

OVERVIEW

In early 2007 the City of Pittsfield issued a Request for Proposals to retain a consultant to assist with the City and the school district in providing analysis and recommendations regarding public high school education in Pittsfield with a particular emphasis on the potential and/or opportunities for school consolidation.

In May 2007, the City entered into a contract with Dore and Whittier Architects, Inc. (DWA) to complete this study. After several initial planning sessions with members of the School Committee and District Administration, a scope of work was developed that placed a priority on educational planning and visioning for secondary education in Pittsfield. DWA subsequently retained the services of DeJONG/LOCKER, a renowned educational planning firm, to join the study team. The DeJONG/LOCKER team was led by Frank M. Locker, Ph.D., REFP, AIA and his associate Jason Boone.

The main goal of this study was to create a process in which to evaluate and determine the long range disposition of secondary education in Pittsfield. The School Committee and District Administration placed high priority on conducting this study in an open, inclusive and collaborative manner with educators, parents, students, administrators and the community. To this end, the consulting team worked with a group of dedicated individuals that formed the Futures Team that met for five, full-day workshops to explore current and future educational concepts to form an overall Master Plan and Educational Vision for secondary education in Pittsfield.

The results of this extensive Educational Visioning process, which is outlined in detail in this report, culminated in a series of conceptual design options prepared by DWA that met the educational objectives developed by the Futures Team. For comparative purposes, project cost estimates were prepared for each series of design options developed. These estimates included construction costs for either new or renovated space, contingencies,



construction phasing. These project estimates also include 'soft' costs such as design fees, furnishings, equipment, technology, incidental costs, etc. Costs are summarized in Chapter 6 of this study.

SUMMARY POINTS

Highlights of the information garnered during the development of this study are listed below.

1. Overwhelmingly, the Futures Team preferred a consolidated school option where all students are educated on a singular site.
2. If the existing high schools are to be consolidated, a complete reorganization of educational delivery is needed and the development of small learning communities is essential to its success.
3. High school education needs to retain its connection to the community in order to be successful.
4. Integration of career-technical/vocational learning and core academic learning is a cornerstone of this new Vision.
5. It would be extremely difficult and the Vision would be compromised significantly, if the existing high schools were renovated in an effort to attain the educational objectives outlined within this study.
6. The comparative cost estimates for new construction vs. renovations are similar.

This study is the first step of many that will be required to continue to improve education in Pittsfield. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to provide assistance to the City and School District as they move forward with this process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Futures Team and City and School Administrations for their dedication, hard work and openness to this process. Everyone involved provided insightful, honest, forward-thinking information and are united in their commitment to improving the learning environment for the students of Pittsfield.

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0.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our schools exist to serve our communities. The best approach to making educational decisions is to make them in a community context. This Vision for the high schools of Pittsfield represents this philosophy.

The effort recorded in this document represents the critical thinking of the Futures Team, a group of committed community members- parents, teachers, school administrators, students, business leaders- who met for five intensive all-day workshop sessions to share ideas and experiences, challenge one another, and collectively craft concepts of the most appropriate approach to secondary education in Pittsfield.

Thank you Futures Team.

FUTURES TEAM

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CONSULTANT TEAM

This study was led by Frank Locker PhD, AIA, REFP, and Jason Boone of DeJONG.LOCKER, educational planners, in close cooperation with Dore & Whittier Architects, led by Lee Dore, Assoc. AIA.

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