



**MEQUON-THIENSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**COMMUNITY TASK FORCE**

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**November 13, 2019**

***Co-Chairs:***  
*Stephanie Clark*  
*Peter Stone*

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Mequon-Thiensville School District's six school buildings were originally built between 1955 and 1968 and received various additions and upgrades over the past several decades. Although the schools are well maintained and the district has an ongoing maintenance program to prioritize and address issues within each building, the district has numerous facility needs.

In spring 2018, the district finalized its 2018-21 Strategic Plan, which identifies the creation of a long-range master plan for facilities. On September 19, 2018, a request for proposals was released for a facilities master planning partner. In November 2018, Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) was retained by the district to facilitate a long-range master planning process. From November 2018 to July 2019, the district and EUA worked collaboratively to develop a long-range master plan (LRMP). The process included a comprehensive facilities analysis, including of learning environments, for their capacity to:

- Support projected enrollment growth
- Provide modern, safe and secure environments
- Support community recreation and athletic usage

As part of this effort, EUA conducted interviews and walk-throughs at each school site to identify educational shortcomings and space needs. The firm also conducted interviews with building principals, assistant principals, facilities coordinators and the director of buildings and grounds. In April 2019, three community workshops were hosted to engage the community and provide stakeholders with updates and opportunities to provide input.

Construction management firm J.H. Findorff & Son was retained for a limited term to review the district's maintenance and facilities plan. EUA completed the *Long-Range Master Plan: A Framework For Our Future*, on July 22, 2019. The LRMP was subsequently presented to and accepted as complete by the MTSD Board of Education.

## LONG-RANGE MASTER PLAN

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The Long-Range Master Plan includes a capacity and utilization study based initially on November 2017 enrollment projections by Applied Population Lab and then supplemented by an August 5, 2019, report from MD Roffers Consulting, which more comprehensively reviewed enrollment and growth trends in Mequon and Thiensville neighborhoods. The LRMP analyzed the district's space needs, including for classrooms and other areas needed for student-centered learning and support.

The LRMP confirmed that Oriole Lane Elementary School is already significantly over capacity. Wilson Elementary School is also now above capacity. Enrollment projections indicate that elementary school enrollment in the district is likely to significantly increase over the next decade and that classroom and other spaces will be inadequate to meet expected growth. Safety and security concerns were also identified in the LRMP.

Ultimately, the LRMP offered several proposals to address concerns within a 10-year framework covering six core components: enrollment and growth; safety and security; flexible learning environments; maintenance; community use and recreation; and athletics. Numerous challenges were identified across all building sites, including:

- **Outdated classroom configurations:** Classrooms generally function well for large-group instruction, but were not designed to accommodate the small-group and cooperative learning methods that serve as fundamental components in educational standards today.
- **Lack of core classroom space at the elementary level:** This issue is most severe at Oriole Lane Elementary.
- **Shortage of specialty space:** This need, felt most significantly at the elementary level, includes a lack of space for learning specialists, special education, art and music.
- **Lack of gymnasium space throughout the district:** While existing gym spaces meet most of physical education needs, there is significant pressure on the gyms to meet co-curricular and community recreation needs.
- **Accessibility issues for those in wheelchairs:** This is a particular concern at restrooms throughout district buildings.
- **Outdated furniture:** Updated furniture would allow for an easier reconfiguration of space and greater adaptability for innovative teaching practices.
- **Site circulation and traffic flow:** Traffic circulation is not as intuitive as desired and can lead to significant congestion and potential safety concerns, especially during pickup and drop-off periods.

## COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

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Following the completion of the Long-Range Master Plan, the district decided to assemble an independent task force of 18 community members to review and consider the LRMP and make recommendations to the administration and Board of Education. The task force was composed of diverse stakeholders representing a spectrum of opinions and perspectives related to the school district and community. Former school board presidents Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone agreed to serve as co-chairs, but no current school board members or district staff served as task force members.

The district has a history of engaging the community through ad-hoc committees that explore district-wide issues and strategic planning. In 2004, 2007 and 2014, independent task force groups examined issues like school closures and cost savings in transportation, co-curricular activities and the reconfiguration of schools. These groups have also developed recommendations for sustaining the district financially.

On September 9, 2019, the school board adopted a resolution authorizing the superintendent to form an independent community task force with the following charge:

*“The Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force, an independent entity comprised of diverse stakeholders, shall review and consider the Mequon-Thiensville School District’s Long-Range Master Plan and other relevant information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and School Board regarding facilities issues as identified in the Plan.”*

The task force held six meetings totaling nearly 16 hours from September 11 to November 13, 2019. The members toured the three elementary schools and the high school. Optional tours of the two middle schools were also offered. Among the documents provided to each task force

member were the Long Range Master Plan and the enrollment and population studies it references. The task force also heard presentations from EUA and MD Roffers regarding their work. Considerable other background information was provided to the members in the form of written reports and presentations at the meetings, including from various school administrators. Members were given the opportunity at every meeting to ask questions and provide feedback, and considerable time was spent discussing the core components of the LRMP and the various proposals it contains.

The attached appendix contains the task force member roster, its meeting schedule, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, a list of the written reports provided to it, a list of the presentations received and two related reports made to the board requesting approval of the charge of the task force and a process update.

## **PRIORITIES**

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The task force carefully considered the six components of the Long-Range Master Plan and unanimously concluded that (1) enrollment and growth and (2) safety and security should be priorities for the district to address. A significant majority, but not all, of the task force members also concluded that (3) providing additional flexible learning environments should, at least to some extent, be a district priority. Community and recreation use, athletics and maintenance, while important, were not deemed priorities requiring additional taxpayer support at this time.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **Enrollment and Growth**

Background:

The Long Range Master Plan includes a capacity analysis highlighting current overcrowding at two of the district's elementary schools. The LRMP also references enrollment projections pointing to significantly increasing classroom and common space needs in the future. These forecasts are based on an enrollment population study undertaken by Applied Population Lab and a detailed report from MD Roffers Consulting providing enrollment projections and deeper context and understanding of the impact of housing and market demographic trends specific to Mequon and Thiensville.

MD Roffers projects the MTSD 4K-12 resident enrollment to increase by approximately 10 percent (or 384 students) in the district between 2019-2030. These numbers do not include open enrollment and Chapter 220 participation. Enrollment is projected to increase both in areas where there is new construction and in some aging neighborhoods, where turnover is expected. An increase of 95 resident students is projected at the high school by 2030, with an increase of 113 resident students at the middle-school level. Significantly, a 176 resident student increase is projected in grades 4K-5 by 2030.

Currently, 4K-5 resident enrollment is above capacity at both Oriole Lane and Wilson elementary schools, with enrollment at each school projected to grow substantially and exacerbate existing capacity issues. It is also projected that middle school enrollment will approach capacity by 2030, with the greatest stress occurring at Steffen.

Informed by the LRMP capacity analysis, the APL and MDR offers enrollment projections, curricular reports and district class size guidelines, as well as additional reports from the superintendent and middle school principals and tours of the elementary and middle schools, the task force unanimously concluded that there are current and future capacity issues at the elementary schools that must be addressed soon. There is also a near-term capacity issue with respect to middle school cafeterias and gymnasiums.

The first strategy discussed was to recommend no action be taken at this time. The task force unanimously opposed this response. Inaction would likely exacerbate the challenges currently being experienced and increase the potential that the delivery of curriculum and services would be more adversely affected in the future. The task force did not pursue configurations and use of district facilities, such as Range Line, that represented exorbitant construction or operating cost increases or were deemed to have an unacceptable impact on the community or the achievement of students.

The task force discussed the option of moving all district seventh and eighth grades to Homestead High School and all fifth and sixth grades to Steffen and Lake Shore, thus making the current elementary schools 4K-3rd grade schools. Initially, this option would address capacity issues with comparatively smaller building additions, but it would also likely create an overcapacity issue at the high school in the next five to six years. Such a resolution would thus not fully address the enrollment and capacity issues identified in the Long Range Master Plan.

