



CH-UH CSD Citizens Facilities Committee

Building Assessment Subcommittee Report
December 8, 2010

Building Assessment Subcommittee

Reggie Evans, Committee Chair

Committee Members

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Committee Background

Committee participants have a high level of interest in the well being of the public schools and have personal involvement with all but one building in the district as parents, alumni, volunteers and staff.

Members have expertise in education, historic preservation and real estate, but are not experts in engineering, architecture, construction or the mechanical systems of school buildings.

We appreciated the opportunity to make a system-wide inspection of district facilities. It was an enlightening experience and increased our sensitivity to the environment in which teaching and learning take place.

Charge to Committee



Review and analyze the validity of the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission (OSFC) master facilities assessment conducted in December of 2009.

Committee's Process

- Committee members reviewed the Facilities Commission assessment document and the 2007 Districtwide Facilities Evaluation report prepared by IKG.
- Between October 21 and November 6 the committee took three tours and inspected 10 of the district's 11 buildings (except Boulevard) that are currently in use as schools.
- The committee observed hallways and classrooms, boiler rooms, maintenance tunnels, attics, libraries, cafeterias & kitchens, auditoriums, athletic facilities and locker rooms and rooftops.
- The committee drew on the expertise and first-hand knowledge of tour guides Tige Dague, Lead Tradesmen, and Assistant Custodian Thomas Battle to better understand building operating systems, maintenance needs and facility challenges.
- After each tour and at a meeting dedicated to developing this report, members of the committee compared observations about each school and shared ideas about the overall condition of district facilities.
- Several committee members toured Emerson School, a 1922 building, which was recently renovated as part of Lakewood's facilities improvement process. It provided a context for evaluating our buildings and valuable information about the facilities improvement process



State Assessment | Measurements

- The OSFC uses a three point scale to rate 23 specific elements for each building. The points rate each element as (1) satisfactory, (2) needs repair, and (3) needs replacement.
- The assessment also uses a point system to rate facilities on six broad categories using percentages that define the category as poor, borderline or satisfactory. The categories are:
 - School Site
 - Structural and mechanical features
 - Plant maintainability
 - Building safety & security
 - Educational adequacy
 - Environment for learning
 - Total (average of six)
- The OSFC also offered a renovation cost for each facility.



State Assessment | Conclusions

The facilities commission assessment consistently found our schools to be lacking.

- Ratings on the 23 elements for each school were consistently in need of repair or replacement.
- All buildings were typically rated as borderline on the six categories. Every building had at least one satisfactory category and one poor.
- Every building earned an overall rating of borderline.

Committee Assessment



Our school visits did not provide any basis for challenging the state assessment. Based on our systematic review of buildings, the State's assessment of the appearance and mechanical systems of our buildings is accurate.

The committee is not in a position to agree or disagree with the State's replacement cost estimates.

Committee Observations | Core Problems

- Despite the best efforts of staff to create a clean, comfortable and respectful atmosphere for learning, district buildings are well worn and troubled by outmoded systems, layering of new technology over old, and underfunded solutions to facility needs.
- Additions to the nine buildings built prior to 1970 undermine their architectural and physical integrity, often reduce natural light, and are the source of many facilities problems. They create:
 - Inefficient spaces and operating systems
 - Maintenance challenges
 - An incoherent maze of pipes, wiring and controls that detract from the atmosphere, safety and operation of the buildings.
- Changes in educational technology have created new challenges for electrical systems and use of space.

Committee Observations | Systemic Issues



- While each building is unique and has distinct strengths and challenges, the committee consistently observed the following conditions in buildings throughout the district:
 - HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems are in unsatisfactory condition, require constant maintenance, and are often inadequate and inefficient. While most boilers are relatively new, heating issues are difficult to solve because the piping and classroom ventilators are the problem.
 - Access to mechanical systems is often unpleasant and dangerous.
 - Water problems have damaged several buildings.
 - Every building lacked true accessibility and failed to meet ADA standards. This severely limits options for accommodating children with disabilities.
 - Kitchens are inadequate for preparing meals.
 - Media center spaces do not appear to fit with current uses.
 - Lighting, ceilings, furniture, carpets, windows and decorations made interior aesthetics unpleasant and unwelcoming.
 - Classroom storage is a challenge which often detracts from the school atmosphere.
 - School sites rarely safely accommodate bus, car and pedestrian traffic.
 - Athletic facilities frequently provide the worst examples of air quality and water damage and deliver an insulting message to students and visitors alike.

Committee Observations | Assets



- The schools are structurally sound. No school is on the verge of collapse.
- Many buildings have the benefit of new roofs, windows and other upgrades.
- Older buildings have historic value and architectural integrity.
- Many buildings have multiple large spaces including gyms, cafeterias and auditoriums which allow for varied school and public uses.

