

Chapter 5

Countywide Projects

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has many capital projects that are not for one particular school, but rather are programmed to meet the needs of many schools across the county. These projects involve multiyear plans with different schools scheduled each year, and projects are referred to as countywide projects. The assessment and selection process for many of these projects is carried out through an annual review process that involves school principals, maintenance, planning, and construction staff.

The primary countywide projects that address the physical environment in schools include: compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Asbestos Abatement; Fire Safety Code Upgrades; Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC); Indoor Air Quality (IAQ); Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR); and Roof Replacement. These projects require an assessment of each school relative to the needs of other schools and the development of schedules based on available funding. Some projects, such as ADA, Asbestos Abatement, Fuel Tank Management, and Stormwater Management are driven by mandates that require an evaluation and action plan in order to meet federal, state, and local regulations.

A project entitled Facility Planning, begun in FY 1996, will continue to fund feasibility studies and cost estimates for proposed projects. The goal of this project is to provide accurate cost estimates based on existing building conditions and proposed educational program specifications for the planning and budgeting of new schools, additions, and, modernizations.

The schedule for modernizing schools has been developed and prioritized through the Facilities Assessment with Criteria and Testing (FACT) Assessment process. Funding for modernization projects is appropriated through two projects—Current Replacements/Modernizations and Future Replacements/Modernizations. Projects with expenditures for planning and/or construction in the first two years of the CIP are considered Current Replacements/Modernizations. Projects without expenditures in the first two years of the CIP are considered Future Replacements/Modernizations.

Maintenance and replacement projects are critical to keep aging school facilities operational. As a school ages, it is placed on a maintenance and repair ladder, moving from minor repairs to outright replacement of major systems. PLAR and the countywide projects that focus on roof replacements and mechanical system rehabilitations are essential to the preservation of the school systems' infrastructure. Intensive maintenance and rehabilitation efforts to extend the useful life of schools occur through the following projects: HVAC, PLAR, and Roof Replacement.

The Improved (Safe) Access to Schools project provides improved vehicular and pedestrian access to schools. MCPS staff works with the Schools and Transportation Efficiencies

Planning (STEP) Committee to identify solutions to safety concerns. The County's Department of Public Works and Transportation appropriates funds to improve roads and sidewalks on county property when needed. This project will continue to address access improvements on Board of Education-owned property at MCPS facilities.

The relocatable classroom project will continue to provide relocatable classrooms to meet space needs that cannot be accommodated by permanent construction. Many of the relocatable classrooms have aging heating and air conditioning systems, ceilings, lights, and carpets that are reaching the end of their useful lives and must be replaced if MCPS is to continue using the units for educational programs. A schedule to rehabilitate county-owned relocatable classrooms was developed in 1996. State-owned classrooms are assessed separately and are included in the state-reimbursement request for the rehabilitation/renovation of these classrooms.

MCPS is committed to providing the educational technology necessary to allow all students to access information from around the world. The Global Access Technology project was included in the countywide section of the budget and was intended to support this commitment. The Board of Education adopted a comprehensive Educational Technology Policy in December 1993 and a strategic plan entitled "The Plan for Educational Technology Implementation" in May 1997. This plan provided specific guides and assessments for identifying the needs for staff support, hardware and software, and the capabilities for access to information within, among, and outside of the confines of MCPS facilities. All MCPS schools were wired for global access by the end of the 2002–2003 school year.

The Technology Modernization project, first introduced in the FY 2003–2008 CIP, will provide needed technology updates for the original Global Access program schools. This project will update schools' technology hardware, software and network infrastructure on a four-year replacement cycle. The objective of the Technology Modernization program is to have a student to computer ratio of 5:1. Up-to-date technology will enhance student learning through access to information available online and through the ability to use the latest instructional software. Up-to-date technology in schools and offices is also critical for the reporting required by No Child Left Behind and for the implementation of state-proposed on-line testing strategies.

