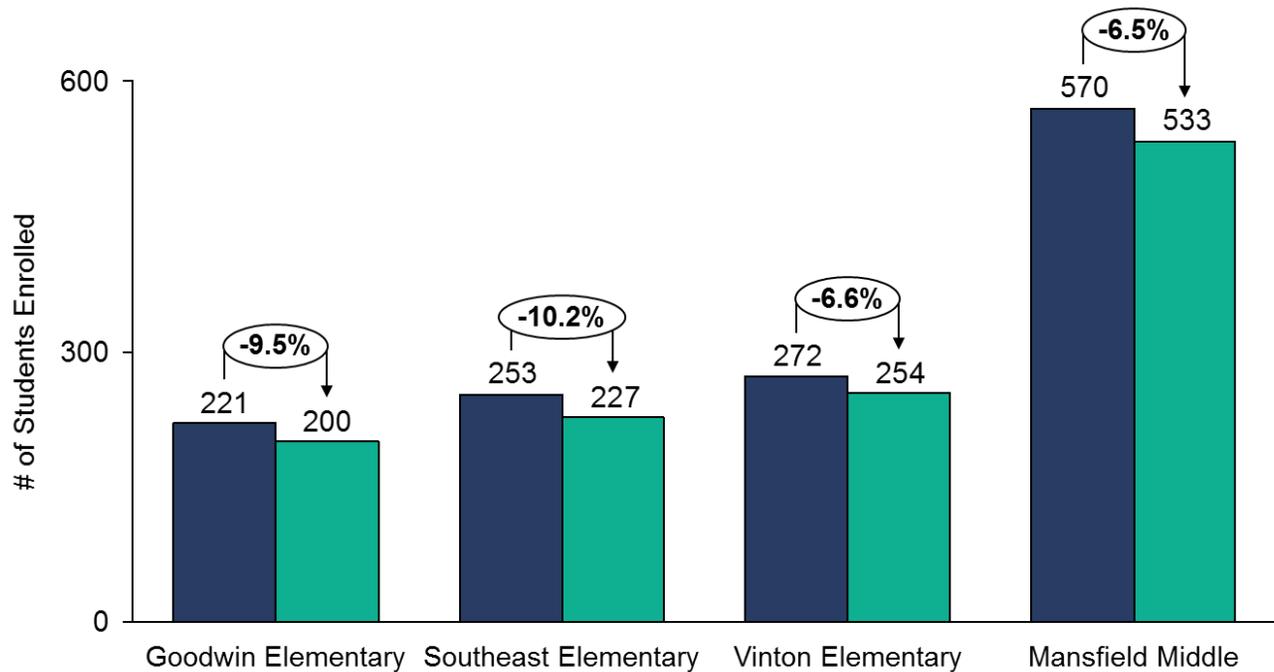


Source: Data provided by district

This general trend has been observed at the school level.

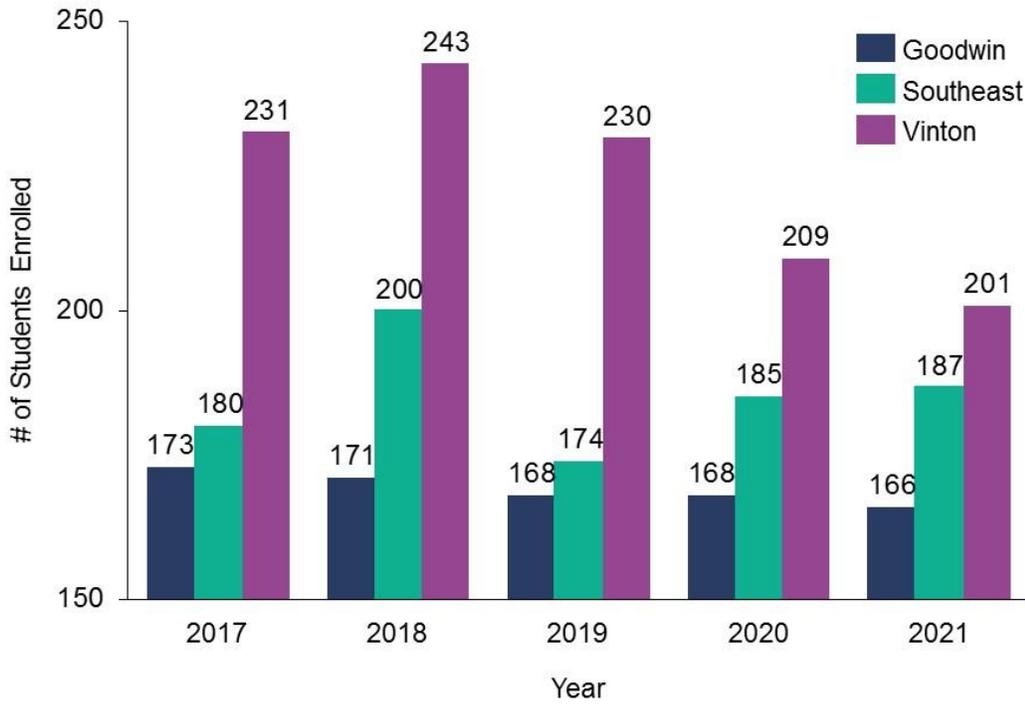
Historical Student Enrollment by School

SY2011-12 and SY2015-16



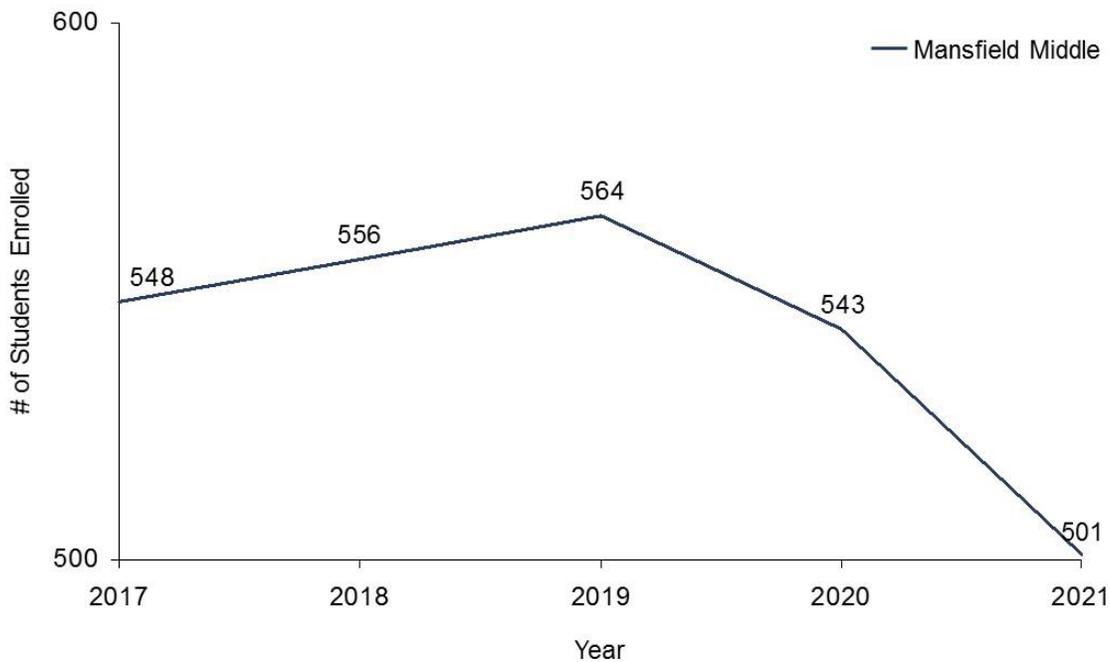
Projected Student Enrollment (Elementary)

SY2017-18 to SY2021-22



Projected Student Enrollment (Mansfield Middle)

SY2017-18 to SY2021-22



These enrollment projections indicate that each new student cohort will be getting smaller and smaller within the next few years, leading to smaller enrollment at the middle school as well.

What Do We Need to Adjust to Achieve Our Vision for the Learning Spaces?

With a clearly articulated vision and deep understanding of the current state, the Steering Committee next worked to define the aspirational goals that would support Mansfield Public Schools in achieving this vision for its learning spaces. These six goals will be used to guide the facilities planning process in a transparent and focused way.

We believe the district's learning spaces should include....

