

POLICY

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: FAA

Modernization/Renovation

A. PURPOSE

To establish a facilities life-span process for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) that addresses changing educational program standards and deteriorating physical conditions at reasonable cost while providing appropriate spaces for educational programs and services and maintaining a safe, secure, and healthy physical environment for students and staff

B. PROCESS AND CONTENT

1. Issue

Buildings, building components, and equipment all require various and continuing levels of maintenance to achieve their expected useful life. MCPS views maintenance as being on a continuum encompassing repairs, renovation, and modernization.

The Board of Education should determine when funds will be spent on aging school facilities:

- a) To maintain the plant's existing physical capabilities
- b) To renew building systems and/or site components by replacement or other means
- c) To bring the facility up to current educational and building standards through either modernization or replacement because of an outdated educational environment or deteriorated building and site conditions

2. Background

Following a period of extensive school closures and consolidations in the 1970's and early 1980's, the Board of Education reactivated a capital program to schedule the systematic modernization of its aging schools still in operation. Closing more than 60 schools had

eliminated many of those in the poorest condition, but the remaining facilities built in the 1950's and 1960's have become 30-40 year old school facilities in the 1980's and 1990's, which are difficult and expensive to maintain.

The County Council has urged MCPS to consider whether schools must be modernized, or whether some, instead, could be renovated at a lower cost. The school system is committed to using its resources as efficiently as possible while providing an appropriate learning environment for all children. For these reasons, a step-by-step approach to the care and modification of facilities from the time of their construction will continue to be followed.

3. Applicable Laws, Rules, and Regulations

The first goal of the MCPS policy FAA: *Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning* is to provide the facilities necessary to sustain high quality educational programs at reasonable cost. Among the objectives of this policy are to consider the impact of facility changes on the delivery and equity of educational programs; to provide adequate school space to accommodate future improvements in educational programs and services to the extent these can be anticipated; and to recognize that “older school buildings must be renovated to continue their use on a cost-effective basis and that modernization to current educational program standards is necessary to maintain program quality.”

State and county fire/life safety and health codes, national standards for accessibility for the physical handicapped, Department of General Service criteria for energy conservation, and applicable rules of State of Interagency Committee for School Construction must be considered when any changes to facilities are contemplated. The Annotated Code of Maryland and the Charter of Montgomery County require a comprehensive six-year program for capital improvements, State law requires each county board of education to “maintain throughout its county a reasonably uniform system of public schools that is designed to provide quality education and equal education opportunity for all children.” (*Annotated Code of Maryland, 4-107*)

4. Definitions

- a) *Maintenance/Preventive and Routine Repairs* refers to, on a day-to-day basis, the ongoing upkeep of property and equipment that includes an annual physical assessment by school and area maintenance staff, as well as the repair and minor replacement activities necessary to support a safe and healthy environment.

- b) *Renovation* is the design, construction, and equipping process through which a school facility and its systems are renewed and updated to meet county, state, and federal codes and requirements. An addition or major redesign of building spaces for program reasons is not included.
- (1) *Local Capital Projects* are specific projects to restore and/or improve school environments for students, staff, and community. Examples are modifications for handicapped accessibility, space modifications for program, installation of ceiling fans, and school security systems. These are renovation-type projects that provide minor modifications to a facility to restore/continue its physical and educational functionality.
 - (2) *Planned Life-Cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR)* is the comprehensive replacement of key facility site components, based on age and condition, in order to anticipate and avoid potential failure, and to prolong the useful life of the facility. Related to PLAR projects are roof replacement and mechanical systems rehabilitation projects funded through the capital budget. These major maintenance projects are renovative in nature.
- c) *Modernization* refers to the design, construction, and equipping process through which an aging school facility is brought up to current educational standards as established by MCPS, and through which its systems are renewed and updated to meet school, county, state, and federal codes and requirements. Modernization may require an addition or redesign of space to meet educational program requirements.

