

Alternative High School Facility Meeting

3/10/09

Present: Kim Davis, Kristen Reed, Judy Card, Shane Christensen, Sally Heaberlin, Ciel Friess, Drea Boyd, Doug Neppl

I. Facilities Implications of Best Practice

- A) Gym/Multi-Purpose/Performance Space/Fitness Area (Big enough for whole school)
- B) Science Labs
- C) Kitchen for foods
- D) Bigger Library
- E) Technology Lab
- F) More stalls in bathroom
- G) Some lockers
- H) Student services/support area (counselors, caseworkers, administration, community service, career/job resource person, AEA, etc.)
- I) Conference Space
- J) Commons Area
- K) Classrooms with walls and doors
- L) A few open areas for team teaching (flexible, with partitions)
- M) Parking
- N) Access to Public Transportation
- O) Good Location (Southeast area of West Des Moines)
- P) Small Size
- Q) Staff Lounge/Workroom
- R) Natural Light
- S) Good Temperature Control
- T) Vocational/Technical
- U) Daycare with reliable workers
- V) Circle Room
- W) Not hand-me-down furniture, etc.
- X) Art Room
- Y) Multi-Media: "Creating" area
- Z) School Store

II. Walnut Creek Pro/Con

A) WCC Staff Input 2/20/09

1. What classes/programming do we not offer because of our facility, that you wish we did?

Vocational programming

PE in alternative form – may be as an elective

Art facilities – a kiln, photo shop

Music space-where kids could play instruments/guitar/keyboard, etc...Recording studio

Career, voc-tech training (some sore of specific niche-print shop, for example)

Theater (a stage)

Gym for more physical activity-wellness approach

Science Lab-we can't do lab work because of the lack of ventilation, etc...

Kitchen

Garden greenhouse

Flexible space for teaming

Teen Center

Departments together-close proximity

Community services sharing: health center, mental health/therapeutic space, daycare

Wide open spaces-kids are cramped on our current building-teachers can't circulate

Lunchroom

A place designated to conduct restorative circles

2. Does our current facility meet your needs? If not, what do we need that we do not have?

No-Consensus

Better wiring – TV's, etc.

Solid walls and doors

Need more space in my classroom-can't circulate to assist students easily

I like students to get up and move around or to have a comfortable circle area as part of our lessons, but that is difficult in such a cramped space

I would also like a performance/stage area

Perhaps caseworkers in middle of building

Main office with more storage/desks that kids can't sit at – however, kids should still be able to interact w/office staff

Office space for community service that is more visible

We need lots of natural light (our kids work better in it)

Study space for safe study

Dedicated computer lab

Flexible, functional technology

Confidential space for therapeutic interaction

Drama space

More bathrooms

Sunshine VAN-A vehicle we could use to go get kids/take kids home

Facility needs to be close to public transportation-kids take the city bus to get to school

Lunchroom – no room to eat-kids eat on the floor

Mounted projectors in all rooms

More desktop computers in classroom

Better signal on laptops (doesn't go through)

Parking lot too narrow-need a bigger lot

No school bus access at current site-kids walk across to get on at Hillside

Office setup – offers privacy for confidential info (office staff should still be available to students)

Don't want an institutional look. Want it to be warm, casual and friendly.

Too many hiding places in maze of hallways in current site.

3. What is the perfect class size? How many students do you believe we should serve in our school? How big is too big?

10-12 per class

Students in our school in a perfect world 150-175

Too big – anything over 200

Lots of research says that 250 or under is ideal (whether alternative or not) for high school.

“Perfect class size” depends on if it’s pure or not. It’s nice to have at least 6 regularly attending students in a single course so they can do group activities. It becomes hard to keep them all on task at about 14 or 15 students.

200-DOE standard; 10-15 reg. ed. & 3-6 sped

12 – gen. ed.

144

20 kids in a class if packet work-maybe have packet programming (this could be more of a drop in situation for kids with extenuating life circumstances) and then more interactive programming for all the rest of the kids.

Online learning during the day

4. Would you like to see our next site include the following spaces? (Results are based on what the 4 groups said)

A. Theater/Auditorium Yes, yes, yes, yes

B. Gym Yes, yes, yes, yes

C. Weight room Yes – but supervised & locked, yes, yes

D. Kitchen Yes, yes, yes, yes

E. Lunch room Yes, yes, yes, yes

F. Commons area Yes, yes, yes, yes

G. A “real” library Yes, yes, yes, yes

H. More conference room type spaces Yes, yes, yes, yes

Other:

Art Rooms

Music Rooms

Daycare facility

Student center that is off the beaten path for kids to sit and visit

Art

Computer

Art room w/pottery wheels

Music room

5. What would you like this initial study group to consider as they are making a recommendation about whether or not the board should take action at this time?

Questions/ideas:

How big can we get and still remain an alternative school?

If we have more space, will we get more students? If so, do we also get more teachers as opposed to more students per class?

Rex Mathes will not work – the building is too small. No parking. By the junior high. Would have to renovate on a huge scale – and that would be costly.

Maximum size....it won't do any good to expand our program over 200 or 250 if that's the point at which high schools start to lose effectiveness.

Access to public transportation.

