

**Hopkinton School District**  
**Data and Planning Subcommittee of the Facilities Committee**  
**Minutes 10/27/05**

Kevin Chittum opened the meeting at 7 pm by welcoming members and explaining that this subcommittee is an outgrowth of the townwide facilities planning committee, which has been working on the facilities planning process for the past 18 months. Katie Merrow noted that this committee is independent of the school board, and the charge of the subcommittee is to look at projections for population and growth in the community and the implications of this data for the planning process.

Present were: Dr. Richard Ayers, Arnold Coda, Harrison Thibault, Michael Wilkey, Larry Keniston, Marcia Clark, Katie Merrow, Kevin Chittum, and Sue Batchelder. Kathleen Callahan, John Moffett and Bill Carozza were unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Chittum noted that these are open meetings, and encouraged others to attend. The function of this subcommittee is not to develop policy, but to assemble data. For voting purposes, a formal committee will be established.

Dr. Ayers presented a history and overview of facility planning in the district. He identified five areas of consideration in analyzing current facilities for data analysis and planning purposes: enrollment projections, building capacity, program expansion, energy efficiency, and life safety and environment, specifically air quality.

Doug Brown, community member, former school administrator and former NH deputy commissioner of education, has completed enrollment projections using data collected through October 2004. Indications are that there will be a gradual increase in student population at the elementary level, and a more dramatic increase at the middle-high school level, over next 4-5 years. However it should be noted that enrollment at the lower elementary level has dropped this year.

The last year that a comprehensive facility study was created in this district was during 1996-1997, when the last major building expansions were completed. At the middle high school, the population at that time was just over 400 students, and the building capacity was increased to hold 450 students. The current enrollment at the high school is 531. Projections completed a year ago indicate that we are now at 1048 students in all schools, and the student population will continue to increase, leading to an enrollment in 2009-2010 of 1081. The actual number used is that which is reported to the state in October.

In determining building capacity, consideration was given to whether we meet class size guidelines, and how programs have changed since 96-97. We are within 2-4 students per level of the state guidelines. Class sizes average 17 at Harold Martin School, 20 at Maple Street School, 21 at the middle school and approximately 20-22 at the high school level. Mr. Thibault asked to have this actual data made available to the committee; Mr. Chittum replied that Bill Carozza, the district staff representative to the committee, which get this information to the committee. Any data needed and available through the school district will be supplied to the committee.

Utilization of the buildings during 2004-2005 was as follows: Harold Martin School, 99% capacity, Maple Street School, 90%, the Middle High School 97%. Calculations for this year will be available after Thanksgiving. Ms. Merrow asked how capacity was calculated to be at 99% at Harold Martin School if the class size is at 17, and the district guidelines are at 20 students. Dr. Ayers replied that the building capacity is based on square footage of the building, not room utilization. Ms. Merrow asked who calculated the building capacity; the reply was that Doug Brown was responsible, based on state guidelines. Mr. Chittum asked for clarification: if every class at Maple Street School has 22 students, then is capacity at 110%, even if there are unused rooms? Dr. Ayers replied in the affirmative. Mr. Thibault asked if there are state guidelines for the size of rooms. Dr. Ayers replied that the state guidelines are 800 square feet per classroom for regular rooms and 1100-1200 square feet for lab rooms. The number of students per classroom is not specified. Currently at the high school there are 16 classrooms, but there are 25 spaces used as classrooms. Dr. Ayers strongly suggested that the committee should tour the schools.

Mr. Wilkey, who serves on the planning board, noted that the number of new building permits, as well as current enrollment, was a factor in determining that capacity is at 99%. If capacity hits 100% or higher, consideration will have to be made whether to freeze building permits in town. Mr. Coda asked how, exactly, the figure of 99% was determined. Mr. Wilkey responded that for permits issued for 3-4 bedroom homes, one student was assumed, to offset the impact of smaller units that would be inhabited by those without children in the schools. These numbers, added to our actual numbers, put us at 99%. Ms. Merrow affirmed that .93 students per household is the most current data from the NH Housing Finance Authority.

