



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.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

On April 23, the Town Council approved establishment of a building committee to construct one new elementary school. If a suitable site cannot be found, the Building Committee will need to return to the Board to discuss next steps. The process of assessing the future of our schools began more than a year ago when the Board engaged the community to review how facilities can meet our future educational needs. This work resulted in identification of six aspirational goals and drivers for change, including declining enrollment, reduction in State revenues and aging facilities. A complete report was presented to the Board of Education in September 2017.

In a series of workshops this past fall, the Board carefully reviewed the report, began to explore options for the future and asked for additional information on the impact of various scenarios, including renovation of existing schools or construction of new ones, optimal school size and configuration, location of potential new schools and the impact on transportation. During a two-night community information event in February and March that was attended by more than 200 residents and school staff, Board members received information and engaged the public in a process to provide input.

Participants in the community event and respondents to a town-wide mail survey expressed support for the development of new schools, with much interest expressed for one elementary school. The Board has considered input from all sources and gathered even more information before taking action to request a building committee.

Our assessment, input, and planning efforts will continue as the process unfolds. Once a suitable site is identified, we will begin considering the new elementary school's design. We will continue to engage the community as this work unfolds and encourage you to review the facilities webpage often.

Note: To read all the reports including the community engagement sessions and community-wide survey report, go to goo.gl/wWo6sN and view under Engagement and Survey Reports.

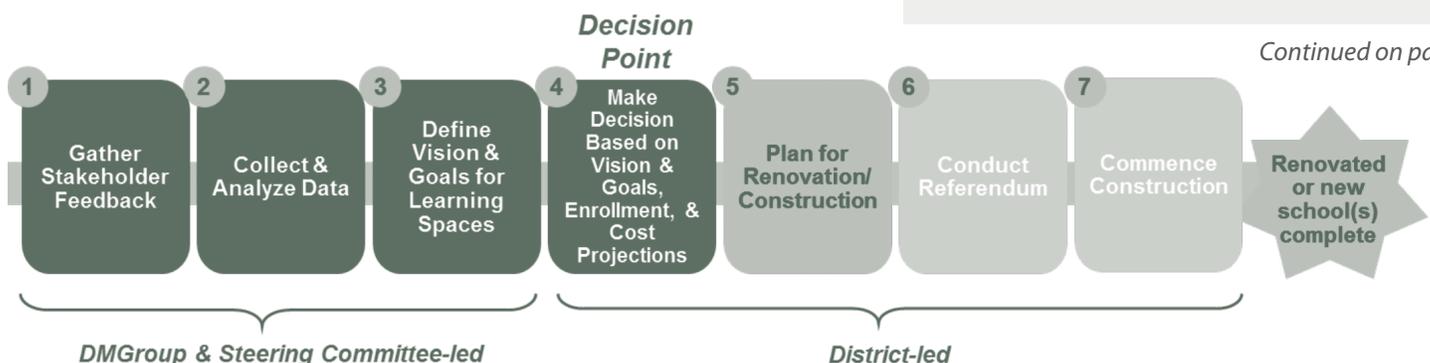


Overview of the Decision Making Process & Community Engagement for Facilities Planning

The Mansfield Board of Education has developed a vision and plan for our facilities and learning spaces. This work has included:

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

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Overview of the Decision Making Process and Community Engagement for Facilities Planning

The survey (sent February 2018) and community engagement events (February and March 2018) were part of a comprehensive facilities planning process based upon the Board of Education's initial study. Community response to the survey and engagement events has provided the Board with thoughtful feedback. Here are the ways we have sought to engage the community:



Community Wide Survey

The survey was designed to get a sense of what community members know about the facilities and educational planning. It was sent to 6,417 households (+26,000 population in 2017) with 310 responses, a 4.8% response, with a confidence level of 95%. 105 households with students in Pre-K to 12th grade and 205 households without K-12th grade students responded. Many respondents are retired and have lived in Mansfield for over 20 years. We received no responses from the approximately 2,848 households comprised of off-campus UConn students.



