Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges: Assessing and Addressing LMSD's Growing Enrollment

Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges

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Overview

Lower Merion School District is experiencing enrollment growth at levels not seen in more than 40 years. Between 2006 and 2016, enrollment increased by almost 21 percent. According to the most conservative projections, enrollment is expected to rise by seven percent over the next decade. In light of the challenges presented by growing enrollment, the District is committed to addressing growth with appropriate resources and facilities and maintaining the quality and integrity of the curriculum to ensure a superior education for all students. To identify thoughtful and effective solutions to accommodate growth, District goals and community priorities have been incorporated into the review and planning process, as well as available and future resources, changing academic needs and long-term consequences.

This report presents historical background as well as enrollment trends and facility issues that are vital to understanding the context in which the District has remained fiscally responsible and committed to educational excellence in its responses to enrollment growth.

Executive Summary

Programmatic Excellence

All District schools have been recognized for excellence by the Commonwealth and featured in numerous publications' "Top Schools" lists. LMSD high schools rank among the highest in Pennsylvania for SAT and PSAT scores, AP Participation rate, total number of National Merit Semifinalists and total number of International Baccalaureate diplomas granted. Approximately 95% of high school graduates attend institutions of higher learning.

Additionally, LMSD has been named one of the nation's "Best Communities for Music Education" by the NAMM Foundation and is recognized nationally for its world language program which enables all students to receive uninterrupted foreign language instruction from first grade until they graduate from high school.

The District's K-12 art and technology programs have earned awards at the state, regional and national levels.

LMSD athletic teams have won numerous league and district titles and recent PIAA State Championships in lacrosse, tennis and basketball.

These accomplishments have defined an LMSD education and the community expects the District to continue to provide students with the opportunities to achieve similar academic, community service, athletic and artistic accomplishments in the future.

LMSD's commitment to programmatic excellence was strengthened in 2015 when it adopted its Strategic Plan, "All Forward – Strategic Pathways for Lower Merion School District." The five pathways outlined in the document address an array of issues and provide a number of solutions. Although the range of issues and solutions discussed are diverse, they are aligned in one common theme: ensuring an innovative educational, social, athletic and artistic environment in which LMSD students will thrive in the rapidly changing world of the 21st Century.

LMSD is properly defined by its Strategic Plan and programs and adequate facilities are necessary to support the stated Pathways and programs. Because the District places a priority on maintaining small class size, as enrollment increases, the need for additional classrooms increases as well.

Beyond making more classrooms available to support enrollment growth, the District will also be expected to offer state-of-the-art facilities such as: science laboratories, auditoriums/theaters, multi-purpose black box theaters, greenhouses for environmental and horticultural studies, high-performance athletic facilities, television studios, multi-media production facilities, musical instrument digital interface labs, open air courtyards, lecture halls with tiered seating to help prepare students for the college environment, a college-style library and fully-integrated technology, enhancements that contribute to the learning environment and attract families with children to the District.

Enrollment Growth

LMSD enrollment growth has been fueled by its stellar reputation, which has earned it the distinction of being one of Pennsylvania's most rapidly-growing districts. Since 2008, it has had the second-highest enrollment growth rate in the Commonwealth and the largest growth by total number of students.

At the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, enrollment in LMSD was nearly 8,400 students for the first time since the early 1970s when the District operated 15 schools, including ten K-6 elementary schools, three 7-9 junior high schools and two 10-12 senior high schools. Currently, there are ten schools in the District – six K-5 elementary, two 6-8 middle and two 9-12 high schools.

Montgomery County Planning Commission and Sundance Associates submitted demographic studies to the District in the fall of 2016. Both studies reported that enrollment will exceed 9,300 students by 2026. (See page 13)

When the growth trend started in 1990, LMSD enrolled approximately 5,200 students. By September 2016, that number had grown to 8,382. In September 2017, at the time of this printing, enrollment is approaching 8,600 students.

Recent Steps

Lower Merion School District has a long history of effectively addressing enrollment fluctuations despite its location in a mature, high-density community with limited access to significant land parcels for expansion and construction.

Over the past several years, the District has consistently carried out its due diligence by methodically scrutinizing issues and identifying solutions that are in the best interest of the community and enrich the educational experience and uphold the District's reputation for rigor, excellence and innovation. Recent solutions include:

- Adding permanent classrooms to Penn Valley, Gladwyne and Welsh Valley.
- Creating classrooms at the elementary schools and Bala Cynwyd Middle School through internal construction and space reassignment. An example of a reassignment at the elementary level involved converting a vocal music room into a grade level classroom. The vocal music program is now an itinerant program, requiring the music teacher to travel to the regular classroom to deliver instruction. As core space is pushed to the limits, some schools have "doubled" or combined classes participating in physical education. While not ideal, these short-term solutions, have saved the District substantial building costs, but nearly all elementary schools and Bala Cynwyd have reached capacity and have run out of space that can be reconfigured.
- Renovating space in the District Administration Office (DAO) has created more classrooms for Lower Merion High School students. To maximize utilization of space available at the

LMHS/DAO campus, the District restored the pre-2009 geographic boundaries of the high school choice zone.
- Granting the Superintendent the authority to assign new large residential developments on large parcels of land that were not previously used as housing to a feeder pattern within the District was a Board action intended to ensure the strategic placement of new students.
- Introducing a "Partner School" administrative regulation (LMSD Administrative Regulations Sect. R 206-4) that caps certain sections of grade levels in elementary schools that have reached optimal class size targets and requires students who register thereafter be enrolled at a "Partner School" – a Lower Merion elementary school that can accommodate further enrollment in that class section.
- Installing four temporary classrooms and two restrooms at Penn Wynne Elementary School and a similar temporary structure with six classrooms and two restrooms at Bala Cynwyd to accommodate growth.

Current State of Existing Facilities

The above-listed changes have helped mitigate some of the current enrollment growth in several District buildings, but as enrollment climbs, a number of buildings are above or nearing capacity levels.

According to the Lower Merion School District 2017 Building Capacity Update, which Gilbert Architects Inc. submitted to the District in May 2017, the following trends were noted:

- The elementary grades are continuing to experience a growing number of students at each grade level. Current enrollment at all schools is between 97% and in excess of 100% of the LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity. Total elementary school enrollments will peak in 2024.
- The middle schools are currently within an acceptable capacity range. However, as the elementary school population moves into the secondary grade levels, the middle schools will be straining to find instructional space. The capacity for both Bala Cynwyd and Welsh Valley Middle Schools are currently within the LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity targeted at 85% utilization.
- The high schools are currently pushing the limits of acceptable capacity range, but as the middle school population moves into the high schools, the LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacities will be exceeded.
- Finally, the athletic fields and bus fleet are also nearing capacity.

The updated report provides an overview and evaluation of District facilities as they relate to current use and future needs based upon updated building capacity information and enrollment projections.

Future Steps under Consideration

As decisions are made about how to respond to the enrollment growth over the next decade, the Board has reviewed feedback from community, civic associations, and home and school associations meetings, considered community comments provided at Board meetings, and examined planning studies, projections and data. The process has produced eight possible strategies for responding to increasing enrollment, which are summarized below. The advantages and challenges are discussed later in the report, as well as the potential for implementing the strategies independently or in conjunction with other strategies.

- Build onto existing elementary schools and maintain current feeder patterns.

- Build a seventh elementary school to accommodate 500 students on the District owned St. Justin's property.
- Build an additional middle school for approximately 1,000 students and reconfigure grades at middle level 5-8 and elementary level K-4.
- Expand capacity at Bala Cynwyd Middle School and Welsh Valley Middle School and reconfigure grades at middle level to 5-8 and elementary K-4.
- Redistrict elementary attendance areas to shift students from schools with greatest capacity concerns or site restrictions (currently Penn Wynne) to sites with greater capacity and site flexibility, which would likely require construction at five schools.
- Expand middle school capacity at Bala Cynwyd Middle School and Welsh Valley Middle School and maintain current grade configuration.
- Build a new Kindergarten Center on the District owned St. Justin's property and shift kindergarten students from elementary schools to the new Center.
- Build temporary and/or permanent classroom addition at Harriton High School.

Planning for growth must also take into account these issues:

- The need to locate space to park an expanded bus fleet, which will be necessary to transport a growing student population to District schools. School bus depots are currently at capacity.
- Adding students and buses will impact traffic at schools throughout the District.
- Construction and school expansion may encroach on open space and greenspace at some schools in the District
- Accommodating increasing student enrollment will require additional teachers, support staff, curriculum costs and materials, as well as construction costs.
- Athletic spaces, such as Arnold Field, may need to be upgraded to accommodate more students.

The District remains committed to ensuring that students' needs are met in a fiscally-responsible manner, with attention to community values and fidelity to the principles outlined in the Strategic Plan. Community engagement will be a critical element of any plan and the public will be kept abreast of the facilities planning process through a comprehensive communication effort. Outreach to date has included 81 public meetings since 2012. (See Appendix A).

In addition, a community input survey was conducted in spring 2017 to better understand the values of the community with respect to school facilities. Survey highlights are presented on page 16.

Conclusion

During this process, the Board has been and continues to be committed to involving the community and ensuring that information is readily available and easily accessible. However, as planning evolves, the District must be aware and responsive to local, state and national decisions that may impact actions. Given these constraints, LMSD remains steadfast in its commitment to its students.

Historical Background[1]

The legacy of Lower Merion's public schools began with the establishment of Lower Merion Academy, which opened to the public in 1813 and attracted students from throughout the community.

In 1834, Pennsylvania enacted a law to "establish a general system of education by common schools." Lower Merion was among the first of the Commonwealth communities to embrace the legislation and by 1835, six schools, including the Academy, formally joined to form the Lower Merion School District. By 1882, Lower Merion had 14 public schools.

The arrival of regular train service in the late 19th century transformed Lower Merion from an agrarian community and summer resort into a thriving middle-class suburb. New homes and commercial developments were clustered near stations along the Main Line. A growing, educated population demanded high-quality public schools. The District responded by building or expanding nine schools between 1910 and 1940.

Lower Merion High School, built during the construction boom, made its permanent home on Montgomery Avenue. When it was dedicated on December 2, 1911, it was considered one of the finest educational facilities in the country. During this period the District opted to close small schools and consolidate students into larger, modern facilities. In a few decades, the District went from educating several hundred students to providing instruction to approximately 5,000 students.

At the same time, the automobile was reshaping the community and was instrumental in causing suburban sprawl. People were no longer geographically limited to living in close proximity to streetcars, rail and pedestrian access. The generation of post-World War II parents who gave birth to "baby boomers," were liberated by the automobile and flocked to suburbs like Lower Merion and Narberth Borough to enjoy a better quality of life.

One of the most striking features of the community was the outstanding reputation of LMSD. Its modern facilities were on the forefront of innovation in education and a well-rounded curriculum and a wide array of extracurricular activities were magnets for families with children.

As the District's reputation grew, school enrollment surged. Between 1950 and 1960, the influx of students necessitated the construction of Harriton High School, Welsh Valley Junior High School, Gladwyne Elementary School and Penn Valley Elementary School.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought to light educational inequities and de facto segregation. In the District, the majority of African American elementary school students attended the Ardmore Avenue School, which had fallen into disrepair and was considered inferior in comparison to other District schools. In 1963, the Board voted to close Ardmore Avenue Elementary and send its students to other schools in the District, marking the beginning of desegregation at the primary level in LMSD.

[1] Historical information in this section provided by the Lower Merion Historical Society and Public Schools of Lower Merion by Ted Goldsborough (1999).

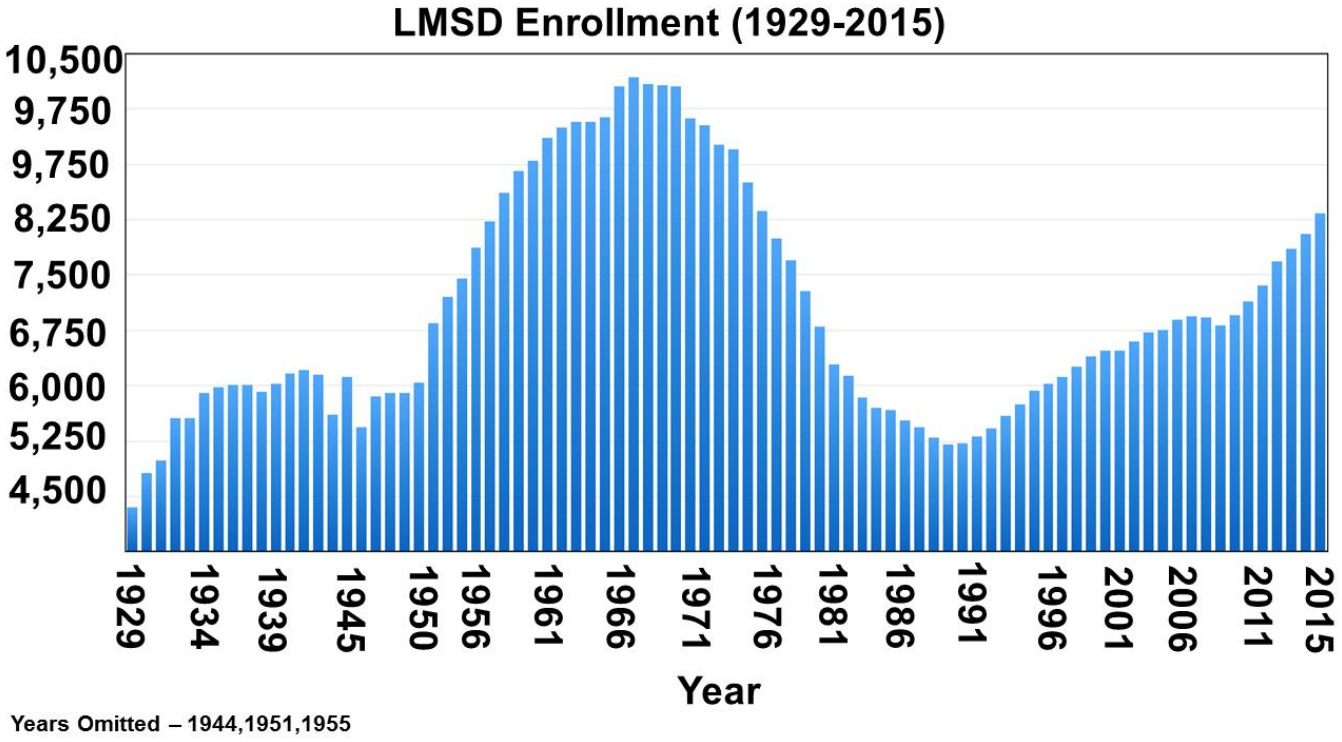
20 years of declining enrollment: 1970-1990

After decades of significant growth, the District confronted a new reality in the 1970s and 1980s – waning enrollment. The declining birth rate precipitated the closing of several schools. By 1990, enrollment was at its lowest level since the 1930s, with fewer than 5,200 students and just nine schools in operation.