1

Common Spaces

Open, flexible common spaces that promote collaboration, teamwork, movement, and play

2

Classroom Spaces

Large, flexible classrooms that allow for project-based learning, collaboration, and movement

3

Quiet Spaces

Enclosed, soundproof spaces for individual reflection and quiet work time

4

Furniture & Seating

Multiple options for comfortable seating and standing which can be reconfigured to promote student agency in creating the environment that best meets their learning needs

5

Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor learning spaces which support the integration of the environment and academic learning

6

Accessible Resources

Accessible physical and digital resources, materials, and tools to facilitate student creativity and exploration

Aspirational Goal #1

1

Common Spaces

Open, flexible common spaces that promote collaboration, teamwork, movement, and play

During focus groups, district administrators, staff, and students expressed a desire for a more flexible, purposeful use of common spaces across the district to promote collaboration, teamwork, and play. While there are some large common spaces within schools, such as the elementary “cafe-gym-atoriums” it was shared often they are not functional multi-purpose spaces, with limitations related to their acoustics, accessibility, and scheduling. Our common spaces should also support our goal of strengthening connections with families and the community; having a designated, welcoming space that can be utilized for community engagement is a key priority.

Many school districts across the country have taken an innovative approach to designing their common spaces, often incorporating at least one large flexible common space into their schools to allow for different configurations of space depending on the desired use, including collaboration space for small group learning, space for teachers to meet, collaborate, and plan, open spaces for movement and play, and alcoves in hallways for student collaboration or individual, quiet work time.



Source: http://www.smithtracey.com.au/projects_portfolio/education/st_mary_s_primary_school_administration_buildin/

School Spotlight

Saanich School District (British Columbia, Canada) has transformed their traditional library space into an interactive, collaborative Learning Commons, with innovative changes to the physical and digital spaces, resources, and role of staff.

To learn more visit: https://youtu.be/7ftD_V_tDsQ

Aspirational Goal #2

2

Classroom Spaces

Large, flexible classrooms that allow for project-based learning, collaboration, and movement

Across the country, innovative districts and schools have begun to think differently about how classrooms can be organized to better support effective teaching and learning. Many schools have found that large, flexible classroom spaces have the ability to cater to different student learning styles and ensure greater accessibility for all learners.

Currently, across all four schools, the majority of classrooms are set up in a traditional classroom format, with four walls, a teacher at the front of the room, and desk and chairs arranged in static configurations. Many stakeholders, including teachers and students, expressed a desire for a more flexible classroom



Source: <http://mrsknappsclassroom.weebly.com/blog/flexible-seating-update>

format to accommodate different student learning needs and instructional approaches. As a district, we want to ensure our classrooms are equipped with spaces that can be dynamically adapted for small group breakout sessions, project-based learning, and quiet, independent work time. We also know that many students need time to get up and move about during the day, so ensuring our classrooms have space to accommodate student movement breaks is also an important priority.

In an effort to create more flexible classroom spaces to accomplish various instructional needs, many innovative districts have successfully integrated technology into the classroom. Easy, ready access to individual and shared digital devices is required.

School Spotlight

The Yonge Development Research School (Gainesville, FL) employs a blended learning model, combining online digital media with traditional classroom methods, to provide teachers the flexibility to define and implement online instruction that meets student needs.

To learn more visit: <https://youtu.be/auzwh1mK2TY>

Aspirational Goal #3

3

Quiet Spaces

Enclosed, soundproof spaces for individual reflection and quiet work time

In addition to having large, flexible classrooms and common spaces to support small and large group collaboration, it is equally important to have designated spaces within our schools and classrooms where students can focus on quiet, independent work. For many students, having a quiet space for individual reading, writing, and reflection is key to developing creativity and critical thinking skills.

In our current learning spaces, students typically complete independent work at their desks or tables; however, if other activities are occurring simultaneously, there are limited options for students who need a quiet, soundproof place to work. Hallways are sometimes used for quiet work time, but a lack of comfortable seating makes for an uninviting workspace. Additionally,



Source: <https://s-media-cacheak0.pinimg.com/originals/f4/7a/a8/f47aa8cbf9f6e1453ab75bce96d1da44.jpg>

Mansfield Middle School has some moveable walls which can be used to partition rooms to create smaller spaces; however, during focus groups it was revealed these are cumbersome to move and not completely soundproof.

In designing innovative schools and classrooms, many districts have created enclosed private spaces for independent work time. Often referred to as quiet “nook spaces” these may be moveable or permanent structures where students can retreat as needed. As a district, we are committed to ensuring our schools include this type of quiet work space.



Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/gallery/2015/jan/08/school-libraries-world-books-gallery>

School Spotlight

Schools in Albemarle County Public Schools (Charlottesville, Virginia) have been outfitted to include quiet nook spaces, along with other more comfortable, flexible seating and furniture.

To learn more visit: <https://youtu.be/4cscJcRKYxA>

Aspirational Goal #4

4

Furniture & Seating

Multiple options for comfortable seating and standing which can be reconfigured to promote student agency in creating the environment that best meets their learning needs

Across all our learning spaces, it is important that we provide multiple furniture options for comfortable seating and standing to promote student agency in actively creating the environment that best meets their learning needs. During focus groups, staff and students alike spoke to a desire for more diverse furniture options beyond the traditional desk, table, and chair so students can choose where they do their best work. Allowing students to select their own learning space empowers student choice, increases engagement, and improves student participation.



Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/10/health/standing-desks-impact-health-education/index.html>



Source: <https://www.k12blueprint.com/success-stories/rethinking-library-media-center>

For example, some students may benefit from a standing desk or fidget chair, which allows them to stay active and concentrate on their work, without interrupting their own or other students' learning. Some other flexible furniture options include soft seating such as couches and bean bag chairs and whiteboard desks. As a district, we will ensure options for furniture and seating in all our classrooms are varied and accessible to all learners.

School Spotlight

Halswell Primary School (Christchurch, New Zealand) has moveable furniture and an open classroom format to promote student engagement and choice.

To learn more visit: <https://youtu.be/8IOKS8Mv-8M>

Aspirational Goal #5

5

Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor learning spaces which support the integration of the environment and academic learning

Across all focus groups, environmental awareness and sustainability were emphasized as core values of the district and its schools. However, while some sustainable practices are in place, overall there is a need to deepen the connection between the classroom, students, and the environment.

Teachers and parents expressed a desire to see more connections between academics and the environment; particularly in the STEM fields (science, engineering, mathematics, and technology), where the outdoors can serve as a living “learning lab” for student investigation and exploration. Our outdoor learning spaces could also be utilized for extracurricular activities, student-directed enrichment projects, and promoting community connections.

In an effort to strengthen the connection between the environment and instruction, some schools across the country have created an “outdoor classroom” which can be shared by teachers across the school. The outdoor classroom may include a community garden and pond, with work stations and tools that allow students to examine and engage with the natural environment.

The district is dedicated to creating learning spaces that support the integration of the environment and academic learning.



Source: <http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2012/11/19/outdoor-learning-center-kids>

School Spotlight

The outdoor classroom at **Postlethwait Middle School (Wyoming, DE)** provides a cross-curricular learning space while also promoting stewardship of nature and social responsibility.

To learn more visit: <https://youtu.be/vnoJis1h47U>

Aspirational Goal #6

6 Accessible Resources

Accessible physical and digital resources, materials, and tools to facilitate student creativity and exploration

To build informed, critical thinkers with strong media literacy skills, we must ensure our students have regular access to the physical and digital resources, materials, and tools necessary to facilitate creativity and exploration. In reflecting on our current spaces, a number of stakeholders expressed the libraries and media spaces in the district are not fully equipped to serve this purpose. Libraries were described as “overcrowded and too cluttered”, with a lack of flexible, usable space for collaboration. And while the district has made technological devices more accessible with iPads now available in classrooms, this has resulted in computer labs being vastly underutilized. As technology continues to evolve and information becomes more easily accessible, we will need to think differently about how our learning spaces provide students access to digital resources and materials.



Source: <http://beyondthebrochurela.com/echo-horizon-schools-magnificent-makerspace/>

In addition to digital resources, it is important that students have access to physical materials and tools which support self-designed exploration and project-based learning. To this end, some schools have developed a designated makerspace, which is an open learning space where students take control of their own learning by exploring, building, designing, and sharing tools and resources. It is intentionally designed to allow students to “learn by doing”, and is particularly well-suited for project-based learning and STEM experiments.

School Spotlight

Students at **Lee Elementary School (Los Alamitos, CA)** learn and explore through engineering challenges in the makerspace.

