



# Inspiring Excellence

Berea City School District: Berea • Brook Park • Middleburg Heights

## District Facility Master Plan

By Carolyn Staskiewicz and Kerrienne Smith, DeJONG

In January 2007, DeJONG was accepted as the contractor to help guide the process of creating a Facility Master Plan for the Berea City School District. A capacity analysis was conducted and other data, including enrollment, was collected. Enrollment projections were completed, and were compared to the district's facility capacities. It was determined that the district is under capacity by approximately 1,600 seats. Since enrollment is projected to continue declining, this number will continue to increase unless the district "right sizes" its facility inventory.

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The Berea City School District has experienced a 7% decline in student enrollment over the past ten years, with an enrollment of 7,638 (including preschool) for the 2007-2008 school year. The district, like many changing suburban school districts, is wrestling with how best to address an aging infrastructure, as well as declining student enrollment that is expected to continue for at least the next ten years.

In August 2007, a Steering Committee was formed to facilitate the decision-making process and to create a Facility Master Plan. This must be an inclusive process. It is an opportunity for a community to come together to determine how educational facilities can be an impetus for change and improvement for everyone. At the end of this process, the district and Board of Education will receive recommendations that provide clear direction on how the district should address facilities to meet the changing needs of the community and to achieve the district's educational goals.

The Steering Committee was presented with background information about the district which included demographics, housing, live birth data, historical & projected enrollment, the capacity analysis, and facility data to develop the questionnaire used at the first Community Dialogue. Based on the results of this first dialogue, an educational framework was developed to serve as a foundation, or a set of planning assumptions, for development of facility options and solutions (see page 2). To be successful, a plan requires collaboration

and a collective buy-in to its development and completion within the district and surrounding communities. The educational framework for the Berea City School District Long Range Facility Master Plan was then developed using the results and feedback from 85 individuals and 15 groups at Community Dialogue #1, held October 18, 2007 at Polaris Career Center, and 730 submissions from the subsequent online questionnaire.



Photograph by Dave Cornelius

**More than 200 community residents participated in the second Community Dialogue held at Polaris in November.**

On November 29, 2007, a second Community Dialogue was held at the Polaris Career Center to get feedback on facility options that were developed with the Facility Master Plan Steering Committee. More than 215 parents, staff members, and community residents attended. Participants were also presented with background information about the district, including the educational framework established at the first Community Dialogue, historical and projected enrollments, facility data, and possible bonding scenarios. The questionnaire presented at the Community Dialogue was also posted to the district's website for the following week to gain additional community input. A total of 247 questionnaires were completed through the district's website. The results report contains the facility options presented at the

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Community Dialogue and online, and the results of participants' responses to the individual, group, and web questionnaires. These results are a sampling of community opinions, and will be used as additional data for the Steering Committee to draft recommendations for the Board of Education. The results report can be found on the district's website ([www.berea.k12.oh.us](http://www.berea.k12.oh.us)) by clicking Home > Our District > Facilities Committee. The Steering Committee is currently using the feedback from Community Dialogue #2 to draft recommendations for presentation to the Board of Education in March 2008.

### **Educational Framework**

The following planning assumptions were utilized as the Steering Committee developed specific facility options.

#### **\* General Class Size**

Elementary Schools ... Less than 20 students per teacher  
Middle Schools ..... 21-25 students per teacher  
High Schools..... 21-25 students per teacher

#### **\* School Size**

Elementary Schools ... 400-600 students  
Middle Schools ..... 600-800 students  
High Schools..... 1,000-1,500 students

#### **\* Grade Configuration**

Statistically, the current grade configuration garnered the most support; however, there was significant support for K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and similar variations separating the early childhood grade levels at the elementary level. Therefore, the Steering Committee developed options based on a number of grade configurations.

#### **\* Balance Enrollment**

In order to ensure that enrollments are adequately balanced and appropriately sized, the district should consider consolidating schools and re-drawing boundaries, as well as changing grade configuration before transporting students to where the schools are or locating new buildings where the students are.



Photograph by Dave Cornelius

Participants at the second Community Dialogue completed surveys and held small group discussions.

#### **\* Attendance Boundaries**

When altering school attendance boundaries, it is most important to consider the utilization (enrollment versus capacity) of the buildings, reducing overcrowding, and meeting the needs of a fluctuating student enrollment.

#### **\* School Facility Decisions**

The most important criteria in consideration of school facility decisions is safety and security. Additional criteria include the following.

- Creating equal learning opportunities for all students: the expectation of the Steering Committee is that all schools would operate with the same class sizes, school sizes, special needs services and programs/curriculum based on grade level.
- Utilization of facilities (capacity vs. enrollment)
- Condition of existing facility
- Number of students at the school

#### **\* Community/Outside Programs**

When considering access to Berea City Schools for outside entities, the district should consider additional preschool programs, as well as day-care and childcare. School buildings can be designed for successful community-school partnerships as joint-use facilities.

#### **\* District Administration Building**

The current district Administration Building should be sold or leased. The Long Range Facility Master Plan will develop options that consider where the administration should be re-located.

#### **\* Educational Opportunities**

The district should consider offering new and additional educational opportunities to students, including but not limited to the following:

- World Languages at all levels
- Magnet programs such as science/math or performing arts
- Block scheduling at both high schools
- Year-round schools
- Increased/advanced technology

#### **\* Additional Facility Issues**

As the district moves forward with a building program, all new and renovated buildings should be air conditioned.

*“A civilization  
flourishes when  
people plant trees  
under which they  
will never sit.”*

--Greek Proverb