Table A

Changes in District enrollment

1929 - 2015



Years Omitted – 1944,1951,1955

Enrollment rebounds: 1990s, a time to address growth

Enrollment, which had plummeted by 1990, was about to spike upwards in the mid-1990s as adult "baby boomers" began having children. The District was closely monitoring the shift and took action to address future enrollment needs. By 1996, enrollment had increased to more than 6,000 students and continued to grow - up from a 55-year low at the beginning of the decade.

Taking notice of the upward creep in enrollment, in 1993 the superintendent convened a diverse group of community stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for the District that outlined strategies for addressing identified educational needs. One of these strategies was to conduct a District-wide facilities study. The study was completed in 1995 and formed the basis of the District's "Capital Program" and prioritized the following:

- Educational program equity at each developmental level
- Aging facility infrastructure (43-91 years old)

- Equipping buildings with the capability of new technologies
- Program accessibility for all students as per the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Space to accommodate increasing enrollment.

The aging high school facilities were identified as priority projects and in 1996, a $77.8 million plan to modernize the schools was introduced by administrators. The plan proposed merging Harriton and Lower Merion into a single high school on the Harriton campus, creating a district-wide kindergarten center, and upgrading nine aging elementary and middle schools. The community's response was swift and negative: the one high school proposal was rejected because of concerns about cost and size. The District responded by tabling the high school project. The plan for the kindergarten center was also put on hold.

In 1997 the Board approved $250 million for the renovation and expansion of all schools, beginning with the elementary and middle schools.

Although high school construction projects were postponed indefinitely, the Board agreed to interim solutions to accommodate growth. A nine-classroom temporary modular building was installed at Harriton, which supplemented four temporary classrooms that were previously added. At LMHS, existing technical arts space was repurposed into classrooms.

Seeking a permanent solution to growth: 2000s

In 2003, a Community Advisory Committee made up of more than 60 community members was formed to review key issues surrounding the modernization efforts of the high schools and provide recommendations to the Board of School Directors. Over the course of the school year, the CAC considered various high school configurations.

The enrollment projections contained in the District's 2002-03 Budget Book guided the CAC configuration and size recommendations. The internal analysis projected that high school enrollment would peak at 2,500 students in 2007, decline slightly and level through 2011.

The CAC noted, *"During the 2003-2004 school year, 1,495 students attended Lower Merion and 845 attended Harriton, for a total of 2,340. This is an increase of 112 (5 percent) from the previous year. The [projected] number rises to a little over 2,500 students in 2007, and then drops to a nearly constant value of about 2,200 students after year 2011. Approximately 38 percent of Lower Merion children attend parochial or private schools. This percentage has remained fairly constant for many years, but could change due to general economic conditions or other unpredictable factors, with consequences to the public schools."*

The CAC's note of caution regarding the non-public attendance rate in Lower Merion would prove prescient.

The CAC concluded that two schools would best serve the educational needs and interests of students in the community. The goal was for the high schools to have equal curricular and co-curricular offerings, which required a threshold of 1,200 students at both schools. In June 2004, the Board voted to approve a high school plan based on the CAC's recommendations, with the design and bid process to begin for both schools over the next 12 months.

Budget Book enrollment projections for 2005-2006 revealed a changing scenario – enrollment was projected to trend up. Every Budget Book over the previous six years had predicted that the high-water mark for enrollment would be around 2004-2005, with declines in the years beyond. Now the projected

base numbers for those years were higher – by more than 200 students. The administration, acting on this development, recommended designing the high school projects with maximum flexibility so as to accommodate fluctuations – and potential significant increases in student enrollment.

The District purchased properties at 425 Belmont Avenue, 55/65 Rock Hill Road and 1165 Matsonford Road to house operations, transportation and technology services and reduce congestion on the LMHS site. Classrooms in the District Administration Office would be decommissioned for easy re-conversion should the need arise. There was no specific evidence of need – yet – but there was a growing sense that it was better to have space available should it be later needed. Less than a decade later the additional flexibility would prove valuable in addressing enrollment growth.

With Harriton High School set for completion in 2009 and Lower Merion High School in 2010, the District moved forward with a plan to balance enrollment at each school, which shifted students from the more populated eastern portion of the District to the Harriton campus. The plan created controversy, but the District, utilizing enrollment projections to inform the process, reduced the size of Lower Merion's choice zone, a geographic area encompassing parts of Ardmore and Narberth where students historically could choose to attend either high school. Consequently, fewer students were allowed to choose LMHS, but any student could opt to attend Harriton and receive public transportation. Additionally, new and attractive curricular opportunities were offered at Harriton.

Projecting Enrollment: A Recent History

During the 1990s and early 2000s, enrollment projection data included annually in LMSD budget models and budget books were based almost entirely on a retention model. The retention model examines cohort survival rates of students moving through the District, supplemented by live birth data in the District to account for students not yet of school age. Historically consistent private school enrollment rate of around 38% is factored into the data.

Annual budget books prepared by the District during the 90s and early 2000s, acknowledged the difficulty of projecting enrollment after five years out *"because they (the children who would enter elementary school in the future) have not been born."*

Prior to 2002, the projections had been generally accurate, however, by 2002 actual enrollment was trending slightly lower than projection but remained within the acceptable margin of error.

The 2001-2002 Budget Book, which was published during the 2000-2001 school year and based on an internal analysis by the District's business manager, projected enrollment at 6,572 for that school year. Actual enrollment was 6,469 and declining at the elementary level.

The District's 2002-2003 Budget Book indicated that enrollment was expected to peak in 2004-2005 at 6,517 students and then decline to a low of 6,141 by 2010-2011. Again, the projections were based on an internal analysis by the business manager and not on information provided by a professional demographer.

Enrollment forecasts prepared by the business manager and District administrators concluded that newly-renovated facilities and recently approved plans for Merion, Gladwyne and Penn Valley would be adequate to meet future enrollment. Moreover, the District anticipated that the same would be true of the planned high school projects.

A New Trend

When 2004-2005 arrived, it was indeed a peak year for enrollment. The Budget Book enrollment projections developed for the 2005-2006 school year indicated that enrollment would no longer stabilize and decline; now, enrollment was expected to stabilize and then trend up.

The District added a new section in the Budget Book dedicated to expanded enrollment data, including an analysis of elementary enrollment with a watch list for classes expected to approach or exceed District historic class size guidelines. At the direction of the Board, the administration had recently adjusted these guidelines (by one or two students) to accommodate slightly higher class sizes across all elementary schools. Consequently, redistricting would not be required to accommodate immediate space restrictions at Gladwyne Elementary School, which was nearing completion of Phase 2 classroom expansion, and potential capacity issues at other schools in the near future.

The next year, in a Budget Book section titled “How Things Have Changed in the Last Ten Years,” “Enrollment Changes” topped the list. In comparing 1996-1997 enrollment to 2006-2007 projected enrollment, it was noted that the increase of 894 students represented the “equivalent of two elementary schools or one high school.” For the first time enrollment was projected to grow beyond 7,000 by 2015-2016. Over the next few years, the District compiled and published even more detailed enrollment information, including comparisons of projected enrollment vs. actual enrollment at all grade levels. Growth was now forecast through at least 2018-2019.

New Strategies for Forecasting Enrollment: 2012

As the Board wrestled with the implications of unanticipated and unprecedented growth on District facilities, its goal was to accurately determine the extent of enrollment growth. The internal retention model historically used by the District was not adequately predicting change and the District was committed to investigating other forecasting models for calculating student enrollment.

DeJong Healy 2012

The District commissioned its first independent enrollment study in May 2012. Conducted by DeJong Healy, the demographers used a retention model similar to one used by the District. The consultant also looked at trends in the local housing market, local, state and national demographic data and analyzed information provided by the Lower Merion Township and Narberth Borough planning offices. The results confirmed the District’s initial steeper-than-expected enrollment increases and projected an even higher rate of growth, validating that the District was not experiencing a temporary increase, but instead facing sustained, long-term growth.

As the results of the DeJong Healy study were released, the District organized several community meetings in the fall of 2012 and presented the data to the Federation of Civics and individual civic associations.

Gilbert Architects: 2015

The District contracted with Gilbert Architects Inc. in 2015 to update the 2012 Lower Merion District-wide Facility Study that explored the impact of growth on all schools and future capacity needs. Based on the highest projected enrollments, Gladwyne, Penn Valley, Welsh Valley and Bala Cynwyd faced the most significant capacity concerns. In January 2013, the Board authorized a four-classroom addition at both Gladwyne and Penn Valley, a minor addition and re-configuration of space at Bala Cynwyd and a 12-classroom addition at Welsh Valley.

According to the Gilbert report, growing elementary and middle school enrollment would likely impact high school capacity and result in the schools either reaching or exceeding capacity over the next six years. Because major capital projects to accommodate growth were completed at both high schools less than a decade ago to the report, the findings were disconcerting.

District response

The District's immediate plan to accommodate the increasing number of high school students was to use classroom space available in the District Administration Office, referred to as the A building, on the LMHS campus that had not been in use during the initial high school projects. Up to 14 classrooms could be repurposed for high school use, temporarily eliminating the need for new construction at Harriton.

To ensure Harriton's population did not rise above capacity, the Board restored the pre-2009 geographic boundaries of the high school choice zone. The action would promote a gradual increase in enrollment on the LMHS campus where capacity was available, while easing sharper growth at Harriton. It would also avoid the need for major redistricting and maintain the general "3-1-1" feeder pattern for all students which redistricting would eliminate – three elementary schools funneling into one middle school and one high school.

In the long run, the Board opted to act in a fiscally-responsible manner by selecting an option that saved the District millions by repurposing underutilized space at the DAO and easing enrollment issues at Harriton. The decision was influenced by community input and a commitment to ensuring programmatic equity between schools.

In an action to help ensure enrollment planning flexibility among schools, in 2014, the Board provided the Superintendent the authority to assign new residential developments on large parcels of land that were not previously used as housing to a feeder pattern within the District. Geographically, three planned developments would send children to Cynwyd Elementary School under the approved changes to Policy 206. If one elementary school could not accommodate students from this new residential community, the District would be able to assign the community to a neighboring school that had space available.

Revisiting Enrollment Projections: 2015

The Board, in an effort to determine whether enrollment projections were on track, authorized the Montgomery County Planning Commission to conduct an updated enrollment study. The goal was to gather data to monitor population trends and prepare for the future.

The April 2015 MCPC study confirmed continuing high rates of growth. The study -- the most comprehensive to date -- concluded that enrollment growth is anticipated based on several factors:

- A decrease from 38% to 32% in the number of students in Lower Merion and Narberth enrolling in private schools – a swing of *"as many as 600-700 students going to public school that would not have 10 years ago."*[2]

[2] Other factors that may have impacted enrollment trends in recent years are the move of private schools like Episcopal Academy and Jack Barack Academy out of the community. At one time, more than 200 children from Lower Merion and Narberth attended Episcopal. Today, the number is fewer than 100. Additionally, the recent closure of local parochial schools like Presentation BVM in Wynnewood (K-8), St. Thomas Good Counsel in Bryn Mawr (K-5) and St. Matthias (K-5) in Bala Cynwyd has likely resulted in at least some additional elementary age students accessing public schools. Although it is difficult to quantify the impact of The Great Recession on enrollment in LMSD, there was an increase in transfer students from local private schools to public schools for about three years during and immediately after the

- The continued popularity and reputation of the District.
- An increase in residential construction, especially multifamily projects, leading to an increase in the number of students being drawn from multifamily homes and rental apartments.
- An increase in housing sale activity with a larger net result of incoming students.
- Increasing home sales and a greater rate of public school students originating from these homes compared to those that have left the District.
- Many large grades throughout the District expected to cause growth in the upper schools.

The study cited additional growth pressure from 2,000 planned/proposed units of new multi-family units in the District and highlighted the need for regular reviews of enrollment projections and the identification of strategies to accommodate growth across the District. Penn Wynne Elementary School was flagged as an immediate concern due to significant growth in recent years.

Responding to Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) projections

To alleviate the impact of enrollment growth outlined in the MCPC projections, the following actions were taken by the District:

Temporary buildings

For Penn Wynne Elementary School, the District authorized the installation of temporary buildings with four classrooms and two restrooms and the proposed addition of four permanent classrooms and an auxiliary gym to add capacity to meet projected enrollment. The projections and proposal were presented in December 2015 at a School Board meeting and to the Penn Wynne Civic Association and Home and School Association in January 2016.

Introducing partner schools

The “partner school” plan was introduced to address growth and maintain favorable class sizes, preserve programs, maximize existing resources and provide planning flexibility at the elementary level. The plan caps certain sections of grade levels in elementary schools that have reached pre-determined class size targets. When capped, students who register thereafter are enrolled at a “partner school” – a Lower Merion elementary school that can accommodate further enrollment in that class section.

Public Discussion of Long-term Strategies

At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, the Board held a Facilities Public Workshop to formally start the dialogue about long-term strategies to address enrollment trends. Topics included:

- An elementary school “neighborhood stabilization” concept that would keep current school communities intact by adding capacity at each school based on need, but likely result in large elementary schools.
- A seventh elementary school that would reduce construction needs at other schools, but require significant redistricting.

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downturn in the economy from 2008-2011. What’s more difficult to determine is how many families with young children who traditionally would have chosen private school at the start of their children’s schooling from K-1, instead chose or are now choosing public school due to economic or other reasons. Whatever the case, the private school enrollment decrease trend in LMSD mirrors larger national trends: the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that the percentage of all U.S. elementary and secondary students enrolled in private schools decreased from about 12 percent to 10 percent over the past 15 years and is projected to decrease to 9 percent by 2025-26.

- Conversion of BCMS and WVMS to 5-8 middle schools and reconfiguration of elementary schools to K-4; this plan would maintain current elementary boundaries, but result in middle schools that would be as large as LMSD high schools.

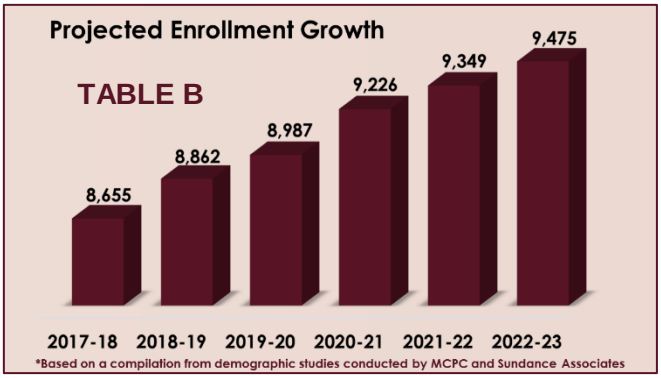
Also discussed were the potential costs and configurations of temporary and permanent solutions at Welsh Valley and Bala Cynwyd.

