



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

970 Madison ▪ Oak Park ▪ Illinois ▪ 60302 ▪ ph: 708.524.3000 ▪ fax: 708.524.3019 ▪ www.op97.org

---

TO: Members of the District 97 Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Carol L. Kelley, Superintendent of Schools  
Therese M. O'Neill, Asst. Supt. Finance & Operations

SUBJECT: Holmes Expansion

DATE: June 14, 2016

During the board meeting on May 24, 2016, some of you shared questions and concerns about the recommended addition and associated upgrades to Holmes Elementary School that total approximately \$6,670,000. As a result, we believe the proper and prudent thing to do is to take a step back from the proposed plan and timeline, and use the board meeting this evening to provide you with additional history and supporting documentation regarding the situation at Holmes. We will also present you with three recently modified options for the school with the hope of getting consensus on one of them. If we are able to reach consensus, we will bring this option to you for vetting during your meeting on June 28, 2016 and possible approval during your meeting on July 12, 2016.

## History

In January 2016, Steve Larson from Ehlers presented the district with a combined enrollment/building capacity report that included trend information about student enrollment. This report indicated that Holmes would experience growth in conjunction with the residential development projects that are either currently being constructed by the Village of Oak Park, or are scheduled to be built in the future. When calculating capacity and determining classroom needs, Steve used a minimum class size of 25 students and divided that number by the total projected enrollment. Based on this formula, the report demonstrated that, with the exception of Holmes and possibly Longfellow, our need for additional classroom space would be minimal for future years. However, in reality, our average class size has been significantly below 25 for many years. This is reflected in the attached building enrollment report from May 31, 2016.

After the enrollment/building capacity report was shared with the board, the district directed Jennifer Costanzo from STR Partners, Inc. to conduct a thorough walkthrough of our 10 schools. During those walkthroughs, Jennifer assessed classroom size, as well as how the existing space (e.g., computer labs) might be converted or enhanced to better meet 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. She also met with all of the principals and got their feedback on potential improvements to their buildings. Following the walkthroughs, Jennifer prepared a comprehensive analysis for each building using the trend data from the enrollment/building capacity report and the information she collected about existing classrooms versus required classrooms. That analysis is attached.

Once that analysis was completed, Jennifer met with cabinet to present her findings. Those findings were then shared with the administrative leadership team for review and discussion. The administrative leadership team, which is comprised of school and district-level administrators, used the information Jennifer provided to identify potential solutions for addressing short-term needs for the

2016-17 school year. The team also came to a consensus about presenting FAC with a recommendation for building an addition onto Holmes that would be complete by August 2017.

FAC reviewed and discussed the recommendation for Holmes during its meetings in March and May, which included the attached proposed timeline for completing the work between the spring of 2017 and August 2017.

The sense of urgency for addressing the capacity issues/concerns at Holmes was born from the projected enrollment numbers provided by Ehlers, as well as the results of the walkthrough conducted by Jennifer. Those numbers and results show that the classroom space we will need over the next five years at Holmes will be below what is currently available.

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Classrooms Available</u>	<u>Classrooms Needed</u>
2016-17	21	22
2017-18	21	24
2018-19	21	24
2019-20	21	25
2020-21	21	26

While we were confident that we could make the necessary adjustments/modifications within the existing space to secure the additional classroom we will need next year, our ability to do that moving forward became far more challenging given our projected growth and anticipated needs starting with the 2017-18 school year. That is why we prepared scenarios and specifications that would enable us to begin construction at Holmes in March 2017 and complete it prior to the start of the following school year. We also wanted to make sure that whatever work we did would not disrupt the new outdoor classroom that was generously donated by the Holmes PTO.

During its meeting on May 24, 2016, the board asked whether the district had considered redistricting. This option would require an extensive, long-term conversation with the community, which could only be had if there was adequate space available across the district. Unfortunately, the space in our buildings is anticipated to become incredibly limited over the next five years.

- Beye – Currently has 15 classrooms; may need up to an additional three
- Hatch – Currently has 16 classrooms; will need 15 of them for three of the next five years and all of them for the other two.
- Irving – Currently has 20 classrooms; will need 18 of them for four of the next five years and 17 for the other one
- Lincoln – Currently has 24 classrooms; will need 25 for the next five years
- Longfellow – Currently has 22 classrooms; will need 23 for one year, 24 for two years, 25 for one year and 26 for one year
- Mann – Currently has 20 classrooms; will need 18 of them for two years and 19 for the other three
- Whittier – Currently has 15 classrooms; will need all of them for the next five years

Please note that the capacities listed above are based on mid-point projections that have a margin for error.

### Potential Options for Holmes

This evening, the district is presenting the board with three revised options for the addition at Holmes, which includes costs and pros and cons. Please note that all three options include the preservation and protection of the outdoor classroom space donated by the PTO.

1. Option 1 – Resolution of capacity only; \$2,474,000 (\*plus soft costs)
2. Option 2 – Resolution of capacity with minimal renovations; \$3,322,000 (\*plus soft costs)
  
3. Option 3 – Resolution of capacity with overall renovations and enhancements; \$5,968,025 (\*plus soft costs)

\*Plus soft costs include professional fees, as well as contingency and escalation costs.

All three of the options feature the following pros:

- Provide 26 general education classrooms
- Each grade level is grouped together with five sections total per level
- Availability of one overflow classroom to accommodate possible “bubble” in population growth

They also all have a similar con in that the Village of Oak Park owns the right of way, which means District 97 will incur additional costs for utility work (total costs are unknown).

The additional pros and cons for each individual option are listed below.

Option 1 – Construct a five-classroom addition with renovation to provide new bathrooms necessary to accommodate added occupancy.

Pros:

There are no additional pros for this option beyond what is listed above.

Cons:

Below are the additional cons associated with this option.

- Size of kindergarten classrooms not consistent within building and does not conform to district average
- Size of general education classrooms not consistent within building
- Two general education teachers currently sharing one large room for two individual sections
- Small school office, which also does not provide professional learning space

Option 2 – Construct a five-classroom addition with renovation to provide new bathrooms necessary to accommodate added occupancy. Perform minimal renovation of existing classrooms to resolve issue of consistency in size and create individual instruction space.

Pros:

The additional pro of this option is that all general education classrooms will be similar in size.

Cons:

Below are the additional cons associated with this option.

- Size of kindergarten classrooms not consistent within building and does not conform to district average
- Small school office, which also does not provide professional learning space

Option 3 – Construct a five-classroom addition with renovation to provide new bathrooms necessary to accommodate added occupancy. Perform minimal renovation of existing classrooms to resolve issue of consistency in size and create individual instruction space. Renovate instructional space to produce kindergarten classrooms that are equal in size and consistent with the district average.

Update the school office to improve the overall functionality of the space; include a professional library/conference room for staff meetings.

Pros:

Below are the additional pros associated with this option.

- All general education classrooms similar in size
- Kindergarten classrooms are in renovated spaces and consistent in size
- Main office is renovated to include a professional library/conference room, allow staff to operate in a more functional space, and have it conform to similar offices in our other elementary school buildings

Cons:

The additional con of this option is that renovating existing classrooms to make them more consistent in size may generate conversation about equity in our other buildings.

As we stated above, our hope is get consensus from you on one of the options this evening so we can bring that option to you for vetting during your meeting on June 28, 2016 and possible approval during your meeting on July 12, 2016.

clk/tmo/jc

attachments