Some research has shown that the synergy created through close proximity to high school curriculum and activities might be an academic benefit to seventh- and eighth-grade students. However, it was feared that having seventh and eighth graders sharing a campus with high school students could adversely impact the social and emotional well-being of younger students exposed to more mature behavior by high school students. For these reasons, and because it was believed that such a major grade reconfiguration would be highly disruptive and potentially divisive, the task force concluded its discussion by determining this was not a strategy to be pursued.

The task force spent considerable time discussing the benefits and challenges of addressing the elementary capacity issues by either 1) Maintaining the current K4-5 elementary and 6-8 middle school grade configurations, or 2) Moving all fifth grades to the middle schools, resulting in a new 5-8 grade configuration at Steffen and Lake Shore and K4-4 grade configurations at the elementary schools.

Research suggested Option 2, or moving the fifth grade to the middle schools, had the potential to provide a degree of synergy in the curriculum that might benefit those students, but it was not definitive. Ultimately, there were no perceived attributable academic benefits to either option. There was clear research indicating that the fewer transitional changes students experience in their school careers, the better the outcomes. These two options had the same number of transitions, though at different ages. Some task force members were concerned that not all fifth-grade students would be ready to transition to middle school.

The construction costs associated with either Option 1 or Option 2 would be similar, and there would likely be no significant difference in operational costs.

The task force recognized that Option 1 allowed for a more prudent approach to adding new classrooms, which would allow the district to plan more effectively. Option 2 had the potential to disrupt more families in the community, as boundary changes would occur at both the elementary and middle-school levels, although in Option 1, a larger number of students would potentially be impacted at the elementary level.

In the end, a stronger consensus was built around the sense that, without a clear and compelling reason, the district should maintain the current grade-level configurations at the schools (4K-5, 6-8) and add classrooms to the elementary schools as capacity and enrollment would dictate. Three-quarters of the task force supported elementary expansion and expansion of the cafeterias and gyms in the middle schools. One-quarter supported moving fifth grade to the middle schools.

The task force rooted this conversation in academic, social and emotional best practices; the capacity of the community to absorb potential changes to school boundaries; and, through the prism of acting as good stewards of the communities' physical and monetary resources. The majority opinion evolved throughout the meetings and the members were able to respect divergent assessments, finally coalescing in a strong recommendation at the end of the process.

#### Recommendations:

1. The district should address overcapacity at the elementary school level by expanding the number of classrooms at one or two of the elementary schools and by creating such additional space as may be needed for common areas such as music, art, cafeterias and gyms and for academic specialists and special education.
2. The district should address scheduling capacity issues at Steffen and Lake Shore middle schools by expanding the cafeteria and gym spaces at each school.

### **Safety and Security**

#### Background:

A safe and secure learning environment for students, staff and administrators has long been a district focus, and many of the highest-priority safety and security needs have already been addressed. For example, school entrances have been remodeled to require visitors to buzz into a secure office environment before gaining entrance to academic areas in a building, and security camera systems are in place to address the most pressing needs. Programmable key fobs are used to secure and facilitate electronic monitoring of building entrances, and additional security doors have been installed to allow some academic areas to be electronically closed off from more public areas for after-hours activities or for additional security during lock-down situations.

In 2016-17, the district retained Safe Havens International to conduct a school safety, security and emergency management assessment of each district site. The report generated from this

assessment was reviewed in conjunction with the development of the Long Range Master Plan, which then identified some additional safety and security concerns. These safety and security concerns were reviewed and discussed by the task force, and members view many of them as priority needs that should be addressed soon.

Specifically, the task force focused on previously identified and ongoing concerns at the elementary and middle schools regarding site circulation and traffic flow during pickup and drop-off hours. Bus and parent areas are often not sufficiently separated and traffic circulation is not as intuitive as desired, leading to legitimate safety concerns and significant congestion. Sooner or later, there's likely to be a serious incident.

The task force also considered the safety and security problems posed by not having the high school administrative offices near the main entrance. Moving these administrative offices and reconfiguring the main entrance would allow for a line of sight from the offices to the building entrance and the parking lot. It is believed that doing so would provide greater opportunities to prevent or at least mitigate threats. The sooner administrators are aware of a danger, the more time and options they will have to respond.

It is also important that the high school have a more identifiable main entrance. Creating an easily identifiable main entrance that includes ready access to the administrative offices would minimize confusion by visitors during the day and, most importantly, ensure administrators and staff are better able to identify, process and comprehend critical information about what is happening on campus. Task force members did stress that the new visitor entrance should be modest in appearance and focus on addressing safety and security concerns.

The task force also noted challenges to securing elementary and middle school buildings when an after-hours event is held in a space such as a gymnasium. Often, by providing access to such locations and the closest restrooms, event participants and others gain unsupervised access through corridors to other areas of the building.

Several buildings received upgrades to their fire alarm systems in recent years. The task force reviewed these systems and discussed the need to promptly upgrade alarm systems in all school buildings to provide better overall coverage. (Fire alarm system upgrades are mentioned in the maintenance component of the LRMP, but the task force considers this to be a safety and security issue.) Not only is safety enhanced by adding more devices, but the upgrades would also include a mass-notification system capable of providing real-time information during emergency situations, when other means of communication may be unavailable.

Also included in the safety and security component of the LRMP are proposals to increase accessibility for those with mobility impairments. Many building restrooms lack wheelchair-accessible stalls, entrance pathways and handicap-accessible fixtures, and some building areas (including stages) are accessible only by stairs. Elementary playground equipment is also not fully accessible. The district believes that, having met applicable codes at the time of construction, it is legally compliant with ADA and other requirements at all facilities. However, there are key areas that students and others would benefit from if all buildings were ADA compliant at today's standards.

More inclusive and better designed spaces would allow individuals with a range of physical abilities to access facilities as independently and safely as possible. The task force believes it is



important to prioritize inclusion, meaning that all people—regardless of abilities or health care needs—are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the school community.

#### Recommendations:

3. Regardless of what other construction or renovation work may be done, the district should, using current ADA standards as a guide, promptly improve accessibility at all buildings for those with mobility impairments. This work should include upgrades to bathrooms and sinks and access to stages, other inaccessible building areas and playground equipment.
4. The district should work closely with area law enforcement agencies and traffic engineers to promptly develop and implement a multifaceted strategy to improve traffic safety at all of the schools. The district should, independently or in conjunction with building construction or renovation projects, prioritize the improvement of site circulation and traffic flow at the elementary and middle schools to improve safety and reduce congestion. This might include providing separate pickup and drop-off areas for buses and private vehicles, as well as improving parking lot design to allow for dual-lane traffic flow.
5. The district should construct a new and more identifiable visitor entrance to Homestead High School that includes easy access to administrative offices.
6. At all buildings, the district should promptly upgrade fire alarm systems that have not yet been upgraded, so as to provide for more uniform and improved system coverage.
7. In connection with other construction and renovation work that may be done at each of the schools and if funds are otherwise available, the district may wish to consider enhancing security for after-school events and activities.

### **Flexible Learning Environments**

#### Background:

The district is committed to providing students with high-quality, adaptable physical environments that enable inquiry and collaboration and support dynamic curriculum and programs. The district also provides ongoing professional development to support teachers' use of flexible, student-centered learning environments.

Flexible learning environments is a description for facilities that more readily support today's approach to instruction—more student centered as opposed to teacher centered. The Inquiry and Collaboration Centers at the elementary and middle schools and a few other areas have been converted to flexible learning environments and are heavily used by students and staff. It is not the physical design of the area or the furnishings that can alone positively affect student achievement; rather, it is what students and staff are able to do with the space. Generally, student-centered instruction more positively affects student achievement than teacher-centered instruction. Ready access to shared breakout spaces can also support the implementation of inclusive practices by enhancing the ability of educators to provide specialized instruction and intervention.