To learn more visit: <https://youtu.be/PrdG7DbA6pA>

Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the key findings from this process were:

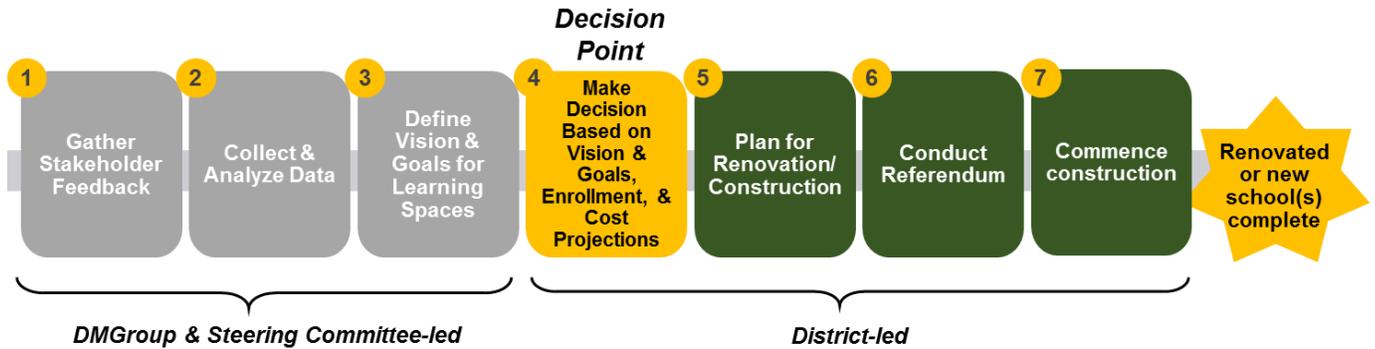
- Enrollment has been declining since 2012 and is projected to continue to decline at an even greater rate through 2021.
- The current facilities' operating budget and additional facilities requests for repairs and upgrades total over \$23 million for the next 4 years and beyond.
- State revenue to towns and schools will decrease in SY2017-18 with no expectation that the funds will be restored in the future.
- Our current learning spaces could be better equipped to prepare students for future success and support the development of the "5Cs".

Ultimately, it will be financially unsustainable to maintain and operate three very small elementary schools and the middle school as it is now. If we continue to invest in maintaining our facilities as they are now, we will have to reduce resources in other areas, possibly reducing programs to students.

Therefore, our recommendations are:

- Develop a plan for construction and/or renovation of our current facilities (including the 3 elementary schools and middle school) which addresses our enrollment and fiscal reality and the current limitations of the learning spaces.
- Meet the needs of all learners by ensuring any future plans for the facilities are grounded in the vision and goals for the district's learning spaces.

Where Do We Go from Here?



In this time of shifting demographics and workforce needs, Mansfield Public Schools is committed to educate and prepare each student to succeed. Now more than ever, it is important to ensure all Mansfield students are confident and engaged learners with the skills and experiences necessary to thrive in the 21st century. In order to do this, we need learning spaces that are flexible, inclusive, and interactive to support the district’s mission to develop global citizenship, communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking in ALL students.

Significant time has been spent creating a vision and goals for our learning spaces. The vision and goals contained in these pages will guide decision-making and resource allocation for decisions regarding the district’s facilities and learning spaces, allowing us to remain intensely focused on delivering a high-quality learning experience to all of our students.

Building on the vision and aspirational goals identified with broad stakeholder input, the district will begin to develop and enact detailed action plans in order to bring the vision and goals to fruition. There is still a great deal more work to be done before we are able to make any physical changes to our learning spaces, including careful consideration of our enrollment projections and fiscal reality. Given the fiscal climate we are facing as a community and as a state, our student enrollment trends, the state of our current facilities, and our aspirations for student learning and development, we recognize we may need to adapt our current approach to educating students. However, we are committed to ensuring any changes to our learning spaces support the continuation of high-quality instruction that is at the core of what makes an exceptional Mansfield education.

The district will need help and support and cannot accomplish this work alone; the success of the plan rests on the community’s collective shoulders. Stakeholder voices have been influential in the development of this vision and goals, and it will continue to be crucial that the community remain engaged and committed as we move into planning and implementation.

Together, the district and the community can ensure our learning spaces serve all Mansfield students now and in the years to come.

Appendix

Process Overview

The vision and goals for the learning spaces were formulated through a rigorous 6-month process. The process consists of seven major steps, as outlined below. Steps 1 – 3 have already been completed as of September 2017.



1. Gather Feedback

As a key component of the data gathering phase, focus groups and interviews with key district and community stakeholders were conducted at the onset of this process. Central office members, principals, district staff, parents, students, and key community members were invited to participate and engage in conversations focused on their experience with and vision for Mansfield Public Schools and its' learning spaces. The major themes and key takeaways from these interviews and focus groups are listed below.

Focus Group and Interview Participants

- Central Office
 - Superintendent
 - Directors of Finance, Special Education, IT, and Facilities
- School Staff
 - Principals (all levels)
 - Teachers (all levels)
 - Other faculty and staff (all levels)
- Students (elementary and middle school, grades 4-8)
- Parents (all levels)
- Key Community Members
 - Community members and local business leaders
- School Board Members
- Town Council
- Town Manager
- Town of Mansfield committees: Planning & Zoning, Sustainability, Conservation & Land Use

Key Areas of Strength from Focus Groups

- 1** Teachers and staff are talented, innovative, and dedicating to serving students well and promoting academic rigor.
- 2** Students have access to an abundance of opportunities to explore their interests and passions through courses and extracurricular activities.
- 3** At the elementary schools, some teachers have created more flexible classroom environments.
- 4** The middle school has a flexible schedule with a daily “X block” where students access personalized intervention and enrichment.
- 5** All schools have some environmentally sustainable systems and practices in place, including recycling, composting, and greenhouses.
- 6** The district is dedicated to building teacher capacity through an ongoing initiative of targeted professional development.

Key Areas for Growth from Focus Groups

<p>Restrictive Classroom Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of classrooms are set up in a traditional classroom arrangement, with desk and chairs in rows and immovable furniture • Many stakeholders, including teachers and students, expressed a desire for a more flexible classroom setup to accommodate different learning environments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small group breakout sessions ○ Project-based learning ○ Quiet, independent work time ○ Student movement breaks • District staff and community members also spoke to the lack of technology integration in classroom, noting it can be difficult to effectively retrofit technology or infrastructure upgrades to older buildings.
<p>Less Flexible Common Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District administrators, staff, and students expressed a desire for a more flexible, purposeful use of common spaces to promote collaboration. • Some of the current limitations of the district’s common spaces include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elementary “Cafe-gym-atorium” is not a functional multi-purpose space and scheduling is a challenge ○ Poor acoustics in the Mansfield Middle cafeteria limit usage ○ Flexible walls at Mansfield Middle provide option to create larger open spaces, but are not soundproof and are difficult to move ○ Hallways are sometimes used for student breakout sessions or quiet work time, but a lack of comfortable seating makes uninviting workspace
<p>Underutilized Media Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District staff and community members expressed the importance of ensuring students have access to the information and resources they need to become informed, critical thinkers and learners. However, the current libraries and media spaces in the district are not fully equipped to serve this purpose. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools libraries were described as overcrowded, with a lack of flexible, usable space for collaboration. ○ Computer labs are underutilized

<p>Integration of the Environment & Outdoor Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across all focus groups, environmental awareness and sustainability were emphasized as priorities for the district and its schools. While some sustainable practices are in place, overall there is a need to deepen the connection between the classroom, students, and the environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All schools have greenhouses, but water is not always accessible. ○ More outdoor spaces for play integrated with environment are desired • Teachers and parents expressed a desire to see more connections between academics and the environment; particularly in the STEM field (science, engineering, mathematics, and technology), where the outdoors can serve as a living “learning lab” for student investigation and exploration.
<p>Limited Teacher Collaboration Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district has a dedicated focus on professional development and growth for teachers and staff, and has a number of initiatives underway towards this end. However, staff frequently expressed that there are limited spaces in some schools for them to collaborate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is limited collaboration spaces for teachers at Mansfield Middle ○ Mansfield Middle is primarily organized by grade level. With limited common spaces for teachers to meet, collaboration across grade levels is challenging.
<p>Limited Family & Community Engagement Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across all focus groups, there was a desire to build connections among Mansfield schools, families, and the broader community. Providing designated spaces to facilitate community engagement may support this goal, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Family Engagement Center with resources and events for families ○ Strengthening connections with faculty at UConn and utilizing the university’s learning spaces

2. Collect & Analyze Data

The information gathered during interviews, focus groups, and Steering Committee meetings, combined with quantitative data provided by the district, was used to identify Mansfield Public Schools' areas of strength and growth. Quantitative data included district data, community surveys, enrollment projections, and facilities expenditures. A summary of the key takeaways is highlighted below. These takeaways ensured the Steering Committee's dialogue was grounded in fact-based research.