The Restroom Renovations project, first introduced in the FY 2005–2010 CIP, will provide needed modifications to specific areas of restroom facilities. In FY 2004, a study was conducted to evaluate restrooms for all schools that were built or renovated before 1985. A list was compiled and schools were rated based on an evaluation method using a preset

number scale for the assessment of the existing plumbing fixtures, accessories, and room finish materials. All 47 schools identified on this list had restroom renovations completed by FY 2010. In FY 2010, a second round of assessments were completed, which included a total of 110 schools. Based on funding, the first 71 schools are proposed for renovation in the FY 2011–2016 CIP. (See appendix G for the list of schools and corresponding ratings.)

Building Modifications and Program Improvements, was approved in the FY 2007–2012 CIP to provide facility modifications or program improvements to schools that are not scheduled for a modernization or an addition in the foreseeable future.

A new project, County Water Quality Compliance, was approved in the FY 2010 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2009–2014 CIP to provide funding to plan and implement a variety of pollution prevention measures related to stormwater discharge from our school facilities as required by federal and state laws.

A brief description of each countywide project follows.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Funds from this project support compliance with federal and state laws and regulations regarding the accessibility of school facilities for persons with disabilities. The items most frequently provided are ramps, elevators, and wider door openings for wheelchair accessibility. Accessible bathrooms and water fountains also are funded as part of this program. MCPS's goal is to provide access to all spaces in its buildings. In some cases, programs have been relocated to accommodate students until full accessibility can be met. Funding for this program will continue beyond the six-year planning period.

Asbestos Abatement

Federal and state regulations require the management and ultimately, the removal of asbestos from schools. Funds from this project support compliance with these mandates. As a cost saving measure, a special group of MCPS employees has been trained to remove asbestos in a manner that complies with strict safety requirements. However, projects that are larger than this group can accommodate are competitively bid and are funded through this project. Funding for this program will continue beyond the six-year planning period.

Building Modifications and Program Improvements

This project will provide facility modifications and program improvements to schools that are not scheduled for a modernization or addition in the foreseeable future.

County Water Quality Compliance

This project will provide funding to plan and implement a variety of pollution prevention measures related to stormwater discharge from our school facilities as required by federal and state laws.

Current Replacements/Modernizations

This is a summary project for all modernization projects that have planning or construction expenditures for either FY 2011 or FY 2012. Modernization projects are moved from the Future Replacements/Modernizations project to this project when expenditures are approved by the County Council in the first two years of the CIP. Appendix E of this document lists the priority order of modernizations, based on FACT and Educational Program assessments.

Design and Construction Management

This project provides funding for the MCPS staff necessary to assure the successful planning, design, and construction of the capital projects contained in the six-year CIP.

Energy Conservation

This project funds the materials necessary to develop strategies to reduce energy consumption. These strategies include improving building mechanical systems, retrofitting building lighting, and updating associated temperature control systems. This project will continue indefinitely.

Facility Planning

In order to assure the availability of accurate cost estimates for facility construction, a feasibility study process has been instituted. Architects are hired for each new or modernization project to develop and evaluate several feasible options that meet the project's needs. For each option, a cost estimate is prepared and an analysis is performed to determine the most cost-effective solution. The study of options is presented to the Board of Education and the project cost is established. This "preplanning" information is then used to develop a budget for submission to the County Council for funding. The feasibility study process helps to produce a clear understanding of the feasibility, scope, and cost for each project.

Fire Safety Code Upgrades

This project funds building modifications to meet Fire Marshall and life safety code requirements. Facility modifications to be addressed in this project are sprinklers, escape windows, exit signs, fire alarm devices, and exit stairs.

Fuel Tank Management

The school system has 236 underground fuel storage tanks. Federal law requires regular inspection, monitoring, and in some cases replacement of these fuel tank systems. It is expected that all tank systems will be upgraded and replaced as required by current regulations.