Additionally, a formal objective included in the district's strategic plan is to develop universal work readiness skills for career success. Flexible student learning environments provide opportunities to grow students' skills and expand their experiences in a manner that is more reflective of their likely future work environments. Important employment skills that are more readily developed in flexible learning environments include collaboration, interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem solving, adaptability, leadership and creativity.

The Long Range Master Plan recommends creating a number of shared breakout spaces in each school building—outside the classroom—for groups of students to use. Each area would be transparent, meaning that staff could observe students beyond classroom walls, and would include technology and furnishings appropriate for the age group served. Some flexible, student-centered learning environments could be built in connection with the construction of new classroom additions. However, at other schools, building flexible breakout areas would require substantial remodeling.

A substantial majority of the task force favors creating at least some new flexible learning areas in the elementary and middle schools. Others, however, are opposed to this proposal, principally because of cost and also because they may question the definitiveness of academic research suggesting that such areas improve student achievement. There is also some disagreement among those who support more flexible learning environments as to how many should be created in each building.

Separately, the task force discussed acquiring new and more flexible classroom furniture that would more readily facilitate the setup of smaller learning groups and enhance student participation in each class. Task force members observed a few such classrooms while touring the elementary schools, with purchases of new furniture having often been facilitated by private fundraising. The task force recognized that the replacement of outdated classroom furniture with new, flexible furniture would lead to the creation of more student-centered learning environments within the classroom. There was a perceived need for more parity among schools in this regard.

#### Recommendations:

8. The district should pursue, in the most efficient and economical manner possible, adding a limited number of flexible, student-centered breakout areas in its elementary and middle schools.
9. The district should consider purchasing new, more flexible classroom furniture in the elementary and middle schools. Various funding sources should be explored, and parity between buildings should be an important consideration.

### **Maintenance**

#### Background:

All district schools were built between 1955 and 1968 and have received various additions over the years. The task force toured the buildings and agrees with EUA that the facilities are generally well maintained. The district has an ongoing 10-year maintenance program in place to

prioritize and address building conditions and maintenance needs, and it currently allocates 1.8 percent of its annual budget to maintenance.

Additionally, in 2016, the district was first allowed by statute to establish a Capital Improvement Trust Fund (Fund 46). Fund 46 is, in essence, a savings account for capital improvement projects. Some large maintenance projects may qualify as capital improvements for which Fund 46 savings may be used. As of June 30, 2019, the district's balance in Fund 46 was \$920,918. By law, the district may begin to access these dollars in July 2020.

The task force believes that the ongoing maintenance of district facilities should be paid for out of the annual operating budget. Limited facility upgrades that are more in the nature of capital improvements may, from time to time, be paid for with reserve funds.

The district's 10-year maintenance plan includes the air conditioning of all schools on its list of desired capital improvements. The task force discussed air conditioning and recognizes that its addition would improve comfort for students and staff during warmer weeks, especially at the beginning and end of the school year. However, air conditioning would require a very large expenditure, particularly for the limited times it would be used, and a substantial majority of the task force does not consider it a priority at this time.

#### Recommendations:

10. The district should continue to adequately budget, and reserve, for current and projected future maintenance needs. It should also continue to regularly review and update its 10-year maintenance plan.

11. The district should consider an annual budget stipulation to Fund 46 to demonstrate ongoing fiscal and facility planning.

### **Community and Recreation Use**

#### Background:

The Mequon-Thiensville School District operates the Recreation Department for the communities of Mequon and Thiensville, as the school district is the only local governmental body that is able to tax both communities. Of the 446 school districts in Wisconsin, it is one of only seventeen with such responsibility. The Recreation Department uses public facilities and provides numerous recreational, leisure and enrichment activities for youth, adults and seniors. Last year, there were more than 7,800 participants in these programs, which provide great value to our communities.

The district's Community Service Fund (Fund 80) is used to record activities that are not elementary or secondary education programs, but have the primary function of serving the community. Approximately 78 percent of Recreation Department operations are funded by user fees, with the remaining revenue coming from a local tax levy that has not changed since 2009-10. The Recreation Department's proposed 2019-20 total budget is \$1,059,412.

The Recreation Department is seeking continued growth in offering diverse and varied programs for all age groups, while continuing to improve on current programs. The task force

supports this objective. However, because we believe there are higher priorities for the district, we decline at this time to recommend any significant facility renovations or additions for the sole purpose of enhancing or expanding Recreation Department offerings.

#### Recommendations:

12. The district should continue to collaborate with Mequon and Thiensville officials regarding the recreational use of existing public facilities, the creation of additional spaces needed to enhance programming, and a vision for recreation for the entire community.

13. The district should continue to periodically review facility rental rates to ensure rates are sufficient and competitive.

### **Athletics**

#### Background:

Athletics represents an important facet of a balanced education, reinforcing social responsibility, leadership, sportsmanship and fair play. Homestead High School currently fields 29 WIAA varsity sports, serving more than 700 student athletes, with an additional 80-plus clubs and organizations. Students, various local athletic and civic organizations and the greater Mequon-Thiensville community are the beneficiaries of physical education spaces and fields that are well maintained and resilient.

The task force appreciates the value of high-quality athletic facilities. However, because we believe there are higher priorities for the district, we decline at this time to recommend any upgrades or expansion of the district's athletic facilities using taxpayer funds, above what appropriately might be paid for from the district's operating budget or reserves.

There is a strong history of private fundraising to achieve desired outcomes with respect to athletics in the Mequon-Thiensville community. For example, with district approval, private funds have previously been raised to install:

- **Multi-sport stadium turf:** This was provided via a Highlander Strong Fundraising Campaign, through the Booster Club. The turf field benefits physical education classes and co-curricular organizations, such as band, as well as community youth organizations like Cardinal football. The turf field is also a resource that the district can rent to external organizations when the schedule allows for it.
- **Sommers Automotive Pavilion:** Sommer's Automotive, through Board of Education Naming Policy 6900/district funding collaboration
- **Softball backstop, dugouts:** Booster club/softball families & team fundraising project
- **Softball turf infield:** Booster Club/district funding
- **Main gym:** Kohler Credit Union, through Board of Education Naming Policy 6900
- **Main gym bleachers:** Booster Club/district funding collaboration
- **Highlander tennis hut:** The majority was funded from alumni donations. Booster Club paid for the heating. Mikkelson Builders donated labor for construction and HHS faculty constructed the roof.

## Recommendations:

14. The district should, consistent with applicable Board of Education fundraising policies and such priorities as it may establish, continue to pursue private funding for desired upgrades and expansion of district athletic facilities requiring funds in excess of what the board deems prudent to expend from its annual operating budget or reserves.
15. The district should continue to work with Mequon and Thiensville officials regarding the development and use of athletic facilities and open spaces beneficial to the Mequon and Thiensville communities.
16. The district should continue to leverage its annual maintenance operating budget to prioritize and address current and future athletic facility needs.

## COSTS AND FUNDING

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### **Costs**

The district retained Hunzinger Construction Company in early September 2019 to provide construction management services related to the Long Range Master Plan. As the task force was charged with reviewing the LRMP, establishing priorities and making recommendations regarding implementation, members requested that Hunzinger-working in connection with district architects EUA-provide preliminary cost information regarding the various proposals being considered by the task force. Hunzinger's preliminary, standalone estimates were reviewed and discussed by the task force and were valuable to its deliberations.

However, the task force recognized that the information it received represented very early, ballpark estimates that would certainly change if project planning were to proceed. To that end, these numbers may change as focuses narrow, efficiencies emerge, more detailed plans are drawn and finalized and opportunities arise for negotiation.

### **Funding**

Public school districts in Wisconsin are subject to state-imposed revenue limits that restrict the amount districts may levy for local property taxes based largely upon an enrollment-based formula and state aid. The Mequon-Thiensville School District receives very little general state aid, primarily due to high property values. In fact, approximately 79 percent of the district's revenue comes from local property taxes. As such, the district's operating budget is significantly impacted by its revenue limit.