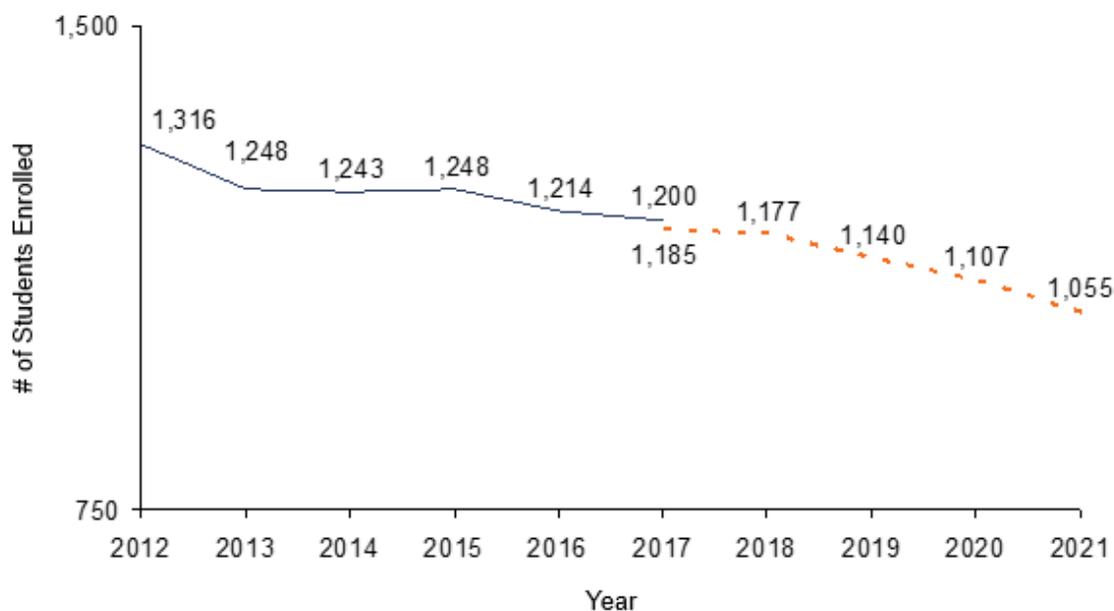
Key Data Analysis Findings

1. Student-Related Data

1a. Enrollment & Demographics

Historic & Projected Student Enrollment

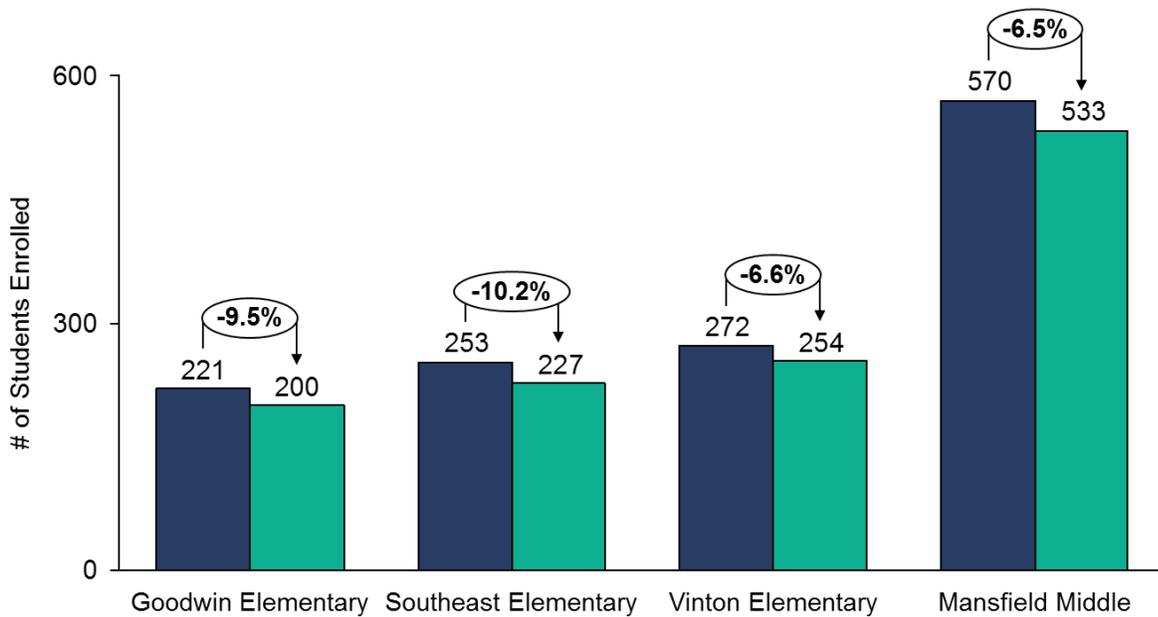
SY2011-12 to SY2020-21



- Student enrollment has decreased by 2% annually in the last five years and is expected to further decrease 3% annually over the next five years.

Historical Student Enrollment by School

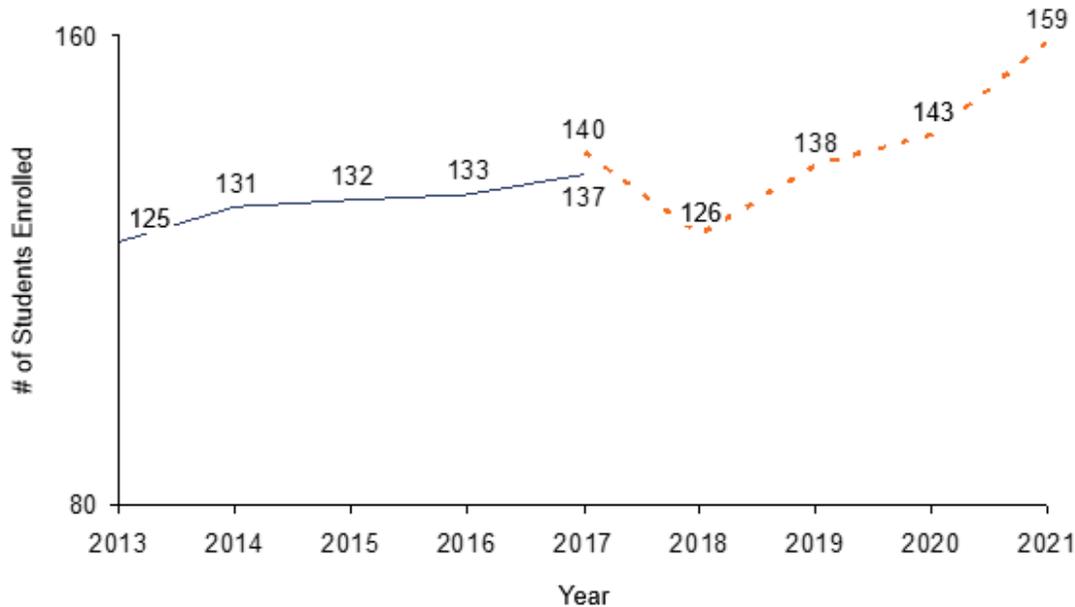
SY2011-12 and SY2015-16



- From SY2011-12 – SY2015-16, Goodwin and Southeast experienced a slightly larger enrollment decline than Vinton and Mansfield Middle School.

Historic & Projected Mansfield Student Enrollment (EO Smith High School)

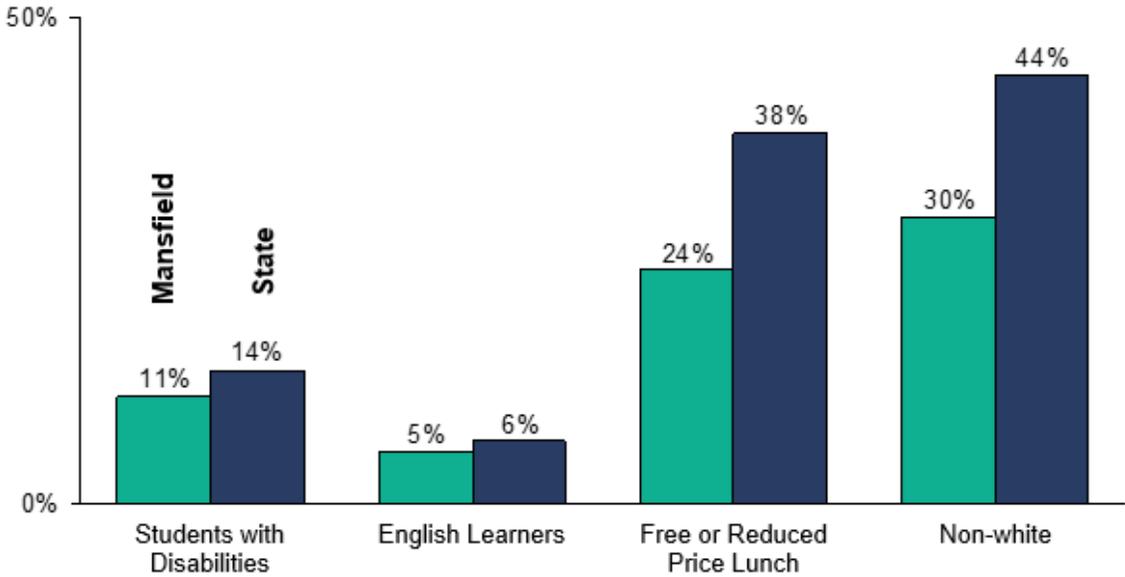
SY2012-13 to SY2020-21



- Placement rates for Mansfield students to EO Smith High School have increased and are projected to further increase over the next 5 years thereby increasing Mansfield Public Schools' overall responsibility for operating budget costs at EO Smith High School.

