

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA

CCPS MEMORANDUM # 78 (2007)

November 13, 2007
Minor revisions November 14, 2007

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: MARCUS J. NEWSOME
SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: FIRST REVIEW OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) – FY2009-FY2014

PERTINENT INFORMATION

The Chesterfield County Charter Section 5.2 specifies that **"No later than March 1 of each year, the Superintendent of Chesterfield County Public Schools shall submit to the County Administrator his estimate of projected revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year in a form requested by the County Administrator as well as a six-year capital improvement program."** As in previous years, the County Administrator has asked for the Capital Improvement Program in December.

Key points derived from the analysis that forms the basis of this report are as follows:

- The September 30, 2007 enrollment of 58,414 was 484 students higher than last year.
- From 1996 to 2000 enrollment growth averaged approximately 400 students per year. From 2001 to 2006 the average growth was 1,100 students per year. The fall of 2007 represents a significant departure from the growth rates of the last six years. Notwithstanding this lower growth rate, analysis of enrollment trends indicates that in the near term significant annual growth will continue. **Attachment A** provides enrollment data at the elementary, middle, and high school level for the past twenty-five years. **Attachment B** provides data on functional capacity, enrollment and mobile classrooms as of fall of 2007.
- As future enrollment patterns are monitored, planning efforts will continue to focus on both: 1) the construction of new schools and the expansion of existing ones to relieve overcrowding in targeted areas of the county, and 2) the renovation and improvement of aging facilities throughout the county.

ENROLLMENT TREND ANALYSIS

The rate of the enrollment growth that the school division experienced during the last six years is significantly higher than it was in previous years. Significant enrollment increases were experienced at the high school level and accounted for approximately 50% of the total growth. This was largely due to the significant influx of elementary students in the early 1990s. For example, in 1992 growth at the elementary level accounted for forty-six percent (46%) of the increase of more than 1,300 students. From 1998 to 2002, elementary enrollment declined in two of the five years, with elementary growth accounting for only about 16% of total growth in the fall of 2002. Based on those elementary numbers, within the next five to seven years we could see overall growth moderate as those students move through the system.

There are two primary factors that affect school enrollment over time: (1) annual kindergarten enrollment and (2) growth within cohorts over time. From September of 1994 to September of 2004, kindergarten enrollment had actually declined by 185 students. However, in the fall of 2005 the enrollment grew by 135 students and additional 150 in the fall of 2006. Kindergarten enrollment this fall remained stable when compared to the prior year. In addition, the average number of births over the last four years has increased by more than 150 annually when compared to the previous four-year average.

The second factor is the growth within cohorts over time (year to year) as each group of students progresses through school. Depending on the survival rate from year to year, the grade level enrollment will either increase or decrease. To illustrate, there were 3,676 students in the 1993 fifth grade cohort. The size of this group when they started in kindergarten in 1988 was 3,144. That group grew by 532 students from kindergarten to fifth grade. By comparison, the current fifth grade class contains 4,333 students. When this group entered kindergarten in 2002, they had 3,725 students, an increase of 608 students from kindergarten to fifth grade.

The enrollment trends are monitored regularly. Significant changes in the long-range trends can be brought about by such factors as changes in the economy, major new residential developments, changes in interest rates, and major corporate relocations. In addition, road-building projects like the extension of Route 288 through northwestern Chesterfield County can have major impact on enrollment over time. Yet another factor that attracts new residents is the outstanding reputation of the schools and programs in the county. Funds are identified in this plan for new schools and classroom additions that are anticipated to be necessary to accommodate current students and projected growth.

EVALUATION/ANALYSIS

The County Administrator provides to the Superintendent annually a projection of the funding available to the School Board for capital needs. This funding consists of "pay-as-you-go" dollars referred to as the CIP Reserve, cash proffers negotiated at the time of rezoning to help defray the capital costs associated with the resultant development, and the capacity to issue general obligation bonds of the County. The capacity is determined in accordance with fiscal policies of the Board of Supervisors. Debt service on bonds issued by the County on behalf of the School Board is included in the School Board's operating budget adopted annually. For FY2009-2014, funds available through the CIP Reserve total \$68,128,600; cash proffers are estimated at \$10,348,600 (representing a significant decline from previous estimates); and debt capacity is \$169,282,500. In addition, funds are transferred to the CIP from other sources as needed for specific projects. In FY2009, these funds include state technology funds of \$1,851,500, and food service funds of \$1,361,000.

