

**Ad Hoc Committee For East Junior High
School Renovations / Construction Plans**

**Ad Hoc Committee Final Report
To School Board and Public**



May 2, 2006

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

- Objective
- Committee Members
- Meetings and Process Description
- Majority and Dissenting Recommendations
- Summary
- Questions from the Board and Public

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Objective

Examine the facts associated with

- Renovating the existing East Junior High School
- OR -
- Demolishing East Jr. High School and building a new school on the same site

and make a recommendation to the School Board on how to proceed.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Members

Residents

Nancy Chapman, Wilkins
Juan Henderson, Forest Hills
Connie Morenzi, Turtle Creek
Yvonne Nesby, Rankin
Leroy Wood, Turtle Creek

Parents

Gail Denise Brentley, Wilkins
Heather Lum, Churchill
Heidi McDonald, Edgewood
Bob Rinsma, Churchill
Peter Rubash, Churchill
Victoria Zido, Wilkins

East Jr. High Staff

Janet Wilson Carter, Principal
Adam Forgie, Turtle Creek
Pamela Kress, Forest Hills
Pat Marchand, Assistant Principal
Barbara Ritts, Braddock

Experts

Eric Bartko, Forest Hills (Statistical Analysis)
W. Thomas Borellis, Churchill (Architecture)
Mike Moyta, Churchill (Commercial Architecture)
Michael Takacs, Swissvale (Environmental Scientist)

**THANKS for this opportunity
to serve the District!**

Facilitators

Dr. Roslynne Wilson, District Superintendent
Joyce Sullivan, School Board Secretary
Christopher Baker, Buildings and Grounds Admin.

Pg 3

The Committee was made up of twenty members who, at every meeting they could attend and on between-meeting assignments,

- examined the facts closely,
- explored and carefully weighed all options considered, and
- debated and expressed personal opinions passionately and in most cases politely.

Several of the Committee members sought out related information over the Internet and in libraries.

It was a great team and everyone who participated can be proud of the work accomplished.

Not all Committee members could be here tonight, but I ask that those who are here, please stand and be recognized.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

1. March 2 - Ad Hoc Committee Kickoff (at East Junior High)
2. March 16 - East and West Junior High Comparison (at West Junior High)
3. March 23 - A Successful Renovation and Discussion With Architects
(at Wilkins Primary)
4. March 30 - Pro and Con Voting and Prioritization (at Wilkins Primary)
5. April 6 - Working Hard Toward A Majority Recommendation
(at Administration Building)
6. April 19 - Discussion with Architects, Finalizing the Majority Recommendation
and Presentation Planning (at Administration Building)

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process

- Meeting 1: Ad Hoc Committee Kickoff (at East Junior High)
 - Committee Member Introductions
 - Facilitators introduced the objective
 - Received information on:
 - East Junior High building evaluation by the architect, which included various proposals that had been previously examined by the Board
 - construction, renovation and reimbursement articles
 - “Student by municipality” demographic information for all schools
 - Took tour of East Junior High School
 - Requested projected student enrollment data
 - Agreed that next meeting should be at West Junior High

Pg 5

On all our building tours, we noted details of each building including:

- Overall layout to support curriculum
- Individual classroom configuration, size and condition
- Physical plant
- Capability to support ADA accessibility requirements
- Capability of building to support community use
- Cafeteria size and condition
- Swimming pool size and condition
- Administrative office configuration, size and condition
- Vendor accessibility
- Traffic patterns and parking

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Between meetings: At Facilitators request, studied the materials provided and considered:
 - “Who do we need to talk to?”
 - “What additional information do we need?”
 - “Where do we need to go?”
- Meeting 2: East and West Junior High Comparison (at West Junior High)
 - Toured West Junior High School
 - Broke into our category groups and listed the additional information we needed, speakers we wanted, and places we wanted to visit
 - Requested more information (such as transportation feeder pattern data and more data on reimbursement formulas)
 - Requested that we speak to the architects
 - Requested that we visit Wilkins Primary, that was a recent, successfully renovated District school