Percentage of Students by Subgroup

SY2014-15

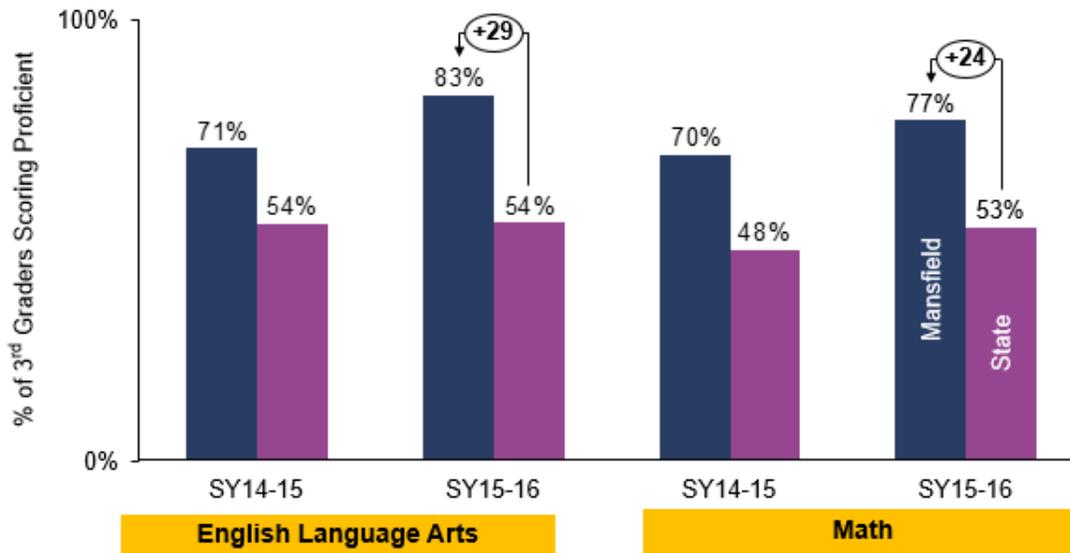


- The percentage of Mansfield Public Schools students in certain subgroups is lower than the state average.

1b. Academic Performance

Percent Proficient on SBAC ELA & Math (Grade 3)

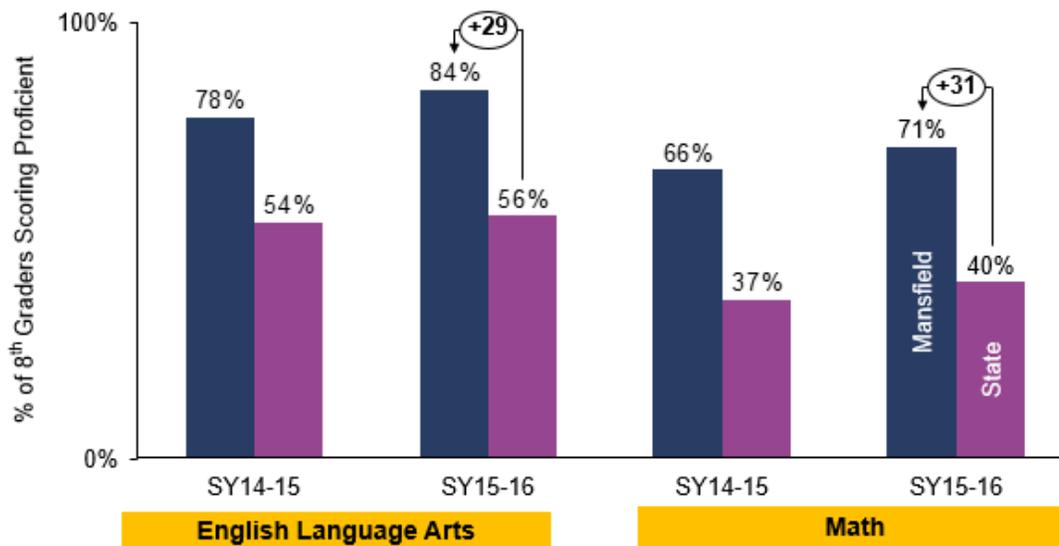
SY2014-15 and SY2015-16



- SY2015-16 3rd Grade SBAC assessments show that Mansfield is performing better than the state average in ELA by 29 percentage points.

Percent Proficient on SBAC ELA & Math (Grade 8)

SY2014-15 and SY2015-16

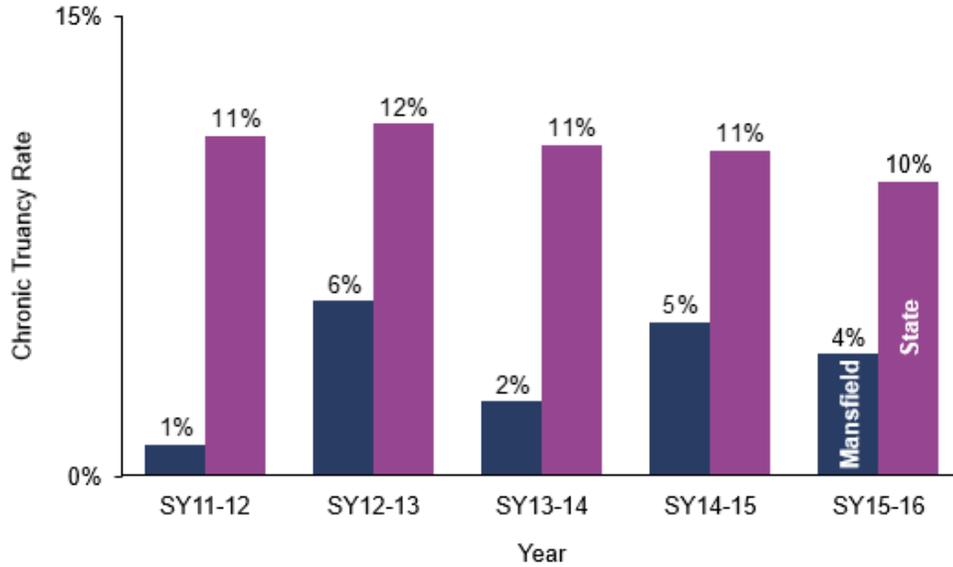


- In SY2015-16, the number of Mansfield 8th graders scoring proficient or higher on both ELA and math was significantly higher than the state averages.

2. Climate & Culture-Related Data

Chronic Truancy Rate

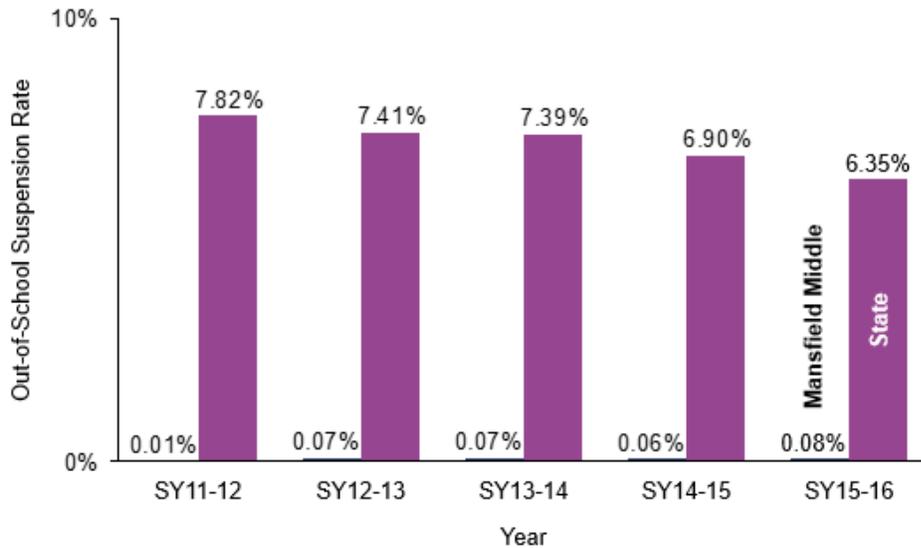
SY2011-12 to SY2015-16



- Over the past five years, the chronic truancy rate in Mansfield has been less than half of the state average.

