

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

May 15, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Build Out of the Carl Sandburg Learning Center (04-29-19-03)

During Public Comments, Board members requested the following information:

Question A

Ms. Dixon requested information regarding the estimated costs of adding a second floor to the Carl Sandburg Learning Center.

Response

In regard to the shell space planned, the project to co-locate the Carl Sandburg Learning Center with Maryvale Elementary School includes a shell space on the second floor in the Carl Sandburg Learning Center portion of the building. The space is the size of approximately 10 classrooms and was included as part of our ongoing practice to leave flexibility in our school facilities for possible future unanticipated needs. In this case, the space primarily is intended for possible special education requirements in the future. The space could be accessed by either school and could be used in the future as classroom space for either Maryvale Elementary School or the Carl Sandburg Learning Center. However, Maryvale Elementary School is being constructed for 700 students, which is at the upper end of the preferred range for elementary schools. In addition, there is some thought that the new facility for the Carl Sandburg Learning Center may provide increased opportunities for special education services and enrollment may increase at that school.

It is difficult to fully estimate the build-out cost as some of the cost depends on the ultimate purpose for and design of the space for its intended use, and the project would have to be designed and bid. However, we estimate that the cost would be between \$3 and \$4 million to complete. Please note this estimate is greater than the cost for Bayard Rustin Elementary School's build out, and again, is contingent on planning for special education needs in the future.

In regard to early childhood, which also was discussed at the April 29, 2019, Board meeting, the Maryvale/Sandburg project is one with heavy use requirements for space on the first floor of the building. The Fire Marshall requires that for egress, younger students in first grade and below must have direct access to a ground floor exit or a dedicated staircase that is not available for use by students of other ages.

Other school uses such as the entry and administration suite also require placement on the first floor. Many of the Carl Sandburg Learning Center special education services are best located on the ground floor. Therefore, all available first floor space is used in the current design of this project, and there are not opportunities to relocate uses from the first floor to the second floor. This inhibits our ability to accommodate additional first floor uses in this project, such as additional early childhood services. Unfortunately, additional space dedicated to a first floor use cannot be added to the project due to site constraints. The Maryvale Elementary School component of the project already does include an increase in the number of classrooms for Head Start and prekindergarten, as well as space for the Linkages to Learning program.

In this particular project, adding a dedicated staircase at this juncture would require a major redesign and structural changes when the project already is in progress. This is an approach that we evaluate in school design. In some cases it is feasible, but frequently it can add significant cost, which is why the ground floor option typically is the preferred approach. However, we will continue to evaluate the possibility of accommodating younger students on the second floor with a dedicated staircase in projects going forward, particularly given the emphasis on increasing early childhood services.

It is possible that one or two classrooms in the current building plan may be available for lease for child care or early childhood services if the enrollment at both Maryvale Elementary School and Carl Sandburg Learning Center remains less than expected. However, we are exercising caution around extending or entering into new leases given our space needs as a system and the difficulty of terminating leases once space is occupied by an outside entity. Given the competing interests for the first floor, the unknown factors regarding future program use at both schools, and the current configuration for both schools, we recommend permitting both schools to move in and allow time for planning to operationalize the spaces before decisions are made about further allocation of existing space for other uses.

Question B

Mrs. Smondrowski requested information regarding the possibility of partnering with the City of Rockville regarding building out the Carl Sandburg Learning Center.

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the City of Rockville have had conversation about the City of Rockville funding additional design features for the Maryvale Elementary School and Carl Sandburg Learning Center (Maryvale/Sandburg) project. At this time, there are no plans for this funding from the City of Rockville; however, MCPS will continue to engage in this topic.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 240-740-3050.

JRS:AMZ:em

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