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 2: East and West Junior High Comparison (at West Junior High) (continued)
 - With no involvement of the School Board, Administration or Facilitators, Committee members brought up, discussed and unanimously agreed that no Committee member would discuss intermediate progress or statements made at meetings with non-members or the press. This was done in order that, at each meeting, members felt free to express their honest opinions. We did not want intermediate results debated in the press or to be subjected to the court of public opinion before we had the opportunity to reach our majority recommendation.
 - There was no restriction on Committee members taking or gathering input from non-members outside our meetings.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 3: A Successful Renovation and Discussion With Architect (at Wilkins Primary)
 - Toured successfully renovated building - Wilkins Primary
 - A member provided additional information they had found for Committee review
 - Architect walked us through Renovation and New Facility plans for East Junior High
 - Questioned architects on the two plans and discussed other possibilities involving a single, combined Junior High, rather than two
 - WHSD enrollment projections indicate that between Years 2006 – 2011, East Jr. enrollment will fall from 290 to 237 and West Jr. from 564 to 458. All attending agreed that given the imbalance in student populations between the two Jr. Highs, equalizing student population at East Jr. and West Jr. should be a priority. We requested that Rick Marsh come to the next meeting to discuss transportation feeder patterns.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 3: A Successful Renovation and Discussion With Architect
(at Wilkins Primary) (continued)
 - Based on data we were provided, discussions with the architects and enrollment projections, we decided that four Options should be considered, rather than two:
 - A. Renovate existing East Jr. High
 - B. Demolish East Jr. High, build a new school on East Jr. High site
 - C. Build a new, single Junior High for all students at a central location
 - D. Expand and renovate West Jr. High as the single Junior High for all students
 - Decided that a Pro and Con list of all four Options needed to be created and ranked
- Between Meetings: Individually developed and submitted Pros and Cons for the four Options.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 4: Pro and Con Voting and Prioritization (at Wilkins Primary)
 - Discussed transportation feeder patterns with Rick Marsh
 - Concluded that a complete restructuring of transportation feeder patterns was not necessary to equalize student populations at East Jr. and West Jr., but that only a minor change was necessary
 - Facilitators provided combined Pro and Con lists for each Option, including all input received
 - Reviewed Pro and Con lists and were given the opportunity to add or delete items and make modifications
 - Voted on each Pro and Con for all four Options, rating them on a scale of relative significance
 - High Priority (3 points), Priority (2 points), Low Priority (1 point), No Significance (0 points)

 - Refer to Handout for Option significance ranking

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 5: Working Hard Toward A Majority Recommendation
(at Administration Building)
 - Discussed all four Options relative to the Pro and Con significance ranking. Decided that the data for each Option was hard to relatively compare, but that we should use overall significance rankings to drive toward a majority recommendation.

Significance Analysis, Outcome of Pros and Cons Evaluation

- Very important that all Junior High students get equal facilities
- Very important that all Junior High students get facilities capable of supporting identical curriculum (including swimming instruction)
- Strong concern that a new single Junior High building at a central site would be too expensive (per architects, greater than \$30,000,000)
- Strong concern that traffic and parking would make the renovated / expanded West Junior High solution unfeasible

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 5: Working Hard Toward A Majority Recommendation
(at Administration Building) (continued)
 - Discussed differences between East Jr. and West Jr. Highs, the meaning of “equality” and relative building abilities to support equivalent educational programs. There was large majority agreement among those attending that equivalent educational programs (including swimming instruction) must be maintained at each Junior High.
 - Discussed the negative impact that the removal of East Jr. High from Turtle Creek (Option C and D) would have on the community and the possibility that removal might contribute to an eventual community decline. A large majority of those attending agreed that the presence of a district school building in Turtle Creek is a significant asset to the community and therefore, to the district. It also helps to maintain the geographical balance of schools within the district.