The district is also fortunate to have been the beneficiary of generous private gifts over the years, including from the Mequon-Thiensville Education Foundation and various parent and booster groups. Additionally, the district has had some success raising funds for special projects by granting advertising and naming rights.

Like all school districts, MTSD maintains a general fund balance (Fund 10), which is unassigned and can be used for any purpose. General fund balance helps reduce short-term borrowing and

is not a measure of cash on hand. The MTSD Board of Education has set an expectation that the district maintain a fund balance as a percentage of expenditures from 20 to 25 percent. This expectation is set based on a desire to maintain the highest possible Aaa bond rating by Moody's, and MTSD is one of only three districts in the state to hold this rating. The district's unaudited fund balance is currently 24.57 percent of expenditures. The district has, on occasion, used fund balance for one-time capital needs, but never for recurring operating expenses. As permitted by a relatively recent change in state law, the district also maintains a much smaller capital project fund (Fund 46) that can be used for the construction of facilities.

State law provides that school districts must receive voter approval through a referendum to expend any funds that exceed the revenue limit. Given the magnitude of the costs necessary to implement the task force recommendations, it is apparent that community approval of a referendum would be necessary to fund construction. Although some limited funding might be available from reserve funds and private sources, the task force suggests that a referendum in the range of \$35 to \$60 million be considered.

Some members of the task force are reluctant to go beyond the low end of this range, while others are comfortable with the higher end. The principle difference in approach centers on how much, if any, funds should be spent on the flexible learning component of the Long Range Master Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Throughout its discussions, the task force relied on certain guiding principles. Members focused on initiatives that would impact the achievement of all students and help them succeed.

A priority when discussing the enrollment and growth component of the Long Range Master Plan was to minimize the impact to families while maximizing the resources available to each student across all schools to achieve parity and equity. The task force also prioritized the care and safety of students and staff, as demonstrated by its recommendations to improve school traffic flows, address accessibility shortcomings and install security alarm systems.

The potential fiscal impacts of the task force recommendations were discussed, and the task force acknowledges the responsibility of the Board of Education to make decisions that are in keeping with the will and capacity of the community. It is also important, as the district's long-term facilities needs are addressed, to embrace the moment, prudently plan for the future and strive for continuous improvement and excellence in our schools.

**Mequon-Thiensville School District  
Community Task Force**

**Signature Page**

By their signatures below, the members of the Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force endorse the Task Force report and affirm its recommendations.

  
Stephanie Clark  
Co-Chair


  
Peter Stone  
Co-Chair

  
Cindy Anderson

  
Lesley Curro

  
Anna Bakalinsky

  
Nicki Depies


  
Erin Eschrich

  
Ajay Ganju

  
Daniel Gannon

  
Erik Hollander

  
Brian Odeja


  
Miriam Peltz

  
Moshe Rapoport

  
Cedric Rembert

  
MaryNell Ryan

  
Daniel Suhr

  
David Teplin

  
Deborah Tye

# **Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force**

## **Appendix**

**Appendix A:** Task Force Member Roster

**Appendix B:** Meeting Schedule, Meeting Agendas and Meeting Minutes

**Appendix C:** List of Written Reports Provided to the Task Force and Presentations Received

**Appendix D:** Board Reports Relating to the Work of the Task Force



# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

## **Task Force Roster**

Stephanie Clark

Co-Chair

Peter Stone

Co-Chair

Cindy Anderson

Anna Bakalinsky

Lesley Curro

David Delahunt

Nicki Depies

Erin Eschrich

Ajay Ganju

Daniel Gannon

Erik Hollander

Brian Odeja

Miriam Peltz

Moshe Rapoport

Cedric Rembert

MaryNell Ryan

Daniel Suhr

David Teplin

Deborah Tye

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #1: Wednesday, September 11, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

*Range Line Conference Room, 11040 N. Range Line Rd.*

Meeting #2: Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

*Building Tours: Start at Donges Bay Elementary, 2401 W. Donges Bay Rd.*

Meeting #3: Wednesday, October 2, 2019, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

*Range Line Conference Room, 11040 N. Range Line Rd.*

Meeting #4: Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

*Homestead High School Inquiry Wing, 5000 W. Mequon Rd.*

Meeting #5: Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

*Range Line Conference Room, 11040 N. Range Line Rd.*

Meeting #6: Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

*Range Line Conference Room, 11040 N. Range Line Rd.*

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #1 – September 11, 2019

Location: Range Line – 11040 N. Range Line Road

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 PM

## AGENDA

1. **Introductory Comments**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone
2. **Introductory Comments**  
MTSD Superintendent of Schools, Matthew Joynt
3. **Presentation of Community Growth and Enrollment Projections (30 Minutes)**  
Mark Roffers of MDRoffers Consulting  
  
Questions and Comments
4. **Break (10 minutes)**
5. **Presentation of MTSD Long-Range Master Plan (40 Minutes)**  
Bob Morris and Eric Dufek, Epstein Uhen Architects (EUA)  
  
Questions and Comments
6. **Wrap-Up**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #2 – September 18, 2019

Location: Donges Bay School – 2401 W. Donges Bay Road

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 PM

## **AGENDA – Tour of the MTSD Elementary Schools**

### **1. Introductory Comments**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

### **2. Donges Bay Elementary School Tour (6:30 – 7:00 pm)**

Chris Gray, Principal of Donges Bay Elementary School

*Travel to Wilson Elementary School*

### **3. Wilson Elementary School Tour (7:15 – 7:45 pm)**

Jocelyn Sulsberger, Principal of Wilson Elementary School

Lindsey Moore, Assistant Principal of Wilson Elementary School

*Travel to Oriole Lane Elementary School*

### **4. Oriole Lane Elementary School Tour (8:00 – 8:30 pm)**

Mary Jo Tye, Principal of Oriole Lane Elementary School

### **5. Wrap-Up**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

*Travel to Donges Bay Elementary School*

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

September 25, 2019

Location: Donges Bay School – 2401 W. Donges Bay Road

Time: 4:30 – 6:30 PM

## **AGENDA – Make Up Tour of the MTSD Elementary Schools**

- 1. Donges Bay Elementary School Tour (4:30 – 5:00 pm)**

*Travel to Wilson Elementary School*

- 2. Wilson Elementary School Tour (5:10 – 5:40 pm)**

*Travel to Oriole Lane Elementary School*

- 3. Oriole Lane Elementary School Tour (5:50 – 6:20 pm)**

*Travel to Donges Bay Elementary School*

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

October 2, 2019

Location: Steffen Middle School – 6633 W. Steffen Drive

Time: 5:15 – 6:25 PM

## **AGENDA – Optional Tour of MTSD Middle Schools**

**1. Steffen Middle School Tour (5:15 – 5:45 pm)**

*Travel individually to Lake Shore Middle School*

**2. Lake Shore Middle School Tour (5:55 – 6:25 pm)**

*Walk over to Range Line School for Task Force Meeting*

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #3 – October 2, 2019

Location: Range Line – 11040 N. Range Line Road

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 PM

## AGENDA

**1. Introductory Comments**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

**2. Q & A**

**MTSD Middle Schools**

Jeridon Clark, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

Dr. Deborah Anderson, Principal of Steffen Middle School

Allison Rudich, Principal of Lake Shore Middle School

**MTSD Recreation Department**

Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services

Michael Schoemer, Recreation Department Director

**3. Task Force Essential Question Reflections and Discussion**

**4. Break** (10 minutes)

**5. Hunzinger Construction Company - *Presentation Regarding Costs***

Questions and Comments

**6. MTSD Funding Overview**

Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services

Questions and Comments

**7. Task Force Survey and Activity – Essential Questions**

**8. Next Steps and Wrap-Up**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #4 – October 16, 2019

Location: Homestead High School – 5000 W. Mequon Road

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 PM

## AGENDA

1. **Brief Tour of Homestead High School**
2. **Introduction of Topics and Process**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone
3. **Presentation of Long-Range Master Plan (LRMP)**  
Matthew Joynt, Superintendent of Schools  
  
