Introduction to Educational Facilities Master Planning

Best Practice in PK-12 Educational Facility and Capital Planning
21st Century School Fund  Washington, DC
About the 21st Century School Fund

- The 21st Century School Fund (21CSF) was founded in 1994 on the premise that communities are responsible for creating healthy, safe, and educationally appropriate learning environments. It is based in Washington, DC. [www.21csf.org](http://www.21csf.org)

- **Mission:** To build the public will and capacity to improve urban public school facilities.

- **Vision:** A country where every child learns in an educationally appropriate, healthy and safe school that serves as a community anchor and is built and maintained in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.

- **Our work:** Locally, 21CSF has sustained and built on its experience in public private partnerships and educational facility planning. In 1995, 1997, 2000 and 2003, the District of Columbia School System (DCPS) engaged the community in a participatory master planning process. We continue to provide technical advice, advocacy, information, policy analysis, and development to other districts and non-profit organizations. 21CSF has developed software to increase public engagement in school facilities planning and expanded its work to include providing limited assistance to public charter schools on school facility issues in the District of Columbia.
Assessing the Need for a Facilities Master Plan

- Is there a citywide Plan that provides for education, administration, and operations infrastructure for early childhood through post-secondary education?
  - Location and utilization of buildings and land
  - Condition of facilities and grounds
  - Design of interior and exterior space

- Does this Plan ensure that the locations and organizations of schools encourage and welcome students and families and utilizes the assets of the city?
  - School locations
  - Feeder patterns
  - School boundaries
  - School size
  - Grade configuration
Need for A Facilities Master Plan

- Does this plan improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and communities?
  - Does it provide green space and access to play areas?
  - Is it open to a wider community of families or community members?
  - Is it scaled, in size to the community within which it resides?
  - Is it accessible by foot and public transportation?
**Best Practices For Developing A Facility Master Planning Framework**

| 1. Vision                        | 6. Coordinated                        |
| 2. High Quality Public Education | 7. Accurate and Complete Data          |
| 3. Vibrant and Safe Neighborhoods| 8. Manageable and Feasible            |
| 4. Fair and Equitable            | 9. Publicly Open, Inquire Based Process|
| 5. Complete and Comprehensive    | 10. The Future of Our Public Schools  |
1.0 | VISION

- The Masters Facility Plan (MFP) should provide a clear, inspiring vision for the District’s public facilities that will be broadly acceptable to its citizens.

- Build confidence in the District’s ability to overhaul its inventory of facilities efficiently and thoroughly.

- Be an inclusive plan that can be embraced by the entire city, providing a serviceable template for the next decade.

The VISION is worthy of the District and its children, families, and neighborhoods.

- Does it support a system of public schools where the expectation is participation of parents and families?

- Is it inclusive of the city as a whole?

- Is it inspired?

- Does it build confidence in leadership?

- Is it a blueprint for the next decade?

- Will it increase enrollment?
2.0 | HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Provide the best support for educational improvement.
- Accurately reflect reforms detailed in the Master Education Plan and lay the foundation for a high quality system of public schools in the District.

The MFP advances and supports HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION, not just school buildings.

- Does it reflect the education plan?
- Does it give priority to programs with special space requirements?
- Does it support innovation?
- Does it create a compelling educational environment for teachers?
- Does it support spaces for support and specialized services (social workers, nurses, counselors, psychologists)?
- Does it adequately support existing gyms, auditoriums, and older or historic structures?
3.0 | VIBRANT & SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Improved school facilities in neighborhoods attract and sustain families.
- Contribute to improving the quality of life for residents, particularly if it is part of the community based improvement initiatives.
- By implementing the MFP, the District can strengthen neighborhoods by increasing public access and connections.
- High quality design and construction must be supported by the MFP.

The MFP will make a contribution to securing VIBRANT AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS.