Highlights of survey findings

These are the preferred ways to ***that respondents said they obtained information*** about the schools and facilities project.

- **Households with Pre-K to Grade 12 Students:** School Newsletter, Board of Education Newsletter, Website (Other (Mix of Board meetings, word of mouth, staff, newspaper))
- **Households with no Pre-K to Grade 12 Students:** Board of Education Newsletter, Newspaper (primarily The Chronicle), Website, Other (Staff, word of mouth board meetings, school newspaper)

These are the priorities that respondents said the ***facilities project*** should focus on.

- **Households with Pre-K to Grade 12 Students:** Provide high-quality learning experience, improve the classroom learning experience, cost and tax implications, other (renovating current buildings, flexible and adaptable classrooms)
- **Households with no Pre-K to Grade 12 Students:** Provide high-quality learning experience, improve the classroom learning experience, cost and tax implications, other (renovating current buildings, flexible and adaptable classrooms)

Many respondents cited issues such as: the tax and cost implications, maintaining the quality of learning, what to do about the aging school buildings (renovate or build new,) consolidation, security, keeping small classroom size, and retaining great teachers.

About the Community Engagement



Planning for the Future of Mansfield Schools

The two sessions held at Mansfield Middle school provided information to support the Board of Education's long range planning. The first session provided information to help the board determine its final recommendations. During the second session, questions from the first session were answered and discussed in small groups. This session provided input for the Board's final recommendations.

Community Engagement Session One — February 28

More than 200 community members attended this session. Up to this point, the facilities work had focused on the big picture – what we hoped to achieve with updated or new facilities and the details of a long range plan. The information presented focused on the topics below and included a Q&A session with Kosta Diamantis from the CT Office of School Construction Grants and Review.



- Grade configuration
- Build New or Renovate
- Number of Schools
- The State of Connecticut approval process and reimbursement rates
- Cost to Mansfield to build new or renovate
- Research report on grade configuration and size of school

The presentation can be found at:

http://www.mansfieldct.gov/filestorage/11634/11636/47756/20180228_mboe_presentation.pdf

Attendees expressed interested in learning more about these issues:

- Class Size
- Community Engagement
- Configuration
- Costs
- Curriculum
- Design
- District Priorities
- Location/Siting
- Other School District Examples
- Other Town Projects
- Referendum Process
- Research
- State Reimbursement
- Sustainability
- Teacher Needs
- Timeframe
- Transition
- Transportation

Attendees were also asked to define their priorities for the future. Priority areas of interest included:

- Educational programs must remain strong
- Building(s) should support education goals
- Sense of community should be maintained
- Ensure cost information is available to support the final decision
- Include teachers in the process
- Trust in Board's decision making process in a final recommendation

Community Engagement Session Two — March 15

The second session provided a response to the questions raised in the first session. Participants gathered in the auditorium first where feedback and answers were presented from Session One.

Lynn Stoddard, Chair, Mansfield Sustainability Committee, then presented information regarding best practices for building and siting municipal buildings. The Mansfield town engineers and town planner spoke about available sites for schools and representatives from M&J bus spoke about transportation implications. An outline of building options and rough estimates was presented.

Participants then broke into small groups to consider a variety of facility options. Group members selected options of interest (below) and identified the pros and cons for each option selected:

- Build one new elementary school and close 3 elementary schools
- Build two new elementary schools and close 3 elementary schools
- Renovate 3 elementary schools
- Renovate two elementary schools and close one
- Renovate the middle school
- Build one new middle school and close the existing middle school
- Renovate middle school to become an elementary school, close 3 elementary schools, build a new middle school

The one-school scenario appeared to generate the most discussion on fiscal and educational benefits. This option was viewed to offer lower operation costs and increased opportunity for students and teachers within a 21st Century learning environment; promoted teacher collaboration; reduced specialists' travel time; reduced bus transportation time and costs; and increases student diversity.

Concerns included loss of staff; loss of a small school environment; loss of neighborhood feeling; the logistics of a possible land purchase in a centralized place; what to do with three out-of-date buildings and the possible loss of community in a larger building.