Questions and Comments
4. **Break** (10 minutes)
5. **Task Force Member Questions**  
for MTSD Administrators, EUA and Hunzinger Construction
6. **Discussion of LRMP Proposals and Alternatives;  
Formulate Recommendations**
7. **Next Steps and Wrap-Up**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone



# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #5 – October 30, 2019

Location: Range Line School – 11040 N. Range Line Road

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 PM

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Introduction of Topics and Process**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone
- 2. Continued Discussion of LRMP Proposals and Alternatives;  
Formulate Recommendations**  
*Including Enrollment and Growth, Modern (Flexible) Learning Environments*
- 3. Discuss Overall Costs and a Funding framework; Consider Potential  
Recommendations**
- 4. Next Steps and Wrap-Up**  
Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

Meeting #6 – November 13, 2019

Location: Range Line School – 11040 N. Range Line Road

Time: 6:30 PM

## **AGENDA**

**1. Welcome**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

**2. Task Force Discussion and Approval of the Final Report**

**3. Wrap-Up**

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone

### Meeting #1: September 11, 2019

The task force met for the first time on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at Range Line School, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

After introductions and introductory statements by the co-chairs, the timelines and the charge of the task force were discussed. Superintendent Matthew Joynt then thanked the task force for their participation, spoke to the district's commitment to its facilities and then provided background on the district's facilities-related community engagement efforts to date, noting that the task force would use the district's recently completed [Long-Range Master Plan](#). The work of the task force will then be used to create and launch a community survey.

The task force and survey reports will be presented to the board in accordance with the school district's governance framework.

Mark Roffers from MDRoffers Consulting then presented data he collected as part of his work to project housing and market demographic trends that he used to make enrollment projections.

Mr. Roffers then explained that based on his methodology, he projects resident enrollment to increase by 384 resident 4K-12 students in the district between 2019-2030. These numbers do not include open enrollment and Chapter 220 participation.

Mr. Roffers explained that enrollment was projected to increase in areas where new housing was increasing, as well as in other areas of the district. Moreover, between 2019 and 2030, he projects a 176 resident student increase in grades 4K through five.

In January 2019, 4K-5 resident enrollment was above both elementary schools' ideal capacity levels. Mr. Roffers said overcrowding is projected to remain an issue through 2030 at both Oriole Lane and Wilson if there are no changes.

At the high school level, between 2019 and 2030, Mr. Roffers projects an increase of 95 resident students in grades nine through 12 by 2030. Moreover, he projects an 11 percent increase, from 3,572 resident 4K-12 students in January 2019 to 3,956 students in 2030.

The implication of this at the 4K-5 levels is that enrollment is projected to grow at Oriole Lane and Willson Elementary Schools, exacerbating capacity issues through 2030. Moreover, the middle schools may begin to approach capacity by 2030, with the greatest stress occurring at Steffen Middle School.

Mr. Roffers then answered questions from task force members.

After a short break, Bob Morris from Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) reviewed the [Long-Range Master Plan](#) developed for the district. Mr. Morris explained that the findings of the reports are

based on observations, analysis of existing plans against standards of design, and interviews with key personnel.

Mr. Morris explained that capacity is simply the number of students who can be reasonably accommodated by a school building and site, and it is affected by a number of variables. He noted that there is no mandated standard for capacity, but that the number is generated by the industry and local standards.

At a high level, the district has needs within the following core categories:

- 1) Modern Learning Environments
- 2) Safety and Security
- 3) Maintenance
- 4) School District Athletics
- 5) Community Use and Recreation
- 6) Enrollment and Growth

Mr. Morris then spoke about how education has changed over the years as the knowledge and skills necessary for success in an increasingly complex global economy have changed. This part of his presentation included a review of how teaching and learning has evolved over the years and how flexible learning spaces can facilitate learning.

Mr. Morris went into some detail about the needs at the various buildings and offered three options for how they can be addressed, as [outlined in the facilities plan](#).

Task force members then had an opportunity to ask questions and briefly discuss their next meeting, a tour of the elementary schools, to take place on September 18, 2019, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

**Meeting #2: September 18, 2019**

The MTSD Community Task Force held its second meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2019. The meeting's agenda provided task force members with a tour of the School District's elementary schools. The meeting began at Donges Bay Elementary School, located at 2401 W. Donges Bay Road, at 6:30 pm.

Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone welcomed task force members to the meeting. Following brief introductory comments, Mrs. Clark introduced Donges Bay Elementary School Principal, Chris Gray. Principal Chris Gray gave task force members a tour of the school.

At approximately 7:05 pm, task force members then traveled as a group by bus to Wilson Elementary School, located at 11001 N. Buntrock Avenue. It was noted that the bus used for the meeting was provided by the school district's transportation company, Riteway, at no cost to the district or task force. Upon arrival (approximately 7:15 pm) Principal Jocelyn Sulsberger and Assistant Principal Lindsey Moore gave task force members a tour of Wilson Elementary School.

At approximately 7:45 pm, task force members then traveled as a group by bus to Oriole Lane Elementary School, located at 12850 N. Oriole Lane. Upon arrival (approximately 8:10 pm) Principal Mary Jo Tye gave task force members a tour of Oriole Lane Elementary School.

At the conclusion of Oriole Lane's tour, task force members convened for a brief discussion, led by Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone.

During each building tour, the school principal highlighted 8-10 areas of the building that provided insight into the components of the district's long-range master plan, including modern learning environments, safety and security, maintenance, community use and recreation and enrollment and growth.

During each tour, the building principal allowed time for questions and comments from task force members.

At approximately 8:50 pm, task force members traveled as a group by bus back to Donges Bay Elementary School, where the meeting concluded at 9:00 pm. The next Community Task Force Meeting will be held on October 2, 2019 at Range Line School (located at 11040 N. Range Line Road) and begin at 6:30 pm.

### Meeting #3: October 2, 2019

The MTSD Community Task Force convened for its third meeting on Wednesday, October 2, 2019, at Range Line School, located at 11040 N. Range Line Road. The meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

After a brief welcome from Co-Chairs Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone, task force members engaged in a question and answer session regarding middle-level education and community recreation programming in the district. As part of the discussion, questions were answered by district administrators regarding the cost to equip a classroom with flexible furniture, the possibility of reopening Range Line as a school, and the potential benefits and challenges associated with the movement of middle school-aged children in and out of the district's current middle school model (in response to school capacity challenges).

At approximately 7 p.m., task force members had the opportunity to share their current thoughts in response to the following essential questions, as provided by the co-chairs:

1. After distilling the reports and information in the first two meetings, how would you prioritize the core components (modern/flexible learning environments, safety and security, maintenance, school district athletics, community use and recreation, enrollment and growth)? Why?
2. Recognizing that all six core components have needs that are recommended to be addressed, are there any aspects of the plan that are not a pressing issue for you to prioritize at this time?
3. If addressing the enrollment and growth core component at the elementary schools is a priority for you, than which, or what part of options 1, 2, or 3 do you prefer and why? Are there any options or parts of options that you do not prefer?

Task force members were given up to five minutes for their comments. All members of the task force shared their personal opinions in response to the prompts.

Following a short break, task force members received a presentation from Dan Cole with Hunzinger Construction Company. Mr. Cole presented a conceptual budget summary for components within the district's master facilities plan. He shared that all costs were conservative and inclusive of every aspect of the 10-year facilities plan, and described the process used to develop the estimates. Each estimate was provided in a range of costs. Throughout the presentation, task force members asked questions and engaged in the discussion.

Eric Dufek, with Eppstein Uhen Architects, provided additional information pertaining to the components of the district's long-range master plan.