- Does it envision the school contribution to the attractiveness of the neighborhood?
- Does it allow for sufficient community use?
- Does it support walkable schools?
- Does it allow for large schools to be fiscally viable, but small enough to compete with specialty and charter schools?
- Does it contribute to a greener or environmentally friendly city?
- Is it conducive to increased reliance on public transportation?
- Does it modernize our old and historic schools?
4.0 | FAIR & EQUITABLE

- Represent fair and equitable priorities for distribution of limited school modernization funds and DCPS management attention.

- Priorities for projects should be driven by need and mindful of public school investment in all communities.

- Criteria for setting priorities should be explicitly stated and developed with public input.

The MFP represents a FAIR AND EQUITABLE distribution of funding and attention, first treating those schools and neighborhoods with the greatest need.

- Is it equitable, treating schools and neighborhoods fairly with valuable public school investment throughout the city?

- Does the plan distribute resources to schools fast enough to get them all up to reasonable standards with the next several years?

- Are all schools scheduled for modernization within the next 10-15 years?

- Are criteria for priorities reasonable?

- Are criteria consistently applied?

- Does it plan for improved maintenance and repair simultaneously with modernizations?

- Does it encourage co-location, leasing, and other accommodations for charter schools?
5.0 | COMPLETE & COMPREHENSIVE

- The MFP has to be complete and comprehensive, planning for all neighborhoods and for all public schools, including charters.
- Consideration of all relevant factors must be demonstrated
  - Full comprehension of the impact of charter school enrollment patterns on traditional schools
  - Charter school needs for co-location and stand-alone facilities
- Should reflect community demographic change, initiatives, and programs underway that reflect the population, neighborhoods and communities.

The MFP is a COMPLETE & COMPREHENSIVE plan for all DC public schools.
- Is there a short and long term plan for each school?
- Is there a schedule for improvements needed?
- Is there a budget estimate?
- Do enrollment estimates incorporate explicit and research based assumptions about future residential and enrollment change?
- Are schoolyards, playgrounds, athletic fields, rec. assets, and green space part of the plan?
- Is sufficient swing space provided?
- Is there enough consideration for future growth?
- Are the needs of special education students sufficiently considered?
- Does it offer a realistic, studied proposal for administrative needs?
- Is there sufficient space for central admin.?
6.0 | Coordinated

- Evidence of planning in coordination with District agencies including libraries, parks and recreation, public transportation, health services, housing, and public safety.
- Reflect increased accommodation for community use of schools during non-school hours.
- Take into account the impact of charter school enrollments.

The MFP is COORDINATED with plans and initiatives of other District agencies, as well as within its own system.

- Does the plan envisage and allow for coordinated planning, design, and construction among district agencies?
- Are priorities for school improvements aligned to educational priorities?
- Does it simplify feeder school patterns so that neighborhood students can remain together from elementary, middle, through a comprehensive neighborhood high school?
- Does it sufficiently consider increased charter enrollment and its impacts on school district planning?
- Is it keeping with LEED environmental standards for schools?
- Is it coordinated with energy conservation initiatives?
7.0 | ACCURATE & COMPLETE DATA

- Reports from local schools, parents, teachers, principals, and students should indicate that assumptions are valid and data is accurate.
- Spot checks of data must show that it is current and complete.
- Information should be presented in a clear, transparent, and comprehensible format.

The MFP data are known to be ACCURATE & COMPLETE and the information is clear and easy to understand.

- Are enrollment projects based on valid assumptions explicitly stated?
- Is inflation factored into cost estimates?
- Do condition, adequacy, and capacity assessments reflect the experience of the school users?
- Have condition, adequacy, and capacity assessments been checked by local school principals, parents, teachers, custodians, and building engineers?
- Is information clear, transparent and presented in a comprehensible format?
- Is the data clearly tied into criteria for making decisions on school consolidations and building improvements?
The MFP must reflect the urgent need for improved facilities, but the plan must be feasible and manageable by DCPS.

