

BERKLEY SCHOOLS ACADEMIC SPACES, FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Frequently Asked Questions

FACILITIES

Was the assessment used to evaluate safety in the buildings?

Yes. Safety was evaluated as part of the report. In addition, at the building level stakeholder meetings student safety was discussed. Many stakeholders wished for offices closer to the parking lots, or vestibules for guests to enter, rather than entering half a building away from the main office. Integrated Design Solutions, Inc (IDS) listened to the concerns of the stakeholders and made recommendations to relocate offices or improve traffic flow, all for improving student and staff safety. Details on the recommendations are in the report, listed inside of each school's tab.

Why have Sinking Fund dollars been used to repair athletic items, such as the Hurley Field astro turf, instead of other spaces listed in the report?

Sinking Fund dollars may be used primarily for the construction or repair of school buildings and facilities, acquiring or installing technology (wiring or materials for installing), and the purchase of real estate sites. Each year the maintenance and facilities staff prioritizes needs in the District that are eligible for Sinking Fund work. Recently, the Hurley Field turf was updated because it had reached the end of its life, and was very low on its impact and safety score. Many students and community members use Hurley Field. The turf was updated as part of a regular life-cycle improvement and to ensure user safety. Other recent Sinking Fund projects include BHS auditorium seating/related improvements, boiler repairs, new lockers, roofing/lot/concrete replacement projects, technology infrastructure improvements and lighting/energy improvements.

How will the community be educated about what 'state-of-the-art' facilities look like? Are there models locally?

IDS looked at Berkley's deficiencies relative to building codes and educational industry standards to arrive at their recommended upgrades. As the next steps progress, Berkley will work with an architecture firm to better understand 'industry standards' and 'state-of-the-art' facilities and will share these results with the community. This may include site visits to neighboring communities. School-level examples of spaces and visits are also common in the next phase of planning.

Will the District make any immediate improvements to facilities prior to consulting with an Architecture firm?

Yes. As we learned of immediate and potentially hazardous issues throughout the assessment process, repairs were made using Sinking Fund dollars. We are also addressing lower cost safety items as the needs arise. The Sinking Fund dollars will be used throughout the summer on projects as well, many of which are contained in the IDS report as deficiencies.

TECHNOLOGY

Did this study identify ways in which collaboration with other agencies could be used for technology deficiencies?

The report outlined deficiencies in technology and made recommendations for upgrades and improvements. Collaborative decisions and efforts would be part of the next phase of the assessment when planning and implementation would begin.

For technology, were the assessment recommendations to get us up to speed, or prepare us for future technology upgrades?

Both. All technology deficiencies were identified, and the recommendations for improvements were in some cases to bring us up to current technology and other areas, like building a robust network infrastructure or cloud storage/computing, were to allow for future needs as well. Berkley School District will seek the best system-wide solutions.

ACADEMIC SPACES

Were any recommendations made in the Academic Space Needs category to add square footage, new classrooms, facilities, etc? Was consideration made for crowded classrooms and learning environments?

Yes. During the assessment process IDS met with a stakeholder group at each of our schools, comprised of teachers, parents, and staff members. At nearly each building, space was a concern. While the current classroom sizes were right-sized when built, recommendations for expanding classroom sizes and creating new spaces such as a dedicated fine arts wing or separate cafeteria spaces are contained in the full report.

Has the District thought about merging schools and the number of schools we operate vs efficiency that might come with less buildings?

Discussions about school merging and the number of schools/buildings we operate will be part of the next phase of the assessment process. We will consult with experts to guide us through the report findings and ask for community input in order to make the best decisions for all students in the Berkley Schools.

GENERAL

How realistic are the cost estimates contained in the report?

IDS did a very diligent job in cost estimating deficiency dollars. The team consulted with experts, priced out current costs, and also considered inflation (2.5% per year) and construction costs to arrive at the final numbers. IDS explained their cost estimating process on page 1.4 of the report. Depending on the economy, costs could go up or down. The IDS cost estimates allow for educated planning, but are only estimates.

Did IDS recommend time frames for corrective actions for each priority score category?

All deficiencies listed in the report were given a priority score from most to least critical. This scoring allows the District to know what the most immediate needs are. IDS did not specify beyond most to least critical with a specific time table, but we understand the urgency behind our most critical needs.

Has any consideration been made to reduce Schools of Choice numbers to right size buildings for the future?

Schools of Choice numbers will most likely be discussed as part of the next phase of the assessment process. We will engage the community and consider total student populations while developing future plans.

What are the District's next steps in the assessment process?

The next step is for the District to bring in an architecture firm as experts to help us through all of the information presented in the report. These experts will allow us to develop priorities. As part of this process we will involve the community as well.

Will this report be used to develop a capital improvement campaign?

It is most likely that this report will eventually lead to a capital improvement campaign. At this time, we need to work with an architecture firm, begin the prioritization process and discussion with the community before we launch into a capital improvement campaign. However, we understand that our needs far outweigh the capacity of the annual Sinking Fund and General Fund dollars. As the process continues, we will keep the community informed.

Will you really pursue \$120 Million in repairs and upgrades?

Not likely. The Berkley School District received a report containing every possible deficiency, including items that don't exist but would be nice to have (e.g. dedicated cafeteria space at all schools). We will take this report and consult with experts and the community to determine which items will support current District programs, and will advance the District well into the future.

How can I stay informed or involved?

The District will continue to update the website with more FAQs as well as post the next steps of the process online under the ABOUT US tab of www.berkleyschools.org.