

**SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

to the

**Clark Pleasant Board of School Trustees**

by the

**Clark-Pleasant Long Range Facilities Task Force**

and

**Educational Services Company**

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in cooperation with

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**Recommendation**—In consideration of the sense of urgency and the needs identified by the Clark Pleasant Long Range Task Force, the original Option B recommended by the Task Force, and the available debt leeway available to the Clark Pleasant School Corporation, Option B Revised as described in the following report is recommended as the preferred set of options for the Board’s consideration and action.

The task force also recommends regular, ongoing, periodic analysis of the Long Range Facilities Plan. It strongly urges the Board of Education to re-evaluate the facilities needs of the school corporation on an annual basis and to engage community members in regular, significant dialogue regarding the effectiveness of the long range plan. A formal assessment of needs and modifications to the plan should occur no later than 2008.

### *Introduction*

**Task Force**— A 50-member long range facilities task force of community and staff members was convened by Superintendent Dr. J. T. Coopman in November 2005 to update the corporation’s long range facilities plan through 2016. Throughout the 2005-06 school year approximately 35 core members of the task force met twice monthly to review projected student enrollments, school capacities, financial information and the school corporation’s program priorities. The task force also conducted two community forums to discuss issues and strategies associated with the rapidly growing student enrollment and providing facilities to accommodate that growth.

The charge to the task force was to recommend an update to the school corporation’s current ten-year facilities plan to accommodate the growing school enrollment. The plan needed to be cost effective in relation to the corporation’s debt capacity and affordable with respect to the tax impact of such debt for school construction.

The approach of the task force was to seek consensus on both issues and options within the task force and at the community forum discussions. The intent of the task force was to provide the Board of School Trustees with information that will enable it be adaptive and strategic as it deals with the dynamics of rapidly growing enrollments and the potential for significant programmatic changes, particularly at the high school level.

### *Task force issues and considerations*

Several issues confronted the task force during its deliberations.

The explosive growth of student enrollment over the past ten years and the prospects of even greater growth during the next ten year period

The severe facility shortages the school corporation will face within the next three years; first at the high school but following rapidly at the intermediate level (grades 5 – 6) and the middle school (grades 7 – 8)

The priority for providing additional school facilities to continually improve the academic excellence of the school corporation and provide adequate space in the face of rapid growth of student enrollments

The concern for maintaining a safe environment for students, staff and community and the quality of community life during a period of rapid growth

The limited tax base to support needed facilities—the growth rate of the tax base is not growing proportionally with the increase in student enrollments largely because almost all of the increase in the school corporation tax base is the result of residential building that does not keep pace with the per capita increase in enrollment

The serious consequences of actions by legislative bodies, state education agencies, and local planning commissions for fast growing entities such as Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation. These actions often increase costs without

increasing the ability to finance those costs; there is a need for stronger and more effective dialogue with those entities.

The frustrations resulting from the lack of control by the Clark-Pleasant community over many of those actions and deliberations

The impact of all-day Kindergarten that will increase both operating and facilities costs for a school corporation that is already working hard to keep up with enrollment growth

The rapidly changing demographic profile of the school corporation that creates more diverse student needs and places heavier demands on both facilities and programs

The need for greater dialogue among community members about the complex choices facing the corporation using a “both/and” approach: both greater adaptation in such areas as modular classrooms, alternate student schedules and different use of existing instructional spaces, and more facilities at all levels

### *Background information*

The task force considered a ten-year enrollment projection conducted by a professional demographer based on students already enrolled in the corporation, birth rates and new students resulting from residential development.

Some key demographic findings included student enrollment growth of 73 per cent over the past ten years and the likelihood that it could double over the coming ten years if the factors feeding the current high enrollment growth continue. The greatest area of projected growth is in grades 9 – 12. Many of those students are already in the system at lower grade levels.

From 1990 through 1999 the school corporation experienced an increase of 2,500 new homes. In the next five years from 2000 – 2004 an additional 2,500 homes were constructed. Based on development trends in the school corporation approximately 6,100 single and multi-family units could be built in the next ten years.

Capacities for school buildings were calculated at both optimal and maximum levels. Even when maximum capacity levels are considered, additional spaces will be needed for grades 9 – 12 by 2008-09, for grades 5 – 6 by 2009-10 and for grades 7 – 8 by 2010-11. A new elementary school is scheduled to open the beginning of the 2007-08 school year. However by 2011-12 space will be needed for elementary students as well.

Despite community interest in smaller high schools and building new facilities in place of using modular classrooms or alternate schedules, a review of school corporation financial capacity and facility operating costs caused the task force to turn from “either one or the other” considerations to “both new facilities and other” alternatives.

Two smaller high schools

Based on responses from community members adding a second small high school would have been the preferred strategy for satisfying enrollment growth in grades 9 - 12. However, the task force also determined that it is not feasible to open a second high school because of increased operating costs.

