

Articles about Hubble in Focus on Learning, a newsletter distributed to all District 200 households.

February 2005

Search Continues for New Middle School Site

Plans to build a new middle school in the southwest part of the school district continue, with discussions focusing on site identification and purchase and how partnerships among impacted governmental units can move the project forward. A committee working to implement the Board's plan to build the new school identified potentially available sites last summer. After consultation with the land owners or their representatives few remain viable options. Discussions with those owners have been ongoing with no agreement to date. The City of Warrenville stands ready to buy a school site in or adjacent to Warrenville if a sale/purchase agreement can be successfully negotiated.

Meanwhile, the committee is working on other aspects of implementing the Board's January 2003 decision to build a new middle school. Separate subcommittees are:

- Looking into alternate uses of the Hubble property and the relocation of non-school activities currently held there.
- Talking about the timing of a referendum to finance the new school construction and the potential of including funds to complete the renovation of the Jefferson Preschool.
- Discussing means of informing, involving and seeking feedback from the community on the implementation plans.
- Reviewing the need for attendance boundary changes when the new school is opened.

“The construction of a new middle school in the southwest part of the District remains a high priority for the Board of Education,” Board President Andy Johnson said. “We continue to explore all options that will make the construction of the new school an attractive option for our taxpayers.”

Benefits of New Construction

Estimates show that the cost of a new school is significantly less than the cost of renovating the entire existing building to the same standard as other District schools. In addition, new construction has the following benefits:

- It is designed to accommodate the program rather than fitting the program into a building designed for another purpose. The same program driven design process used in planning the high school renovation and additions will be used for the new middle school.
- It is more energy efficient, saving the District more than \$180,000 a year in energy costs.
- It has flexible space to allow for future program changes.
- It increases opportunities for using technology in the classroom.

- It is less expensive (\$6 to \$8 million depending on land costs) than renovating the entire existing school to the same standard as other schools.
- It offers the potential to partner with other governmental units to increase accessibility to outdoor space.
- It offers a longer usable life span than a renovated building.
- It is more appropriately sized for the program and enrollment.
- It brings a middle school to the southwest part of the school district, closer to most of the population it serves.
- It reduces maintenance and custodial costs as much as \$400,000 a year. (On a recent January day contractors were at Hubble at the same time making plumbing, electrical, heating, and fire alarm repairs.)
- It creates the potential for putting the Hubble property on the tax rolls.

March 2004

Board Identifies Long-Term Plan for New Middle School

A citizen/staff committee will begin meeting in April to recommend how the Board's decision to replace Hubble Middle School should be implemented. The Board voted in January to build a new middle school in the southwest part of the District, but stopped short of identifying a specific site or indicating if the existing Hubble property should be sold and redeveloped. The committee will tackle those issues as well as many others, including:

- how the new school should be funded
- if the Cities of Wheaton and Warrenville are willing to help fund site and construction costs
- the interim solutions that are necessary to ensure that Hubble students are equitably served until a new school is built

The Board chose the option of building a new school over several others, believing that it is in the best long-term interest of students and taxpayers. The cost of renovating the existing building to make it comparable to the District's three other middle schools is estimated at \$42 million, while the cost of building new is projected to cost about \$36 million, including the property purchase.

Building a new school will require a referendum even if the District can generate enough money by selling Hubble and other means to finance the project. State law requires a community to authorize the construction of a new school by referendum.

The Hubble Study Committee will give the Board a status report on its work in October.

November 2003

Planning for the Future of Hubble Middle School

The Board is reviewing information and feedback it received during three public meetings last month as it prepares to make a decision about the long-term use of Hubble Middle School. Architects have estimated it will cost about \$42.3 million to renovate Hubble over a four-year period to the same standard as the other schools in the District. Before making such a financial commitment, the Board has agreed to explore other options and to continue to solicit input from the community.

The District initiated talks with the Cities of Wheaton and Warrentonville more than a year ago to explore the possibility of the two communities working together to redevelop the Hubble property and build a new middle school in Warrentonville. Those talks are continuing, but no decision has been reached on the purchase of land or the sale of the Hubble property. Meanwhile, the District is looking at several other potential sites for a new school.

Only two of the District's 20 operating schools have not had major upgrades in the last 20 years. Hubble is one of them. The school has been serviced as needed, but not renovated. Jefferson School, which is a preschool center, was partially renovated in the early 1990's but awaits complete renovation to bring it to District standards.

The Hubble building was constructed in 1925 when the community authorized the construction of its first high school. It had major additions in the 1950's and 1970's. It remained a high school until 1992 when it was converted to a middle school.

Options for Hubble

- Renovate the existing building
- Sell Hubble and build a new middle school on another site
- Build a new middle school on the existing site
- Build a new middle school on another site and continue to use Hubble for another, as yet unidentified, purpose
- Address only the most critical needs at Hubble

December 2002

Planning for the Future of the Hubble Middle School Building and Property

District 200 is working with the Cities of Wheaton and Warrenville and their respective park districts to explore the potential of the two communities working together to redevelop the Hubble Middle School property and build a new middle school in Warrenville. The discussions include how revenues from Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in both cities might reduce or even eliminate the taxpayer costs associated with the project. Several subgroups are meeting throughout the fall to discuss the feasibility of such a partnership.

“At this point in the discussions, it appears very positive that we can work together to benefit all the taxpayers of District 200, Superintendent Gary T. Catalani said.

The District is considering other options for Hubble as well:

- Renew and renovate Hubble and continue using it as a middle school
- Build a new middle school on the Hubble site.
- Build a new middle school on another site and continue to use the Hubble for other purposes

The cost of building a new middle school and acquiring a site is estimated at \$28 million, much or all of which could be covered by TIF revenues in Wheaton and Warrenville if the communities agree to a partnership. The cost of renewing Hubble and making it comparable to the District’s three other middle schools is estimated at \$34 million. When high school expansion is complete, Hubble will remain as the only school that has not had major renovation in the last 20 years.

As the Board gets more detailed information on the options, it will provide opportunities for public discussion and feedback.

February 2002

Goal 3: Plan for the long-term use of Hubble

Since the Board of Education started work on its long-range facility plan in 1985, major renovations to the Hubble building have been at the bottom of the list. With the decision to expand the two high schools, Hubble is left as the only school that has not had major renovations since 1985. The state has identified about \$16 million in improvements that are required to bring the school into compliance with state building standards. Due to its size, age, and condition, a complete renovation of the building is estimated at \$25 to \$30 million. Before making such an investment in the 76-year-old building, the Board wants to examine its long-term use from both a student and financial perspective. A plan for making such a study will be brought to the Board this year.