Current Conditions and Challenges: 2016

In November of 2016, the District shared the results of two updated enrollment studies. The first report was presented by Sundance Associates, a demographic consulting firm located in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. This report was followed by an updated demographic report from MCPC. While there were slight differences in data, both studies pointed to steady increases in enrollment through 2023 (Table B).

The reports highlighted the following trends:

- Enrollment is projected to increase by nearly 1000 students over the next six years.
- Middle school enrollment will increase by more than 350 students.
- Growth will impact the high schools the most with the addition of 700 students.
- The current second grade class of 687 started as a kindergarten class of 454 and will graduate as a 12th grade class of 908 students.



Short-term Response to Increasing Enrollment: 2016

On the LMHS campus, the District Administration Office renovations have been completed and students are using classrooms in the old LMHS. Temporary classrooms have been installed at Penn Wynne. Growth needs for the 2016-2017 school year were met but the District continues to plan for sustained future growth. The most pressing need is at Bala Cynwyd Middle School.

Other issues that must be considered when planning for increasing enrollment and strategies to accommodate more students include:

- The need to locate space to park an expanded bus fleet, which will be necessary to transport a growing student population to District schools. School bus depots are currently at capacity and more space will be required. Furthermore, adding buses will impact traffic at schools throughout the District. Currently, District buses are operating at 100 percent capacity
- Construction and school expansion may encroach on open space and greenspace at some schools in the District
- Accommodating increasing student enrollment will require additional teachers, support staff, curriculum costs and materials, in addition to construction costs.
- Properties, such as Arnold Field, will need to be upgraded to accommodate more students.

The Core Values of Our Community

The Strategic Plan

The core values of both the school and broader community are important to any Board decision. The recent Strategic Plan is an embodiment of the community values. To supplement the direction that the Strategic Plan provides, the Board invited the community to competerecently a survey to directly assess their thoughts regarding redistricting.

The LMSD Strategic Plan – *All Forward: Strategic Pathways for Lower Merion School District* – is the driving force behind the District's actions and guides planning and decision-making. Developed through an extensive 18 month collaborative process, it sets forth a shared vision, which will direct enrollment-related decisions. The plan is a significant factor driving the decisions related to facilities.

While some school districts view strategic planning as a mandated exercise required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Lower Merion School District has embraced innovative and creative planning as vital to its continued success and evolution as one of the finest public school systems in the nation.

Five "strategic pathways," briefly described below, govern the actions of the District:

- **Redefining success:** Success incorporates creativity, critical thinking, and love of learning and innovation for each and every child to encourage globally aware and engaged students. It requires reaching far beyond standardized test scores and embracing and celebrating the many ways in which students demonstrate individual growth.

- **Transformative curriculum:** The District offers a transformative interdisciplinary curriculum that is student-driven and fosters innovation and positive risk taking. It transcends state standards, is inquiry-based and connects the classroom to the world. Our curriculum encompasses diverse perspectives, promotes global awareness and makes use of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices. This dynamic, adaptable curriculum provides vertically and horizontally aligned curricular experiences, ensuring every student learns from the connections across subject areas and receives a comprehensive and balanced education. Subject material is relevant to the world our children will enter in college and as adults. Innovation is the rule and not the exception.

- **A commitment to professional learning:** Lower Merion School District is a community that values educators and the critical role they play in ensuring our students' success. We trust our professionals and seek to support their perpetual growth and development through collaborative professional learning opportunities rooted in self-reflection and inquiry. We believe in providing resources to staff that encourage a culture of engagement, innovation and exploration.

- **Student-driven schools**: District students engage in navigating their own learning and growth in close partnership with professionals. We create an environment where students value self-reflection and inquiry and play a central role in identifying their passions and achieving their goals. We nurture and celebrate the individual strengths of our students and help them to develop competencies that ensure their success beyond the LMSD experience.

- **A spirit of community:** The District takes pride in being a central part of the community. We value the diverse, dynamic talents of every member of our community and their enduring support for public education. We honor this spirit through consistent outreach and the creation of meaningful relationships to promote experiential learning, ongoing service and engagement that will strengthen and support the student experience during school years and beyond.

Since its adoption two years ago, the District's strategic plan has shaped decision-making in nearly every aspect of operations. From curriculum and instruction to facilities planning, the Board and administration are dedicated to ensuring that the plan is implemented for the benefit of current and future generations of LMSD students.

Survey Results

In May 2017, the LMSD Board of School Directors and superintendent launched a survey to gather input from the community on the eight enrollment growth strategies that were published in the April 24, 2017 *Tomorrow's Students Today's Challenges* community newsletter. The survey was open to any community member who chose to participate, and 1,659 responses were collected. The majority of participants described themselves as residents of the District (98%) with households that include currently enrolled LMSD students (85.1%) and/or young children who will attend LMSD upon reaching school age (35.8%). All school communities were represented, and residents of Wynnewood comprised the largest segment of the sample (about 30%).

Results reflect the community's commitment to maintaining small class sizes and a high standard of quality regarding the scope and depth of the educational experiences provided to LMSD students. While some voiced their support for increasing class sizes and cutting back on non-academic programs as a way to "make do with what we have," many more expressed a desire to make class sizes even smaller than they currently are – particularly at the middle and high school levels – and to prioritize space and opportunities that extend beyond a basic instructional program.

Of the eight strategies presented to the community for feedback, the overall rating of support by respondents, a nonrandom sample of the community, was positive for six strategies and negative for two. The strategy with the most support among survey participants was *high school expansion*. In general, survey participants also reported *expansion at the middle schools* and the *use of the St. Justin's property for a kindergarten center* as favorable, although only slightly. The remaining three strategies for which positive levels of support were found – *building an additional elementary school at the St. Justin's property*, *redistricting and expanding elementary schools as needed*, and *elementary school neighborhood stabilization* – received an average rating of slightly more support than not, but disaggregation by school communities revealed sharp differences in the levels of support or opposition among the school communities as represented by this sample. Participants, on average, indicated more opposition than support for the strategies that involved middle schools serving grades 5 through 8, whether through the *addition of a new middle school serving grades 5-8* or the *reconfiguration of the grades at elementary and middle school to shift 5th grade up to the middle level.*

A number of new suggestions for addressing enrollment growth were submitted, as were many comments expressing concern over increased taxes, preservation of outdoor space, the possibility of increased traffic congestion as school enrollments climb, and the developmental appropriateness of clustering fifth graders with students in grades six through eight. Notable among the responses were statements of support for adding an additional school to the District and re-districting.

Building Capacity – Classrooms and Core Space

Principals' Perspective: Impact of Enrollment on Facilities

During the spring of 2017, the Board of School Directors hosted two Facilities Public Workshops which featured presentations by all ten school principals addressing how enrollment growth has impacted facilities usage and needs at each site. While all schools have their own unique set of circumstances, several common themes emerged:

- **Enrollment growth has necessitated the re-purposing of classrooms and other spaces for uses other than what had been originally intended**, particularly at the elementary and middle school level. School stages double as music "classrooms." Auxiliary gymnasiums, locker rooms, offices, libraries and meeting rooms have been turned into classrooms. Large closets have been transformed into instructional support spaces. These are just a few examples of how schools are attempting to resolve space issues with creative – though less than ideal – solutions. The trend of increasing enrollment causes the schools (and the District's operation team) to respond to the reality of constantly adapting facilities to meet needs.

- **Traffic and congestion during AM drop-off and PM pick-up and major school events are issues reported at every school.** Some schools noted that parent drop-off and pick-up lines extend well into the surrounding school neighborhoods. Schools have made efforts to mitigate these issues by assigning staff to supervise pick-up and drop-off and monitor parking, altering traffic patterns to achieve better traffic flow, encouraging the use of school buses and even creating "how-to" videos for parents on strategies for navigating parking lots and school driveways. In an effort to enhance walkability, the District has funded sidewalks in recent years at several schools. However, the District can only build sidewalks on its properties; Township support would be needed to extend sidewalks and improve walkability beyond school property.

- **Some of the most significant constraints are related to core spaces like cafeterias, auditoriums and gymnasiums**. Lack of sufficient space has led to cramped seating, long bottlenecks in cafeteria serving areas and some "doubled-upped" physical education classes with upwards of 50 students utilizing a single gymnasium. Schools have sought to mitigate some of the cafeteria issues by implementing satellite food serving stations and adding another lunch period to the schedule. (High schools have moved to a "lunch and learn" model whereby students have a dedicated block of time at the middle of the day when they can get lunch and eat anywhere in the building.) Alternate physical education/physical activity strategies have been explored to meet student needs, though recess – particularly during inclement weather – remains a significant challenge at some elementary schools where gym space and play areas are limited. Schools have worked creatively to schedule auditorium events around other uses/needs for these spaces (like music classes using stages as classrooms as described above).

- **Lack of meeting space has impacted opportunities for teacher collaboration, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels.** The repurposing of meeting rooms into classroom spaces has compromised the ability for staff and administrators to coordinate effective, regular collaboration around a variety of topics, from lesson-planning and strategizing around student needs to sharing best practices. The District is making use of technology to support professional learning and communication, but meeting time and space is essential.

- **Scheduling in general has become more challenging as there are more demands on fewer available spaces.** Additional impacts at the elementary level include shared classrooms, itinerant art/music programs (teacher moves with supplies from classroom to classroom instead of having a dedicated space). At the high schools, laboratory space is at a premium and while current facilities are adequate, additional labs will be needed to maintain existing offerings. School staff has worked hard to make the most efficient use of the building and schedule and the District has worked to keep class sizes low, minimizing the impact on the student experience during regular class time.

The Updated Gilbert Report

The Gilbert Architects Inc. Facilities Update report provided an overview and evaluation of District facilities as they relate to current use and future needs based upon updated building capacity information and enrollment projections.

Data collection process

LMSD commissioned the MCPC to prepare an enrollment study in the fall of 2015 and again, in the fall of 2016 to update projections using the then current actual enrollment data. The District also engaged Sundance Associates to prepare their own independent analysis of projected student enrollment, which was published in November, 2016. Both demographic studies confirmed that there will be continued student enrollment growth at all grade levels, with projected enrollments differing only slightly. The District has opted to use the highest projected enrollments identified within each report to plan for the future. Consistent with that approach, the Gilbert Facilities Update utilized the highest projected enrollments per school to compare those enrollments to each building's capacity.

Gilbert Architects met individually with each school principal and/or administrative staff to review the current room utilization to determine the current building capacity based on the Department of Education (PDE) and LMSD guidelines referenced below.

Capacity Guidelines

Background

The "capacity" guidelines used are: Pennsylvania Department of Education's PlanCon[3]. Requirements for Reimbursable Projects ("PDE Guidelines") and Lower Merion School District Optimal Classroom Capacity Guidelines and LMSD Optimal Building Capacity Guidelines (collectively, "LMSD Guidelines").

PDE guidelines

The Commonwealth provides reimbursement for school districts for the construction of new schools, additions to existing schools, and/or renovations or alterations to existing schools to meet current educational and construction standards. According to PDE, "a condition of reimbursement is to bring the entire building up to current educational standards and reasonably current construction standards." One such condition of reimbursement involves utilizing PDE's established methodology for calculating

[3]According to PDE: "PlanCon, an acronym for Planning and Construction Workbook, is a set of forms and procedures used to apply for Commonwealth reimbursement. The forms are designed to: (1) document a local school district's planning process; (2) provide justification for a project to the public; (3) ascertain compliance with state laws, regulations and standards; and (4) establish the level of state participation in the cost of the project.

building capacities. Interestingly, while PDE notes the objective to bring building up to "current education standards," it is worth emphasizing that the formula used for reimbursement has not been updated since it was developed in 1973. This means that many of the programs listed on PDE's planning forms do not reflect current requirements. The forms do not account for areas such as special education and other support services like English Language Learners, and Speech/OT/PT therapy that reflect current practices such as new instructional modalities, least restrictive environment obligations, and elective programming essential to the delivery of a 21st century education program. The chart below provides additional details regarding PDE's capacity calculation.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Capacity Guidelines

Grade Level	Utilization Factor	Conditions
Elementary (K-5)	100%	PDE recognizes 25 students per classroom for all grades. For half-day kindergarten, two classes can be accommodated in one room (AM and PM). Therefore, each classroom can accommodate a full-time equivalency (FTE) of 50 students. PDE does not make any provisions for increases in enrollments or accommodations for special programs in elementary schools. The maximum capacity is only applied to all general classrooms. Room scheduling does not permit 100% usage of the classrooms every hour of the day at the elementary level. No provisions are made to accommodate enrollment bubbles in grade levels.
Secondary (6-12)	90%	Classrooms receive a capacity of 25 students per classroom. Science labs receive a capacity of 20 students for each lab. Shared educational spaces such as science, art, music, gymnasiums, family and consumer science, and technology education, etc. receive capacity based on standardized student class sizes. Special education and other administrative support spaces do not receive capacity. Spaces which fall below the minimum PDE classroom size of 660 square feet, or are below minimum sizes for secondary instructional spaces, are not counted as part of the instructional capacity of the facility.

Many Schools in Pennsylvania have adopted their own class size guidelines, which may vary from the PDE reimbursement guidelines, to determine building capacity.

LMSD guidelines

At the elementary level, LMSD classroom capacity is based on the necessary physical classroom space to accommodate the following established class size guidelines:

Grade	Students Per Class
Kindergarten	20
First	22
Second	22
Third	23
Fourth	25
Fifth	25

These class size guidelines are driven by the educational philosophy that lower class sizes optimize learning and instructional environments. Thus, the determination of LMSD classroom “capacity” is a function of the necessary physical classroom size coupled with the recommended number of students based on the curriculum taught in the space. A utilization factor (see below) is then applied to determine the Optimal Classroom Capacity for the identified school.

At the secondary level, LMSD Classroom Capacity is based on 25 students per general classroom. Science lab capacity is based on the physical layout of these special purpose spaces. LMSD uses 20 per lab for middle school and 24 per lab for high school.

Utilization Factor

In general, the utilization factor refers to the percentage of the day all classrooms in a school will be occupied. High school classrooms are optimally occupied 80% of the day because of the flexibility needed to accommodate the class changes throughout the day. On the other hand, elementary classrooms have a higher utilization factor (90%) because the students generally stay in one classroom for a larger portion of the day, which requires less flexibility. In between the two, a utilization factor of 85% is applied at the middle school level. These utilization standards are based upon national recognized recommendations from the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE).

As enrollments have increased, LMSD schools have already made necessary building-level adjustments that impact the desired delivery of the District’s educational program. An example of such an adjustment has been to convert an elementary school vocal music room into a grade level classroom. That vocal music program is now an itinerant program, where the music teacher travels to the regular classroom to deliver the vocal music program. This is sometimes referred to a class “on a cart.” In addition, there are examples of where sections of physical education have been “doubled” (meaning more than one class participates in a program at the same time) due to limited core space. There is a limit to how much this practice can effectively alleviate core space pressure and it also compromises the instructor’s ability to safely manage the students’ experience.