One new single building high school at a new location

A second strategy considered was a new high school at a new location, converting the existing high school into a middle school and converting the existing middle school into a second intermediate school. The task force determined that the school corporation does not have the debt capacity to build a new 3,300 student high school to accommodate the projected 100 per cent increase in enrollment in grades 9 – 12 over the next ten years and still be able to concurrently meet the other facility needs in grades K – 4, 5 – 6 and 7 – 8.

*Options considered*

**Option A**

Build a new middle school and eventually convert it to a large single building high school for 3,300 students

Convert WCHS to a middle school

Total estimated initial project costs: \$175 million

**Option B**

Convert Whiteland ES to an intermediate school and keep WCHS at its site

Build a new middle school and convert CPMS to a ninth grade center

Total estimated initial project costs \$141 million

**Option C**

Convert Whiteland ES to high school space and keep WCHS at its site

Build a new intermediate school and a new middle school and convert CPMS to a ninth grade center

Total estimated initial project costs \$164 million

In each of these scenarios there is also an undetermined cost for modular classrooms to accommodate increasing enrollments until construction of additional facilities is completed and in the case of WCHS, improvements of core support spaces. These additional costs will further impact the available bonding capacity of the school corporation during the ten-year planning period under consideration.

### *Task force conclusions*

The task force thoroughly deliberated and analyzed information critical to establishing a ten-year strategic facilities plan. Task force members realized there may be better options—these were not the ultimate options—only the optimum options based on the projected information and needs at that point in time. The data continually change and the decision making process the Board of School Trustees faces is dynamic and requires constant re-evaluation.

The task force considered seven criteria related to costs, perceived community acceptance, debt level required and tax impact, highest and best use of existing facilities, risk that unexpected changes will adversely affect implementing the option, safety, and the transitions from school to school and years spent in modular classrooms for students.

In May 2006 the task force members recommended Option B as the best option for several reasons including the following:

- Lower initial costs
- Smaller albeit more frequent increases in taxes over the years
- Best use of existing facilities by converting to other uses that relieve capacity requirements
- Minimizing transitions for students from building to building with a minimum of modular classrooms at lower grade levels.

The task force also had some concerns for Option B:

- Low levels of net debt capacity during some years
- The need to expand the core facilities at WCHS as classrooms were added for increased enrollment

Following the conclusion of the task force deliberations in June 2006 the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation issued bonds for the current construction project for West Elementary School as planned. The Corporation was required to increase the bond issue by \$1.2 million because of increased site development and construction costs. The additional \$1.2 million resulted in a projected negative debt leeway (net debt capacity) in 2008 and again in 2011 for the recommended Option B.

To accommodate that negative debt capacity while still honoring the rationale underlying the task force recommendation, the administration and architects modified Option B to satisfy the need for facilities as follows:

### **Option B Revised**

- Build a new 1,600 middle school with a core for 2,100 students and an adjacent intermediate school for 500 students to share the core facilities
- Convert CPMS to a ninth grade center
- Total estimated initial project costs: \$142 million

A description of Option B Revised is attached as Appendix A.

**Urgency**—the Board faces an urgent and critical timeline. The data and process are dynamic and not static. The rapid changes increase the demands on the school corporation’s facilities and consequently the need for Board decisions that are strategic, proactive and timely. By the beginning of the 2008 – 09 school year Whiteland Community High School is projected to be above maximum capacity and the following year (2009 – 10) Clark-Pleasant Intermediate School will also be above maximum capacity.

New facilities will require from 30 to 36 months to complete. For that reason the Board must review the information provided, consider these and other options, and then act decisively to set the strategies for meeting the facilities needs of the school corporation.

**Strategic thinking**—the decisions the Board must make soon means deciding on high-leverage actions that resolve the needs related to a rapidly growing enrollment while continuing to evaluate changing program needs, especially at the high school level.

These decisions may also involve abandoning some programs and practices that interfere with reaching for excellence in the school corporation and do not add value to the quality of life in the community. Such thinking involves considering future-oriented decisions, acting on them and then standing by them even in the face of antagonistic short term interests; e.g. parents who might object to modular classrooms even though in the long run using the modular classrooms temporarily enables the school corporation to afford needed facilities sooner.

**Other factors**—the Board’s decisions and the urgency surrounding them are affected by other factors often out of its control. It has no legal control over different zoning, development and taxing bodies that affect commercial and residential development and the associated tax revenues generated by those developments within the school corporation.

Decisions by the State legislature affect facilities needs, program requirements and the capacity to fund such programs; e.g. instituting all-day Kindergarten will affect the need for facilities, and both operating costs and instructional staff costs for those facilities. The changing nature of American high schools and the demands for a high performing work force are also creating the need for significant program changes.

