

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Community Forum on Facility Improvement Planning

Public Comment

Support for new facility for Walnut Creek Campus. It is not bricks and mortar that make the building. Staff make up the heart and soul of the school. There are many space issues in the current building. Students use the church across the parking lot when they need to gather in a large group. My son graduated from Walnut Creek two years ago. (Julie Doy)

I am a Valley senior involved in band and orchestra and plan to major in music in college. The orchestra and choir rooms and auditorium do work now, but they could be much better. The auditorium is not on par with the quality of the fine arts program. Acoustics need improvement and seating is inadequate for the number of people who come to concerts. (Travis Patton)

Comments from the perspective of a drama parent: The auditorium looks "unimportant" compared to other spaces at Valley. The school is a fine arts leader in the state, but the facilities do not match. We can create revenue by renting out the facility for community use.

With the focus of the core curriculum on K-5, is there any thought to moving sixth grade to junior highs? This would present cost efficiencies. Significant remodels would only be needed at Stilwell and Indian Hills (Tara Wirta)

From a fine arts advocate: A significant number of students are involved in the fine arts at Valley. There is not enough space in the current auditorium and there may be code violations. Not enough rehearsal or performance space in the Valley auditorium. (Drew McLellan)

Valley Orchestra Guild President: Support more rehearsal space in the orchestra area. (Marta Patton)

Small Group Discussion

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST FACILITY NEEDS IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?

During the school day

- Kindergarten rooms – need room to accommodate all sections in the building
- Special education needs to accommodate the needs of all children and the adaptive equipment
- Parking at elementary schools
- Improve emphasis on science and math in elementary

- There is a problem when the three orchestras practice at the same time – space issue. The classroom and rehearsal space is not large enough. This is the same for vocal students. Band has plenty of space for rehearsal but could also use a good performance space. Having band on one side of the school and orchestra and vocal on the other is not good. Not good changing space or adequate restroom space.
- If a new performing arts center could be on or near the Valley campus, this would be better. This would also provide rehearsal space. Transportation to an auditorium off campus would be a challenge. The drama program would have to learn to do shows on the road. Rehearsals would need to be at the auditorium too.
- There are no direct outside exits from the current auditorium.
- If an arts facility was off campus it would take time to accomplish this.
- The drama room is cramped and impacts the learning experience. Catwalks have no bars on them.
- Choir practices in the orchestra room which limits orchestra practice in there.
- There are 20 students in the AP Music Theory Class and only 10 computers are available. Only half the class can be on a computer at one time. The computers are located in the director's office.
- If it is a choice between no new auditorium and having it on the city/school campus, I'd like it at the city-school campus.
- If the city and school built an auditorium together, who would get priority for its use?

Outside of school hours (community use)

- Fine arts being built off Valley's campus.
- Same problems as during the school day. Sometimes a guest performer is brought in for an evening performance.
- It would be good to have a facility for all students in the district or for the community.
- It could be rented out for revenue. This would attract groups (professional companies) to rent it for performances. If it is a wonderful facility, people will want to come.
- Jazz festivals, etc. could be held there and would help fund the programs.
- Passionate fine arts parents would be willing to help raise the money. Alumni parents would also help.
- It would be nice to have something smaller than the Civic Center to attract groups to Central Iowa.
- Handicap accessibility would need to be addressed as well as safety.
- It is great that there are different groups looking at needs for different students.
- The auditorium could also be used as a gallery.

How would you like to be engaged in the facility planning process?

No responses from the discussion groups

Written comments from individuals attending the March 11 forum

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST FACILITY NEEDS IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?

During the school day

- Better space allocation and planning for needs of special education program
- Science labs – new emphasis on “bricks and mortar” of our children’s education: science and math and technology
- Parking and flow of traffic

- At high school (Valley)

Outside of school hours (community use)

No comments from individuals attending the forum

How would you like to be engaged in the facility planning process?

- Forums
- Would like to serve on site-based committee at Westridge

- I’m not sure how I can help, but I’d be interested.