Another accommodation that has been made in response to growing enrollment is increasing the class size guideline by one or two students. However, if enrollments continue to rise, the ability to make such adjustments without a disruptive and/or deleterious impact on the educational program decreases.

Increasing enrollments have also resulted in a decrease in the ability to deliver common programs across buildings. For example, two elementary schools have lost their Large Group Instruction spaces entirely.

Cafeteria space, both in terms of serving line efficiency and seating becomes compromised. Due to space limitations, our elementary schools currently eat lunch by grade level, stretching out the period of time lunch must be served.

External limitations may also exist at a school in the form of limited space for playgrounds, sports fields and parking. The relationship of a school to its neighborhood and the characteristics of a neighborhood may create problems with parking and traffic congestions during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal. In general, increasing enrollments may create new problems and will make existing problems worse.

Capacity Analysis by School

The analysis of each school shown herein compares projected future enrollments to the LMSD Optimal Building Capacity. Also, shown for comparison purposes only, is the PDE capacity. The ability of a school building to accommodate a given number of students can be considered as a continuum bound by the LMSD Optimal Building Capacity at one end and, at the other end, by an enrollment that can only be accommodated by compromising the educational program. The extent to which the educational program is compromised will be different for each building and level of education. For example, the analysis shown for a school may indicate a numerical capacity deficit when compared to the LMSD Optimal Classroom Capacity yet still be able to maintain the optimal number of core spaces. The ultimate assessment of whether a school building can accommodate a given enrollment will be based on the Administration's evaluation of all aspects of the educational programming offered at the school together with all core and classroom spaces.

SUMMARY OF CAPACITY BY SCHOOL

Belmont Hills Elementary School (BHES)

Current capacity summary:

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 494 students is expected to be realized by the 2024-2025 school year. This represents an enrollment that falls within LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 491 students and has a Student Capacity Deficiency of 3 students.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	461	2017-18	492
2011-12	451	2018-19	488
2012-13	452	2019-20	483
2013-14	469	2020-21	481
2014-15	468	2021-22	489
2015-16	491	2022-23	473
2016-17	485	2023-24	490
2024-25 K-5 Highest Projected Enrollment			**494**
2025-27 Average Projected Enrollment: 489		2025-26	493
		2026-27	485

Observation: Space required for support rooms and programs has already been impacted by the need to accommodate increasing enrollments. These impacts will remain.

Belmont Hills ES (BHES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten	2	50	100	40	80
1st Grade	4	25	100	22	88
2nd Grade	5	25	125	22	110
3rd Grade	4	25	100	23	92
4th Grade	4	25	100	25	100
5th Grade	3	25	75	25	75
Building Capacity	22		600		**545**
Utilization Factor			**100%**		**90%**
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			**3**		**491**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2024-25 Highest Projected Enrollment:	494
Student Capacity **Deficit**	3
2025-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	489
Student Capacity **Availability**	2

Data from MCPC Enrollment Projections November 14, 2016

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 494 students is expected to be realized by the 2024-25 school year. This represents an increase of 9 students over the 2016-17 enrollment of 485 and exceeds Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 491 students.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	Space is not adequate. LGI was converted to a grade level classroom in 2016-17 and no longer available.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is adequate.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is adequate. All art instruction is held in Art Room 118.
Music:	Space is not adequate. Vocal music is an itinerant program.
Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 001.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 024.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Cynwyd Elementary School (CES)

Current capacity summary:

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 551 students is expected to be realized by the 2022-23 school year. This represents an enrollment that falls within LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 558 students and has a Student Capacity Availability of 7 students.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	502	2017-18	540
2011-12	512	2018-19	531
2012-13	516	2019-20	541
2013-14	508	2020-21	547
2014-15	543	2021-22	532
2015-16	559	**2022-23 Highest Projected**	**551**
2016-17	547	2023-24	536
		2024-25	529
2023-27 Average Projected Enrollment: 528		2025-26	528
		2026-27	520

Observation: Learning support classrooms may be reassigned if needed for additional grade level classroom(s).

Cynwyd ES (CES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten *	2	50	100	40	80
1st Grade	4	25	100	22	88
2nd Grade	5	25	125	22	110
3rd Grade	4	25	100	23	92
4th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
5th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
Building Capacity	**25**		**675**		**620**
Utilization Factor			**100%**		**90%**
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			**675**		**558**

* Building has 3 sections of half-day kindergarten

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2022-23 Highest Projected Enrollment:	551
Student Capacity **Availability**	7
2023-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	528
Student Capacity **Availability**	30

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	This building has no dedicated L.G.I. /S.G.I. spaces. Therefore the space is not adequate.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is adequate.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is adequate. All art instruction is held in Art Room 016.
Music:	Space is adequate. Music Instruction is held in rooms 019 and in 021.

Since the school has an odd number of kindergarten sections, one kindergarten room is available for one-half of each day to accommodate special programs. If an additional kindergarten section is added in the future, as is represented in the table above, this will decrease the space available for these programs at highest projected enrollment.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 017.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 0107A & 221.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Gladwyne Elementary School (GES)

Current capacity summary:

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 758 students is expected to be realized by the 2019-20 school year. This represents an increase of 41 students over the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 717 students. Both the current, 2016-17, enrollment of 722 students and the average student enrollment from 2020 to 2026, 742 students, indicates that the building will continue to have a student population that exceeds LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity by approximately 25 students.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	600	2017-18	722
2011-12	633	2018-19	740
2012-13	675	**2019-20 K-5 Highest Projected Enrollment:**	**758**
2013-14	701		
2014-15	738	2020-21	750
2015-16	741	2021-22	736
2016-17	731	2022-23	727
2020-27 Average Projected Enrollment: 742		2023-24	745
		2024-25	751
		2025-26	749
		2026-27	737

Observation: Depending on class sizes, short-term solutions may be to assign special education classrooms to general classrooms and/or split full-sized classrooms for special education that would be shared by multiple grades.

Gladwyne ES (GES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten *	3	50	150	40	120
1st Grade	6	25	150	22	132
2nd Grade	6	25	150	22	132
3rd Grade	6	25	150	23	138
4th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
5th Grade	6	25	150	25	150
Building Capacity	**32**		**875**		**797**
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			875		**717**

* Building has 5 sections of half-day kindergarten

Since the school has an odd number of kindergarten sections, one kindergarten room is available for one-half of each day to accommodate special programs. If an additional kindergarten section is added in the future, as is represented in the table above, this will decrease the space available for these programs at highest projected enrollment.

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2019-20 Highest Projected Enrollment:	758
Student Capacity Deficit	41
2020-2027 Average Projected Enrollment:	742
Student Capacity Deficit	25

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	This building has an auditorium.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is not adequate.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is adequate. All art instruction is held in Art Room 154 and half of room 119.
Music:	Music Instruction is held on the Stage (room 140), in Music room 142, and as shared space in room 119.This space will most likely not be adequate at highest projected enrollment, since additional classrooms will be converted to grade level classrooms.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 124 and in shared room 119.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instructions is held in room 131.
ESL / FLES:	Space is marginally adequate for the ESL program. This space will most likely not be adequate at highest projected enrollment.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Note: Special education and gifted are at risk of not having adequate space at highest projected enrollment.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Comments: Core spaces are impacted for the need of additional classroom space such as the stage which currently serves as a music classroom. The cafeteria (seating area at 2,461 s.f.) is undersized to serve the current population requiring multiple lunch servings. Addressing core spaces should be considered if classroom additions are constructed.

Merion Elementary School (MES)

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	495	2017-18	607
2011-12	530	2018-19	609
2012-13	549	2019-20	619
2013-14	549	2020-21	628
2014-15	568	2021-22	625
2015-16	614	2022-23	644
2016-17	611	**2023-24 Highest Projected Enrollment**	**643**
2024-27 Average Projected Enrollment:639 students		2024-25	641
		2025-26	632
		2026-27	520

Observation: Space required for support rooms and special education programs will be adversely impacted by the need to provide additional building capacity based on the enrollments. Core spaces are impacted by the need of additional classroom space such as the stage which currently serves as the instrumental music classroom.

Merion ES (MES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	**LMSD Capacity**
Half Day Kindergarten	2	50	100	40	80
1st Grade	5	25	125	22	110
2nd Grade	5	25	125	22	110
3rd Grade	5	25	125	23	115
4th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
5th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
Building Capacity*	27		725		665
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			725		**599**

* Vocal music is currently on a cart

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2023-24 Highest Projected Enrollment:	644
Student Capacity **Deficit**	45
2024-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	639
Student Capacity **Deficit**	40

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 644 students is expected to be realized by the 2023-24 school year. This represents an increase of 46 students over the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 598 students. The average student enrollment from 2024 to 2027 is 639 students, indicating that the building will continue to have a student population that exceeds Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity by approximately 41 students.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment	
Large Group Instruction Room:	This building has an auditorium.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is adequate. This space will most likely not be adequate at highest projected enrollment.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is adequate. All art instruction is held in Art Room 118.
Music:	Space is not adequate. Instrumental music instruction is held on the Stage in the Auditorium, room 240. Vocal music is an itinerant program held in classrooms for some grades, and must be held in the auditorium lobby 5-10 periods per week.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building, but it has reached the point where all available space has been used. Space will most likely not be adequate at highest projected enrollment.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in rooms 117A & 117B.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 232.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Comments: Enrollments should be closely monitored and additional options considered to create additional space.

Penn Valley Elementary School (PVES)

Current capacity summary:

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 689 students is expected to be realized by the 2017-18 school year. This represents an increase of 5 students over the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 684 students. The average student enrollment from 2018 to 2027 will vary throughout the range of years with an average of 650 students. This represents an enrollment that falls within LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	524	**2017-18 Highest Projected Enrollment**	**689**
2011-12	584	2018-19	672
2012-13	614	2019-20	638
2013-14	636	2020-21	641
2014-15	660	2021-22	630
2015-16	705	2022-23	654
2016-17	667	2023-24	643
2018-27 Average Projected Enrollment:650 students		2024-25	662
		2025-26	661
		2026-27	651

Observation:

- Space required for support rooms and programs are impacted by the need to provide additional building capacity based on the enrollments. A portion of the art and music programs are already being delivered on an itinerant basis.
- Core spaces may be impacted by the need of additional classroom space, such as utilizing the stage for program area.

Penn Valley ES (PVES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten	2	50	100	40	80
1st Grade	6	25	150	22	132
2nd Grade	5	25	125	22	110
3rd Grade	6	25	150	23	138
4th Grade	6	25	150	25	150
5th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
Potential Additional Classroom	1	25	25	25	25
Building Capacity	31		825		760
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			825		**684**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2017-18 Highest Projected Enrollment:	689
Student Capacity **Deficit**	5
2018-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	650
Student Capacity **Availability**	34

Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 689 students is expected to be realized by the 2017-18 school year. This represents an increase of 5 students over the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 684 students. The average student enrollment from 2018 to 2027 will vary throughout the range of years with an average of 650 students. This represents an enrollment that falls within Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 684 students.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	This building has an auditorium.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is adequate.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate, but 12 sections are double sessions (2 classes in the gym at one time).
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is not adequate. Some art instruction is held in Art Room 144. Ten (10) sections of art are itinerant and are taught in regular classrooms.
Music:	Space is not adequate. Instrumental and vocal music instruction is held in rooms 170 & 174. Ten (10) sections of vocal music are itinerant and are taught in regular classrooms.

Comment: Creation of additional grade level classroom (shown as "Additional Classroom" in the chart above above) will require a reorganization of specialized program spaces which may require internal modifications to spaces.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 145.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room 127.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:-	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Comments: Depending on class size, short-term solutions may be to assign special education classrooms to general classrooms and/or split full-sized classrooms for special education that would be shared by multiple grades. Minor space modifications within the school may also alleviate short-term space shortages.

Penn Wynne Elementary School (PWES)

Current capacity summary:

- The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 803 students is expected to be realized by the 2020-21 school year. This represents an increase of 177 students over the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 626 students. The average student enrollment from 2020 to 2026 is 795 students, indicating that the building will continue to have a student population that exceeds LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity.
- The Projected Enrollment (PE) of 764 students is expected to be realized by the 2017-18 school year. Four modular classrooms were added in 2016 to address this growth. This represents an increase of 25 students over the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity with modular classrooms.
- The Projected Enrollment (PE) of 798 students is expected to be realized by the 2019-20 school year. Six permanent classrooms and an auxiliary gymnasium need to be added to address this growth. With such permanent addition, enrollment falls within LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 802 students, with a Student Capacity Deficiency of 1 student.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	558	2017-18	764
2011-12	576	2018-19	774
2012-13	593	2019-20	798
2013-14	645	**2020-21 Highest Projected Enrollment**	**803**
2014-15	382	2021-22	793
2015-16	720	2022-23	792
2016-17	738	2023-24	796
2021-27 Average Projected Enrollment: 795 students		2024-25	802
		2025-26	798
		2026-27	786

Penn Wynne ES (PWES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten*	0	50	0	40	0
1st Grade	7	25	175	22	154
2nd Grade	7	25	175	22	154
3rd Grade	6	25	152	23	138
4th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
5th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
Building Capacity	**30**		750		696
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			750		626

*Located in modular classrooms

Capacity with Four Modular Classrooms -Installed for 2016-17 School Year

Penn Wynne ES (PWES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Kindergarten Classrooms *	3	50	0	40	120
Art, Music Teaching Spaces	1	25	0	25	0
Revised Building Capacity, with Modular Classrooms	33		750		**816**
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity, 2016-2017 (With Modular Classrooms)			750		**734**

* Building has 5 sections of half-day kindergarten

Capacity with Four Modular Classrooms – Using Art, Music Teaching Space In Modular for One (1) Grade Level Classroom

Penn Wynne ES (PWES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Kindergarten Classrooms *	3	50	0	40	120
Grade Level Classrooms	1	25	0	25	25
Revised Building Capacity,	**34**		750		**841**
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
Revised LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity 2016-2017 (With Modular Classrooms)			750		**757**

* Building has 5 sections of half-day kindergarten

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2017-18 Projected Enrollment:	764
Student Capacity **Deficit**	25
2019-20 Projected Enrollment:	798
Student Capacity **Deficit**	59

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

The 2017-18 projected enrollment of 764 was accommodated for with the addition of the four modular classrooms for the 2016-17 school year with a total LMSD optimum capacity of 716. The modular classrooms provide the ability to have classrooms in the main building, as art and music teaching stations moved to the modular classrooms. But the modular classrooms do not provide the required space needed to accommodate the HPE of 803 students is expected to be realized by the 2020-21 school year.