Out-of-School Suspension Rate (Mansfield Middle School)

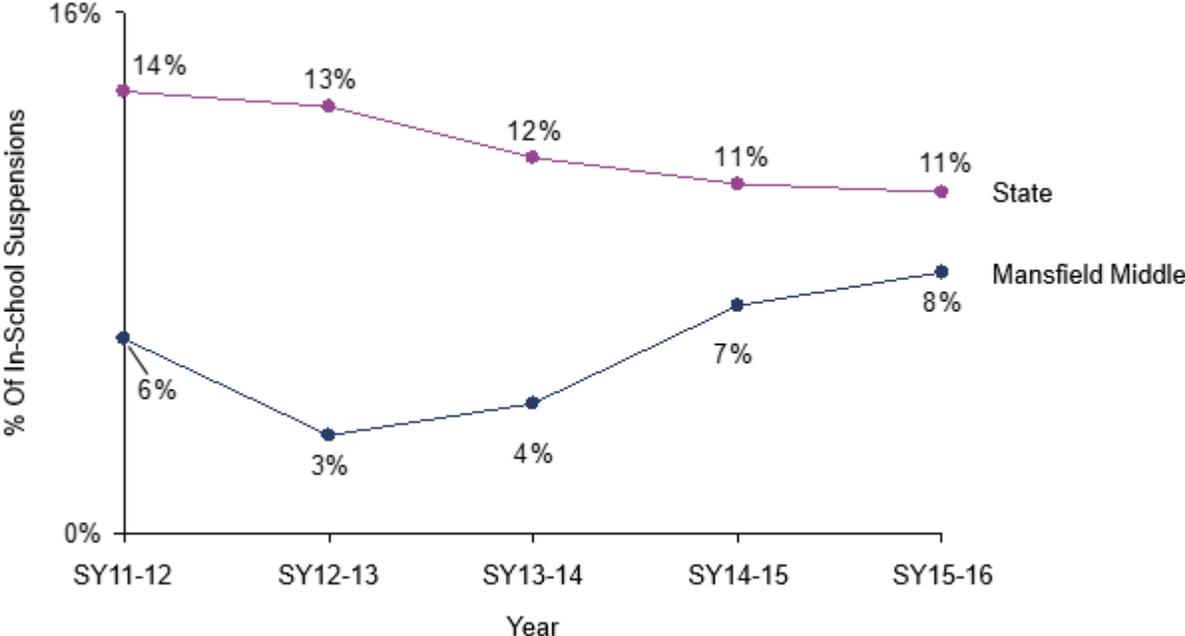
SY2011-12 to SY2015-16



- Mansfield Middle School's out-of-school suspension rate has been significantly lower than the state average.

In-School Suspension Rates (Mansfield Middle School)

SY2011-12 to SY2015-16

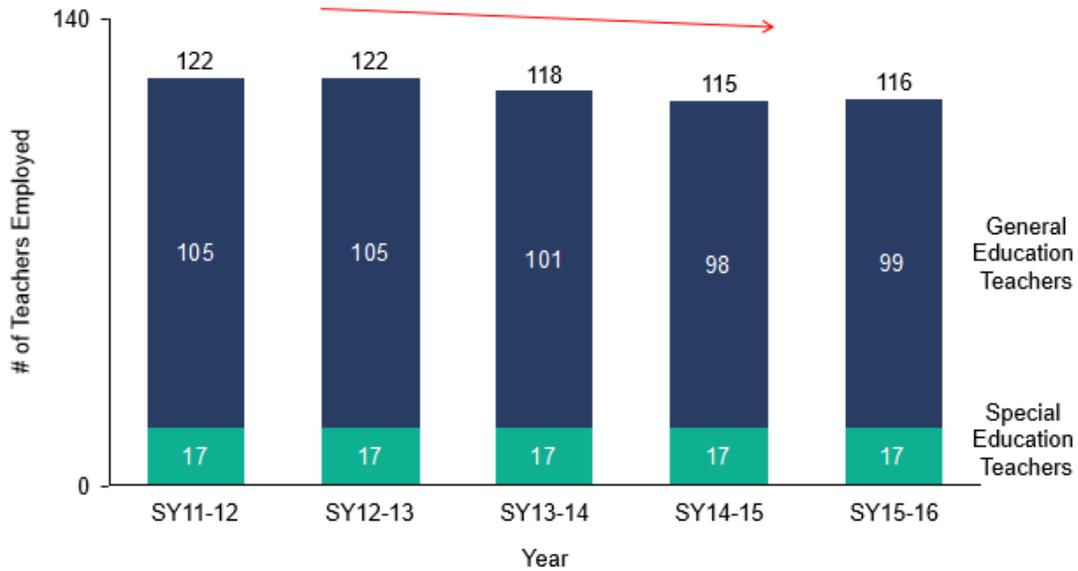


- Although below the state average, Mansfield Middle has seen a gradual increase in in-school suspensions, while the state has been declining.

3. Teacher-Related Data

Number of Teachers Employed

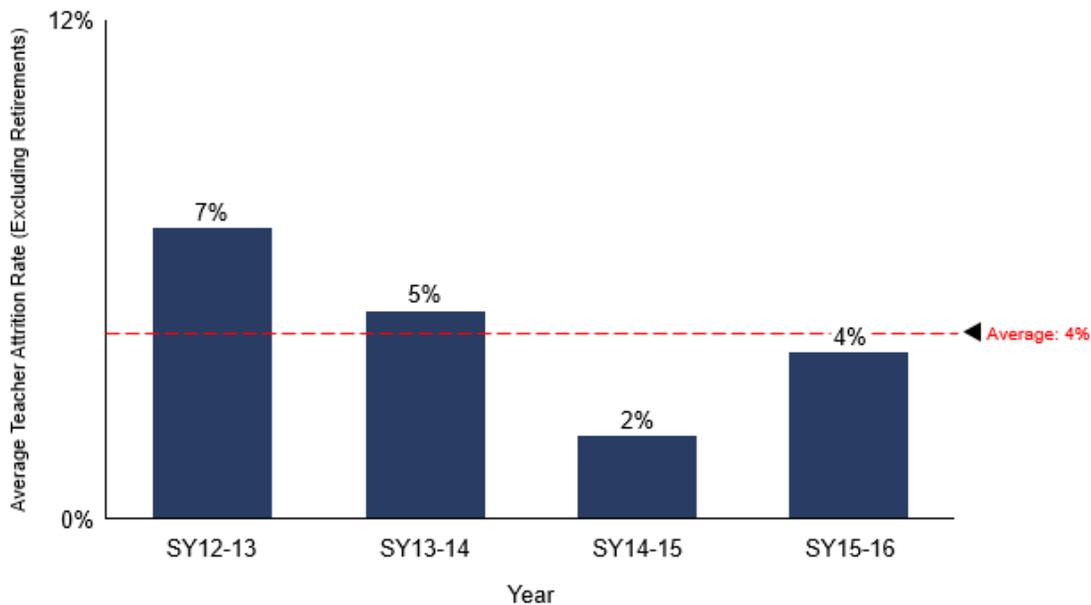
SY2011-12 to SY2015-16



- Over the last five years, the number of general education teachers employed by Mansfield has been slightly decreasing by 1.5% each year.