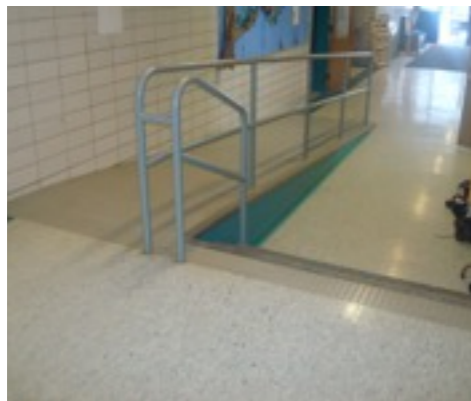
Canterbury Elementary School



Canterbury was built in 1928, with additions in 1958, 1968 and 1973.

Strong Impressions

- The architectural details and floor plan of the original building and the site are inviting.
- Water damage is dramatic. It has undermined the foundation, and has caused buckling floors and unpleasant odors in many spaces.
- Electrical conduit runs across the ceiling, symptomatic of the difficulty of responding to changing electrical codes and power demands.

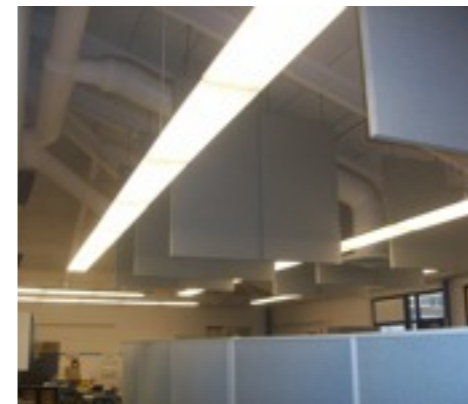


Fairfax Elementary School

Fairfax is one of four buildings built in the 1970s to a common design.

Strong Impressions

The building, like all the 1970s 'footprint' buildings, is unpleasant and suffers from functional obsolescence. It has had many modifications to improve the space which have created several environmental issues: poor air quality and circulation, limited light, confusing interior circulation and wasted space, and bad acoustics.



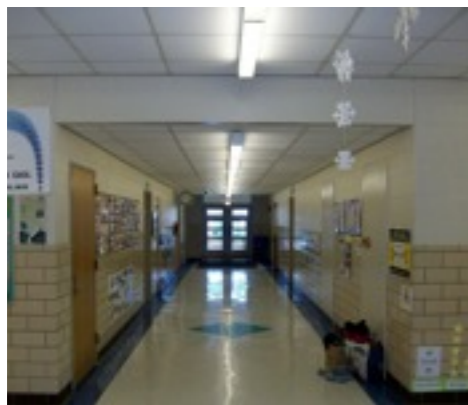
Gearity Elementary School



Gearity was built in 1947, with additions in 1950, 1954 and 1958.

Strong Impressions

While the building has many systems issues, it is pleasant and appears to be in good condition so it is easy to clean and maintain.



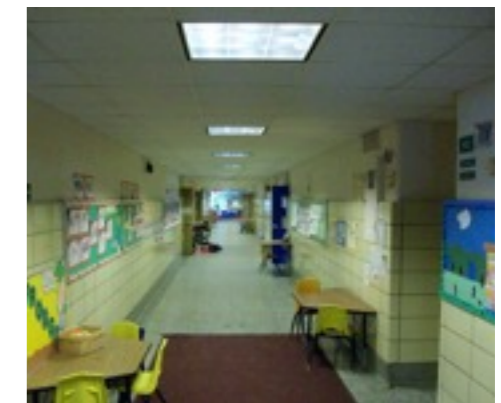
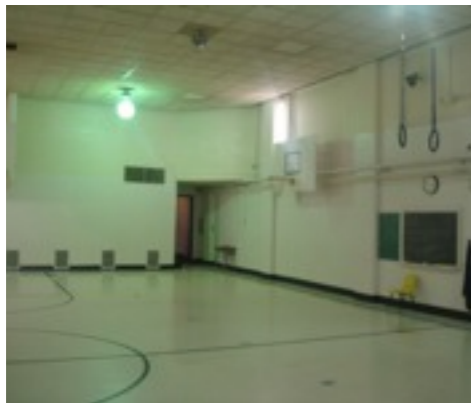
Noble Elementary School



Noble was built in 1925 with additions in 1954 and 1974

Strong Impressions

Noble has the largest square footage of any elementary building. The large well designed building with its high ceilings, large windows and large auditorium is inviting and structurally sound. The K-1 wing has numerous mechanical issues and is an example of the problems created by poorly designed and executed additions. The tight lot size and reoriented entrance create significant traffic issues.



