

KFCS Newsletter

Volume 1; Issue 3

Facility Taskforce Recommendations

From September through December of 2011, a group of local citizens met to review our facilities and their identified needs. DLR architects out of Portland facilitated the study. The focus of the group was to look at our buildings through the lens of our strategic plan (<http://www.edline.net/pages/klamathfalls>). In particular, the mission statement, "Preparing all students to succeed in an ever-changing world," influenced their work and their recommendations.

What they discovered was a district whose buildings have tremendous needs due to their age and to the lack of capital investment over the years. The newest building is Ponderosa Junior High, built in 1970. The Lucile O'Neill plant was constructed in the 1960's. The other five actively used facilities, Fairview, Pelican, Conger, Roosevelt, and KU were built in the 1920's and 30's. Though the sites have been well cleaned and maintained as well as possible over the years, limited dollars have been available to address infrastructure needs. As a result, the plumbing, roofing, mechanical, masonry, electrical, and asphalt in all buildings are reaching a crisis point. Addressing these facility needs cannot be delayed much longer.

Another area of concern highlighted during the facility process is improving the safety features of our buildings. At a time in which tragedies have been happening in schools throughout the country, our district is living on borrowed time.

The district board of directors, at their January 9th meeting, approved the taskforce recommendations. These recommendations will serve as the outline from which the board will work over the next years and, in fact, decades. There are no quick fixes here. This plan is divided into three distinct phases – short term, mid range, and long term.

The short-range components include three parts that should be addressed in the next five years. One is to improve Klamath Union High School by doing a partial demolition to right size it for current enrollment needs. The remaining building would be remodeled. Included in the changes is an office re-location to Monclair Ave. Parking and a new entryway would also be added to that side of the school. The safety of the building would be improved by structuring it so the office could monitor all entries into the building by eliminating other entry points into the building.

The health and safety of the building would also be addressed by repairing the mechanical, temperature control, electrical, ventilation, and roofing systems. Replacement of single-paned windows throughout the building with double-paned ones would conserve energy. Major remodeling would take place in the field house, shop wing, and girls' locker rooms. Pel Court would be retained and a new gym would be added to replace the inadequate second gym currently used.

A second short-term recommendation of the taskforce is to invest in health and safety improvements at the elementary and junior high levels. This would include repairing mechanical systems, temperature controls, ventilation, roofing, and security systems.

The total for this K-12 repair and safety initiative would be \$20,300,000.

The third short-term recommendation is to consolidate elementary schools to save operational expenses and to negate the need for more infrastructure investments in the closed building or buildings. The board has taken no formal action on this recommendation. See more information on this topic below.

The mid-range elements of the plan include a possible addition to Ponderosa in order to add an additional grade level. This recommendation also includes improving the Ponderosa learning environment by adding natural lighting into the building. The estimated cost of this project is \$3,000,000. Such an addition would allow the closing of a second elementary school if enrollment levels hold steady.

The more long-term recommendations are to replace each of the remaining elementary schools over time. This could take many years to complete. Attached is the link to the facility plan. It will add more detail to this executive study. <http://www.kfalls.k12.or.us/edline/KFCS-FacilityPlanDraft.pdf>.

What About the Closing of an Elementary School?

As indicated above, it looks probable that an elementary school will be discontinued. Here are some questions and answers related to this issue:

Q: Which building will be closed?

A: It likely would be one of our two smallest buildings, either Pelican or Fairview.

Q: When will the decision be made?

A: The board plans to address this issue by the end of this school year.

Q: When will the closing happen?

A: 2012-13 would be the last year for the discontinued building.

Q: Where will the students go who were in the closed building?

A: District boundaries would be re-drawn and these students would attend classrooms in the remaining buildings.

Q: Is there enough room in these remaining buildings to take in all the students?

A: Yes, there currently are open classrooms in all the elementary buildings.

Q: Won't closing a school just make for larger class sizes at the other remaining schools when students are relocated?

A: No, it might actually make class sizes smaller. As students would be relocated to other schools, so would the teachers. The savings from maintenance and non-instructional costs from closing a school might even allow the budget committee to consider hiring more teachers.

January Is School Board Recognition Month

Please join me in thanking our dedicated school board members for sharing their time and talent with us. Their leadership is invaluable in helping KFCS continue to improve in all areas. Current members are President, Bill Jennings, Vice President, Rick Vaughn, Pelican area rep, Trina Perez, Mills' area rep, Minda Milani, Roosevelt area rep, Donnie Boyd, Fairview area rep, Lori Theros, and Conger area rep, Mark Halverson.

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