Community attitudes toward such things as using existing facilities differently, increases in taxes to pay for renovated and new facilities, using modular classrooms, altering the school calendar, and other similar adaptations will affect the Board as it makes important decisions related to providing adequate school facilities over the next few years.

**Opportunity for proactive thinking**—sometimes rapid growth stymies the ability of corporations to plan and improve. This cannot be the case at Clark-Pleasant Community Corporation. With growth the opportunity exists to plan intentionally and deliberately for improvement. The current dilemmas should only increase the resolve of the Board, the administration and the community at large to become more future-oriented and proactive. The opportunities to plan for new facilities and improved programs served by those facilities can become the stepping stones for excellence and a greater commitment to school and community collaboration.

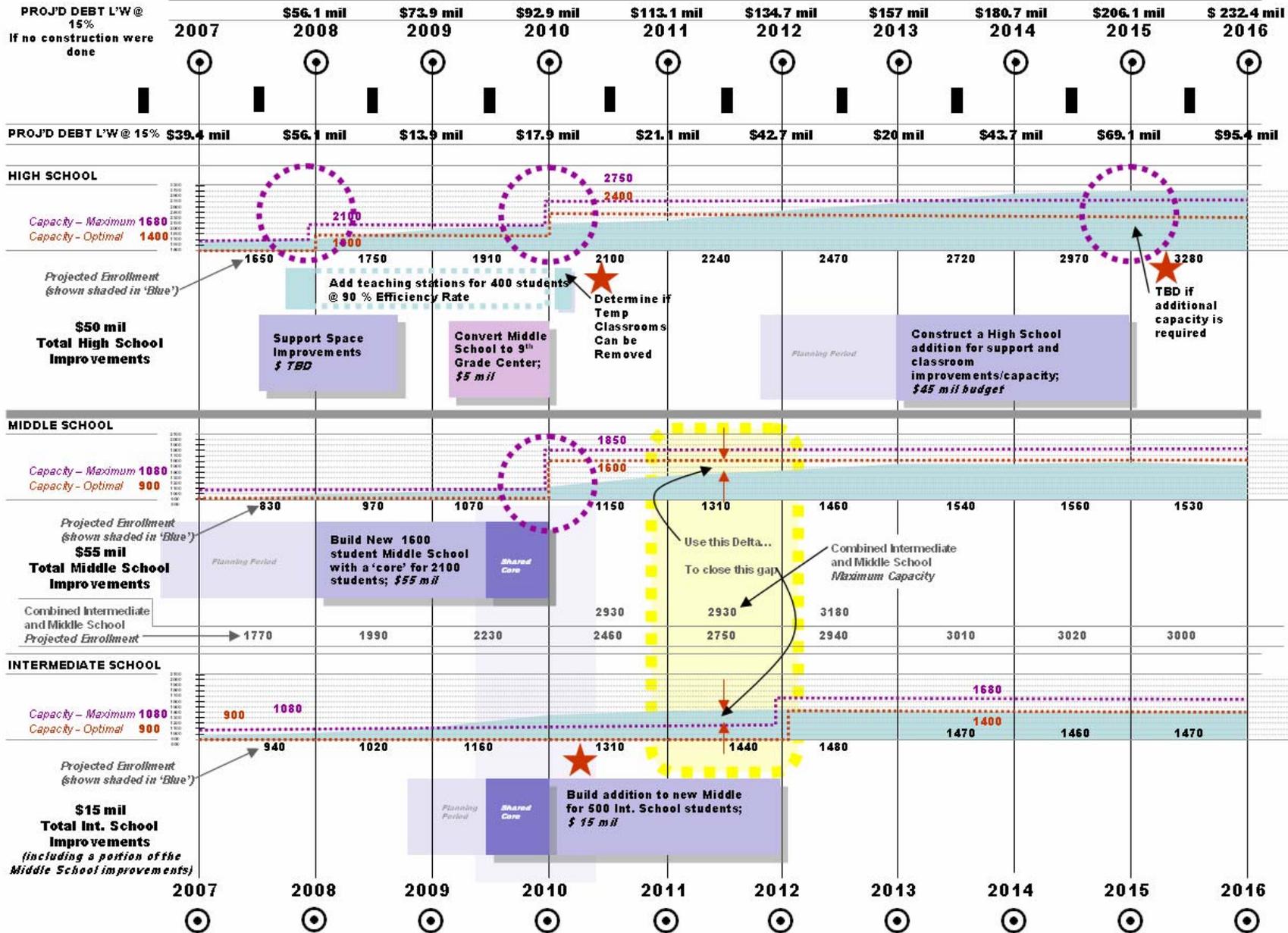
The recognition and interest in the dilemmas faced by the school corporation may also create opportunities for membership on planning commissions, legislative lobbying, continuing community dialogue, influence with state agencies, implementing new and adaptive educational strategies, and increasing cooperation with other regional and state education agencies. These opportunities coupled with intentional planning and deliberate resolve for continuous improvement will greatly aid the goal of being a high performance school corporation in a community that increasingly supports and expects excellence.