Many participants realized that renovating the three elementary schools was not an option due to cost, disruption and reimbursement commitments from the State. There was also discussion about the status of the middle school. Future plans will be considered as part of a larger long-term school facility plan.



Questions & Answers

1. Why was the one elementary school option selected?

Our three elementary schools are more than 60 years old and in need of major renovations: roofs, heating systems and other large cost items. Expenses to maintain these schools have increased over time. Doing nothing (i.e. spending no money) is not an option. The schools' infrastructure and HVAC systems must be addressed. The cost of these renovations are equal to the cost of a single new school. What's more, the state may refuse to contribute to renovations due to the age of the buildings. *A single elementary building would allow for:*

1. consolidating and improving resources: separate cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium and media center in one school
2. considerable savings in administrative, special services, custodial, and support staff
3. energy savings: heating and cooling one school instead of three individual schools
4. reduction of per pupil costs
5. flexibility to accommodate increasing or decreasing enrollment
6. a single united elementary school community
7. a more efficient transportation plan
8. one school that is shared by students across the community will result in a diverse student body and enhanced social experiences.

2. What will improve educationally for our children?

A single elementary school design:

- provides flexible and adaptable learning spaces that enable collaboration, interaction, information sharing and creativity
- offers a learning environment that accommodates the needs of each student and supports the development of the whole child, ensuring their academic as well as their emotional, social and physical development
- includes a healthy physical environment
- supports and enhances a robust educational program
- incorporates outdoor learning spaces
- meets or exceeds recommendations for school safety and security

3. What is the process?

On April 23, the Town Council approved establishment of a building committee to construct one new elementary school. The building committee will conduct site tests, begin the design process, secure the services of professionals to move the process forward and determine the final cost of a new school. This proposal then goes to the town council to set a referendum date, after which community members vote on the referendum. If funding is approved by Mansfield residents, it then goes to the State for reimbursement approval. This process will take two to three years, after which construction can begin.

What's happening in our Classrooms



New learning practices Our principals and teachers strive to provide all students with self-directed learning experiences, offer relevant, authentic ways to apply what they have learned, and develop the academic and process skills needed for future learning.

Vinton School Pre-Kindergarten Engineering Challenge

Vinton School preschoolers have been learning about construction. Recently they were challenged to create a pendulum that could be used for destruction. Using a variety of materials such as play-doh, popsicle sticks, clothes pins and straws, students worked for more than 20 minutes to develop their creations.



Mansfield Middle School Presents – *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

which tells the story of the German imprisonment of Jewish people from Terezin Czechoslovakia from 1941 to 1945. Presenting a play on this topic required thoughtful planning and became a collaboration between UCONN professors and MMS staff. Professors Glenn Mitoma and Alan Marcus facilitated conversations with staff, students, and the wider community.



Southeast School Singers Perform at the UCONN Neag School of Education Graduation

The Southeast Singers, a group of twenty-eight third and fourth graders, performed at the UCONN Neag School of Education graduation on Sunday, May 6. They were joined by music education graduates and performed the National Anthem and a selection titled Give us Hope. The Southeast Singers, under the direction of Southeast music teacher Kate Smallidge, meet weekly during recess to rehearse.



Goodwin School Holds Exhibition Night at Ballard Institute of Puppetry Third grade students at Goodwin School engaged in a problem-based learning experience that began with the question: Why do people tell stories? Led by teachers Nancy Titchen, Angela Jankowski, and Mary Lee Geary, the students studied a variety of stories from ancient myths to modern day favorites. They then wrote their own stories and created a visual display using a crankie box, a simple device that displays a long roll of pictures one frame at a time. This work included collaboration with technology education students from Windsor High School and puppetry masters from UCONN. An exhibition of the work was presented at the Ballard Institute of Puppetry Black Box Theater on March 29.

Important Dates



Last Day of School 2017-18:

Friday, June 22

First Day of School 2018-19:

Thursday, August 30

Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education



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