Teacher Attrition Rate (Excluding Retirements)

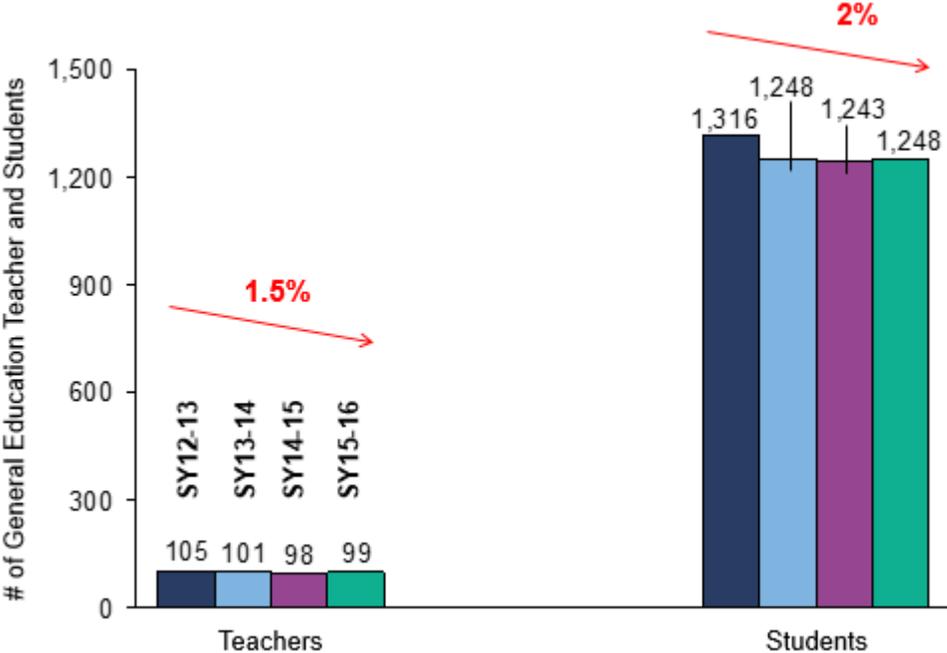
SY2012-13 to SY2015-16



- Mansfield teacher attrition rates (excluding retirements) have overall been declining over the past 4 years, with an overall average of 4%.

Number of General Education Teachers & Students

SY2012-13 to SY2015-16



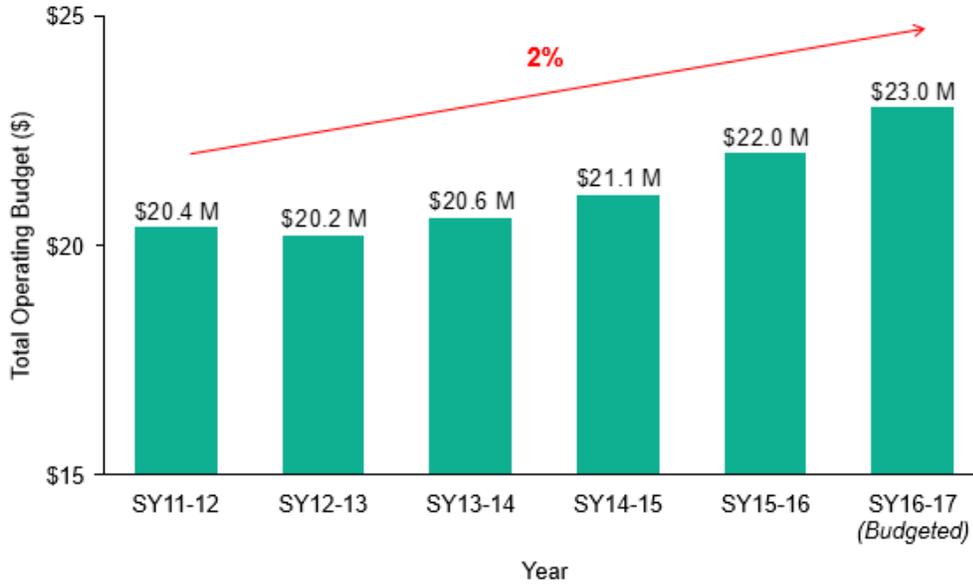
- Mansfield’s student enrollment and the number of general education teachers have declined at a similar rate.

4. District Financial Data

4a. Financial Data (Overall)

Total Operating Budget

SY2011-12 to SY2016-17



- Over the last five years, Mansfield Public Schools' operating budget has increased 12.8% in total and 2% annually.

Per Pupil Spending (of Total Operating Budget)

SY2011-12 to SY2016-17

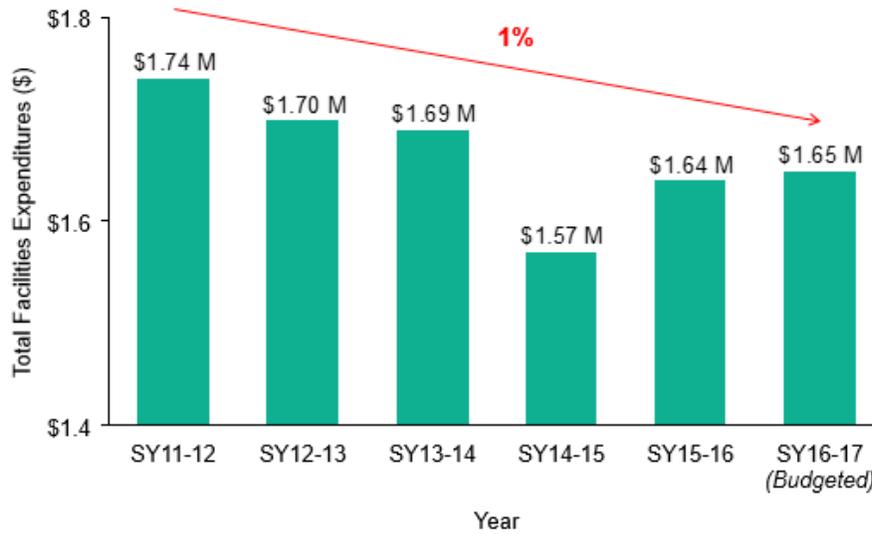


- Over the last five years, Mansfield Public Schools' per pupil spending has increased 23% in total and 5% annually.

4b. Facilities Financial Data

Total Facilities Expenditures

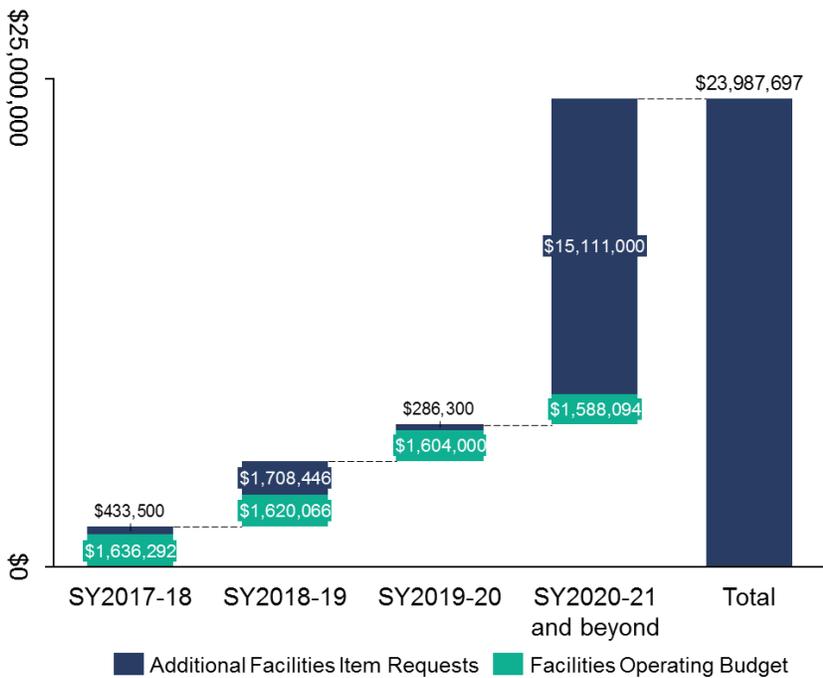
SY2011-12 to SY2016-17



- Over the last five years, Mansfield Public Schools' facilities expenditures have declined by 5% in total and 1% annually. Note that the total facilities expenditure amounts do not include capital expenditures.

