



Facilities Task Force Meeting
Aug. 22, 2023

Welcome

Task Force members in attendance were Chantell Bertollini, Alec Covert, Erin Schweigert, Karl Noste, Michelle Simmons, Tyler Dockins, Robert Kratzig, Todd Torgeson, Derek Forbes, Lisa Gilchrist, Bryant Michaelson, Adrienne Somera, Jay Yeager, Kurt Harvill, James Everett and Angie Hoyt.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Members in attendance read over the minutes from the July 26 meeting. Lisa Gilchrist requested an update be made in the minutes to consistently reference task force members with this title. All task force members approved the minutes with the above requested revision.

Group Norms

Jay asked members in attendance to review the group norms.

1. Attend all meetings and be on time.
2. Listen to and show respect for the views of other members.
3. All questions are welcome.
4. Be an attentive listener and hold each other accountable.
5. Carry out assignments on schedule.
6. Extend grace and assume positive intent.
7. Always strive for win-win situations.
8. Every member is responsible for the team's progress/success.

Review Upcoming Meetings

An additional meeting has been added on Sept. 13 at 5:30 p.m.

- Site visit to Lynden Middle School.
- Task force members will meet in the Meridian Learning Center at 5:30 p.m. and hop on a bus to ride together to tour Lynden Middle School.

Sept. 26 at 5:30 p.m.

- Site visit to Meridian High School.
- Task force members will meet in the Meridian Learning Center at 5:30 p.m. and walk over to tour the high school.
- Task force members will review all information presented so far.
- Task force members will be asked to prioritize projects for recommendation to present to the community for feedback.

Oct. 24 Review at 5:30 p.m.

- Review feedback gathered from the community and draft recommendation.

Tour Meridian Middle School

The task force was greeted at Meridian Middle School by Tim Faber with King Architects. The task force was asked to use safety, infrastructure, condition and learning lenses while touring the facilities at MMS and IRE. MMS Principal Todd Torgeson and Assistant Principal Robert Kratzig showed the task force around MMS.

The task force tour began in the common area where Tim Faber pointed out the structural concerns with a non-reinforced concrete building and reviewed the cost to renovate and bring the school up to code vs. rebuild.

The task force moved into the outer wing at MMS, where safety concerns with unsecured exterior doors, issues with traffic flow, uneven surfaces and ADA compliance issues are prevalent. Damage to walls, floors, paint and paneling, leaking windows, a musty smell because of lack of circulation, and non-functional windows all were seen within the outer wing learning spaces. Approximately two-thirds of the MMS students utilize the outer wing learning spaces.

While walking between the outer wing spaces, task force members commented on the lack of playground activities. Lack of funding has prevented any major renovations.

The task force moved into the main building space at MMS, where traffic flow challenges, ADA compliance issues, leaking pipes and non-functional fixtures were noticed.

Task force members loaded back onto the school bus for Irene Reither Elementary School.

Tour Irene Reither Elementary

The task force members entered the main building at IRE where Tim Faber and IRE Principal Tyler Dockins gave an overview of the two buildings that make up IRE. Both IRE buildings scored well on the study and survey. The two buildings are currently operating at capacity and portable classrooms are being utilized for additional space. There is severe space concern with the enrollment projections of three hundred additional students by 2030.

In the Ten Mile building (also referred to as Building B) there are safety concerns with the exterior classroom doors, and there is only hot water for hand washing in the restroom spaces.

Task Force members submitted their thoughts, reflections, and feedback after the tours.

Meridian Middle School

- Our kids and staff have been resilient in dealing with the outdated conditions, and a warmer, more inviting space would be conducive to learning.
- It is clear that maintenance staff have done what they can to keep the school functioning the best they can. I was surprised by the lack of windows in the cafeteria and other rooms. It is very dark and doesn't feel welcoming. After touring it is easier to see some of the safety challenges.
- The condition of the buildings left me frustrated, not for lack of effort by our amazing staff, but that we haven't done more for our students in prior years. As a parent, you attend concerts and sporting events in the gym, which is relatively new, conferences in the main hall classrooms that have had a small facelift - to see the nooks and crannies of decay was concerning. The middle school needs to be top priority and focus for the task force with all efforts in the voting process. I would like to see the middle school students'

Strategic Planning feedback compiled and shared with the task force as well as printed materials for our community members. I would also like to have input from current students specifically pertaining to the conditions of the building - as well as their voice and support when it comes time to involve community members in tours and question and answer sessions.