Review existing alternative programs with innovative programming

Explore community space – sharing programs for PE/nature/culinary/music/drama/etc.

Build knowledge base on alternative ed. best practice

Must preserve the alternative feel of our space

b) WCC Student Feedback 3/6/09

Pros

- It's small
- No Doors
- No set classrooms
- Location= In a neighborhood

- Size means everyone knows everybody
- Some rooms have walls and doors
- Alternative feel—open/decorated/_supportive
- Not a lot of people
- Not too small
- It is a different environment with open space as far as room configuration (specifically not the standard desks all in a row and teacher up front set up)
- School store
- Allowed to eat and drink in class
- Classes
- Not actual classrooms with doors
- Single bathrooms
- Like the non traditional classrooms (not four walls and door)
- Like not feeling closed in-more open
- Relaxed, casual atmosphere
- The lobby
- The "feel of the building"
- Good air conditioning
- Close to home
- Not Valley
- Comfortable environment - not huge
- Unique rooms
- No desks
- Pretty windows
- Stage
- High ceilings
- Graduation wall-hand prints on wall
- Homey Feel
- Tables and chairs, not desks
- Big windows
- Openness
- Location
- Small, community feeling
- Cozy, homey
- Neighborhood/Neighbors
- Doesn't feel/look like a school
- Comfortable

Cons

- Old
- Crowded
- Smells
- Bad ventilation
- Asbestos
- Need better library
- Need real classrooms
- Gym
- All rooms need walls and doors
- Lobby is too small
- Bathrooms too small/smelly
- Parking lot too small/not functional
- Some classrooms too small
- Needs more space
- Not enough lunch space (echoed by nearly everyone)
- Needs a bigger commons area
- Little space
- No lunch room
- Not enough room to sit
- Run down ex: carpet, walls, ceiling
- Don't like not having walls/doors
- Temperature control upstairs (too hot or cold, no air moving)
- Need more space (gets too crowded during passing/ lunch time)
- Needs better actual classrooms
- Needs new ceilings
- Too small
- Not a school building
- Bathrooms suck - not enough plus they're dirty and stinky
- Bldg could be a little bigger
- Lobby too small
- No walls
- Not enough bathrooms
- Don't like unisex bathroom
- No lunchroom
- No student center
- Classrooms w/o walls
- Small lobby

- No lunch room
- No commons area
- Bathrooms
- Need bigger library
- Need more space
- Need bigger computer lab
- Need common room for kids to hang out and talk when not in class (earn right to be there with good behavior)
- Need garden/Outside area
- Need more/better furniture

What does our current building not have, that you wish it did?

- Swing sets/outside active area
- Auditorium
- Daycare--reliable workers
- Bigger lobby area to eat/serve lunch in and as a student area
- More bathrooms (something I hadn't really thought of, but they said they are tired of waiting in line and then getting in trouble for taking too long)
- Woodworking/shop/utility class
- Boxing area/gym to do physical things in if you want to (not required)
- A music/performance area that allows them to play throughout the day
- A commons area/lunchroom
- More room
- Lunch room
- Playground (blacktop, field space, swings)
- Need it's own bus system
- Lunch room
- Common area
- Gym
- Vending machine for when the school store is not open
- Bigger classrooms
- A lunch room
- A cafeteria so our meals would be prepared on site
- A student lounge
- A gymnasium or weight room
- A stage or auditorium
- More classrooms so we can have more varied classes offered
- Not VHS
- Bigger cafeteria

- Punching bags
- Boxing ring
- Small auditorium
- Lunch room
- Bigger lobby
- Fozzball
- Ping pong
- Pool
- Video games
- Student lounge
- Better air and heat regulation
- Fresh air
- Lunchroom with small tables
- Gym but optional PE
- Work out room
- Walls and doors in classrooms
- More and better bathrooms with stalls
- Gym
- Lunchroom
- Coffee shop
- Science lab
- Foot stools
- Rec room
- Computer lab (not a classroom)
- Art room
- Shelter (for kids w/o a place to stay)
- Kitchen
- Big library
- Air conditioning

c) **Additional Concerns from ALT HS Committee:**

Age (built in 1924)

ADA Compliance

Heating/Cooling

Flooding/Sewer

Kitchen needs totally redone

Bathrooms need totally redone

Windows rotting/not energy efficient

Insulation bad (caseworkers can hear other caseworkers)
Not designated/private meeting spaces
Small SPED rooms

III. Clegg Park Pro/Con

Pros:

Space—Classroom, Office, Meeting Rooms
Windows (both to outside and in building)
Gym
MPR
In Neighborhood
Parking
Wired for Technology
Bathrooms
Staff lounge
Lots of storage
Partnerships with community in basement (DMACC classes, daycare?)
Library
Potential to make changes

Cons:

Enough Parking?
Bussing?
Some bathrooms will need updated
A lot of exits
Science Lab
Vocational?
Not enough offices in one space for “hub of services” (counselors, caseworkers, administration, community service, etc), similarly, where would the entrance be if hub of services was in library area?
Would need to add Kitchen equipment
No performance space—stage, auditorium, etc.
Supervision Concerns

Next Meet March 23, 4:15 at LRC: Agenda—Alternative Sites