5. Continuum of Activities

To maintain and extend the life of facilities, MCPS initiate and follows a continuum of activities from the first day of new school occupancy. The timeliness shown in parenthesis are intended as suggestions and are not absolutes. The condition of the building will be the determining factor.

a) Maintenance/Preventive and Routine Repair (Occupancy-Onward)

Preventive maintenance is provided to ensure that a building component or item of equipment will achieve its expected useful life. This effort begins when the item is new and continues until it is replaced or modernized. Facilities receive regular operational care such as cleaning and maintenance of systems and finishes,

lubricating, checking for proper operation, adjusting and aligning, and identifying items to be repaired or modified.

Preventive maintenance is accomplished by a team of electricians, plumbers, carpenters, heating mechanics, and general maintenance workers. The program is scheduled and directed by each maintenance trade. Schools and users are not expected to request preventive maintenance services. The program is staffed and funded through the operating budget of the Division of Maintenance.

Routine maintenance restores items and components to their normal operating condition. Planned repairs are made while the component is still operational to avoid a breakdown. "Broken-fix-it" repairs may require immediate attention to prevent damage to other building or equipment components. Repairs are initiated by maintenance staff, preventive maintenance reports, manufacturers' recommendations, and school requests. Both planned and "broken-fix-it" repairs are funded from operating budget accounts.

b) Renovation

(1) Local Capital Projects (5-25 years)

Capital projects are scheduled that enhance, protect, or restore physical environment in schools. Recent examples include modifications to lights and windows to increase energy conservation, installation of ceiling fans in non-air-conditioned buildings, and replacement of identified environmental hazards such as contaminated plumbing systems. Minor modifications also may be made to existing spaces/components to allow the educational program or activity to operate effectively and efficiently. These capital projects are not intended, primarily, to lengthen the life of the facility and probably will not lessen the needs of facilities in the 30-year-old range. School and area administrators and area maintenance staff identify these needs. These projects are funded through the capital budget.

(2) Major Maintenance (15 - 30 years)

The major maintenance program completely overhauls or replaces worn-out building components. Based on annual maintenance requests submitted by principals, trade/manufacture recommendations, and analyses by maintenance technicians, a comprehensive, six-year, school-by-school major maintenance plan is developed each fiscal year.

Facilities are evaluated and components scheduled for replacement. These include roofs, mechanical systems, and key facility components such as classroom and hallway lighting, floor surfaces, doors and partitions, as well as exterior asphalt, fields, fencing, and concrete. A replacement program (Planned Life-Cycle Asset Replacement - PLAR) has been initiated to replace components that do not last 30 years. Major replacement projects are expected to extend the useful life of a facility and may reduce the overall needs of a 30-year-old facility. For this reason, schools identified on the six-year modernization schedule are excluded from replacement projects, such as PLAR, for the same period.

The program is funded through the capital budget and reduces impact on the operating budget because resources will not be applied to continuing, costly routine repairs to worn-out building components/equipment.

c) Modernization (30-Plus Years)

An evaluation of physical conditions and educational standards are reviewed along with long-term projections for schools in the 30-plus year-old range. A ranking of facilities based on these factors is developed, with those schools most in need of educational and physical improvements assessed for estimated modernization costs. When previous capital projects at a school have impacted the scope of its anticipated modernization, these are identified. Base on life cycle cost analyses and unusual circumstances, it may be necessary to replace buildings. The department of school facilities and facilities planning develop this schedule. The superintendent will recommend and the Board of Education will approve and request fund for modernization projects for the six years of the Capital Improvements Program.

Public comment and testimony on the recommendations are provided through the MCPS annual capital budget and CIP process. Public comments on the Board-adopted request are directed to the County Executive and County Council.

C. REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The superintendent, through the annual capital budget process, will review with the Board and the public which facility improvements have been accomplished through replacement or modernization projects. For schools identified as eligible for future modernization, an annual assessment will confirm or modify the previously adopted schedule based on physical condition, educational standards, enrollment projections, available funds, holding schools, outstanding planning issues, and other factors as appropriate.

2. Because schools identified for future modernization are excluded from other six-year renovation/replacement projects, modernization projects are expected to move forward in a systematic manner based on assessment procedures. When extenuating circumstances are identified, a project may be moved forward, given priority consideration, or receive other unusual capital remedies until such time as modernization can occur.
3. This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 835-91, October 8, 1991.