(See below for capacity with proposed permanent addition)

Capacity with Permanent Addition - Adding Six (6) Classrooms and Auxiliary Gym

Penn Wynne ES (PWES) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD students per clrm	LMSD Capacity
Half Day Kindergarten	3	50	150	40	120
1st Grade	7	25	175	22	154
2nd Grade	7	25	175	22	154
3rd Grade	6	25	150	23	138
4th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
5th Grade	5	25	125	25	125
Un-assigned Classrooms	3	25	75	25	75
New Building Capacity	**36**		975		891
Utilization Factor			100%		90%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			975		802

* Building has 5 sections of half-day kindergarten

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2020-21 Highest Projected Enrollment:	803
Student Capacity **Deficit**	1
2021-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	795
Student Capacity **Availability**	7

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

To accommodate the HPE of 803 students that is expected to be realized by the 2020-21 school year, the construction of a six classroom, permanent addition to the existing building will provide capacity for 808 students.

Observation: In addition to planning for additional classrooms and PE space, core spaces should be carefully evaluated as enrollments increase.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	Space is not adequate. LGI was converted to a grade level classrooms. This space will not be recovered and therefore will not be adequate at highest projected enrollment.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Space is currently adequate. However, with increasing enrollment, the space may not be adequate.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is not adequate. Additional physical education space in needed as part of the permanent addition.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate
Art:	Space is adequate. Art instruction is held in Art Room 234 and in one of the modular classrooms. Additional art space will be needed at highest projected enrollment.
Music:	Space is adequate. Instrumental music is held in room 146, general music in room 166, and in one of the modular classrooms. Additional music space will be needed at HPE.

Since the school has an odd number of kindergarten sections, one kindergarten room is available for one-half of each day to accommodate special programs. If an additional kindergarten section is added in the future, as is represented in the table above, this will decrease the space available for these programs at highest projected enrollment.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Space is adequate.
Gifted:	Space is adequate.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The middle schools are currently within an acceptable capacity range, but as the elementary school population moves into the secondary grade levels, the middle schools will be taxed for instructional space. The capacity for both Bala Cynwyd and Welsh Valley Middle Schools are currently within the LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity targeted at 85% utilization. Bala Cynwyd will exceed the recommended LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity by 2017-18 and Welsh Valley will exceed the recommended LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity by 2018-19.

Bala Cynwyd Middle School (BCMS)

Current capacity summary:

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1175 students is expected to be realized by the 2021-22 school year. This represents an increase of 260 students over the 2016-17 enrollment of 915 and exceeds LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 939 students by 236 students.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	831	2017-18	1016
2011-12	865	2018-19	1105
2012-13	893	2019-20	1109
2013-14	922		
2014-15	901	2020-21	1154
2015-16	866	**2021-22 Highest Projected Enrollment:**	**1175**
2016-17	915	2022-23	1160
2022 - 2017 Average Projected Enrollment: 1140		2023-24	1130
		2024-25	1094
		2025-26	1145
		2026-27	1173

Recommendation:

- Repurpose 2 specialty program rooms into regular classrooms. (This conversion could be delayed until the 2018-19 school year.) Add 6 modular classrooms for 2017-18 to accommodate projected enrollment growth of 1016 students.
- Begin the planning process for the addition of 12 permanent classrooms to be completed by 2019-20 school year to accommodate the HPE of 1175 students. This capacity will allow for other special program spaces to be accommodated. The cafeteria will need to be expanded and the kitchen serving lines need to be reconfigured to accommodate the larger volume of students during the 3 lunch periods.

Bala Cynwyd MS (BCMS) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
Classrooms: Grades 6-8	37	25	925	925
Special Education >660 sf	6	0	0	0
Gifted <660 sf (undersized)	1	0	0	0
Science Classroom	0	25	0	0
Science Lab	9	20	180	180
Computer Lab	3	20	60	0
Computer Lab-Library	1	0*	0*	0
TV Studio (undersized)	1	20	0	0
Art Classroom	2	20	40	0
Music Classroom (Key Board)	1	25	25	0
Instrumental Music Room	2	25	50	0
Choral Room	2	25	50	0
Family Consumer Science	2	20	40	0
Tech Ed > 1800 sf	0	20	0	0
Tech Ed < 1800 sf	2	0	0	0
Gym 6500-7500 sf	1	66	66	0
Auxiliary Gym >2500 sf	1	33	33	0
Auxiliary Gym <2500 sf	0	0	0	0
Classrooms & Capacity Totals	71		**1469**	**1105**
Utilization Factor			90%	85%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1322	**939**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2021-22 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1175
Student Capacity **Deficit**	236

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1175 students is expected to be realized by the 2021-22 school year. This represents an increase of 260 students over the 2016-17 enrollment of 915 and exceeds Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 939 students.

Phase I:

Planning for 2017-18 - Capacity with Six Modular Classrooms

Bala Cynwyd MS (BCMS) Revised Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
2016-17 Total (TS) & Capacity	71		1469	1105
Total Classrooms (Same)	71			
Add 6 Modular Classrooms	6	25	0	150
Total Classrooms (Same)	77			
Existing General Classrooms and Science Labs				
Total Classrooms and 6 Modular Classrooms	52			
Total Building Capacity	77		1469	**1255**
Utilization Factor			90%	85%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1322	**1067**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2022-23 Highest Projected Enrollment:	551
Student Capacity **Availability**	7
2023-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	528
Student Capacity **Availability**	30

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

1. ADD 6 MODULAR CLASSROOMS: Based on the continued enrollment growth, it will be necessary to have the six modular classrooms available for the 2017-18 school year.

Phase II:

Planning for 2018-19 - Capacity with Six Modular Classrooms Extended

Bala Cynwyd MS (BCMS) Revised Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
2017-18 Total (TS) & Capacity	77		1469	1255
2 Existing Classrooms Repurposed into classrooms	No new spaces	25	50	50
Total Classrooms (Same)	77			
Existing General Classrooms, Science Labs,	52			
Total Classrooms with 2	46			
Repurposed Existing Classrooms	54			
2018-19 Total Building Capacity	**77**		1519	**1305**
Utilization Factor			90%	85%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1367	**1109**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2018-19 Projected Enrollment:	1105
Student Capacity **Availability**	4

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

1. **REPURPOSE 2 EXISTING CLASSROOMS:** 2 Computer labs will be repurposed for use as regular classrooms. This action is at the expense of spaces for special programming. The computer program will become an itinerant program.
2. **MAINTAIN 6 MODULAR CLASSROOMS:** Based on the continued enrollment growth, it will be necessary to maintain the modular classrooms made available for the 2017-18 school year.

Both actions noted above are necessary to accommodate the projected growth for the 2018-19 school year.

Phase III:

Planning for HPE 2021-22 – Capacity with Permanent Addition

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1175 students is expected to be realized by the 2021-22 school year. This represents an increase of 236 students over the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 939 students.

Projections indicate continued enrollment growth.

In order to meet future capacity needs, it is recommended that 12 permanent classrooms be constructed. Construction would need to be completed no later than August 2019 to eliminate possible adverse effects to the educational program currently in place.

Temporary classrooms will be removed upon completion of the permanent addition.

Bala Cynwyd MS (BCMS) Revised Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	**PDE Capacity**	**LMSD Capacity**
2018-19 Total (Clrms) w/out 6 Modular Classrooms	71		1469	1105
Additional Permanent Classrooms	12	25	300	300
Total Classrooms with 12 Permanent Classrooms	83			
Existing General Classrooms and Science Labs. NIC 6 Modular Classrooms	46			
Total Classrooms with 12 Permanent Classrooms	58			
2019-20 Total Building Capacity	83		1769	**1405**
Utilization Factor			90%	85%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1592	**1194**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2021-22 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1175
Student Capacity **Availability**	19

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

The additional permanent classrooms provide adequate space for the middle school program and for additional specialized programs as needed for future programs.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Cafeteria space is not adequate. Additional space is needed to properly seat the students for each of the three lunch periods. Serving area is not adequate. Flow of serving lines creates bottlenecks at point of sales stations, which reduces student dining time.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate.
Art:	Space is adequate. All art instruction is held in rooms 102 & 104.
Music:	Space is adequate. Choral instruction is held in rooms 108 & 110. Band instruction is held in rooms 126 & 127.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements.
Computer Room:	There are currently 3 computer classrooms and 1 music keyboarding room. These rooms are under reivew as potential spaces to be re-purposed for general classrooms.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Welsh Valley Middle School (WVMS)

Current capacity summary:

- The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1200 students is expected to be realized by the 2021-22 school year. This represents an increase of 149 students over the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1071 students.
- Projections indicate continued enrollment growth that exceeds the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity through the 2026-27 school year. This may indicate the need for additional classroom space.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	829	2017-18	1060
2011-12	863	2018-19	1091
2012-13	915	2019-20	1122
2013-14	944		
2014-15	973	2020-21	1159
2015-16	977	2021-22 K-5 **Highest Projected Enrollment:**	**1200**
2016-17	1018	2022-23	1178
2022 - 2017 Average Projected Enrollment: 1114		2023-24	1128
		2024-25	1070
		2025-26	1071
		2026-27	1123

Recommendation:

- Additional space could be provided with the use of modular classrooms installed in the same area during the renovation/addition project completed in 2015.
- A permanent classroom addition could be considered.
- The cafeteria will need to be expanded and the kitchen serving lines need to be reconfigured to accommodate the larger volume of students during the 3 lunch periods.
- 2016-17 District-wide Facility Study – Building Capacity Using LMSD Middle School Room Capacity Guidelines.

Welsh Valley MS (WVMS) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
Classrooms: Grades 6-8	43	25	1075	1075
Classroom (undersized)	1	0	0	25
Special Education >660 sf	9	0	0	0
Gifted >660 sf (undersized)	0	0	0	0
Science Classroom	0	25	0	0
Science Lab	8	20	160	160
Computer Lab	1	20	20	0
Computer Lab-Library	1	0*	0*	0
TV Studio (undersized)	0	20	0	0
Art Classroom	2	20	40	0
Music Classroom	1	25	25	0
Instrumental Music Room	1	25	25	0
Choral Room	1	25	25	0
Family Consumer Science	2	20	40	0
Tech Ed > 1800 sf	0	20	0	0
Tech Ed < 1800 sf	3	0	0	0
Gym 6500-7500 sf	0	66	0	0
Auxiliary Gym >2500 sf	2	33	66	0
Auxiliary Gym <2500 sf	2	0	0	0
Total Building Capacity	**77**		1476	**1260**
Utilization Factor			90%	85%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1328	**1071**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2021-22 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1200
Student Capacity **Deficit**	129
2022-27 Average Projected Enrollment:	1114
Student Capacity **Deficit**	43

Data from Sundance Enrollment Projections November 12, 2016

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1200 students is expected to be realized by the 2021-22 school year. This represents an increase of 129 students over the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1071 students.

Projections indicate continued enrollment growth that exceeds the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity through the 2026-27 school year.

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Cafeteria space is currently not adequate. Additional space may be needed to properly seat the students for each of the three lunch periods. Serving area is not adequate. Flow of serving lines creates bottlenecks at point of sales stations, which reduces student dining time. This should be revised.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate.
Art:	Space is adequate. Art instruction is held in rooms E204 & E205.
Music:	Space is adequate. Choral instruction is held in rooms C212. Band instruction is held in rooms C211.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Gifted:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room F200 and F208.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Speech:	Space is adequate. Instruction is held in room E119A.
ESL / FLES:	Space is adequate for program requirements.
Computer Room:	There are currently 2 computer classrooms and 1 music keyboarding room. These rooms are under reivew as potential spaces to be re-purposed for general classrooms.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

HIGH SCHOOLS

The high schools are currently pushing the limits of acceptable capacity range, but as the middle school population moves into the high schools, the LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacities will be exceeded.

Additional space at the high school level is also being driven by changes in curriculum including the science programs. With additional capacity added to each school by means of a construction project, including a multi-story classroom addition onto Harriton High School and the conversion of classrooms at the adjacent district administration building to support Lower Merion High School, the high school capacities can achieve a more acceptable functional capacity.

Harriton High School (HHS)

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2010-11	1086	2017-18	1274
2011-12	1188	2018-19	1327
2012-13	1185	2019-20	1337
2013-14	1170	2020-21	1403
2014-15	1225	2021-22 K-5	1433
2015-16	1230	2022-23	1502
2016-17	1018	2023-24	1538
2025 - 2017 Average Projected Enrollment: 1547		2024-25	1577
		2025-26 **Highest Projected Enrollment:**	**1589**
		2026-27	1537

Recommendation: Planning must begin as soon as possible to meet future capacity needs and have adequate instructional area to accommodate the HPE. The most significant programmatic shortfall will be science labs. It is recommended that an addition of six permanent general classrooms and four science labs be constructed. Construction would need to be completed no later than August 2021 to eliminate possible adverse effects to the educational program currently in place. Consideration should be given to increasing cafeteria serving and seating areas to accommodate a larger volume of students.

Harriton HS (HHS) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
Classrooms: Grades 9-12 (Including Former Alt Ed Clrm)	54	25	1350	1350
Special Education >660 sf	9	0	0	0
Gifted >660 sf	0	0	0	0
Science Classroom	1	25	25	25
Science Lab (LMSD Cap. 24)	12	20	240	288
Green House	1	0	0	0
TV Studio	1	20	20	0

Art Classroom	7	20	140	0
Music Classroom	1	25	25	0
Black Box	1	25	25	0
Instrumental Music Room	1	25	25	0
Choral Room	1	25	25	0
Family Consumer Science	2	20	40	0
Tech Ed > 1800 sf	0	20	0	0
Tech Ed < 1800 sf	2	0	0	0
Gym 6500-7500 sf	2	66	132	0
Auxiliary Gym >2500 sf	1	33	33	0
Total Building Capacity	96		2080	**1663**
Utilization Factor			90%	80%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			1872	**1330**

The following indicates the progressive Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

LMSD Classroom Optimum Capacity	**1330**
2017-18 Projected Enrollment:	1274
Student Capacity **Availability**	56
2018-19 Projected Enrollment:	1327
Student Capacity **Availability**	3
2019-20 Projected Enrollment:	1337
Student Capacity **Deficit**	7
2020-21 Projected Enrollment:	1403
Student Capacity **Deficit**	73
2021-22 Projected Enrollment:	1433
Student Capacity **Deficit**	103
2022-23 Projected Enrollment:	1502
Student Capacity **Deficit**	172
2023-24 Projected Enrollment:	1538
Student Capacity **Deficit**	208

2024-25 Projected Enrollment:	1577
Student Capacity **Deficit**	247

2025-26 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1589
Student Capacity **Deficit**	259

Data from MCPC Enrollment Projections November 14, 2016

Planning for HPE 2025-26 – Capacity with Permanent Addition

Projections indicate continued enrollment growth and that by the 2020-21 school year, enrollment will reach 1403 students which exceeds the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1330 students. We expect shortages of science labs to be the initial impact to the program.

To meet future capacity needs and have adequate instructional area to accommodate the HPE, it is recommended that an addition of six permanent general classrooms and four science labs be constructed. Construction would need to be completed no later than August 2021 to eliminate possible adverse effects to the educational program currently in place.

