



# **Iredell-Statesville Schools**

## ***Facilities & Planning Division***

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### **2011 – 2012 Facilities Task Force**

#### **Executive Summary:**

As school buildings are aging, we face the growing challenge of maintaining the education facilities at a level that enables our teachers to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Facilities issues are important at all educational levels, both in old and new facilities alike. These challenges have been magnified by economic conditions and societal issues both nationally and locally.

Iredell County, the Iredell Statesville School District and Mooresville Graded School District are to be commended for their commitment to meet the challenges, which face our local schools, especially as it relates to facility needs. The expenditure of over two hundred and thirty million dollars to address some of the needs over the past eight years attests to the local government and community support of our school facility needs. This support reflects the overall importance of education in our community. The completion of Phases I, II and all but one project in Phase III has been a successful beginning to the long range plan for the community in relation to educational facilities.

The economic recession over the last four years has resulted in a difficult environment for school facilities. Some of the changes have worked to our advantage; such as a slowing of the fast growth we were experiencing prior to 2008. Most of the changes, however, have resulted in a negative impact on schools. Resources have shrunk drastically yet the needs have increased. New programs implemented require modifications to existing facilities to meet the requirements for quality instruction. The investment in facilities addresses some of the needs, but many new challenges still exist.

A major initiative in the Iredell Statesville School District and Mooresville Graded School District strategic plans is the creation of a Facilities Master Plan (FMP). The purpose

of creating a FMP is to create appropriate, quality learning environments for students and all users of school facilities across the District. This will be a comprehensive, expandable and adaptable ten-year facilities planning model. The FMP enables the districts to align with their current instructional needs; but also review its current facility portfolio to determine necessary adjustments. The FMP will also provide a guide to assist in the development of a comprehensive short; middle and long range capital plan addressing identified facility needs.

Previous task force recommendations resulted in the 2004 – 2010 three phase solution to a number of facility challenges. Credit must be given for the investment of over two hundred thirty million for school facilities by the county. The current facilities task force addresses a different set of issues, but with the same phased approach as the previous FMP.

Current data related to school needs includes new program requirements, deferred maintenance needs, safety and compliance, technology needs, overcrowding, aging buildings and future growth. Data was gathered over the past year from leadership teams, staff administration, community members and maintenance staff. Combined with historical and growth data a large amount of information was combined in a “Facility Audit” document. The data was reviewed to develop a prioritized set of needs for each school in both systems.

The large amount of data to review required that it be dissected into smaller amounts. The county was divided into six geographic districts, with some adjustment based on program commonalities. Subsequently the information was divided within districts by school. Needs which were common to most schools were grouped together into system wide initiatives. Data was rated by the task force and captured by priority. Priorities were ranked for each school in a district through a consensogram. Upon completion of the ranking of the needs for each school the needs were bundled into project recommendations. These projects were discussed and placed according to short, medium and long range status. Finally the prioritized projects across all districts were placed on a ten-year three-phase time line. The phases were balanced based on rough cost estimates, comparative priority ranking and safety / compliance requirements. The final product is the project recommendation document included. This document will cover a ten year cycle, but is a living document and will be revised as new information and needs become apparent.

**Issues and Challenges:**

Deferred maintenance has become a significant challenge for our school systems. The county has improved facilities in the schools significantly over the last decade to address overcrowding, aging buildings and accelerated growth. Currently the insurance coverage for

existing school facilities in just Iredell Statesville schools exceeds five hundred fifty million dollars. Mooresville Graded School District will add another approximately one hundred thirty five million to the capital investment in schools. The industry standard for maintaining any facility in optimum condition for safety and efficiency is approximately two percent to four percent of the value annually. This translates into a minimum maintenance investment of just under fourteen million to an upper limit of just over twenty seven million dollars a year to maintain the facilities in good to excellent condition. Unfortunately we have averaged just over one percent of the value annually which means that a backlog of needed maintenance exists and is growing each year. We continue to repair aging infrastructure in many of our existing older buildings. Some of our facilities are reaching the end of their effective life cycle and need major renovation or replacement. Deferred maintenance has become the primary challenge for our facility departments.

New programs such as the International Baccalaureate, Early College, Career Academy, Alternative programs, Visual Performing Arts and Magnet's require renovation and redesign of existing facilities. Some of these programs have been housed in substandard or inadequate facilities, which need to be replaced, or the program moved to a more appropriate site.

Safety and security of our campuses has been and continues to be of primary importance for the community and school districts. This includes access control and camera surveillance, code compliance, life safety equipment, environmental, ADA compliance and abatement or correction of any identified hazards. Many schools need major upgrades to fire, security and monitoring systems.

Overcrowding is still a problem in some of our schools. We have many extra seats in the system to accommodate growth, however; they are not always where the students are located. Yes redistricting might help in a few instances, but not when the surrounding schools are also limited in space. In some areas of the county we may need to invest in additions or new schools to balance overcrowding and address growth. Currently this focus is mainly in the Southern and Mooresville districts, but is also seen in other schools isolated around the district.

We now live in a technological age. Technology has entered our lives at every level and is now required if we are to prepare our students to compete in the emerging global economy. Currently technology is either inadequate, non existent or out dated in many of the Iredell Statesville schools. Inequities exist in the system due to the cost of technology, the

extensive needs and the variation in schools ability to raise funds. A large investment in technology across the system is necessary to improve infrastructure and bring current technology equally to all students.

**Recommendations:**

The Task Force recommendations address the above identified needs through a Facilities Master Plan included in this document. Iredell Statesville Schools and Mooresville Graded Schools are both included in the final plan recommendations. The plan uses a ten-year cycle with appropriate adjustments to the plan as the economic, educational and socio-political climate changes. The ten-year cycle is divided into Phases IV, V and VI. Each of the phases has defined years but not set dates. This is due to the fluidity of the economy and funding sources. The needs do not change, but the critical factor for implementation will be the funding availability. Ultimately the estimated investment over the ten-year cycle will be approximately two hundred and fifty nine million or an average of twenty five million each year. The current plan of Phase I, II and III over an eight-year period cost approximately two hundred and thirty two million. This is an average of twenty nine million annually so the estimates are within reach.

The 2012 Facilities Task Force appreciates the trust and encouragement of the Iredell Statesville Board of Education, Mooresville Graded Board of Education and the Iredell County Board of Commissioners. This FMP is submitted to enable the leaders of our county and community to better understand the needs and plan for the future of K -12 educational facilities.