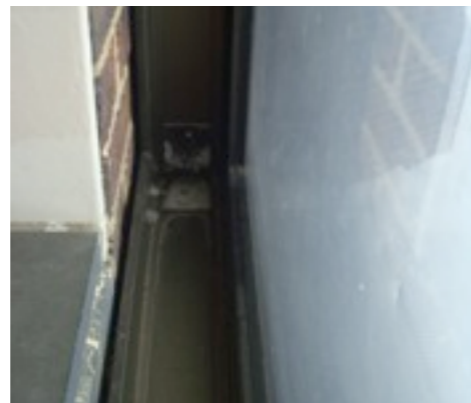
Oxford Elementary School



Oxford was built in 1927 with additions in 1929 and 1973

Strong Impressions

ADA access issues are very evident in this building which is on three floors but lacks an elevator. The 1973 library addition which blocked the original entrance stands out as an inefficient space that has compromised the building's design. The sturdy structure, intact courtyard, historic murals, and spacious gym with a stage are assets that help make this a pleasant school.



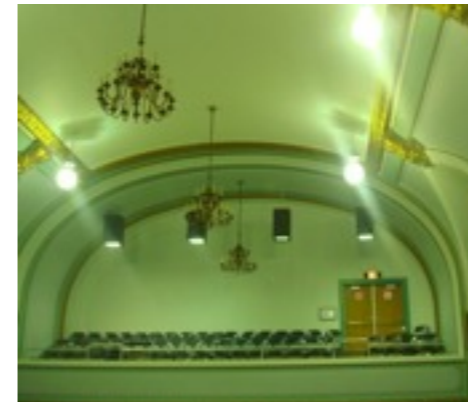
Roxboro Elementary School



Roxboro Elementary was built in 1919 with work in 1956 and 1973.

Strong Impressions

This is the oldest and smallest building in the district and it feels like it. The space is cramped and some of the architectural assets, particularly the auditorium, have been compromised by the additions. Site access is difficult.



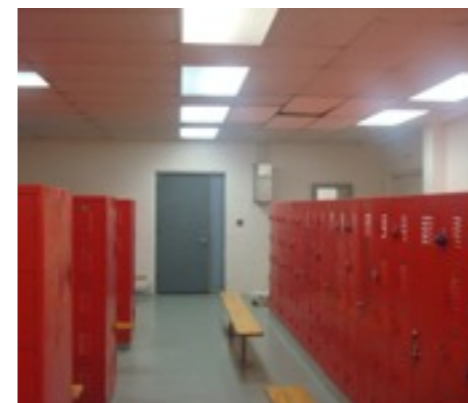
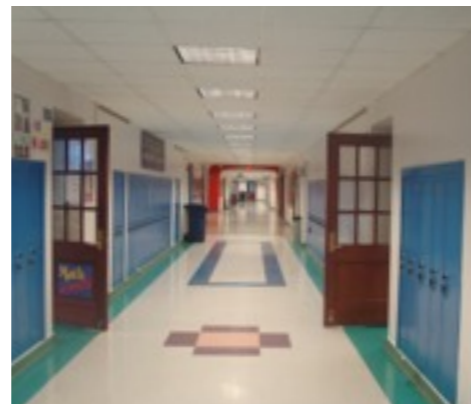
Monticello Middle School



Monticello was built in 1929 with an addition in the 1970s.

Strong Impressions

- The building creates a positive impression with its historic exterior and placement facing Monticello Boulevard.
- The interior space is open, well lit, and spacious. It has the advantage of three gyms and a large auditorium. The hot boiler room and aged inner workings are inefficient and out of date.



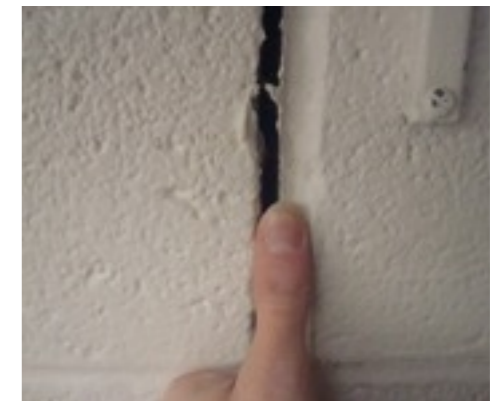
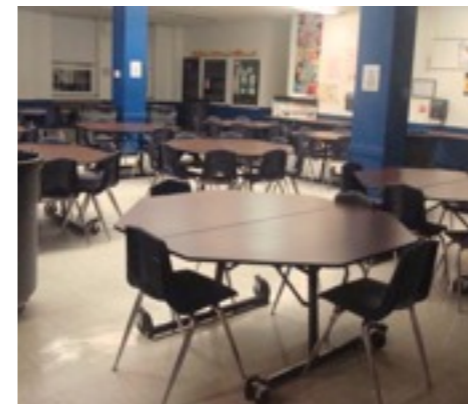
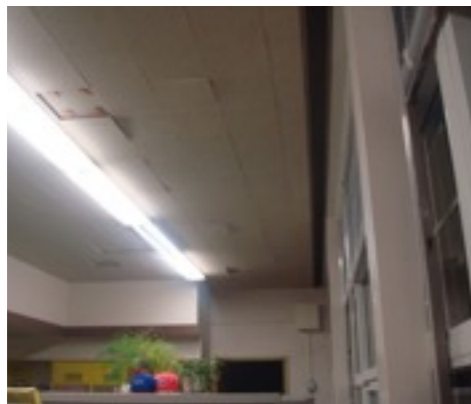
Roxboro Middle School



Roxboro Middle School was built in 1925 with additions in 1956 and 1973.