Harriton HS (HHS) Revised Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	**PDE Capacity**	**LMSD Capacity**
2016-17 Building Total	98		2080	1663
Classroom Addition	6	25	150	150
Science Labs Addition	4	20	80	96
Total Building Capacity	**108**		2310	**1909**
Utilization Factor			90%	80%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			2079	**1527**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2025-26 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1589
Student Capacity **Deficit**	62

Data from MCPC Enrollment Projections November 14, 2016

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	Spaces is adequate.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Spaces are adequate, but most likely will not be at Highest Projected Enrollment.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate.
Art:	Space is adequate. Art instruction is held in rooms 125, 126, & 225 - 229.
Music:	Space is adequate. Choral instruction is held in room 129. Instrumental instruction is held in room 130.
Family & Consumer Sciences:	Space is adequate. FACS instruction is held in rooms 122 & 123.
Technology Education:	Space is adequate. Tech. Ed instruction is held in rooms 222 & 223.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Lower Merion High School (LMHS)

Current capacity summary:

- The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1880 students is expected to be realized by the 2024-25 school year. This represents an increase of 440 students over the 2016-17 enrollment of 1440 and exceeds LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1486 students.
- Projections indicate continued enrollment growth and that by the 2019-20 school year, enrollment will reach 1582 students which exceeds the LMSD's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1486 students.

Historic 10-day Enrollments	Students	Projected Enrollments	Students
2002-03	1434	2017-18	1491
2003-04	1495	2018-19	1525
2004-05	1553	2019-20	1582
2005-06	1584	2020-21	1660
2006-07	1627	2021-22	1736
2007-08	1559	2022-23	1797
2008-09	1470	2023-24	1843
2009-10	1403	**2024-25 Highest Projected Enrollment:**	**1880**
2010-11	1331		
2011-12	1260	2025-26	1854
2012-13	1287	2026-27	1842
2013-14	1300	**2025-27 Average Projected Enrollment: 1848 students**	
2014-15	1350		
2015-16	1443		
2016-17	1440		

Recommendation: Planning needs to begin as soon as possible to meet future capacity needs and have adequate instructional area to accommodate the HPE. It is recommended that seven existing classrooms on the third floor, and two on the first floor, of the adjacent Lower Merion District Administration Building be renovated to provide the additional space needed.

Lower Merion HS (LMHS) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	PDE Capacity	LMSD Capacity
Classrooms: Grades 9-12	58	25	1450	1450
Special Education >660 sf	11	0	0	0
Gifted >660 sf	1	0	0	0
Science Classroom	0	25	0	0
Science Lab (LMSD Cap. 24) includes new labs in DAO	17	20	340	408
Green House	0	20	0	0
TV Studio	1	20	20	0
Art Classroom	7	20	140	0
Music Classroom & Black Box	2	25	50	0
Instrumental Music Room	1	25	25	0
Choral Room	1	25	25	0
Family Consumer Science	2	20	40	0
Tech Ed > 1800 sf	0	20	0	0
Tech Ed < 1800 sf	2	0	0	0
Gym 6500-7500 sf	1.5	66	99	0
Auxiliary Gym >2500 sf	1	33	33	0
Total Building Capacity	**105.5**		2222	**1858**
Utilization Factor			90%	80%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			2000	**1486**

The Highest Projected Enrollment (HPE) of 1880 students is expected to be realized by the 2024-25 school year. This represents an increase of 440 students over the 2016-17 enrollment of 1440 and exceeds Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1486 students.

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity	1486
2017-18 Projected Enrollment:	1491
Student Capacity **Deficit**	5
2018-19 Projected Enrollment:	1525
Student Capacity **Deficit**	39
2019-20 Projected Enrollment:	1582
Student Capacity **Deficit**	96
2020-21 Projected Enrollment:	1660
Student Capacity **Deficit**	174
2021-22 Projected Enrollment:	1736
Student Capacity **Deficit**	250
2022-23 Projected Enrollment:	1797
Student Capacity **Deficit**	311
2023-24 Projected Enrollment:	1824
Student Capacity **Deficit**	338
2024-25 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1880
Student Capacity **Deficit**	394

Data from MCPC Enrollment Projections November 14, 2016

Planning for HPE 2024-25 – Capacity with Additional Instructional Space at Adjacent District Administration Building

Projections indicate continued enrollment growth and that by the 2018-19 school year, enrollment will reach 1525 students which exceeds the Lower Merion School District's Optimum Classroom Capacity of 1486 students.

In order to meet future capacity needs and have adequate instructional area to accommodate the HPE, it is recommended that seven existing classrooms on the third floor, and two (2) on the first floor, of the adjacent Lower Merion District Administration Building be renovated to provide the additional space needed.

Lower Merion HS (LMHS) 2016-17 Capacity	Number of clrms	PDE students per clrm	**PDE Capacity**	LMSD Capacity
2016-17 Building Total			2222	1858
DAO Classrooms	4	25	100	100
DAO Undrszd. Clrms<660 s.f.	5	0	0	125
Total Building Capacity	114.5		2322	**2083**
Utilization Factor			90%	80%
LMSD Optimum Classroom Capacity			2090	**1666**

Student Capacity Availability/Deficiency in successive school years.

2024-25 Highest Projected Enrollment:	1880
Student Capacity **Deficit**	214

Data from MCPC Enrollment Projections November 14, 2016

Evaluation of Core Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Large Group Instruction Room:	LGI is provided in room 100.
Cafeteria and Serving Area:	Spaces are adequate, but most likely will not be at Highest Projected Enrollments. Modifications may be necessary.
Gymnasium/Physical Education:	Space is adequate.
Library/Media Center:	Space is adequate.
Art:	Space is adequate. Art instruction is held in rooms 130 – 136.
Music:	Space is adequate. Choral instruction is held in room 128. Instrumental instruction is held in room 129.
Family & Consumer Sciences:	Space is adequate. FACS instruction is held in rooms 116 & 118.
Technology Education:	Space is adequate. Tech. Ed instruction is held in rooms 110 & 112.

Evaluation of Specialized Program Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Special Education:	Spaces vary throughout building and are adaptable.
Psychologist/Social Worker:	Space is adequate for services provided.
Computer Room:	This building has no dedicated computer room.

Evaluation of Administrative Spaces at Highest Projected Enrollment:	
Main Office/Reception:	No identified deficiencies.
Principal's Office:	No identified deficiencies.
Guidance:	No identified deficiencies.
Nurse/Health Room:	No identified deficiencies.

Comments:

The proposed classrooms at the district administration building that are less than 660 square feet are considered substandard classrooms by PDE and are not part of the PDE capacity calculation. The seven undersized classrooms could provide additional instructional areas for Lower Merion High School. Consideration should be given to increasing cafeteria serving and seating areas to accommodate a larger volume of students.

Parking and Traffic

Increasing enrollment is having an impact on parking and general traffic flow at District schools. Parking and traffic problems are most likely to occur during drop-off and pick-up times. Traffic and congestion peak during the 20 to 30 minutes prior to the start of school and again for 20 to 30 minutes at dismissal. This peak traffic can sometimes cause backups at intersections near schools.

In general, there is sufficient space at each location to accommodate bus drop-off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon. However, there are some locations where buses may backup to adjacent streets for short periods.

Each school has a separate designated area for parent pick-up and drop-off. Most schools assign staff to monitor and assist the flow of traffic for these activities. Parent queuing can be accommodated on school property at most schools. However, where that is not possible, traffic lines can spill over to nearby streets. At some locations, the parent queue extends to nearby streets for a brief period in the afternoon. There are two locations where parents must pick-up from the street in front of the school, a less than ideal situation.

For most schools, some staff and visitors are required to use parking spaces available on nearby streets. In one case, additional staff parking has been leased from a neighboring church.

Athletic Fields, Play Spaces and Green Spaces

The availability of land and buildable surfaces will determine whether development can occur at sites throughout the District. Key aspects of each site are detailed below.

Belmont Hills – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	35.24%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	50%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	14.76% (49,536 SF)
Parcel in acres:	7.7 (net)
Acres Available for Use (Building, Play Area, etc.)	5.3 *
Soft surface playground:	7,719 SF
Hard surface playground:	9,415 SF
Green space playground:	58,099 SF

* 2.45 acres of the BHES site consists of steep and wooded terrain not suitable for use.

Cynwyd – Site Review *	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	46.87% **
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	44%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	Existing impervious surface exceeds the allowable.
Parcel in acres:	4.3 ***
Soft surface playground:	5,831 SF
Hard surface playground:	7,138 SF
Green space playground:	19,093 SF

* This site is shared with Bala Cynwyd Middle School. The total parcel size is 14.06 acres (net).
** Includes track, which is non-conforming. *** This assumes the site is divided by an imaginary line passing through the center of the track and football field.

Gladwyne – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	34.64%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	34.94%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	0.3 % (1,373 SF)
Parcel in acres:	10.7 (net)
Soft surface playground:	9,067 SF
Hard surface playground:	5,357 SF
Green space playground:	92,911 SF

Merion – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	36.4%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	44%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	7.6% (27,294 SF)
Parcel in acres:	8.2 (net)
Soft surface playground:	7,545 SF
Hard surface playground:	9,984 SF
Green Space Playground:	115,125 SF

Penn Valley – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	28.16%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	28.55%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	.39 % (2,513 SF)
Parcel in acres:	14.9 (net)
Soft surface playground:	15,876 SF
Hard surface playground:	4,075 SF
Green space playground:	135,274 SF

Penn Wynne – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	45.65% *
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	49.51%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	3.86 % (10,715 SF)
Parcel in acres:	6.4 (net)
Soft surface playground:	7,242 SF
Hard surface playground:	17,763 SF
Green space playground:	65,669 SF **

* Does not include temporary classroom building.

** Does not account for area of temporary classroom building

Bala Cynwyd Middle School – Site Review*	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	46.87%**
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	44%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	Existing impervious surface exceeds the allowable.
Parcel in acres:	14.06 (net)
Amherst Field (playing fields) size in acres	5.17 (net) ***
Percent of Amherst Field classified as impervious surface:	0.3 %

* This site is shared with Bala Cynwyd Middle School. The total parcel size is 14.06 acres (net). ** Includes track, which is non-conforming. Does not include temporary classrooms.
*** Amherst Field parcel is separate from school.

Welsh Valley Middle School – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	23.18%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	27.25%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	4.07 % (60,631 SF)
Parcel in acres:	34.2 (net)*

* Includes former church property

Harriton High School – Site Review	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	30.60%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	32%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	1.4 % (30,023 SF)
Parcel in acres:	Parcel in acres: 49.23 (net)

Lower Merion High School – Site Review	
School Building Parcel (N. of Montgomery Ave.)	
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	57.35%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	57.70%
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	.35 % (3,242 SF)
Parcel in acres:	21.26 (net)
Arnold Field (playing fields S. of Montgomery Ave.) size in acres	17.07
Percent of site classified as impervious surface:	15.7%
Maximum allowable impervious coverage for this site:	28.05 %
Allowable Less Existing Impervious Surface	12.35% (91,788 SF)

Arnold Field Master Plan

In 2016, LMSD published a master plan study for outdoor sports playing fields for Lower Merion High School. A number of potential projects were identified, along with cost estimates to accomplish the following goals:

- Develop a Master Plan document to guide decision making for long and short term capital investment in LMHS athletic fields, venues, and outdoor facilities.
- Provide modernized/up-to-date sports facilities to create an environment of excitement that inspires trickle down participation from the high school level to youth community sports and meets the aspirations of student athletes, parents and the supporting athletic community.
- Facilitate access, ease participation and financial burdens, reduce transportation costs and enhance equity by having as many (“all”) sports facilities located on campus.
- Create a sports facility environment that inspires the same level of community pride that the District’s tradition of excellence and opportunity has already installed through its facilities.
- Develop facilities that respect the character of the surrounding community.

Some projects have already been accomplished, such as replacing the surface of the existing artificial turf field. Other projects identified include:

- Constructing team shelters for use at South Ardmore Park.
- Tennis court renovations.
- Home and Visitor Grandstand renovations/replacement along with accessible parking.
- New field house with accessible restrooms and concessions. Renovations to existing restrooms and storage areas.
- Multi-use synthetic turf complex to accommodate baseball, softball and multi-use fields.

The total cost estimate (2016) for these projects, less the project already completed, is approximately $7.4 million.

School Bus Parking

As enrollment increases, student transportation requirements also increase. The District has been able to avoid purchasing additional buses by increasing the efficiency of bus routes and relying on outside contractors to meet transportation requirements to more distant locations. However, the District anticipates purchasing ten large-sized buses to meet projected enrollment.

The LMSD bus fleet is housed at three locations: the primary location at Matsonford Road, which includes administrative offices and repair facilities; Harriton High School; and Lower Merion High School. All locations have restrictions on the number of buses that can be stored and all locations are at maximum capacity.

Over the past decade, the District has carefully explored potential sites for bus parking and more than 40 sites have been considered. Unfortunately, these locations were determined to be unsuitable due to size, zoning restrictions, operational and logistics limitations, development already in progress and other concerns.

Most recently, the District has considered plans to construct a parking deck at Matsonford Road for use by drivers' cars to make additional space available for buses. This plan faces objections from neighboring municipalities and PennDOT. Due to these concerns, planning has been put on hold.

Bus parking may be an option at the former church property now incorporated into the Welsh Valley Middle School site, but no specific plans for this site have been developed.

The Challenges of Addressing Growth

As LMSD balances its commitment to fiscal responsibility with the needs of its students, specific actions have been implemented to address current enrollment. These actions, however, are not adequate for addressing the continued enrollment growth predicted in the years ahead. The District must plan for long-term solutions.

Effective planning for Lower Merion's future facilities needs is complicated by three key factors:

Funding restrictions imposed by Act 1

Act 1 legislation caps a school district's ability to raise taxes above an index set annually by the Commonwealth. Increases above the index are subject to limited exceptions such as to cover costs of special education and retirement system (PSERs). There is no exception to cover enrollment growth expenditures such as construction or increased staffing.

Site constraints

Expansion of current facilities is difficult due to the limited footprint of most school sites. For the most part, LMSD schools are located in densely-populated neighborhoods and existing facilities offer few or limited opportunities for expansion. Expansion plans would have to balance the need for additional classrooms with other needs such as the need for outdoor recreational space and parking.

Limited availability of property

The District has been searching for available property for some time without success. There are few, if any, parcels that are ideally located and suitable for construction of a new school. If the District were to consider addressing growth by building an additional school, siting the facility would almost certainly require extensive and costly demolition and construction and/or extensive renovations on properties facing issues similar to existing LMSD sites. Real estate costs in Lower Merion are comparatively high, adding another deterrent to site acquisition.

Fiscal Planning in a Growing School District

Enrollment planning presents a significant fiscal challenge to any school board. Given the complexities of developing a 2017-2018 budget during a period of historic enrollment growth, LMSD is making every effort to plan responsibly.