Sarah Viera, executive director of Business Services, then provided an overview of school district funding, including details of the 2019-20 school district budget and the funds within it. In addition, Ms. Viera shared information with regards to the District's fund balance, Aaa bond rating, sources of revenue, overview and utilization of fund 46, long-term debt obligations and potential tax impact related to hypothetical referendum amounts.

Ms. Viera answered questions from task force members.

At the conclusion of the meeting, task force members engaged in a discussion regarding priorities, urgency, and the strategies related to the components of the long-range master plan.

The co-chairs concluded the meeting with a brief preview of the next task force meeting, to be held on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. It was noted that the upcoming October 16, 2019 meeting may be held in the high school's Inquiry Wing. Details pertaining to the location of the next meeting will be shared and posted for the public with advance notice.

**Meeting #4: October 16, 2019**

The task force met for the fourth time on Wednesday, October 16, 2019, at Homestead High School, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The meeting began with a brief tour of Homestead High School in which Matthew Joynt, superintendent, discussed the use of flexible learning spaces in the school, as well as a tour of some of the spaces in the high school that are either in need of attention or have been upgraded through the 2015 referendum, directly through private giving through Leave a Legacy effort, through the schools' PTSO, or through the Mequon-Thiensville Education Foundation.

Mr. Joynt then followed up on his written report provided to task force members with a presentation. He then answered task force members' questions.

After a short break, the meeting resumed with the co-chairs facilitating questions of task force members to MTSD Administrators, EUA and Hunzinger Construction.

The bulk of the meeting involved task force members discussing the Long Range Master Plan proposals and alternatives and formulating recommendations. The co-chairs outlined a process for members to share opinions and engage in discussion to inform the group's eventual recommendations. Specifically, the co-chairs noted that for each component of the Long-Range Master Plan, members would have a discussion.

Members discussed, broadly, needs relating to the Recreation Department and athletics as well as a series of maintenance-specific items.

The meeting ended at 9:30 p.m. after a review of next steps and a wrap-up by the co-chairs. The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for October 30, 2019.



### **Meeting #5: October 30, 2019**

On Wednesday, October 30, 2019, the task force met for the fifth time at Range Line, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

After being called to order, the co-chairs provided an update on the task force's work to date. They also explained that one task force member had contacted the co-chairs and explained they needed to step away from the task force due to family commitments.

The co-chairs then described the work that would be done, starting with a discussion of Long-Range Master Plan proposals and alternatives related to enrollment growth and flexible learning spaces.

Task force members discussed how traffic flow in all campus parking lots can present safety issues, particularly at the elementary and middle schools. Moreover, the need to increase the visibility of the high school visitor entrance was discussed by members as a matter of security.

The co-chairs then led a conversation about enrollment growth in the district. As it relates to solutions, task force members discussed the strategy of doing nothing and the merits of Long-Range Master Plan Options 1 and 2.

Task force members then discussed flexible learning spaces. Members shared opinions and feedback about the existing flexible learning spaces in the district, and the enhanced opportunities for collaboration and individualized instruction that they provide. They also discussed the associated costs and the number of flexible learning spaces to impact the student experience.

The co-chairs facilitated a discussion on overall costs and funding. A review of the District's funding options was provided by the co-chairs. Additionally, Brian Brewer, managing director of public finance at Baird, was in attendance at the October 30 meeting to respond to questions, when appropriate. After answering questions and discussing the district's needs, task force members discussed and considered the inclusion of costs and a funding framework in their eventual report of recommendations.

After a review of the next meeting agenda, the co-chairs adjourned the meeting. The task force will convene for a final meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Range Line Conference Room.

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

## List of Written Reports Provided to the Task Force

[MTSD 2018-21 Strategic Plan](#)

[MTSD Long-Range Master Plan](#)

[MDRoffers Community Growth and Projections Study](#)

Applied Population Lab (APL) Enrollment Projections Study

[MTSD Quality Report](#)

Memoranda from the MTSD Administration:

**Topic: Mequon-Thiensville School District Middle Schools**

Date: September 26, 2019

From: Jeridon Clark, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Allison Rudich, Principal of Lake Shore Middle School, and Dr. Deborah Anderson, Principal of Steffen Middle School

**Topic: Mequon-Thiensville Recreation Department**

Date: September 26, 2019

From: Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services and Michael Schoemer, Mequon-Thiensville Recreation Director

**Topic: School District Funding Overview**

Date: September 27, 2019

From: Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services

**Topic: MTSD Long-Range Master Plan and Facilities Planning**

Date: October 13, 2019

From: Matthew Joynt, Superintendent of Schools

**Topic: MTSD Long-Range Master Plan and Facilities Planning – Range Line Site**

Date: October 25, 2019

From: Matthew Joynt, Superintendent of Schools

# MTSD Community Task Force (2019)

## **List of Presentations Given to the Task Force**

Mr. Mark Roffers, MDRoffers Consulting

Mr. Bob Morris, Eppstein Uhen Architects

Mr. Dan Cole, Hunzinger Construction Company

Ms. Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services

Mr. Matthew Joynt, Superintendent of Schools



## Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Sep 09, 2019 - Special Business Meeting
Category	4. Action Items
Subject	C. Action to Approve Resolution Authorizing the Superintendent to Form a 2019 Community Task Force
Type	Action, Information, Presentation
Recommended Action	<p>The Mequon-Thiensville School District administration is recommending the Board of Education approve of the following resolution:</p> <p>The Board hereby authorizes Superintendent Matthew Joynt to form an independent community task force, with Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone as co-chairs, with the following charge: The Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force shall review and consider the Mequon-Thiensville School District's Long-Range Master Plan and other relevant information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and School Board regarding facilities issues as identified in the Plan.</p>
Goals	<p>Critical Success Factor #4: Ensure a climate and culture to sustain excellence.</p> <p>Critical Success Factor #3: Ensure fiscal stability and appropriate resources for programming and facilities.</p> <p>Critical Success Factor #2: Maximize operational effectiveness of organizational systems and processes.</p> <p>Goal #5: Establish strong relationships through consistent communication and engagement of all stakeholders.</p>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND:

Per Board Policy 9212, "the Mequon-Thiensville School District is a public school district that represents the interests of a diverse and highly engaged community. The Board values the input and insight of its stakeholders and believes that effective Board-stakeholder engagement strengthens the Board's role as an active, informed and engaged governance body."

Community engagement requires meaningful, shared communication between a public school district and the community it serves. As outlined in Board Policy, the District is committed to processes that encourage collaboration with the community to build greater understanding, develop trust, guidance and active support for public education and the children of Mequon and Thiensville. In the MTSD, we believe engaging our community through meaningful relationships fosters trust and accountability.

**Recommendation:** The Mequon-Thiensville School District administration is recommending the Board of Education approve of the following resolution:

The Board hereby authorizes Superintendent Matthew Joynt to form an independent community task force, with Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone as co-chairs, with the following charge: ***The Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force shall review and consider the Mequon-Thiensville School District's Long-Range Master Plan and other relevant information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the***

The adoption of the proposed resolution will confirm the Board's support for the use of a community-led task force as a community engagement strategy, formally establish the task force and its charge, and affirm the independence of the task force work. That said, it is important to note that the opinions and recommendation(s) of the MTSD Community Task Force are not binding and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Board of Education, of any individual school board member or of the Superintendent.

**Background of the Task Force Structure in the MTSD:** The District has a history of engaging the community through ad-hoc committee structures that explore District-wide issues. Individuals outside of the organization's structure drive the work of such a task force or committee. In 2004, 2007 and again in 2014, the District utilized a task force structure, comprised of a diverse group of community stakeholders, to examine issues ranging from school closures, cost savings in the areas of transportation, co-curricular activities, and reconfiguration of schools, to developing a recommendation(s) for how to financially sustain the quality of the District. In each case, the ad-hoc committee or task force has operated independently from the Board of Education and the District, to preserve any undue influence of the elected officials of the school district. The main goal of a community-led committee or task force is to provide recommendations to the administration and Board of Education on a specific issue or topic.