Strong Impressions

Roxboro is unpleasant and difficult to navigate due to additions, multiple levels, narrow halls, absence of windows, and poor lighting. The HVAC system was among worst; steam leaks in the tunnels emitted blasts of hot air. The building's classic façade is compromised by the change in site orientation. It is part of a campus setting but the adjacent land is not owned by the school district.



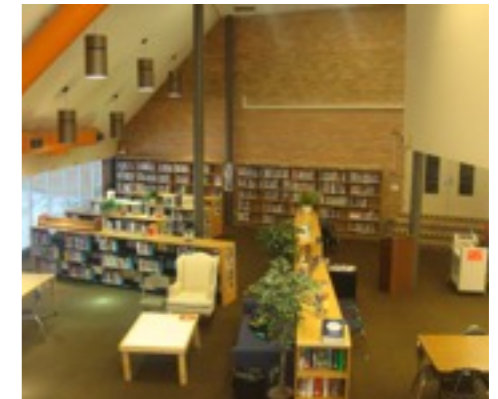
Wiley Middle School



Wiley was built in 1953, with additions in 1954, 1956 and a library addition in 1973.

Strong Impressions

Wiley appears in good condition with a beautiful auditorium and a large gym. Poor lighting detracts from an otherwise easy floor plan. The locker room is in terrible condition due to air circulation problems. The building has been damaged more than once by flooding and the placement of the vault below grade resulted in a serious electrical failure.



Cleveland Heights High School



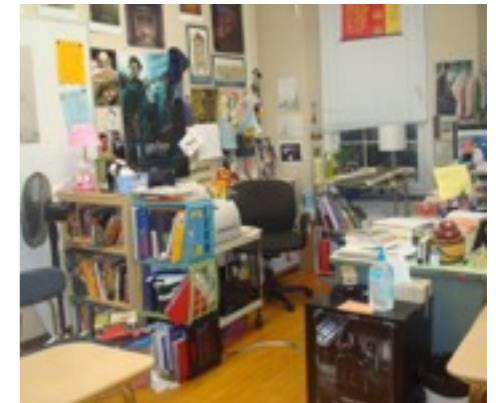
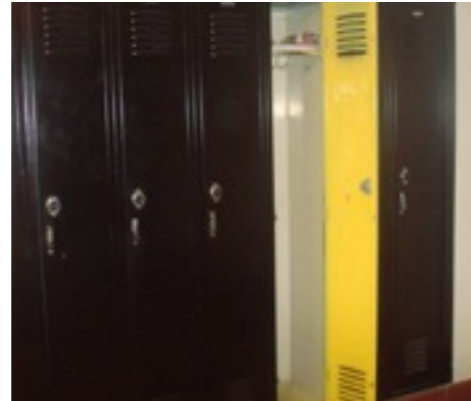
Cleveland Heights High School was built in 1925 with additions in 1930, 1949, 1959, 1960, and 1973.

Strong Impressions

The layering of mechanical systems of varied vintages is especially problematic in this large, historic building that has been modified numerous times over eight decades – often on a make-do basis. Improvements have not been systematic or comprehensive leaving a building with a huge mixture of disconnected solutions to basic functions. The science wing which blocked the impressive historic façade of the building has now outlived its utility being functional obsolete, inefficient and structurally weak. Impressive spaces like the auditorium are offset by the swimming pool and other public spaces present a depressing and negative impression of our school and community.



Cleveland Heights High School



Committee Recommendations

If the district proceeds with creating a facilities improvement plan, we recommend that the plan:

- Is informed by observations of the existing conditions in our schools, and by the experience of other districts that have undertaken state-supported facilities projects. Widespread public exposure to district schools will help people assess the need and options for improvement.
- Is comprehensive, systemic, well thought-out and adequately funded to produce a lasting product.
We have observed too many short term solutions with long-term costs
- Is based on a careful school-by-school analysis that takes into account assets and liabilities and space requirements.
- Includes items that are not covered by the state program, such as athletic facilities, performance spaces, swimming pools, parking lots and playgrounds.
- Takes place soon in order to keep the district up to date and competitive with surrounding districts, as CH-UH may find itself surrounded by school systems whose facilities outclass ours.