



South High School in Downers Grove: FACILITY REVIEW/FEEDBACK SESSION

December 10, 2014



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All members of the District 99 community were invited to participate in Facility Review and Feedback session at South High, which was held on December 10, 2014; 34 people enrolled and/or attended, including students, parents and community members, attended.

- Superintendent **Dr. Mark McDonald** thanked all participants and provided context for the table discussions. He noted that the district's strategic plan directed us to consider how our schools should look and function in the future. Concept plans will be created by next summer; ideas from the plan will help to guide annual capital spending, which is between \$1.2 and \$1.8 million each year.
- Wight & Company's Lead Architect **Craig Siepka** provided an overview of the architectural process and reviewed current trends in educational spaces.
- Principal **Ed Schwartz** provided an overview of the ideas staff members had when asked about possible improvements, and a video showcased those ideas and current challenges.

Participants worked in small groups were asked to discuss and prioritize 11 "themes" that the school identified as priorities for improving (see results at the end of this document for details). School and district administrators as well as a representative from Wight & Company facilitated the discussions.

The **top three** items receiving the most number of high priority votes were:

- Create a classroom environment that **enhances online learning** and student and teacher access to technology (equip students with devices, access to electricity, reliable Wi-Fi)
- Enhance the **safety and security** of the building (i.e. install additional security cameras, eliminate internal bottleneck areas in stairwells)
- Establish more authentic and **better equipped environments**, such as improved science and engineering labs and career and technical education spaces

The items receiving the most number of **low priority** votes were:

- Complete **outdoor renovation plan**, including adding stadium bleachers/storage upgrades
- **Relocate student services** (activities, counseling, psychologists) closer to spaces where students congregate



DGS PARTICIPANT NOTES AND COMMENTS

Complete **outdoor renovation plan**, including adding stadium bleachers/ storage upgrades

- Make more efficient use of green spaces
- Make more environmentally friendly
- Where instruction takes place should be a higher priority
- It's already nice
- Add handrails to stadium bleachers
- Use center courtyard more
- Sports storage and facility upgrades are needed
- Improve student drop-off area

Create a classroom environment that **enhances online learning** and student and teacher access to technology (equip students with devices, access to electricity, reliable Wi-Fi)

- Important that all students have the same 24/7 access to the Internet, etc.
- Need to coordinate with elementary schools, coordinate the direction
- Need to ensure students can recharge devices
- Bandwidth is inadequate
- Technology wave of future—used in every class. We're training kids for jobs that don't exist yet.
- Access to Internet, Wi-Fi, important to learning
- It's ever-changing
- Comcast hot-spot option

Create a **more welcoming** main entrance, redesigning the front desk, attendance and administrative offices

- Entrance is small, security may be concern with design
- Other items are more important
- This is a luxury more than a need
- Administration should have equally accessible space as students
- There's no space for meetings
- Important to make a good first impression and professional; need to clearly mark main entrance. Make kids, parents and community members feel welcome.

Enhance the **safety and security** of the building (i.e. install additional security cameras, eliminate internal bottleneck areas in stairwells)

- There is open access during the day in some locations

- Stairwells are an issue due to lack of flow, overcrowding
- Some hallways don't flow—especially C
- Need more doors!!!
- Need better security for front entrance
- Improve safety at stairwells
- Make people check in at main entrance
- Stairwells are too bottlenecked—need to improve
- Front desk needs doors locked
- Need more cameras
- Need a camera buzz system before entering
- Staff training for safety

Establish more authentic and **better equipped environments**, such as improved science and engineering labs and career and technical education spaces

- STEM very important
- Earth Action
- STEM most important

Expand performing arts spaces, including theater classrooms and auditorium

- Need more flexibility; use existing space and reconfigure

Improve **fitness areas** and spaces dedicated to health and wellness

(No comments noted)

Improve **flexibility in learning spaces** and classrooms by adding more modular furnishings

- One of THE most important improvements we can make
- Ability to transform spaces for various teaching and learning needs is necessary to reach our student learning styles
- Flexible classrooms, but not couches
- This should be easy to do

Make school 100% **air conditioned**

- Table split on importance—depends on whether there are better uses of money
- Possible ways of energy savings through vegetated roofs?