The District currently has $15M in committed fund balance for future capital projects. Under any scenario, the District would likely make use of some combination of existing funds and borrowed funds to cover the costs of facilities expansion. The District is currently able to obtain favorable interest rates for bond issues due to its Moody's Aaa bond rating. Lower interest rates yield long-term savings for taxpayers and enable greater borrowing flexibility as needs arise. The costs of facilities expansion, however, are not limited to construction. All planning must take into consideration staffing and operational needs.

Strategies for Addressing Growth

LMSD schools are a source of significant pride for the community. In a 2016 survey of Lower Merion Township residents by the National Citizens Survey, 95% of residents provided a positive rating for K-12 education in Lower Merion – one of the highest-rated community characteristics in the survey and well-above the national benchmark. Not surprisingly, more and more people want access to this experience. With additional construction and housing turnover, greater numbers of families with children are settling in the District.

In planning for growth, the Board knows there is no “best choice” and is exploring a number of possible options to tackle District-wide facility needs.

** All projected costs based on 2016 estimates*

STRATEGY: Elementary school “neighborhood stabilization” – build on to existing elementary schools and maintain current feeder patterns.

Advantages:

- Maintains existing feeder patterns.
- Does not require elementary school redistricting.
- Controlled (phased) rollout based on need.

- District already owns property.

Challenges:

- Results in large elementary schools, particularly at Penn Wynne and Gladwyne.
- Direct impact on neighborhoods, including parking, traffic, etc.
- Numerous site restrictions.

Other considerations:

- Does not address middle school or high school capacity concerns.
- Could create size imbalances among and between schools.
- Could still require redistricting if one school grows too large to meet capacity needs after expansion.
- Possible greater dependency on modular classrooms.
- Projected costs: $30-35 million.*

STRATEGY: (7th) 500-student elementary school – Build an additional elementary school at former St. Justin's property.

Advantages:

- Reduces construction needs at other elementary schools.
- Provides greater control in accommodating future enrollment increases.
- District already owns St. Justin's property.

Challenges:

- Significant redistricting required.
- Heightens impact on Welsh Valley neighborhood.
- Would require costly parking solution.

Other considerations:

- Does not address middle or high school capacity concerns.
- Could create size imbalances among and between schools.
- Would likely require referendum.
- Projected costs: $46-50 million.*

STRATEGY: (3rd) 5-8 middle school – Build an additional middle school for around 1,000 students and reconfigure grades at middle level to 5-8 and elementary level to K-4.

Advantages:

- Maintains existing elementary boundaries.
- Relieves expansion needs at elementary schools.
- Relieves long-term expansion needs at WVMS and BCMS.

Challenges:

- Significant middle school redistricting required.
- Few suitable sites available in the Township.

- Cost of site acquisition, demolition and construction.

Other considerations:

- Would likely require voter referendum.
- Requires interim modular acquisition at BCMS to handle current capacity issues; would result in tabling of elementary expansion plans for Penn Wynne.
- Requires reconsideration of middle school programs.
- Does not address high school capacity concerns.
- Projected costs: $100-103 million.*

STRATEGY: Conversion of BCMS and WVMS to 5-8 middle schools – Expand capacity at both middle schools and reconfigure grades at middle level to 5-8 and elementary level to K-4.

Advantages:

- Maintains existing elementary boundaries.
- Controlled (phased) rollout.
- Relieves expansion needs at elementary schools.

Challenges:

- Significant site challenges at both schools with more than 1,600 students.
- Middle schools almost same size as high schools on smaller sites.
- Impact on neighborhoods would be significant.

Other considerations:

- Neighborhood reaction to new school in community.
- Would likely require voter referendum.
- Requires immediate modular acquisition at existing middle schools to handle current capacity issues and tabling of expansion plans for Penn Wynne.
- Requires reconsideration of middle school programs.
- Does not address high school capacity concerns.
- Projected costs: $52-54 million,* which includes estimated land acquisition costs.

STRATEGY: Redistricting of elementary schools with expanded capacity at some schools – Redistrict elementary attendance areas to shift students from schools with greatest capacity concerns and site restrictions, which currently includes Penn Wynne, to sites with greater capacity and site flexibility. Expand as necessary, which would likely require construction at five schools.

Advantages:

- Reduces impact at Penn Wynne.
- Relieves expansion needs at some elementary schools.
- Results in more balanced elementary populations

Challenges:

- Heightened site challenges at certain schools.
- Does not relieve increases at Gladwyne, Belmont Hills or Cynwyd.

- Need to increase capacity of core spaces such as auditorium, cafeteria, etc., in addition to adding classroom space.
- Larger elementary schools.
- Would require a number of concurrent projects.

Other considerations:

- Does not address middle and high school capacity concerns.
- Possible greater dependency on modular classrooms.
- Would result in tabling of elementary expansion plans for Penn Wynne.
- Projected costs: $27-30 million.*

STRATEGY: Expand middle schools – Expand middle school capacity at Bala Cynwyd and Welsh Valley and maintain current grade configurations.

Advantages:

- Maintains school feeder patterns.
- Addresses middle school capacity issues.

Challenges:

- Site challenges on BCMS campus.
- Direct impact on densely populated neighborhood.

Other considerations:

- Does not address elementary and high school capacity concerns.
- Requires creative planning to align facilities with programming.
- Projected costs: $17-19 million.*

STRATEGY: Kindergarten center – Build a new kindergarten center at former St. Justin's property and shift kindergarten students from elementary schools to the new center

Advantages:

- Minimal disruption to educational program.
- Alleviates some current elementary school capacity issues.
- District already owns site.
- Maintains existing elementary boundaries for the time being.

Challenges:

- Heightens impact on Welsh Valley neighborhood.
- Would require costly parking solution.
- May not free up enough capacity at elementary schools.
- Would require costly transportation solution.

Other considerations:

- Does not address middle school capacity concerns.
- Could create size imbalances among and between schools.

- Could still require elementary redistricting if any school grows too large to meet grade 1-5 capacity needs.
- Projected costs: $19-21 million.*

STRATEGY: High school expansion – Build temporary or permanent classroom addition at Harriton High School

Advantages:

- Maintains existing feeder patterns.
- Does not require high school redistricting.
- Maintains existing programs and class size levels.
- Location of classrooms would cause minimal disruption during construction.

Challenges:

- Increases impervious surface and parking requirements on Harriton campus.
- High school enrollment trends difficult to predict in long-term.

Other considerations:

- Could still require high school redistricting if one school grows too large to meet capacity needs after expansion.
- Scheduling options could be explored to reduce some needs for additional classroom space.
- Projected costs: $2.3M - $7.4 million** based on four possible configurations of permanent and temporary options, plus any elementary and middle school solution.
  ** 2013 estimates

Ongoing needs

Factors such as maintenance of facilities, renovations or upgrades to Arnold Field, transportation, traffic and bus issues, staff and curriculum related to enrollment growth, as well as other issues will impact the decision making process.

Looking Ahead

Every planning decision is complex and cannot be made in isolation. These are challenging decisions that are presenting increased urgency because of the enrollment growth the District is experiencing. Lower Merion School District is committed to sharing, with the public, the information it is gathering and reviewing to make informed judgments about the best course of action.

The Board remains committed to ensuring that students' needs are met in a fiscally-responsible manner, with attention to community values. Community engagement will be a critical element of any plan and the public will be kept abreast of the facility planning process through a comprehensive communication effort. Information will be updated on the District's website at www.lmsd.org. Comments should be submitted to communitycomments@lmsd.org.

Addendum I

List of Meetings Related to Enrollment Growth/Facilities Expansion Since 2012

2012 (7)
May 21, 2012 Board Business Meeting (Presentation of DeJong Healy Enrollment Projection Study)
September 24, 2012 Board Business Meeting (District-Wide Facilities Study Presentation)
October 22, 2012 Facilities Committee (Updated District-Wide Facilities Study)
November 15, 2012 – Presentation to Penn Valley Civic (PV Expansion)
November 27, 2012 – Presentation to Gladwyne Community (GL Expansion)
December 17, 2012 – Board Business Meeting (GL Expansion & Updated Facilities Study)
January 10, 2012 – Presentation to Merion Park Civic (Updated Facilities Study)

2013 (16)
January 14, 2013 – Board Business Meeting (Updated District-Wide Facilities Study)
January 15, 2013 – Presentation to Ardwood Civic (Updated Facilities Study)
February 28, 2013 – Presentation to Welsh Valley Community (Updated Facilities Study)
March 4, 2013 – Policy Committee (Expanded Choice)
May 13, 2013 – Board Business Meeting (High School Enrollment/Expanded Choice)
June 10, 2013 – Board Business Meeting (Timeline for Public Engagement/Expanded Choice)
August 15, 2013 – Facilities Committee (High School Construction Informational Update)
September 13, 2013 – Policy Committee (AR for Expanded Choice)
September 16, 2013 – Board Education Meeting (Instructional Considerations, Sundance Report)
September 19, 2013 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update, HS Facilities Presentation)
September 19, 2013 – Presentation to Penn Valley Civic (Project Update)
September 23, 2013 – Board Business Meeting (Project Update, High School Enrollment Update)
October 17, 2013 – Facilities Committee (ES & MS Update, WV Design, HS Enrollment Update)
October 21, 2013 – Board Business Meeting (HS Enrollment, WV Design, Traffic & Parking)
October 23, 2013 – Communications Committee (Enrollment Projection Comparisons)
November 14, 2013 – Facilities Committee (Project Update, HS Enrollment Presentation)

2014 (23+)
March 13, 2014 – Facilities Committee (Choice Data, ES/MS Project Update)
March 17, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (High School Enrollment/Choice Data)
April 14, 2014 – Meeting with Federation of Civics (High School Enrollment)
April 24, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
May 15, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
June 5, 2014 – Facilities Committee (5-Year Facilities Plan, ES/MS Project Update)
June 10, 2014 – Presentation to Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (Bus Parking)
July 17, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
July 21, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (Bus Parking)
August 14, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
August 18, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (Enrollment Expansion Update, Bus Parking)
September 22, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (Enrollment Expansion, Bus Parking)
October 16, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)

October 22, 2014 – Communications (Enrollment Growth)
November 13, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
November 17, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (Enrollment Expansion, Bus Parking)
November 19, 2014 – Communications Committee (Enrollment Expansion, Bus Parking)
November 24, 2014 – Special Board Meeting – Public Comments (Enrollment Expansion, Bus Parking)
November 24, 2014 – Community Meeting at Harriton (Matsonford Road Bus Parking)
December 4, 2014 – Finance Committee (Enrollment Growth Impact on Capital Projects)
December 10, 2014 – Communications Committee (Enrollment Growth, Bus Parking)
December 11, 2014 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update)
December 15, 2014 – Board Business Meeting (Enrollment Expansion, Bus Parking)
**Additional meetings in 2014 with Township Commissioners, Narberth Borough Council July 14, August 6, October 6 and November 20 to discuss enrollment growth impacts and bus parking needs.

2015 (17)
January 12, 2015 – Facilities Committee Meeting (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
February 12, 2015 – Facilities Committee Meeting (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
March 12, 2015 – Facilities Committee Meeting (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
March 16, 2015 – Regular Business Board Meeting (Bus Parking/Enrollment Update)
April 13, 2015 – Presentation to Federation of Civics (Enrollment Growth/Bus Parking)
April 16, 2015 – Facilities Committee Meeting (Enrollment Report Summary MCPC)
April 27, 2015 – Board Business Meeting (MCPC Enrollment Study)
May 14, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
July 4, 2015 - Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
July 16, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
August 13, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
August 17, 2015 – Regular Business Board Meeting (Facilities and Enrollment Update)
September 24, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
October 15, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Update on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects)
November 12, 2015 – Facilities Committee (Updates on Elementary and Middle School Enrollment Expansion Projects and Update on DAO Classroom Renovation Design)
November 16, 2015 – Board Business Meeting (Updated MCPC Enrollment Study, Expansion Phase 2)
December 17, 2015 – Facilities Committee (ES/MS Project Update, DAO Project Update, PW Expansion)

2016 (23)
January 5, 2016 – Presentation to Penn Wynne Community (Classroom Expansion Concepts)
January 15, 2016 – Finance Committee (Impact of Enrollment Growth on Budget)
January 21, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update; Kindergarten Center)
February 11, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update)
February 22, 2016 – Presentation to Federation of Civic Associations (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update)
March 14, 2016 – Facilities Update to PW Community (Enrollment Growth Planning)
April 4, 2016 – Special Board Meeting (Facilities and Enrollment Growth Update and Public Workshop)
April 14, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update; LMHS Athletic Facility Plan)
May 5, 2016 – Presentation to Realtors (Enrollment Growth, Partner Schooling)
May 12, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update)
June 6, 2016 – Special Board Meeting (ES/MS Core Space Analysis, Work Session on Facilities)
June 9, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update; LMHS Athletic Facility Plan)
June 16, 2016 – Presentation to Penn Wynne Community (PWES Enrollment Growth, Expansion)
July 14, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update)
August 11, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update; Pedestrian Safety at PW, PV)
September 15, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Projects Update; Pedestrian Safety at PW, PV, WV)
September 19, 2016 – Board Business Meeting (BCMS Facilities Update)
October 13, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Project Updates, Facilities Plan Update)
October 18, 2016 – Presentation to BCMS Community (Enrollment Growth and Program Implications)
November 14, 2016 – Special Board Meeting (MCPC and Sundance Enrollment Studies; HS Program Implications)
November 17, 2016 – Facilities Committee (Enrollment Expansion Project Updates)
December 15, 2016 – Facilities Committee (DAO and PW Project Updates, BC Expansion)
December 19, 2016 – Board Business Meeting (Enrollment and Facilities Update, BC Expansion)

2017 (18+)
January 10, 2017 – Presentation to Neighborhood Club of BC (Enrollment Growth and Program Implications)
January 19, 2017 – Facilities Committee (DAO Project Update, BC/WV Expansion)
February 10, 2017 – Facilities Committee (DAO Project Update, BC/WV Expansion)
February 15, 2017 – Communications Committee (Partner Schooling)
February 16, 2017 – Meeting with BCMS Community (BCMS Expansion)
February 22, 2017 – Presentation to Realtors (Enrollment Growth)
February 27, 2017 – Special Board Meeting (Facilities Update Public Workshop)
March 16, 2017 – Facilities Committee (DAO and MS Expansion, PW Concepts)
March 22, 2017 – Communications (Enrollment Growth, Facilities Communications)
April 20, 2017 – Facilities (DAO Project Update, MS Expansion, PW Concepts)
April 26, 2017 – Communications (Enrollment, Facilities Communications)

May 11, 2017 – Facilities Committee (BC Temporary Classroom, MS Expansion, PW Concepts, Attendance Area Exceptions)
May 11, 2017 – Meeting with Federation of Civics (Enrollment Growth)
May 22, 2017 – Special Board Meeting (Elementary Facilities Public Workshop)
June 14, 2017 – Special Board Meeting (Secondary Facilities Public Workshop)
July 13, 2017 – Facilities Committee (BCMS Expansion)
August 17, 2017 – Facilities Committee (BCMS, PW, WV Update)
August 21, 2017 – Board Business Meeting (BC, PW, WV Projects)

Addendum II

Tomorrow's Students,

Today's Challenges: Summary of Responses to a Community Survey

Report of findings from a survey administered by the Lower Merion Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools in Spring 2017

Prepared by
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Lower Merion School District

Executive Summary

September 14, 2017

In May 2017, the Lower Merion Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools launched a survey to gather input from the community on the eight enrollment growth strategies that were published in the April 24, 2017 Tomorrow's Students Today's Challenges community newsletter. The survey was open to any community member who chose to participate, and 1,659 responses were collected. The majority of participants described themselves as residents of the District (98%) with households that include currently enrolled LMSD students (85.1%) and/or young children who will attend LMSD upon reaching school age (35.8%). All school communities were represented, and residents of Wynnewood comprised the largest segment of the sample (about 30%).