East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Meeting 5: Working Hard Toward A Majority Recommendation
(at Administration Building) (continued)
 - Discussed overall expense of Option C and possible central locations and concluded that cost was too high to bear and there were no obvious site choices that were large enough. Option C eliminated from consideration
 - Option D eliminated from consideration due to traffic and parking situation, transportation feeder logistics and costs and physical concerns in renovating/expanding West Jr. as the single Jr. High
 - Large majority of those attending believed that constraining the architects by a pre-defined structural solution for an East Jr. renovation/expansion (i.e., forcing preservation of all external structure and façade) is a mistake and makes apples-to-apples, lowest cost comparison to an all-new building more difficult.
 - Ultimately, of the fifteen members present at the meeting, fourteen agreed on a proposed “four point” recommendation, with one abstention.
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East Junior High School - Ad Hoc Committee Process (cont.)

- Between Meetings: Proposed draft wording of majority recommendation was circulated and reviewed via e-mail

 - Meeting 6: Discussion With Architect, Finalizing the Majority Recommendation and Presentation Planning (at Admin Building)
 - Discussed recommendation wording feasibility and clarity with architects and agreed on final wording. Agreed the wording provided a clear framework that the architects could work within, if the board approves

 - Large majority of those attending agreed that designing the building to support increased community use is a priority.

 - After meeting discussion, three members who had missed Meeting 5 agreed to support the recommendation

 - Planned the board presentation, including allowance of dissenting opinion presentation
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East Junior High School – Ad Hoc Committee Majority Recommendation

The 17-of-20 member majority recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee is as follows:

CONDITIONS

- The District should maintain its two Junior High system (East and West), **and**
- East Junior High should remain at its current location in Turtle Creek, **and**
- The District should, by **minor adjustment** to the current transportation feeder patterns, **equalize** the number of students at the two Junior Highs, **and**
- The buildings of the two Junior Highs should be capable of supporting equivalent educational programs (including swimming instruction, in an equivalent pool at East Junior High)

BASED ON THESE CONDITIONS.....

East Junior High School –
Ad Hoc Committee Majority Recommendation (continued)

The District should request the architect to create **detailed and comparable design plans** for two equivalent educational facilities (meeting all current building code requirements) at the Turtle Creek site.

1. A Renovated / Expanded Facility design plan that is **not restricted** by the need to preserve the interior and exterior structures and façade of the existing East Junior High School
2. An All New Facility design plan

The cost basis of both comparable design plans should include **all construction-related costs, projected long-term maintenance costs and expected, required contingencies.**

The Board should commit to build the **lowest cost facility.**

East Junior High School – Ad Hoc Committee Dissenting Recommendations

- One Committee member supports all points of the recommendation, **except** the “**not restricted**” clause. The member believes there must be a restriction put on any modification to the exterior structure and facade of East Jr. High School such that minimal changes are apparent.
- One Committee member does not support the recommendation and supports Option D (Renovated/Expanded West Junior High as the single Junior High for all students)
- One Committee member does not support the recommendation and supports Option C or D (New single Junior High for all students at a central location, or Renovated/Expanded West Junior High as the single Junior High for all students)

East Junior High School – Ad Hoc Committee Summary

- The objective of the Ad Hoc Committee was to examine the facts related to renovating the existing East Junior High School, or demolishing the existing school and building a new school at the site, and to make a recommendation to the School Board.
- After examining the related facts and the facts associated with two additional options, the Ad Hoc Committee reached a large majority recommendation.
- The Ad Hoc Committee recognizes the politics and pressure the Board faces with the current situation. We strongly believe that our recommendation will benefit both the students and faculty at East and West Junior Highs and the entire district. The development of the East Jr. High building as a community resource should be a planning priority. By committing to follow the “lowest-cost” solution based on comparable detailed design plans from the architect and strongly encouraging public review of the plans, the Board can attempt to avoid accusations of political manipulation of the final answer.
- The Ad Hoc Committee thanks you for listening and giving us this opportunity to serve the District.

East Junior High School Ad Hoc Committee

**QUESTIONS
FROM THE BOARD AND PUBLIC?**