**2019 Community Task Force Charge:** The Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force shall review and consider the Mequon-Thiensville School District's Long-Range Master Plan and other relevant information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and School Board regarding facilities issues as identified in the Plan.

**Facilities Planning:** In alignment with Board Policy 7100: Facilities Planning, District officials closely monitor enrollment throughout the District through the use of population studies, growth trends and enrollment projections. The following timeline of events describes the steps that have been taken by the District and the Board of Education in monitoring and planning for increased enrollment in the Mequon-Thiensville School District:

**2017** - The Mequon-Thiensville School District commissioned a population trend study by the Applied Population Laboratory (APL) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The study indicated that the elementary schools would experience increasing enrollment in the near term.

**2017** - Final report of the District's Security Audit by Safe Havens International completed.

**2017 (winter)** - The District and the Board engaged in discussions specific to building capacity concerns at Oriole Lane Elementary School. Enrollment projections indicated that all three elementary schools would surpass their current capacity by the 2023-24 school year, with Oriole Lane Elementary School projected to surpass its existing capacity during the 2018-19 school year.

**2018 (spring)** - After several months of engaging the community in strategic planning efforts, the Board of Education approved of the 2018-21 Strategic Plan.

**2018 (spring)** - It was determined by the Board and the District that a comprehensive analysis and extensive planning should take place to determine needs, examine options, and formalize a vision for the future of facilities across the Mequon-Thiensville School District.

**2018 (fall)** - The District began the process of engaging school district stakeholders in a long-range master planning process, with a goal of the project to synthesize the District's existing long-range facilities and

maintenance plan, current enrollment projections, community members' desires and the District's ability to implement high-quality instruction in alignment with the three-year strategic plan.

**2018 (winter)** - Board of Education approved of the selection of Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) as the District's architectural firm to support the long-range master planning project, formally referred to as A Framework for Our Future.

**2019 (spring)** - As part of the long-range master planning process, the District engaged the community as a whole through a series of community workshops.

**2019 (summer)** - Board of Education approved of the Long-Range Master Plan as complete, signifying support for the project as having met the deliverables delineated in the original request for proposal (RFP) for long-range master planning services.

**2019 (summer)** - MDROffers Consulting, a firm that provides information that informs community development, growth management, and school district facility planning, among other services, provided new student enrollment projections to the Board of Education and District administration. Results formulated from this study were included in the Long-Range Master Plan building capacity charts as an additional appendix to the report.

The Long-Range Master plan provides evidence that the District's facilities are well-maintained, due in part to a quality maintenance program that ensures consistent processes are in place to prioritize and address ongoing facility maintenance and building conditions. The final Plan also indicates that the District has a quality safety and security and technology infrastructure.

That said, the Long-Range Master Plan identifies challenges, including projections that point to inadequate classroom space to meet expected enrollment growth at the elementary level, outdated classroom configurations at all schools that are not conducive to student-centered teaching and learning, and site circulation and traffic flow challenges at all campuses. The Plan includes solutions to address these challenges.

**Next Steps:** The administration believes the appropriate next step is to once again involve District and community stakeholders in meaningful and authentic two-way communication. Community engagement in the MTSD has historically involved a community-led committee that studies a specific topic with the potential to impact the community. A 2019 Community Task Force is being assembled to review and consider the Long-Range Master Plan and other information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and Board regarding identified facilities issues.

Task Force membership will include an array of residents representing a spectrum of opinions and perspectives related to the school district and community. District staff are expected to support the Task Force as needed.

Community members, Peter Stone and Stephanie Clark, have agreed to serve as co-chairs of the 2019 Community Task Force. The two co-chairs shall represent balance in their view of the District. Their motivation is to preserve the quality of the District, but their ideology may be very different to ensure diversity of opinion.

The use of a task force, as indicated in the proposed resolution, will empower an external, non-elected committee to devote the time and expertise required for meaningful community engagement, which will equip the Board and administration with a recommendation(s) to address the stated charge.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Board of Education, in its work with the MTSD administration, continues to prioritize community engagement in gaining information to inform decision-making.
- Community engagement in the MTSD has historically involved a community-led committee that studied a specific topic with the potential to impact the community.
- A Community Task Force is being assembled to review and consider the Long-Range Master Plan and other information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and Board regarding identified facilities issues.
  - Task Force membership will include an array of residents representing a spectrum of opinions and perspectives related to the school district and community.
  - Community members, Peter Stone and Stephanie Clark, have agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Community Task Force.
  - The recommendation(s) of the MTSD Community Task Force are not binding and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Board of Education, of any individual school board member or of the Superintendent.

**STRENGTHS:**

- The utilization of a Community Task Force by the Superintendent is an opportunity to work with a representative group of community members to understand issues and include community input in identifying options for moving forward.
- The process, if needs-based, transparent, and sense-making, will have traction with the community to predict resolution of the issue for the near future. By utilizing this method of engagement, the Board and administration will have the power to modify the recommendations of the Task Force.

**CHALLENGES:**

- The short-term risk of a community-led task force is they may make recommendations that reach too far for some stakeholders and not far enough for others.
- If necessary, District administration may ultimately have to pivot from the recommendation(s) of the Community Task Force.

**ACTION STEPS OR NEXT STEPS:**

**September 9, 2019:** Board action on the proposed resolution. The adoption of the proposed resolution will confirm the Board's support for the use of a community-led task force as a community engagement strategy, formally establish the task force and its charge, and affirm the independence of the task force work.

**Fall 2019:** The MTSD Community Task Force will be meeting throughout the fall to engage in their review and work to develop recommendations. The task force has scheduled five meetings to take place on the following dates:

1. Wednesday, September 11, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
2. Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
3. Wednesday, October 2, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
4. Wednesday, October 16, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.
5. Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Meeting notes and additional information will be posted [here](#). The District will also share regular updates in the monthly e-newsletter, Momentum.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Matthew Joynt

**DEPARTMENT OR TITLE:** Superintendent of Schools

## **Motion & Voting**

The Mequon-Thiensville School District administration is recommending the Board of Education approve of the following resolution as amended:

The Board hereby authorizes Superintendent Matthew Joynt to form an independent community task force, with Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone as co-chairs, with the following charge: The Mequon-Thiensville School District Community Task Force, an independent entity comprised of diverse stakeholders, shall review and consider the Mequon-Thiensville School District's Long-Range Master Plan and other relevant information, establish priorities, and make recommendations to the administration and School Board regarding facilities issues as identified in the Plan.

Motion by Chris Schultz, second by Akram Khan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Wendy Francour, Chris Schultz, Krista Brookman, Paula Taebel, Akram Khan

M-T School District Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement: Together, we ignite each student's passion for learning, preparing for a life of infinite possibilities.

Vision Statement: Each student, every time, empowered to succeed.





### Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Nov 04, 2019 - Working Meeting
Category	2. Agenda Items
Subject	A. Facilities Planning
Type	Discussion, Information

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### BACKGROUND:

The Board of Education will be presented with information and engage in discussions related to the District facilities planning efforts. The Board will be joined by Peter Stone and Stephanie Clark, Co-Chairs of the 2019 MTSD Community Task Force.

M-T School District Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement: Together, we ignite each student's passion for learning, preparing for a life of infinite possibilities.

Vision Statement: Each student, every time, empowered to succeed.

**MEMORANDUM TO THE MTSD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
2019 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE  
Stephanie Clark and Peter Stone, Co-Chairs**

At the request of the Board of Education and District administration, we are submitting this memorandum regarding the process currently underway by the MTSD Community Task Force. We anticipate attending the November 4, 2019 Working Board meeting to respond to Board member questions regarding this memorandum.

It is our intent, as the leaders of this independent, community-led committee, to share the procedures we have utilized to date. As the governing body of the Mequon-Thiensville School District, we understand it is essential that the Board of Education has a clear understanding of the processes taken by the Task Force.