In the winter of 2003 and spring of 2004, staff completed a school-by-school review of the adequacy of facilities based upon three major factors: (1) overcrowding, (2) special program needs, and (3) the age and condition of the facility. Based on the School Board's policy, possible solutions to these conditions included portable classrooms, alternative space, relocation of special programs, changes in attendance zones, additions and/or renovations to the facility, and the construction of new facilities. The capital improvements included for funding in FY2005-2011 were those schools where the most appropriate solution was addition, renovation, or new construction. Based on that analysis, a bond referendum was held in November of 2004. The referendum, overwhelmingly approved by voters, included construction of two new elementary schools, two new middle schools, and a replacement for Clover Hill High School. In addition, renovations and additions were included at thirteen existing schools. The projects included in this proposed Capital Improvement Plan for the first three years (2009-2011) are the same as those included in the previous plan and shared with voters prior to the referendum.

1. New Construction

High School

Current enrollment and future projections indicate that Matoaca, Thomas Dale, Bird, and Meadowbrook High Schools will continue to experience significant enrollment growth. In addition, new construction in these attendance zones will add to already overcrowded conditions. Capacity is available in 2012 to begin planning for a new high school to relieve overcrowding in these areas. Partial funding for the construction of the school is included in 2014, with additional funding required in 2015.

Middle

Currently, middle schools in much of the County are experiencing significant overcrowding. Two 1,200 student middle schools are under construction funded in the previous Plan. These schools, Elizabeth Davis in the Bermuda area and Tomahawk Creek in Centerpointe will provide much needed relief to these areas. Opening of these schools, along with additions planned for Falling Creek, Midlothian, Robious, Salem Church, and Swift Creek will provide much needed additional capacity for our middle school students.

Elementary

Two 900 student elementary schools are currently under construction funded in the previous Plan. These schools, Elizabeth Scott in the Bermuda area and Winterpock in Harpers Mill will provide much needed overcrowding relief to these two areas.

Analysis of the remaining geographic areas indicate that continued development and resulting growth in several areas of the county will lead to the need for additional elementary school space. Capacity is available in 2012 to begin planning for a new elementary school, with capacity for construction available in 2014. The specific area for this school will depend in large part on the rate of significant new development currently in the planning stages. Key areas to be considered include the northwest area (currently served by Watkins and Weaver), western corridor (currently served by Woolridge and Winterpock), the south central area (currently served by Gates, Harrowgate and Matoaca), and the central area (currently served by Hopkins and Hening).

2. Renovations and Additions to Existing Facilities

In addition to overcrowding, two other factors were considered when analyzing the adequacy of our facilities. These were the special programs housed in a school and the age and condition of the school. Projects proposed in this area of the Plan include additions to existing facilities to accommodate continued growth and special programs, as well as renovations needed to enable the facility to continue its usefulness on a cost effective basis and meet current program standards. Renovations and/or additions are proposed at Bellwood, Enon, Gates, Harrowgate, and Watkins elementary schools; Falling Creek, Midlothian, Robious, Salem Church, and Swift Creek middle schools; Midlothian and Monacan high schools.

3. Technology

The current CIP provides funding for the implementation and maintenance of the division Technology Master Plan. The Technology Master Plan incorporates (1) the **integration** of technology in a manner that allows for appropriate use to ensure that meaningful learning takes place for each student; (2) **professional development** as a critical element for student success as it directly affects what teachers know and are able to do; (3) **connectivity** of infrastructure, hardware, and software that serve as the backbone of the system that allows integration to occur; (4) **evaluation** of the technology system for effectiveness. The CIP identifies \$2,463,800 in FY2009 for the continued implementation of this Technology Master Plan. The Technology Master Plan is scheduled for revision in the current school year. An additional \$9,496,800 has been set-aside in FY2010 – FY2014 for implementation of the new Plan once adopted by the School Board.

As technology becomes increasingly critical to the delivery of instruction on a daily basis, the reliability and efficiency of the infrastructure and equipment becomes more important. Maintaining the “utility” of technology becomes as vital as the other basic utilities of electricity, water and gas. When full implementation is achieved, a four-year replacement cycle for all computers, servers and video equipment will cost, at today’s prices, \$3.25 million annually. Funding in the CIP also includes the purchase of computers as replacements for outdated equipment.

State Technology Grant funds are provided to the school division to allow all schools to update the necessary infrastructure to accommodate on-line SOL testing. With funds provided in prior biennia, CCPS has completed work on the high schools and middle schools. Funding in FY2009 will be used to continue work at the elementary level. A total of \$1,851,500 is included in the Plan for this purpose.

4. Major Maintenance

By the fall of 2008, the school division will have 64 schools and 74 buildings totaling more than 7-million square feet under roof. Fourteen of those schools will be more than 40 years old, with twenty-six schools 20-40 years old. Only eight schools will be less than ten years old. As the facilities age, regular renovations and improvements become even more critical. In FY2007, the last projects that were unfunded during the 1996 bond referendum were completed. On an annual basis, projects in major categories will need to be completed. The major categories for the anticipated needs are roof replacements, floor coverings, mechanical systems replacement and upgrades, other building renovations, and grounds improvements.