Facilities Spending: Three-Year Budget & Beyond Current Funding

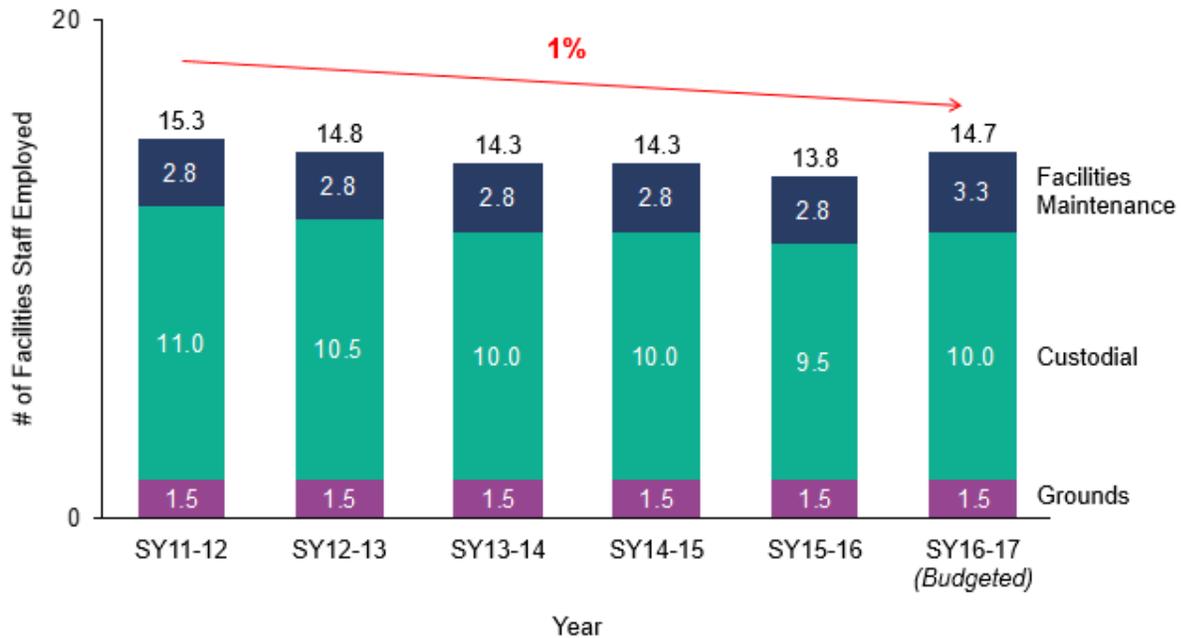
SY2017-18 to SY 2020-21 and beyond



- The current facilities operating budget and additional facilities requests combined total over \$23 million for the next 4 years and beyond.

Number of Facilities Staff Employed

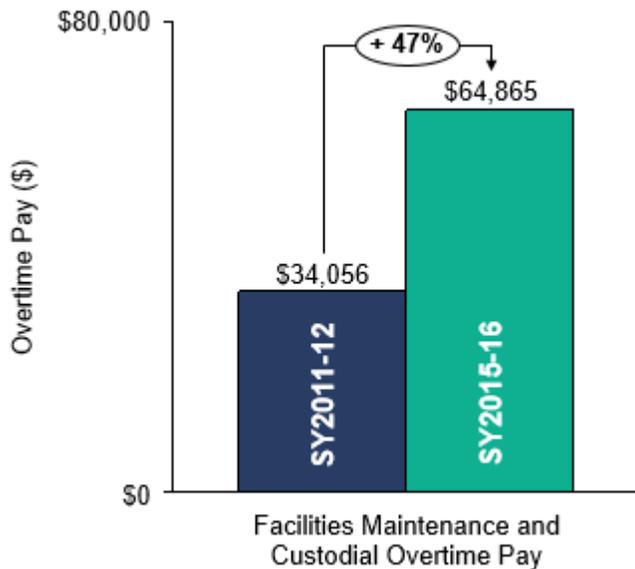
SY2011-12 to SY2016-17



- Over the last five years, the number of facilities staff employed by Mansfield has decreased by 1% annually.

Facilities & Custodial Overtime Pay

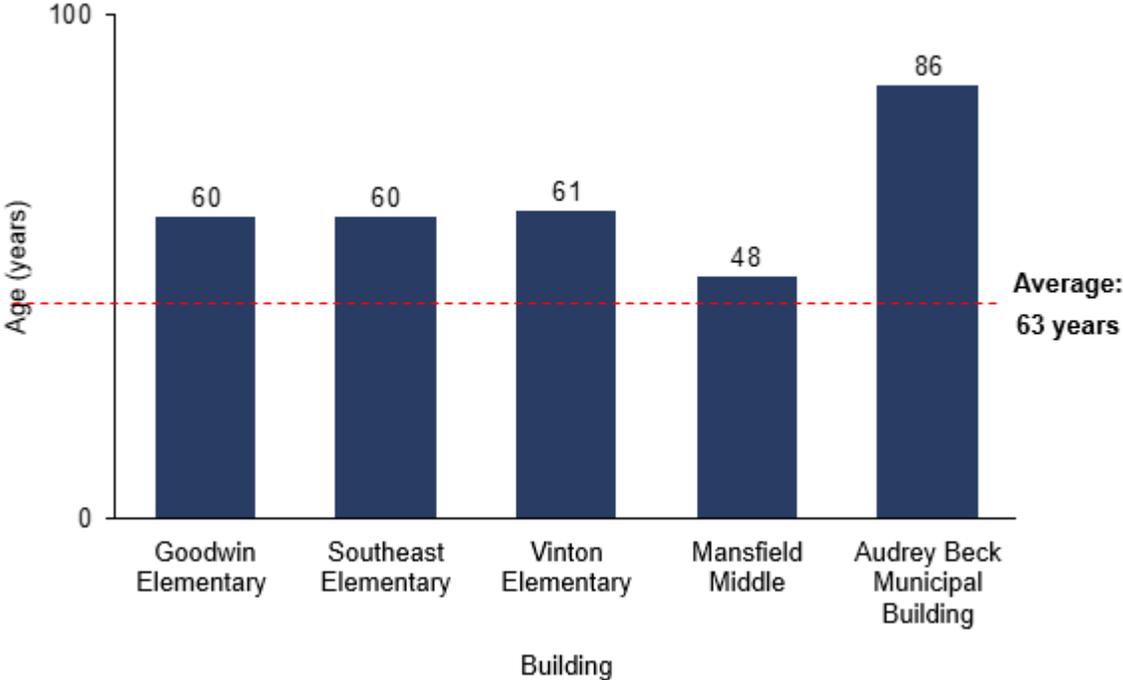
SY2012-13 and SY2015-16



- From SY2012-13 to SY2015-16, the combined cost of facilities and custodial overtime pay increased by 47%.

Average Age of Buildings

SY2016-17



- The average age of all district buildings in Mansfield is 63 years old.

3. Define Vision & Goals for Learning Spaces

After reviewing the input collected from various stakeholders and the district data, the Steering Committee set to work defining the vision and goals for the district's learning spaces.

Key steps in this process included:

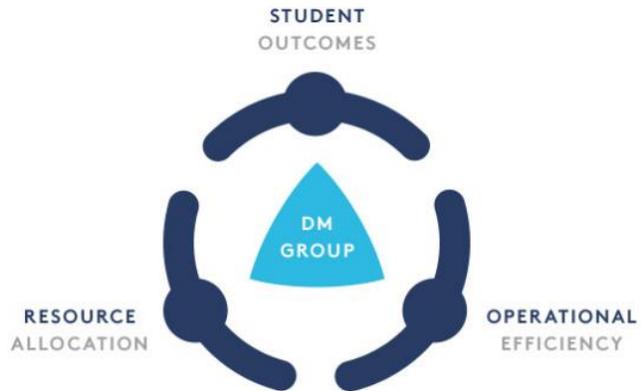
- Reviewing and discussing emerging approaches to learning spaces from around the world
- Conducting a design charrette, which is a collaborative meeting during which members of a team collaborate and sketch designs to explore and share a broad diversity of design ideas for a given space. The objective was to generate multiple ideas for learning spaces which serve the needs of Mansfield's students, staff, families, and the larger community.
- Soliciting additional input on learning spaces from community members via a series of online surveys
- Drafting and refining the vision and goals to ensure they met the specific needs of Mansfield Public Schools and the broader Mansfield community

About District Management Group

Founded in 2004, District Management Group seeks to address the most important management challenges facing American public school leaders. The leaders of our school systems are charged with the enormous responsibility of providing students with the resources to succeed in school and beyond. To achieve this, district and school leaders must not only be great educators, they must also be great managers. District Management Group seeks to provide district leaders with the best management techniques and educational practices to produce measurable, sustainable improvements that help schools and students thrive.

Our unwavering focus is on solutions that improve student outcomes, and simultaneously enhance operational efficiency and resource allocation. Achieving only one of these objectives in isolation is not enough. It is in achieving these three objectives simultaneously that improvements in student outcomes and the public education system as a whole can be made sustainable.

To achieve these objectives, District Management Group engages with districts in different ways:



 <p>District Management Solutions</p>	 <p>District Management Council</p>	 <p>District Management Journal</p>
<p>District Management Solutions offer a comprehensive combination of deep expertise, proprietary software, and dedicated support to help districts in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling: elementary and secondary • Special education • Strategic planning • Program evaluation • Strategic budgeting <p>District Management Solutions also provides professional development programs in these areas.</p>	<p>District Management Council is a network of forward-thinking district leaders committed to driving transformational change in public education. Membership in District Management Council gives you access to our research and thought leadership, prepaid access to our professional development conferences, and opportunities to share ideas with a national network of like-minded district leaders.</p>	<p>District Management Journal distills our in-depth research and years of experience to provide insightful and practical articles, case studies, and toolkits that help school district leaders implement measurable, sustainable improvements in student outcomes.</p>

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In partnership with



District Management Group

Helping Schools and Students Thrive