Future Replacements/Modernizations

This is a summary of all modernization projects that do not have expenditures in the first two years of the CIP. The priority order for modernizations is determined by the FACT and Educational Program assessments, and is detailed in appendix E. Schools are added to the schedule in the out-years of the CIP as the County Council approves funding. Projects shown within this project will be moved to the Current Replacements/

Modernizations project once the County Council approves expenditures for a modernization in either the first or second fiscal year of the CIP.

HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Replacement)

This project provides an orderly replacement of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems in MCPS facilities not scheduled for modernization.

Improved (Safe) Access to Schools

This project addresses vehicular access to schools. Projects may involve the widening of a street or road, obtaining rights-of-way for vehicular access, or the addition of entrances to school sites. The list of specific school projects is approved annually by the County Council.

Indoor Air Quality Improvements

This project provides mechanical retrofits and building envelope modifications necessary to address Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) problems at schools. In the past, funds in this project also addressed lead abatement remediation at identified schools and will be used to develop specific remediation and work plans for schools that have complete test results and lead source assessment.

Land Acquisition

The Land Acquisition project is used to acquire land for new schools and the expansion of smaller school sites. Sites are initially identified through the Comprehensive Master Plan process administered by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Prior to site selection, a Site Selection Advisory Committee (SSAC) is convened.

Planned Life-cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR)

This project provides funding for the repair or replacement of major site improvements and building systems that have reached the end of their useful life. Some of the items that this project covers are field rehabilitation, exterior resurfacing (including driveways and tennis courts), interior partitions, doors, lighting, windows, security gates, bleachers, communications systems, and flooring. All projects are evaluated, and a six-year plan is in place for the repair of needed items. The list of projects is evaluated annually.

Rehabilitation and Renovation of Closed Schools (RROCS)

MCPS has retained some closed schools for use as office space, holding schools, or alternative schools. Some of these facilities have reopened as schools. Funds from this project are used to rehabilitate buildings to meet current codes and to provide appropriate educational spaces.

Relocatable Classrooms

MCPS utilizes relocatable classrooms on an interim basis to accommodate student enrollment in overutilized facilities and

for class-size reduction initiatives until a long-term solution is in place. Some are owned by MCPS, some are owned by the State of Maryland, and others are leased. This project provides funding for the relocation, leasing, acquisition, and repair of relocatable classroom units.

Restroom Renovations

The project will provide needed modifications to specific areas of restroom facilities. A study was conducted to evaluate restrooms for all schools that were built or renovated before 1985. A second study was conducted in FY 2010 to provide restroom renovations at additional schools. Schools were rated based on an evaluation method using a preset number scale for the assessment of the existing plumbing fixtures, accessories, and room finish materials. See appendix G for the list of schools in the project.

Roof Replacement

Roofs that are in need of repair or replacement are funded through this project. The schedule of yearly repairs/replacements is determined according to priority. The roofs are expected to have a life cycle of approximately 20 years.

School Gymnasiums

This project provides funding for building gymnasiums on a priority basis, utilizing the funding levels adopted by the County Council. The schools without gyms are ranked annually based on three criteria: enrollment, other construction projects on site, and percent of gyms in the cluster. A listing of schools without gymnasiums is included in appendix F.

School Security Systems

This project provides funding for security camera systems at MCPS high school facilities. Currently, all high schools have security systems. At this time, no middle schools have security camera systems. Consideration is being given to install security systems in middle schools.

Stadium Lighting

Lighting for outdoor stadiums has been funded through a partnership among the schools, individual booster clubs, city and county governments, and MCPS. This project is proposed to expand into renovation of concession stands in partnership with booster clubs and others, using the model developed for stadium lighting.

Technology Modernization

This project will provide needed technology updates for the original Global Access program schools. This project will provide a better student to computer ratio, best practices for dynamic access to information networks, modern methodologies for teacher training, and application of current theory and practice to prepare students for the 21st century.

