



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

CH-UH Schools announce ad hoc district facilities planning committee

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, OH –

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education announced at their board meeting tonight the creation of a new Citizens' Facilities Committee that will review the District's school buildings, their condition and usage, and the community's current and future educational needs. The Committee will begin their work with a review of a recent report completed by the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC).

The OSFC report, released in April 2010, contains a comprehensive assessment of all of the District's facilities. The OSFC report contained a number of important findings, including:

1. The OSFC looks at facilities, in part, based on the ratio of square footage per student. Their standard ratio is 115 square feet per student for elementary schools, and 165 for high schools. The CH-UH School District's average ratio is 225. This reflects the significant inefficiency of our school buildings.
2. In addition to space usage, the configuration and condition of every building was evaluated. Classrooms were identified as undersized, heating and environmental systems were inadequate, and many buildings did not meet minimum State standards. Overall, CH-UH schools were rated "borderline" in terms of sufficiency for our educational programming.
3. The OSFC, through their Expedited Local Partnership Program's Facility Assessment and Enrollment Projection Report, will assist the District with the cost of any project that generally follows their guidelines. Currently, the State of Ohio's co-funding share stands at 14% of the total cost of the project.
4. In addition to its review, the OSFC also suggests potential facilities plans as a starting place for the Citizens' Committee. The two plans proposed by the OSFC are:
 - Construct all new facilities. This plan proposes reducing the elementary schools to five, reducing the middle schools to two, and retaining one high school.
 - Renovate 5 elementary buildings, one middle school and the high school.

5. Based on educational needs, the declining number of students, and a realistic assessment of what the community can afford, the report also recommended the District strongly consider consolidation of school buildings at the elementary and middle school levels.

“The OSFC report makes the facts clear. The CH-UH School District simply has too much building space for the number of students we have, and the condition of those buildings is inadequate and getting worse every year. Now is the time to address these issues and we are proposing a measured, cautious approach that seeks wide input and analysis. This is a challenge – and an opportunity. We have the chance now to look at our schools and really re-imagine our facilities and configuration so they meet the needs of this community into the future,” said Superintendent Douglas Heuer.

The members of the Citizens’ Facilities Committee will be selected by the Board of Education.

The Citizens’ Facilities Committee will be tasked with the following duties:

1. Reviewing the OSFC Assessment Report and gathering additional data
2. Developing a recommendation to the Board regarding:
 - a. Renovation versus building new,
 - b. Grade configuration,
 - c. Number of facilities.
3. Creating a timeline for implementation
4. Assessing potential funding for the project