

A Long-Range Facilities Plan for the Blount County School District

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Fundamental Questions

- How many schools are needed?
- Which grades will they serve?
- How many students will they serve?
- Where will they be located?

Wild Card

- Cities can annex residential areas and students
- County has no control over annexation
- City school systems also accommodate some "county" students by tuition
- How many students will be in the Blount County system in the future?
- This has implications for long-range school facility planning

1969 University of Kentucky Study

- Led to reorganization to K-8 and 9-12 elementary/high school organization
- Led to consolidated larger high schools
- Heritage and William Blount
- Led to larger K-8 elementary schools
- Abandoned some smaller and older facilities

Capacity in 1997

- Study recognized portable units as real infrastructure, but did not account as permanent teaching stations in core capacity analysis
- Many elementary schools were over capacity with many portable units
- Heritage had good capacity, and William Blount was over capacity
- Recognized that growth would add to capacity problems

BEP Impact

- State Better Education Program mandated smaller classroom size (number of students per class room)
- This would put an added burden on already over capacity elementary schools
- Population growth would add to burden

School Population Growth

- Births were increasing as population increased
- Birth cohorts would eventually need to be accommodated in the school system
- In-migration in pre-school and school age groups also added to growth
- The enlarged cohorts would progress through the grades as they aged
- Cohort student populations were only reduced in high school upper grades with drop-outs

Projections

- Elementary school population projected to continue increase
- Potential grades 6-8 middle school population 2,311 in 1996-97, projected to 2,715 - actual 2,632 in 2006-07
- High school grades 9-12 population 3,166 in 1996-97, projected to 3,540 - actual 3,463 in 2006-07
- Effectively missed mark by about four classrooms each for middle and high school grades respectively

Dr. Spencer's Beliefs (findings)

- Blount County will continue to grow in total and school population.
- The citizens of Blount County want good schools, have high expectations for their children, are aware of the district's facility deficiencies, and are ready and willing to make improvements.
- There is a positive relationship between good school facilities and student achievement.

Dr. Spencer's Beliefs (findings)

- Blount County has two excellent high schools, with good facilities, and a comprehensive range of course offerings; high schools students are not educationally disadvantaged by the facilities at present, but may be so if growth continues.
- Blount County, generally, has excellent elementary school facilities; however, the elementary schools have a total of forty-eight portables, approximately 14% of the total number of teaching stations. An additional eighteen portable classrooms will be added for 1997-98.

Dr. Spencer's Beliefs (findings)

- The district must add an additional twenty-two elementary school classrooms to meet the state class size requirements and approximately ten classrooms annually due to growth.
- Schools with a significant percentage of children in portables place constraints on the education of all children in the school.

Dr. Spencer's Beliefs (findings)

- Students in grades 6-8 are neither children or adults, but are in transition between childhood and adulthood.
- Students in grades 6-8 are at a critical stage in their development and are best served by educational programs, and a school organization, which are appropriate for their maturity level.
- Blount County's middle school students are the most educationally disadvantaged in the system because of inadequate facilities and the K-8 organizational structure.

Change in School Organization

- Blount County has a significant shortage of classroom space in the elementary schools. Rather than add to the existing elementary schools or build new ones, the district has the opportunity to build middle schools.
- The planner concurs with the staff and board's desire to implement a middle school plan of organization and recommends that the long-range facility plan provide for a K-5, 6-8, 9-12 organization throughout the county.

High Schools

- The two high schools are excellent facilities, but are presently over capacity, and further growth is projected.
- There are fundamental questions regarding high school organization.
 - When is a high school large enough?
 - When is a high school too large?
 - Should permanent classrooms be added to the two high schools?
 - Will doing so delay the need for a third high school?
 - Is it better to plan for portables at the high schools until a third high school can be built?

High Schools

- A high school with 1,200 students can offer a comprehensive program at a reasonable cost. Beyond that size, there is a duplication of programs and services and fewer opportunities for individual students.
- The two high schools should be renovated, but not expanded. Accommodate overcrowding with portables; adjust the high school attendance line as required to balance memberships and capacities. Plan to eventually build a third high school, south of Maryville.

Middle Schools Grades 6-8

- Middle schools should, ideally, serve between 600 and 800 students. Given the present number of middle grade students and the projected growth, the Blount County Board of Education should plan for four middle schools. A fifth middle school will eventually be needed.
- The board should place middle schools on each of the high school sites. The two others should be located between Porter and Rockford, and in the Middlesettlements area.

Middle Schools Grades 6-8

- It is recommended that the board accept the inevitability of portable units at the four middle schools, as a step toward building the fifth middle school. The educational specifications should include a location for the portables, convenient to each house, with firefighting equipment.

Elementary Schools Grades K-5

- Moving to middle school organization will relieve most of the capacity problems with elementary schools, but BEP mandate will counter the relief
- One new 650 capacity school should be planned in southwest portion of county
- Fairview should be expanded by no more than four classrooms
- The other elementary schools should be expanded to accommodate 650 students

Five Year Plan 2003-2008

- **BCS Goal 7:** The Blount County School System will initiate and maintain a facility expansion program and maintenance program to accommodate growth in student population based upon student population studies and instructional programming needs derived from instructional program needs assessments. The vision of the Blount County School Board is to have (4) four high schools, (8) eight middle schools, and (16) sixteen elementary schools within 20 years.

Five Year Plan 2003-2008

- The plan had intended to start construction of a new high school in 2004-05 school year, and to occupy the new school in the 2006-07 school year
- The plan had intended to start construction of a new west elementary school in the 2005-06 school year, and to occupy the new school in the 2006-07 school year
- The plan intends to begin implementation of a long-range facility study in 2007-08

The present system and its capacity

Elementary School	Enrollment 2006-07	Design Capacity	Academic Capacity
Carpenters	565	1000	650
Eagleton	481	660	650
Fairview	407	487	495
Friendsville	489	540	440
Lanier	430	600	570
Mary Blount	679	835	820
Middlesettlements	380	460	425
Montvale	415	580	460
Porter	721	740	652
Rockford	407	540	420
Townsend	150	220	175
Walland	314	346	370

Middle School	Enrollment 2006-07	Design Capacity	Academic Capacity
Carpenters	699	910	770
Eagleton	403	924	790
Heritage	776	910	770
William Blount	754	910	720
High School	Enrollment 2006-07	Design Capacity	Academic Capacity
Heritage High School	1671	1420	1620
William Blount High	1792	1320	1330

Major Capacity Capital Improvements

New and Converted Schools since 1997

Carpenters Elementary	\$12.3 million
Eagleton Elementary	\$11.7 million
Mary Blount Elementary	\$12.9 million
Carpenters Middle	\$13.0 million
Heritage Middle	\$9.7 million
Eagleton Mid. Conversion	\$2.2 million
Wm. Blount Middle Conv.	\$2.0 million
(in process)	
Union Grove Elementary	\$14.0 million
Union Grove Middle	\$19.4 million
East End Elementary	\$15.0 million
	\$112.2 million

Some Lingerin Questions

- Is school capacity still an issue in approving new development?
- What was wrong with the previous way we addressed school capacity in approving new development?
- Is there some other way that we can address the school capacity issue in relation to new development?
- Should the Planning Commission be involved in any new facilities planning for schools?

Questions?

Comments