The MFP describes a plan that is MANAGEABLE by DCPS and FEASIBLE with time, cost, and scope objectives as proposed in the plan.

- Is there a project schedule for implementation of each project that accurately reflects the real world opportunities and constraints?
- Are cost estimates realistic and will they enable all schools, at minimum, to be brought into good repair with full modernization the ultimate objective?
- Is there justification for the scope of work that is linked to building or educational studies?
- How many projects will be at what stage of development for each year of the MFP?
- What is the anticipated cost for each year of the modernization program, including inflation?
- What is the anticipated cost for capital projects that need to be completed while schools are waiting their turn for modernization or replacement?
9.0 | PUBLICLY OPEN, INQUIRY BASED PROCESS

- Planning for the future of the city and its many neighborhoods needs intense involvement of residents, experts, public and private interests, and most importantly, local school staff, teachers, parents, and students – the people who use the public schools daily.

- The visioning, assessment, and planning should engage a broad community of stakeholders in an open, inquiry based process in order to develop a plan that the public owns and supports.

The MFP process was PUBLICLY OPEN and INQUIRY BASED.

- Did the district involve residents in developing the proposed plans for their school buildings?
- Were local school staff, teachers, parents, and/or students engaged in developing the proposed plans for their school?
- Was there integration and communication between area experts and the public in setting criteria or conducting assessments of school buildings or of public or local school needs for facility improvements?
- Is a process for revision of the proposed plans in place?
- Did the district involve sufficient members of residents in developing the MFP?
- Were public charter school parents, staff, and operators included in the planning for the school district’s public school facilities?
10.0 | THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS

- The plans for each public school should be clearly stated, with what will happen, when, and at what cost.
- The plans should be explicitly justified and give parents, students, staff, and neighbors cause to evaluate their support or concerns for the future of the schools in their community and that their children attend.

The MFP outlines and justifies a FUTURE for my neighborhood and/or my child’s SCHOOL that I support.

- Do you support the recommendations made for your school (i.e. major building improvements, modernization or replacement; swing space location; closing or receiving schools; co-location; community school or other demonstration program; feeder school patterns; boundary changes?  
- Is the priority for modernization for your school consistent with your understanding of the conditions in your school?  
- Are there appropriate improvements planned for your school while waiting for modernization?  
- Do the plans for closing, consolidating, or receiving students minimize the disruption for the educational environment for teachers and students and their families and offer them a better environment immediately?
The BEST (Building Educational Success Together) community works towards a vision where all children learn in school buildings that are safe and educationally adequate and that serve as community anchors in vibrant, healthy neighborhoods.

BEST collaborative partners developed a joint research, constituency building and communications agenda to improve urban school facilities.

Partners are a diverse group of local and national leaders with experience in educational reform, community development, social justice advocacy, historic preservation, community engagement, academic research and philanthropy.
BEST Partners

- 21st Century School Fund, Washington, DC
  www.21csf.org
- ACLU Maryland, Baltimore, MD
  www.aclu-md.org
- Advancement Project, Los Angeles, CA
  www.advancementproject.org
- Campaign for Fiscal Equity, New York, NY
  www.cfequity.org
- Center for Cities and Schools, Berkeley, CA
  www.citiesandschools.org
- Designs for Change, Chicago, IL
  www.designsforchange.org
- Education Law Center, Newark, NJ
  www.edlawcenter.org
- Grand Boulevard Federation, Chicago, IL
  www.grandboulevardfederation.org
- Healthy Schools Campaign, Chicago, IL
  www.healthyschoolscampaign.org
- Innovation Partnership, Portland, OR
  www.innovationpartnership.org
- National Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities
  www.ncef.org
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
  www.preservationnation.org
- New Visions for Public Schools, New York, NY
  www.newvisions.org
- Philadelphia Education Fund, Philadelphia, PA
  www.philaedfund.org
- Save Our Schools, New Orleans, LA
  www.sosnola.org