- The middle school is in rough shape. It should be completely ripped down and rebuilt
- Update is needed
- Bottom line I attended Meridian Middle School when it was an elementary school. Knowingly there have been some renovations and updates over the last several years. However, what is needed for near- and long-term utilization to accommodate today's students the old facility is outdated and too costly to be remodeled. There is need of a new facility to centralize and streamline for stated future educational enhancement and safety. Cost is a factor to say the least, however, if not done now it will even be more costly down the road.
- Can a new school be designed to allow for easier expansion/addition if the school needs it in the future? I think there are many benefits for high school and middle schools especially in smaller communities to share a common campus. I wish a new middle school could be built on the high school campus and they could both capitalize on the facilities that could be shared.
- The middle school appears very outdated and is in need of many updates. It's obvious that the staff take care of the building as much as they can but as it was stated on the tour there are too many items to take care of to make large meaningful updates or repairs. As an adult working there it seems like it would be a sad building to work in.
- Capacity was a large discussion at the Elementary school. How is the capacity for the current Middle school?
- I'm curious about the plans or ?? for a new middle school that were drawn up back in 2012 when the IRE and MHS buildings were built. Are those usable to save money on design at this point? How far in the process did that get at that time? What were the reasons MMS was dropped last time?
- The MMS facility is clearly the worst condition of any in the district. It shows a clear need for replacement or major renovations.
- My reflection is that there is a pretty dramatic difference in the buildings and student experience. I feel that the middle school has limitations in terms of facilities, particularly in regard to accessibility, that would impact equitable education for students. Flow between and within spaces is a particular concern.
- I also feel that the middle school does seem to have missed some smaller upgrades (new furniture for example) that could improve the environment in small ways.
- Our district has worked diligently to maintain our building and campus but being the oldest building in the district there are numerous areas that could improve learning opportunities for our students with a new building. Continuing to provide technology upgrades to a building that was not designed to support our technology needs is challenging.

Irene Reither Elementary School

- How will we fit all of the students in with the future projections?
- I am impressed by how the staff there have been creative in making their space work for the students who attend there. The six lunch rotations sound like a huge challenge and I am sure it would help if more students could eat lunch at one time.
- The community has put a lot of resources into the elementary school and has still not met capacity. I have concerns on an additional building being placed on the land and would

prefer knowing for certain what options are from both an EPA report on the creek (mirrored image) building and a second building and traffic to the Hannegan (County Works) before we invest a lot of volunteer hours into the review of items that may not be possible. I still have questions if a second building at the location is ideal or if a second in the Cordata neighborhood is more fiscally responsible, like the Sunnyland neighborhood school.

- It's in good shape but needs to be larger. How can we do this more, it is cost efficient? Also, portables are tacky and gross. I don't like them.
- What if we did not develop Ten Mile into district services and had it as a backup plan if IRE runs out of space again? You could move the district services in there but know in the back of your head it will be taken back if need be.
- If there isn't money for both buildings, what would an upgrade of the common space be and where could that go?
- The number of students will continue to increase over time, so it is essential to be prepared for this occurrence. The new school again is certainly the best option and the location ideal. The concept of making alterations to the existing facilities for district offices etc. is wise as it can then centralize administrative personnel. No additional costs for land or completely new facilities. Again, the cost is the problem. Our community is still considered a rural blue-collar folk and accountability will be essential. We are a proud community and have a great track record of school support. The cost of these new facilities will be pushing the limits no doubt. Again, if not done now what will it cost in the future?
- Why is the option of mirroring the Ten Mile building being discussed as an option when it may not even be feasible? The concerns of the creek setback and losing the fire lane might not allow for that option. Shouldn't we be looking at alternative solutions or know for sure if it is feasible?
- Is the "pie" shaped classrooms a good layout to duplicate in the ten-mile building? Do teachers like the class layouts or would they prefer a rectangular classroom?
- Where would be the best location for a lunchroom if a new school was built?
- Beautiful school. It seems very well taken care of.
- What is the typical life span of portable buildings? Are there systems designed for making portable buildings safer for students in a lockdown situation or newer portables that are designed better for the safety of the students in a lockdown situation?
- What options do we have to handle capacity issues at IRE if MMS is prioritized for construction? The facility - even building B - is in exceptionally better shape and meets education needs much better than MMS. Concerned about safety and security on the IRE campus with lack of fencing.
- When I started at IRE in 2014, we fit all the IRE classes in bldg. A. In that short time, with the growth of the population and our large expansion of early childhood programs the need for space has dramatically increased.
- Flow in and between spaces is an issue, and there is a need for larger multi-purpose spaces like gyms.
- In thinking about a student population increase at IRE really means that there are future student population increases coming to all of our grades and campuses. This increase in student population will have an even greater impact on our middle school, which is our oldest building.

Next meeting is at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 13. Members will tour Lynden Middle School.