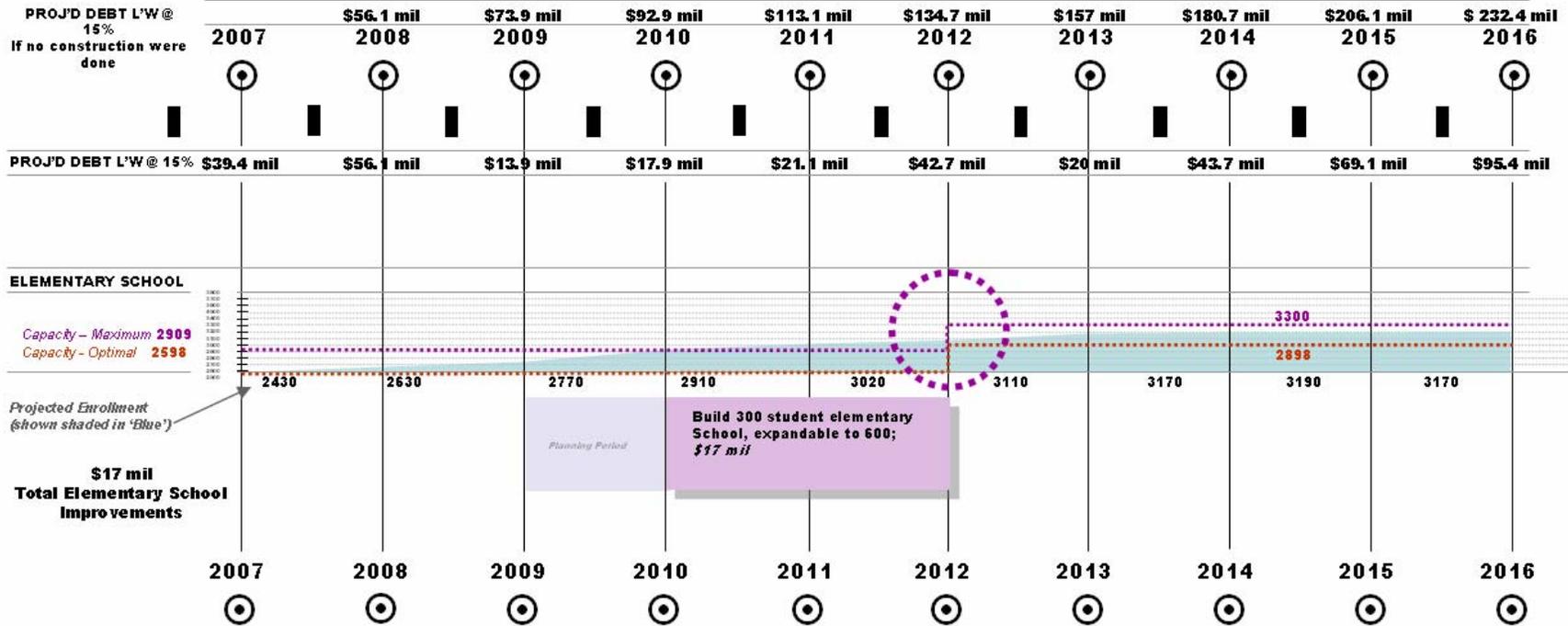
**Future service**—the responsibilities of the 2005-06 Long Range Facilities Task Force were concluded in June 2006. However, the members remain highly aware of the needs facing the school corporation. Furthermore, the members are strongly committed to strategic options such as those proposed. Their services are available for future analysis, dialogue, planning and other activities to help the Board of School Trustees and administration in the continuing effort to provide adequate facilities that support academic excellence for the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation.

**APPENDIX A**

**Option B Revised**

**(Courtesy of CSO Schenkel-Shultz Architects)**





### Classroom Capacities

PK - 1, 20 opt., 22 max  
 2 - 3, 22 opt., 25 max  
 4, 25 opt., 28 max  
 5 - 12, 25 opt., 30 max

### Average Building Area per Student (new construction)

K - 4, 145 to 150 sf  
 Intermediate, 150 to 155 sf  
 Middle, 175 to 180  
 High, 190 to 200

### DLGF Construction Costs (new construction)

K - 4, \$140/sf  
 Intermediate, \$146/sf  
 Middle, \$146/sf  
 High, \$157/sf

### Other Cost Factors:

Project Related Non-construction Costs (soft costs): @ 25 to 30% of Construction Costs  
 Escalation: @ average of 3% per year

### Temporary Classroom Capacities

Elementary: average of 22 opt., 26 max  
 Int., Middle and High School: 25 opt., 30 max