Dr. Ayers moved on to the third planning consideration, that of program expansion. Since the 1996-1997 expansion project, programs have increased at all three buildings. At Harold Martin School, expansion includes reading and enrichment programs, guidance, occupational therapy and behavioral services, nursing services and an integrated preschool program. At Maple Street School, the instrumental music/band program has increased by 92% and group music lessons by 168%. School-wide programs exceed the capacity of the gymnasium, limiting assembly capacity to one grade level of students, teachers and parents at a time. At the high school there are many expanded programs, including advanced level math, science and English classes, expanded math, lab sciences, English, social studies, history, pre-engineering, art, music, physical education, adventure education and Senior Project programs. We now have two computer labs, although only one was anticipated in '96-97.

There is also a higher participation level of students. The average class load is 5.5 classes; in '96-97 the average was 4.5. Mr. Coda asked about the credit requirements for graduation; the state requirement is 20, and we require 21, although our students self-select to take a higher number. We have a low dropout rate, and yet Hopkinton offers some of the highest number of AP classes. Mr. Coda asked whether the increase in behavioral services at Harold Martin School was due to an increase in special needs students; the answer was yes, and although there have been increases at the other schools as well, they were planned to some extent and were accommodated more easily. Special services overall have increased, both in the number of students served and the services required. We accommodate learning needs that might not be accommodated in other districts; this results in a lower cost than out of district placements, but has an impact on space needs. Our students

are carefully and individually monitored, which brings their needs to our attention. Our special needs students are at about 14% of the total population, just under the state average.

Provisions of the 1996-1997 study were identified, and at the high school included the need for two additional classrooms, several larger classrooms, a building useful to the community at large, and a building capacity of 450 students.

The current identified priorities at the three schools are as follows. At Harold Martin School: a ventilation system upgrade, new office space, additional classroom space, and replacement of single-pane windows. At Maple Street School: a full-sized gymnasium addition, and a parking lot to accommodate 80+ vehicles. At the Middle High School: relocation of the main entry for security purposes, additional classroom space (6-8 rooms) to meet population and program demands, and a cafeteria-kitchen expansion.

Dr. Ayers' presentation ended with a facilities planning timeline; committee work will culminate in a presentation to the school board in February 2006 and a presentation at the school district meeting in March 2006.

Discussion was held regarding the proposed timeline; it was clarified that it will be unlikely that there will be a warrant article regarding expansion at the next town meeting; our presentation will be for informational purposes. Further lengthy discussion was held regarding concerns about anticipated population growth in the surrounding area, the possible impact on Hopkinton and its schools, and steps we might take to be proactive. It was finally determined that data analysis is the charge of this particular committee, and dialogue among the committees should be encouraged.

The tasks of this committee were divided into five main areas, and responsibilities were assigned as follows: (1) focus on population and enrollment projections over the next ten years, using existing and available data, assigned to Mr. Thibault and Mr. Keniston. (2) Economic and housing growth and changes, which should be researched with assistance from the planning committee. Mr. Wilkey will assist Mr. Moffett with this task. (3) School capacity projections and facility recommendations will be overseen by Mr. Chittum and Ms. Callahan. (4) Cost and savings of recommended improvements and expansions will be researched by Ms. Merrow and Mr. Coda. (5) State and federal regulations and requirements will be researched by Mr. Carozza and Ms. Clark. Dr. Ayers affirmed that the school district will assist in research and provide data as needed. Each task group should bring gathered information to the next meeting, along with a statement of work indicating what will be accomplished by February and what is not likely to be accomplished by then.

Upcoming meeting dates will be as follows: November 17, December 15, January 19, and February 16. All meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Maple Street School conference room.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.  
Minutes submitted by Sue Batchelder