Committing a minimum of \$2.0 million annually, (\$3.5 million in the outer years of the plan for inflationary increases) to new facility improvement projects in the categories identified above will enable the school division to make reasonable progress toward meeting the ongoing need for facility improvements as the buildings age. This funding commitment will increase the “life expectancy” as safe and productive environments for teaching and learning. A recent critical needs assessment indicated that nearly \$20 million of critical major maintenance exists. Funding was included in FY2008 to begin to address many of the unfunded needs currently identified. An additional \$821,700 has been included in FY2012 to begin to address other major maintenance needs related to the aging condition of our buildings including replacement of major HVAC components, cabinets in many of elementary schools, and energy improvements.

5. Food Service Projects

The Federal and Non-Federal Food Service Funds finance improvements to cafeterias and kitchens in various schools. Various projects are identified each year in order to provide more efficient workspace, update equipment, and provide an enhanced atmosphere for student dining. Funds will be transferred from the food service funds for these improvements.

6. Administrative Space

The Instruction Division Center (IDC) was relocated last year to leased space at 600 Southlake Boulevard. The School Board has entered into a five-year lease with options to renew beyond that time. Funds have been included in FY2012 to begin planning for a new facility to house this portion of our Central Office staff. Funding for the construction of this additional space is proposed for FY2013.

Attachment C summarizes by fiscal year and in total the revenue sources for the CIP as well as the proposed projects in the six areas described above.

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PLAN

As indicated previously, this Plan has been developed to address the projects included in the 2004 Bond Referendum and begin to address other needs in FY2012. The Plan is balanced with revenue projections provided by County Staff for the issuance of debt, CIP reserve, and cash proffers. Additional needs have been identified based on current conditions and future enrollment projections that cannot be addressed in this Plan.

Elementary Schools

Given current capacity and improvements contained in the 2004 Bond Referendum, several areas of the county will experience overcrowding prior to the end of this Plan. Hopkins and Hening Elementary Schools are projected to experience approximately 20% growth over the next five years with enrollment projected to stabilize at that point. Winterpock Elementary School has provided relief to Spring Run Elementary. Even with this additional capacity, current projections indicate that this area of the county will again experience significant overcrowding in the short term. Continued development in this area, such as Magnolia Green and Harpers Mill, will cause this situation to worsen. In addition, the northwest section of the county currently served by Watkins and Weaver Elementary Schools is projected to experience continued growth. Even with the addition of capacity at Watkins planned for completion in 2012, these schools will remain overcrowded. While the opening of Elizabeth Scott provided relief for Harrowgate and Wells, continued development in this area, such as Branner Station, will cause overcrowding to return prior to the end of this Plan. As mentioned above, only one new elementary school is included in this six-year Plan.

Middle Schools

Falling Creek Middle School currently has 17 trailers. The project contained in the 2004 Bond Referendum is scheduled to add 15 classrooms. Given the projected growth in the Hopkins and Hening Elementary School zones, Falling Creek will continue to experience overcrowding. The 360 West corridor will experience relief with the opening of Tomahawk Creek Middle School. However, continued development in this area, such as Magnolia Green and Harpers Mill, will cause this situation to worsen.

High Schools

The opening of Cosby High School this fall, along with the opening of the replacement for Clover Hill High School in the fall of 2010 has provided relief to the significant overcrowding in the western portion of the county. However, as with the elementary and middle schools, continued development will cause high schools in this area to continue to experience enrollment growth with Cosby expected to exceed capacity within two to three years. James River High School is also projected to continue to grow. While Midlothian High School is experiencing stable enrollment at this time, projected development in that area will not allow Midlothian to provide any relief to James River.

As mentioned earlier in this memorandum, the most significant high school overcrowding will be in the Thomas Dale, Bird, Meadowbrook area. Projections indicate that these three schools will exceed functional capacity by nearly 1,900 students by the fall of 2016. Planning for an additional high school has been included in this Plan to begin in FY2012. Regardless of the location selected for this new school, significant boundary changes will be necessary to provide relief for this entire area.

Staff is currently working with County staff to update the Public Facilities Plan. As part of this update, a further review is underway to determine the need for new schools to address current and future enrollment growth. This review may cause priorities included in the out years of this Plan (FY2012 and beyond) to be revised as appropriate and/or recommend further investment in capital spending.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the School Board receive this item for review and invite public comment by email and written communication. Information will be posted on the School Board page of the Internet for review. It is anticipated that the School Board will approve the Capital Improvement Plan for 2009-2014 at its December, 2007 meeting.

MJN/KSK/s
Attachments