- Would be nice not to have finals before winter break, but not urgent

Provide expanded **social and collaborative** spaces for students (i.e., redesign cafeteria, library, and courtyard to maximize existing square footage), and make spaces technology-friendly (with reliable Wi-Fi and network connectivity and access to electricity)

- Students need their “own” space
- There are safety issues with students overcrowding hallways

Relocate student services (activities, counseling, psychologists) closer to spaces where students congregate

- Moving these offices next to students will make it worse (noisier?)
- It’s functioning adequately now
- We need more space
- It’s about the people, not about the space

Other:

- Need more energy efficient solutions
- Wind/Solar/Green Roof project; especially if we use A/C, need energy sources and good curriculum tie-ins (AP Environmental Science), math, statistics, biology
- Green initiatives—alternative energy; solar panels, wind turbines; help kids study those aspects



DGS COMMENTS COLLECTED FROM WEBSITE

Q: What changes to South High's facilities would you most like to see in the future? What should be our priorities?

- Infrastructure improvements & Surveillance/Security
- Alternative Energy Projects (Green Roof, Solar Panels, Wind Turbines, etc.)
- The use of alternative energy projects, wind, solar, etc.
- Alternative Energy Projects
- AIR CONDITIONING!!!
- air conditioning
- Class room upgrades if needed, auditorium should be larger
- Message from respondent:

1. Architectural improvements to both the south facing entrances, to update the appearance and the aesthetic quality of the building: The appearance and condition of the building does a lot to set the tone of the learning environment and the perception within the community. There is an incorrect perception that DGS is inferior to DGN and this translates to real estate values (homes in the DGS community are valued less than in the DGN community). I know from my own experience that the quality of education is just as good at DGS as at DGN. But the perception exists and this perception has been recently supported by the work that has been done at DGN which resulted in upgrading the campus in a very attractive manner -- i.e., grand entrances, wrought iron fencing and attractive landscaping. I would hope that such plans can be on the list at DGS. Appearance does matter in my opinion.

2. I would be in favor of making sure the music and theater departments are up to date technologically - i.e., auditorium lighting and sound systems, etc.

3. I would agree with the desire to air condition the facility. However, I am not necessarily a fan of the goal to move the school year earlier for the sake of completing first semester finals prior to the winter break. Having had two children heavily involved in music at DGS (and because they were orchestra members, also involved at DGN), the December schedule is bad enough with all of the music commitments. If final exams were added to this time frame, it would have been extremely difficult. I would not like to see the music activities reduced for the sake of such a schedule change.

- Systems to facilitate future technologies
- Flexible learning spaces to promote collaboration between students/staff members/community members



DGS STATEMENT RANKINGS

Statements	Siepka #1	Schwartz #2	Staemlin #3	Hash #4	Mastrodimos #5	Davis #6	Total # of Green (G) High Priority	Total # of Yellow (Y) Middle Priority	Total # of Red (R) Low Priority
Complete outdoor renovation plan , including adding stadium bleachers/ storage upgrades	R	R	R	Y/R	R	R	0	1 (Y/R)	5
Create a classroom environment that enhances online learning and student and teacher access to technology (equip students with devices, access to electricity, reliable Wi-Fi)	G/Y	G	G	G	G	G	6 (1 G/Y)	0	0
Create a more welcoming main entrance, redesigning the front desk, attendance and administrative offices	Y	R	Y	R	Y	Y	0	4	2
Enhance the safety and security of the building (i.e. install additional security cameras, eliminate internal bottleneck areas in stairwells)	Y	G	G	Y	G	G	4	2	0
Establish more authentic and better equipped environments , such as improved science and engineering labs and career and technical education spaces	G	G/Y	R	G/Y	G	Y	4 (2 Y)	1	1
Expand performing arts spaces, including theater classrooms and auditorium	G/Y	Y	Y/R	Y/R	R	Y	1 (1Y)	4 (2R)	1
Improve fitness areas and spaces dedicated to health and wellness	Y	Y	Y	Y/R	Y	Y	0	6 (1R)	0
Improve flexibility in learning spaces and classrooms by adding more modular furnishings	Y/R	G/Y	Y	Y	G	G	3 (1Y)	3 (1R)	0
Make school 100% air conditioned	Y	G	G/Y	G	Y	Y	3 (1Y)	3	0
Provide expanded social and collaborative spaces for students (i.e., redesign cafeteria, library, and courtyard to maximize existing square footage), and make spaces technology-friendly (with reliable Wi-Fi and network connectivity and access to electricity)	Y	G/Y	Y	Y	G	G	3 (1Y)	3	0
Relocate student services (activities, counseling, psychologists) closer to spaces where students congregate	Y/R	G/Y	Y	R	R	R	1 (1Y)	2 (1R)	3
Energy efficient solutions			G		G	G	3		