Results reflect the community's commitment to maintaining small class sizes and a high standard of quality regarding the scope and depth of the educational experiences provided to LMSD students. While some voiced their support for increasing class sizes and cutting back on non-academic programs as a way to "make do with what we have," many more expressed a desire to make class sizes even smaller than they currently are – particularly at the middle and high school levels – and to prioritize space and opportunities that extend beyond a basic instructional program.

Of the eight strategies presented to the community for feedback, the overall rating of support by respondents, a nonrandom sample of the community, was positive for six strategies and negative for two. The strategy with the most support among survey participants was high school expansion. In general, survey participants also supported expansion at the middle schools and the use of the St. Justin's property for a kindergarten center as favorable, although only slightly. The remaining three strategies for which positive levels of support was found – building an additional elementary school at the St. Justin's property, redistricting and expanding elementary schools as needed and elementary school neighborhood stabilization – received an average rating of slightly more supported than not, but disaggregation by school communities revealed sharp differences in the levels of support or opposition among the school communities as represented by this sample. Participants, on average, indicated more opposition than support for the strategies that involved middle schools serving grades 5-8, whether through the addition of a new middle school serving grades 5-8 or the reconfiguration of the grades at elementary and middle school to shift 5th grade up to the middle level.

A number of new suggestions for addressing enrollment growth were submitted, as were many comments expressing concern over increased taxes, preservation of outdoor space, the possibility of

increased traffic congestion as school enrollments climb and the developmental appropriateness of clustering fifth graders with students in grades six through eight. Notable among the responses were statements of support for adding an additional school to District and re-districting.

Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges:

Summary of Responses to a Community

Survey

Report of findings from a survey administered by the Lower Merion Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools in spring 2017.

Background

Following the release of a community newsletter, Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges: Planning for Growth and Achievement in Lower Merion School District, on April 24, 2017, the Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools requested that a survey be administered to gather input from the LMSD community regarding the issues and strategies outlined in the newsletter and discussed at the series of public meetings hosted throughout the spring. The resulting survey, developed and coordinated through the LMSD Office of Program Evaluation, was open for public response from May 24, 2017 through June 30, 2017, and publicized by the LMSD Office of Community Relations.

Survey Design

The survey was designed around the issues and strategies described in the community newsletter, Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges, and the need for the Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools to gather community feedback to support the decision-making process revolving around facilities planning in the face of unprecedented enrollment growth. With this purpose in mind, the survey was designed to elicit three types of information: (1) community values in terms of the issues that should be most influential in discussions around elementary, middle and high school facilities planning, (2) reactions to each of the eight strategies outlined in the community newsletter and (3) household information that could be used to describe the survey sample and to identify patterns. It was important to the Board of School Directors that the identity of the survey respondents be confidential, therefore respondents were invited, but not required, to provide demographic information.

Survey Details

Developed to gather input for the LMSD Board of School Directors and Superintendent of Schools to consider while discussing options for addressing enrollment growth and facilities planning.

Reflected the content of the community newsletter, *Tomorrow's Students, Today's Challenges,* shared in April 2017.

Collected 1,989 partial and complete responses via online and paper submissions; 1,659 included in final analysis.

Sample is a self-selected group of individuals, 98% of whom identified as a resident within LMSD

Data Collection and Handling

The survey was administered through Survey Gizmo (www.surveygizmo.com) using a secure account accessible only by the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Program Evaluation. Paper versions of the survey were also made available to community members, who could access them by visiting the front desk at the LMSD District Administrative Offices or by calling the LMSD Office of Community Relations to receive one by mail. The survey was also made available in Spanish, although this version was not utilized.

A total of 1,993 partial and complete responses were collected. After screening these responses using a strict set of rules for inclusion, 1,659 responses remained in the sample for analysis. The majority of excluded responses (n=378) were partial responses that contained no information, likely the result of people who previewed the survey without answering the questions.

Limitations

When interpreting the results of the survey, it is important to consider the characteristics of the sample. Although wide-spread dissemination of the invitation to participate was attempted through email campaigns to families of public school students, press releases to local news outlets,and social media campaigns by both the District and LMSD community members, it is fair to assume that the sample of community members who (1) knew about the survey and (2) chose to participate in the survey is not a perfect reflection of the entire community. The findings from this survey are not generalizable; rather, they provide insight into the opinions and attitudes of 1,600+ community members who knew about the survey and self-selected as participants.

It is also important to note that early responders to the survey encountered technical challenges due to the application of a setting that was applied to limit the number of responses per device. The setting was removed shortly after the beginning of survey administration, and announcements were made to encourage early responders to re-visit the survey if they were unable to complete their responses. A new setting was applied that would allow respondents to save their progress and return to the survey at a later time. Data processing procedures were also updated to include rules for screening partial and duplicate responses.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Approximately 99% of survey participants answered questions asking about the characteristics of their household. Only ten of those indicated they were not residents, of whom three have children currently attending, one has children that will attend and two have alumni in their household. Four of the non- residents have unknown connections to the District.

All communities were represented by the residents in the sample, although to varying degrees (see Table 1). The length of residency status was fairly evenly distributed, with 26.2% having lived in the District 5 years or less, 27.1% having lived in the District between 6 and 10 years, 29.9% having lived in the District between 11 and 20 years and 16.8% having lived in the District for more than 20 years.

Table 1

Residential Status of Survey Participants

Community Affiliation	n	%
Wynnewood	486	29.3%
Bala Cynwyd	254	15.3%
Ardmore	158	9.8%
Narberth	150	9.5%
Merion Station	149	9.0%
Penn Valley	114	6.9%
Bryn Mawr	80	4.8%
Gladwyne	79	4.8%
Villanova	54	3.3%
Haverford	46	2.8%
Merion	32	1.9%
Rosemont	5	0.3%
Resident, Town not given	18	1.1%
Total LMSD Residents	**1,625**	**98.0%**
Non-Resident	10	0.6%

Issues Most Valued by Survey Respondents

Respondents were asked to review a list of issues related to planning for enrollment growth at each level of schooling (elementary, middle and high) and were then asked to select up to three of the issues they felt should be the most influential when discussing facilities planning. The number and percentage of respondents who selected each issue as one of their three most influential are reported in Table 2.

Class Size

An overwhelming majority of respondents – about 84%, 80%, and 79% for elementary, middle, and high school responses, respectively – included “Maintain Current Class Size” as one of the three issues they believe should be most influential in planning for growth. It is worth noting that a number of the respondents who selected “other” wrote that class sizes should be increased rather than maintained, but even more wrote that class sizes should be reduced. In either case, these responses comprised a very small minority of the responses when compared with other options.

Outdoor Spaces for Physical Activity, Athletics, and Greenspace

At each level, the issue of outdoor space was among the most frequently selected choice of issues. More than half of the respondents included this issue at the elementary school – either as outdoor physical activity space (48%) or maintaining greenspace (16%) – while about a third of respondents included outdoor athletic space among their three choices for middle (35%) and high school (33%) planning. This was the second most frequently included issue among the

respondents from Ardmore, Bala Cynwyd, Haverford, Merion, Merion Station, Narberth, Penn Valley, and Wynnewood.

Taxes

Approximately 32-34% of all respondents included “Avoiding tax increases” as one of their three issues chosen at every level. This was the second most frequently included issue after class size within the groups of respondents from Villanova, Gladwyne, and Bryn Mawr.

Level-Specific Issues

The second most frequently included issue was unique to each level: outdoor physical activity space for Elementary (n = 794; 48%), team-based/interdisciplinary programs for Middle (n= 570; 36%) and consistency of course offerings across the District for High (n = 805; 52%).

“Other” Issues Submitted

An option for “Other” was provided to allow respondents to submit an issue of their choosing, and a small minority (5-6%) of survey participants selected this option. The following issues emerged as themes within the written responses associated with the “Other,” although these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the relative minority that these comments represent:

1. Maintaining or increasing the quality of the curriculum and instruction.
2. Keeping school sizes small by building new schools rather than expanding currently overcrowded schools.
3. Reducing class sizes, particularly at the middle and high school level.
4. Maintaining or expanding the variety and richness of course and special subject options.
5. Ensuring equality of curricular offerings across the District.
6. Ensuring that special education, gifted education, instructional support programs and special area subjects have adequate space.
7. Increasing collaboration with the Lower Merion Township zoning board.

Table 2

Frequency of Participants' Choice of Issues as one of their Top 3 Most Important for Planning at Each Level

Elementary School (n=1,655)			Middle School (n=1,573)			High School (n=1,553)		
	n	%		n	%		n	%
Maintain Current Class Sizes	**1,388**	**83.9%**	**Maintain Current Class Sizes**	**1,254**	**79.7%**	**Maintain Current Class Sizes**	**1,216**	**78.3%**
Preserve Outdoor Physical Activity Space	**794**	**48.0%**	**Continue Team-Scheduling/Interdisciplinary Programs**	**570**	**36.2%**	**Provide Consistent Core Course Offerings**	**805**	**51.8%**
Avoid Tax Increases	**563**	**34.0%**	**Preserve Outdoor Athletic Facilities**	**553**	**35.2%**	**Preserve Outdoor Athletic Facilities**	**513**	**33.0%**
Avoid Re-Districting	388	23.4%	**Avoid Tax Increases**	**507**	**32.2%**	**Avoid Tax Increases**	**503**	**32.4%**
Avoid Use of Temporary Classrooms	373	22.5%	Avoid Use of Temporary Classrooms	318	20.2%	Avoid Use of Temporary Classrooms	281	18.1%
Preserving Greenspace	261	15.8%	Avoid Re-Districting	263	16.7%	Avoid Re-Districting	276	17.8%
Maintain Current Grade-level Structure	251	15.2%	Maintain Current Grade-level Structure	249	15.8%	Preserving Greenspace	206	13.3%
Address Traffic Concerns	205	12.4%	Preserving Greenspace	215	13.7%	Address Traffic Concerns	129	8.3%
Avoid Permanent Building Expansion	131	7.9%	Address Traffic Concerns	133	8.5%	Avoid Permanent Building Expansion	108	7.0%
Other – Write in	98	5.9%	Avoid Permanent Building Expansion	113	7.2%	Ensure Adequate Parking	88	5.7%
Ensure Adequate Parking	54	3.3%	Other – Write in	74	4.7%	Other – Write in	87	5.5%
Maintaining current number of elementary schools (6)	41	2.5%	Ensure Adequate Parking	38	2.4%			
			Maintaining current number of middle schools (2)	37	2.4%			
Declined to answer	4	0.2%	*Declined to answer*	86	5.5%	*Declined to answer*	106	6.8%

Responses to Each Growth Strategy

Each of the eight potential strategies for addressing growth in LMSD that were outlined in the community newsletter were individually presented, in random order, to survey respondents along with the following two prompts:

(1) Which of the following best describes your reaction to this strategy?

Strongly Support, Support,

Slightly Support, Neutral,

Slightly Oppose, Oppose and Strongly Oppose

(Comment box, optional)

(2) If you have ideas about how to make this option more favorable, please describe them below.

Note: You will be limited to 50 words.

It is important to note that the survey was designed to elicit reactions to each strategy on its own merits alone, not in comparison to other strategies. Therefore, it is quite possible that respondents may have indicated similar levels of support for two strategies that seem to be in contradiction with one another.

By examining the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses to the scaled item accompanying each strategy, the results give a general sense of how favorable or unfavorable each strategy was among the participants of this survey, as well as how uniform or divided the respondents were on each one. Table 3 contains the means and standard deviations of responses to each of the strategies in order of favorability. The table also contains the number of comments associated with each strategy, as well as the number of responses to the prompt for ideas that would make the strategy more favorable.

Strategies Generally Supported by Survey Participants

The strategy with the most support among survey participants was high school expansion. In general, survey participants also reported expansion at the middle schools and the use of the St. Justin's property for a kindergarten center as favorable, although only slightly.

Strategies Receiving Mixed Results by School Community

The remaining three strategies for which positive levels of support was found – building an additional elementary school at the St. Justin's property, redistricting and expanding elementary schools as needed, and elementary school neighborhood stabilization – received an average rating of slightly more supported than not, but disaggregation by school communities revealed differences in the levels of support or opposition among the school communities as represented by this sample.

Strategies Generally Opposed by Survey Participants

Participants, on average, indicated more opposition than support for the strategies that involved middle schools serving grades 5-8, whether through the addition of a new middle school serving grades 5-8 or the reconfiguration of the grades at elementary and middle school to shift 5th grade up to the middle level. Many comments expressed concern over the developmental appropriateness of clustering fifth graders with students in grades six through eight.

Comments

Table 3
Descriptive statistics associated with each of the Eight Strategies offered for Consideration

Strategy	Respondents (n)	Mean Score*	Stand. Deviation	Comments (n)	Ideas (n)
High School Expansion	1,636	1.3	1.5	242	76
Expansion at Middle Schools (Grades 6-8)	1,627	0.7	1.6	227	80
Elementary School at St. Justin's	1,631	0.5	1.8	272	82
Kindergarten Center at St. Justin's	1,636	0.5	1.9	333	96
Redistrict and Expand Elementary Schools as Needed	1,635	0.2	1.8	263	85
Elementary School Neighborhood Stabilization	1,631	0.2	1.8	289	97
New Middle School (Grade 5-8)	1,638	-0.3	2.0	351	99
Grade Reconfigurations (Grades K-4 and 5-8)	1,631	-0.8	1.7	370	95

**Responses were coded on a 7-point scale with -3 representing "Strongly Oppose" and +3 representing "Strongly Support." Therefore, mean scores that are positive values indicate general support for the strategy, whereas negative values indicate general opposition to the strategy.*

A number of new suggestions for addressing enrollment growth were submitted, as were many comments expressing concern over increased taxes, preservation of outdoor space, and the possibility of increased traffic congestion as school enrollments climb. Notable among the responses were statements of support for re-districting and adding an additional school to the District.