As the Board is well aware, the District has a rich history of using community-led committees to develop collaborative, transparent and strategic recommendations to assist the District and Board of Education in their ongoing work

The work of the Task Force is supported by the MTSD administrative team, which is a resource of information and data and a conduit between the Task Force and the District's partners (Eppstein Uhen Architects, Hunzinger Construction Company and MDROffers Consulting). Additionally, Joe Donovan, President of the Donovan Group, has contributed his experience and expertise to the process.

PRIOR to the first Task Force meeting:

**The following background information was shared with Task Force members:**

- **History of community-led committees:** Periodically, the District has formed groups representative of the community and charged with studying an issue facing the District.
- **Recommendations of such committees:** Over time, a rich history of collaborative, transparent and strategic recommendations have developed which have assisted the District and Board of Education in their ongoing work.

**Task Force members were requested to review the following District reports:**

- Long-Range Master Plan
- MDROffers Enrollment Study Presentation
- 2018-21 Strategic Plan
- 2017 Applied Population Labs Enrollment Study

**The following commitments were made to the Task Force members:**

1. We will respect your time. Meetings will start and end as stated.
2. We will create opportunities for learning, questioning, and dialogue.

3. We will be transparent and act as an independent group.

**Resources/logistical items were prepared to assist with the work of the Task Force, including:**

- A complete meeting schedule;
- The Charge of the Task Force, as authorized by the Superintendent and approved by the Board;
- Brief bios provided by Task Force members to allow fellow members to get to know one another and for the District to share with the broader community;
- Personalized binders with each of the above District reports printed; and
- The Community Task Force page on the MTSD website (part of District facilities planning).

**Task Force Meeting #1: September 11, 2019**

*Prior to the first meeting, Task Force members had an opportunity to arrive early for an informal meet and greet, which many of the members elected to do.*

From a process standpoint, the first meeting allowed Task Force members to meet one another and share their connections to the school district and community. The first meeting also formally initiated the information-gathering phase of the process and provided Task Force members with an opportunity to learn from:

- One another;
- Mr. Matthew Joynt (welcome and introduction to the MTSD commitment to facilities)
- Mr. Mark Roffers, of MD Roffers Consulting (review of enrollment/capacity/housing study)
- Mr. Bob Morris, of Eppstein Uhen Architects (review of Long-Range Master Plan and the six components within it)

Throughout the meeting, and before and after each presentation, Task Force members were given the opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback and share opinions. Overall, the participation at the first meeting was good. Task Force members were engaged and active participants. [This has also been true at all subsequent meetings]

At the conclusion of the meeting, the first of several feedback forms were provided to the task force members. The feedback received provided a preliminary glimpse of where Task Force members were at in their personal processes of understanding and prioritizing District needs. Members were also given an opportunity to submit questions and request additional information. In the days following the first meeting, written responses to fourteen member questions were provided by the administration in collaboration with the District's architectural services and construction management partners, as well as Mark Roffers.

## **Task Force Meeting #2: September 18, 2019**

It was important that tours of at least the District's elementary schools be included in the work of the Task Force. So, the second Task Force meeting was dedicated solely to tours of Donges Bay, Wilson and Oriole Lane elementary schools, in that order. The tours were facilitated by the building principals of each school. At each building, Task Force members were taken to approximately 8-10 locations, highlighting a variety of the components described in the Long-Range Master Plan. Locations included: parking lots, bathrooms, stages, gyms, cafeterias, classrooms with flexible and traditional furniture, storage areas, office spaces, and areas for specials (art, music, etc.).

Throughout the tours, Task Force members asked questions and provided feedback. The building principal, District administration and the District's partners were available to provide responses, when appropriate. Task Force members traveled by bus from one site to the next (provided to us at no cost by Riteway transportation). On the buses, note cards were handed out to Task Force members to record additional questions and notes. These were collected at the end of each bus ride.

Upon completion of the tours, Task Force members were once again asked for their feedback and questions. In the days following the second meeting, written responses to eighteen member questions were provided by the administration in collaboration with the District's architectural services and construction management partners.

Additionally, prior to the third task force meeting and at our request, the administration provided memoranda on the following topics: school district funding; information from the middle school administrators; and, information from the District's recreation department. The annual District Quality Report was also shared with Task Force members at this time.

## **Task Force Meeting #3: October 2, 2019**

In advance of the October 2, 2019 Task Force meeting, we identified several essential questions for Task Force members to consider prior to the meeting. A good portion of the October 2 meeting was dedicated to members individually sharing their thoughts regarding the core components of the Long-Range Master Plan (Modern/Flexible Learning Environments, Safety and Security, Maintenance, Community Use and Recreation, Athletics, and Enrollment and Growth). The essential questions were provided to help prepare for this group sharing activity, and each member was given up to five minutes to speak.

Based on the positive feedback received following the elementary school tours, and at the request of some members of the Task Force, optional tours of the District's middle schools were provided immediately prior to the October 2 Task Force meeting. These tours were also facilitated by the building principals.

The District's middle school principals and recreation department director then responded to questions regarding the memoranda they provided in advance of the meeting. Task Force members then heard presentations from:

- Dan Cole, Hunzinger Construction Company, (conceptual costs associated with LRMP components); and,
- Sarah Viera, Executive Director of Business Services (school district funding overview).

As with every presentation given to the Task Force, an opportunity was provided for members to ask questions, share feedback and engage in discussion.

At the end of the meeting, Task Force members were again asked to provide feedback regarding various aspects of the Long-Range Master Plan, including potential priorities, and this feedback, including a visual documentation activity, was shared with the group. This process further emphasized a theme of the evening - to share openly the current member perspectives regarding prioritizing needs. The task force utilized several activities to share these perspectives.

Following this third meeting, the administration, in collaboration with the District's architectural services and construction management partners, responded in writing to another thirty six member questions.

#### **Task Force Meeting #4: October 16, 2019**

We requested the fourth Community Task Force meeting be held at Homestead High School, to allow members to experience first-hand some of the LRMP components that have been discussed at recent meetings. In advance of the meeting and also at our request, Mr. Joynt provided a written report to the Task Force with additional information on many of the components of the LRMP, including enrollment and growth options, maintenance, safety and security, and modern/flexible learning environments.

The meeting began with a brief tour of the high school, in which the following locations were highlighted: The HUB, the T, the high school administrative offices, the entrance to the High School, the entrance to the Field House, iZone-1, and iZone-3. A narrative discussing each of these locations was provided to Task Force members in advance of the meeting. The tour concluded in iZone-3, where Mr. Joynt gave a presentation in follow-up to his report. Task Force members asked questions during and after the presentation, and responses were provided by the superintendent and others.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the Athletics, Recreation Department, Maintenance, and Safety & Security components of the Long-Range Master Plan, exploring consensus/compromise, considering potential recommendations, and soliciting feedback in different ways. A process was outlined and tools were introduced for members to utilize to share

opinions and perspectives, ensuring that for each topic and component discussed, members would have an opportunity for full group discussion.

At the end of the meeting, the need for a sixth meeting, to be held on November 13, was confirmed. It has always been important that the process not be rushed, but instead be carried out as authentically and transparently as possible.

#### **Task Force Meeting #5: October 30, 2019 (after completion of this memorandum)**

It is anticipated that Task Force members will complete their discussion of the Long Range Master Plan at this meeting and that the focus will be on the Enrollment & Growth and Modern/Flexible Learning components, consensus/compromise, considering potential recommendations, and soliciting feedback in different ways.

It is also anticipated that additional time will be spent at this meeting discussing costs and potential financing.

We intend to provide the Task Force with a draft report by November 6, to solicit additional member feedback, and to revise the draft report as appropriate in advance of the final meeting.

#### **Task Force Meeting #6: November 13, 2019**

The Task Force will meet to discuss, confirm and approve its final report.

If all goes to plan, the co-chairs will present the final Task Force report to the Board of Education as a discussion item at the November 18, 2019 Business meeting.