

ASSESS WORKSHOP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Innovation Teams of students, parents, staff, administrators, parents/grandparents, business and community leaders representing each school in Missoula County Public Schools tackled a series of challenging exercises focused on assessing current educational practices and desired future practices as well as assessing existing school sites and facilities.

The Future of Learning

The workshop began with an overview of the Future of Learning, presented by CTA’s educational facility planner Nick Salmon and Dean of the University of Montana College of Education, Dr. Roberta Evans. The presentation opened by asking participants to identify the most memorable learning experience and to reflect on what they were doing, who they were with, how it made them feel and why it remained memorable today. As observations were shared with the whole group, it became apparent that many experiences did not take place in school, were often experienced alone or in small groups, and in some cases included recovery from failure. The future of learning requires the development of critical thinking skills to address problems that do not yet exist, collaborating with people around the world utilizing numerous

languages to communicate in order to develop creative solutions.

Relevant, Not Relevant, Scary & Why

The table teams discussed the presentation and shared specific portions of the presentation that were relevant, not relevant, scary and why. The most relevant themes of the presentation were the student-centered learning themes of project based learning, collaborative student teams and internships.

Global Century Skills

The group was asked to identify the biggest changes in the world in the past 25 years, what skills are need to negotiate those changes, and local evidence of how students in our community acquire those skills. Missoula is rich with examples of local initiatives focused on developing young people into thoughtful and effective global citizens.

Understanding MCPS’s 21st Century Initiatives

MCPS’s 21st Century Initiatives represent the foundation of the educational vision informing the development of the Comprehensive Facility Plan. The exercise provided an opportunity to understand the six elements of the Model of Change and how they impact teaching and learning in our community.



Project Based Learning

Project based learning is often described as the poster child for developing the global century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. A video from Edutopia launched the investigation into the keys to a successful project based learning exercise, including the formation of essential questions, applying what is learned in core subjects of math, science, language arts and social studies, and utilizing community partners.

Geoffrey Canada

A TED talk by Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children’s Project, was presented during the lunch break. His video covers many key issues in education today including the importance of breaking with traditional practices that are no longer effective, supporting innovation and learning from failure.

Grade Grouping/Looping/Size

Missoula County Public Schools includes nine elementary schools, three middle schools, four high schools, the Willard Alternative Program and the Dickinson Life Long Learning Center. The Education Innovation Teams examined aspects of effective teaching and learning, including the importance of Early Child and Pre-Kindergarten programs and the significant developmental changes along the PK-20 continuum. The

observations of the Education Innovation Teams suggests that many transitions occur within our schools and that they do not necessarily align with the current K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 configuration.

District Organization

Most school districts engaged in comprehensive master planning efforts launch individual building innovations, but not district-wide transformation. Table teams discussed a range of district models including the existing linear/hierarchical model, thematic schools within the existing model, a single PK-12 campus and many out of the box concepts developed by the Education Innovation Teams. This important exercise will require additional discussion and community feedback in order to confirm which model is most effective in supporting the educational vision of MCPS while meeting the needs of the community.

Time & Technology

More than 20 challenging questions exploring the impact of time and technology on education were addressed by the school teams. The important insights of this exercise include consideration of more flexible start to the school day, more flexibility within the school day and alternatives to the traditional summer break.



Site Assessment

The collective knowledge of each school-based team was tapped in order to identify what works, what could be better and what was missing from each site. Information shared in this exercise supplements the extensive site condition assessment provided by WGM Group as a part of the Comprehensive Long Range Facilities Plan.

Facility Assessment

The school based teams were asked to shift attention from the site to the building. Information gathered in this session expands upon the comprehensive facility condition inventory and energy audit developed by CTA in 2009.

School Transformation + Development Map

Dr. Frank Locker's School Transformation + Development Map assessment tool prompted a discussion about a range of current and future educational practices and facility implications characterized in five columns (1) maintaining tradition, (2) initiating change, (3) progressive, (4) transforming and (5) transformed. In most cases, current educational practices appear to be significantly constrained by facilities. The majority of the school teams envisioned substantially transformed educational practices and facilities in the future. The level of support for change in educational delivery and facilities represents the critical work of the

Educational Innovation Teams during the EXPLORE and APPLY phases of the Comprehensive Long Range Facility Planning process.

Community Listening Session

A community listening session was held on Wednesday October 9, 2013 in order to provide an opportunity for more than 50 people to share their hopes and concerns about the work of the Education Innovation Teams as the planning process continues. The feedback allows the comments of the community to be integrated into the process, and to assure that the school teams do not get too far ahead of the community at large.

Subsequent Community Listening Sessions will include a brief overview of the territory covered during the planning workshops, followed by opportunities for Steering Committee members to record hopes and concerns in small groups stationed throughout the venue.

Individual Reflections

At the conclusion of each of the planning sessions participants were asked to write a brief reflection upon the planning process.



MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMPREHENSIVE LONG RANGE FACILITIES PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHTS October 17, 2013

Key Insights

- *Flexibility of spaces, daily schedules, annual school calendars and furnishings are desired*
- *New ways of engaging children and families in early child, pre-kindergarten programs and other community needs are envisioned*
- *District-wide innovation will create the context for building-level innovation*
- *Rising enrollment in the past five years and the next five years represents a ten year cohort that is projected to exceed the capacity existing elementary schools by 2017-18 and middle schools in 2023-24.*
- *The majority of MCPS school sites and facilities are in need of site improvements as well as upgrades to technology, mechanical and electrical systems.*
- *The utilization of undeveloped sites, administrative buildings and leased facilities will be integrated into the preferred solutions of the Comprehensive Long Range Facilities Plan*

