
News and commentary on public school facilities with a local and national perspective from the 21st Century School Fund, a Washington, D.C. based 501(c)(3) non-profit working to build the public will and capacity to improve urban public school facilities, particularly for children from low income communities.

In This Issue

Fix America's Schools Today - California School Facility Delegation - Developing Great Schoolyards - Study for Right-Sizing D.C. Schools - D.C. School Modernizations - BEST Collaborative Meeting - Model Policies for School Facilities

Fix America's Schools Today Introduced in Senate and House

In September, Fix America's Schools Today (FAST!) was introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (OH) into the U.S. Senate (S. 1597) and by Congresswoman Rosa De Lauro (CT) into the U.S. House of Representatives (H.B. 2948). Like the President's school modernization piece in the Jobs Bill Plan, S.1597 and H.B. 2948 would provide grants for repair and modernization directly to state education agencies and local school districts by formula, accounting for need. Both bills would appropriate 25 billion dollars for PK-12 and 5 billion dollars for community colleges. The resources would get out the door quickly, and repair projects would ramp up right away. With FAST, thousands of schools can be repaired and modernized and nearly 250,000 jobs can be created. View your State and Large Local Education Agency Allocations.

California School Facility Delegation Visits Capitol Hill

Twice a year Californians for School Facilities (CSF) visit Washington, D.C. to advocate for federal action in support of school facilities. They believe that schools should be considered national infrastructure and should receive federal funding and similar recognition. In early October, the California delegation met with congressional members in the House of Representatives to advocate for federal support of California schools. Californians for School Facilities encourages other states to visit their representatives on the hill and advocate for federal support of our nation's 100,000 public PK-12 schools. Contact Anna Ferrera, Executive Director for CSF for further information, aferrera@m-w-h.com.

Developing Great Schoolyards

Quality schoolyards are important places because outdoor activities are critical for child growth, health, education, enjoyment, as well as for community use and as green open space in neighborhoods. The 21st Century School Fund released “Developing Great Schoolyards - A Handbook for Elementary Schools”, featuring D.C. public elementary schoolyards and the qualities communities and parents should look for in schoolyards.
Study for "Right-Sizing" D.C. Schools Anticipated

The Deputy Mayor for Education, with a 100,000 dollar grant from the Walton Family Foundation, engaged IFF (Illinois Facility Fund) to study the capacity and performance of DCPS and public charter schools.

IFF has authored reports in Denver, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, using a defined method to determine what they term "performing" or "non-performing" seats. This analysis is being done with an eye to "right sizing" district schools which beyond consolidation could include reconstitution and replacement with school management organizations.

Mary Levy, independent public school analyst, applied IFF methods to DCPS and public charter school data and found that where "performing seats" are located correlates with household wealth and family income of students. So that ALL schools in high wealth neighborhoods are "performing" and those in low wealth neighborhoods and with large numbers of children from low income families are "non-performing" with a very few exceptions, as illustrated in a map and data-tables. The IFF findings are expected to be issued at the end of November. There has been no public input or discussion solicited on the methods, criteria, or purpose of this study.

D.C. Public Schools School Modernization Openings

HD Woodson High School (Ward 7) welcomed hundreds from the entire community with a gala ribbon-cutting on the main steps of the new facility on August 17th. Returning to its original site at 540 55th Street, NE after three years in swing space at Fletcher-Johnson and Ron Brown (for the 9th Grade), the new HD Woodson is a light-filled structure with capacity for 900 students, only a few more than the 840 currently enrolled. It includes an auditorium, gym, playing field and indoor swimming pool that will serve the whole neighborhood. The open central stairway and sets of classrooms clustered around several student lounge and lobby areas are striking features of the new structure.

At 235,000 square feet, the school is about 16,000 square feet smaller than the 1973 building that was razed in 2008. Construction costs (un-audited) are reported to be 397 dollars per square foot; total budget was listed as 102,916,000 dollars.*

Woodrow Wilson High School (Ward 3) showed off its completely modernized Tenleytown building at the ribbon-cutting August 18th. After a year squeezed into swing space at Building 52 on the University of D.C. Van Ness campus, more than 1600 (already above the planned capacity of 1500) Wilson students are exploring a wealth of new and completely re-purposed spaces in a building that feels very bright, spacious and expansive. The new atrium re-uses the old courtyard and provides a four-storey gathering area just inside the main entrance near the cafeteria. A new gymnasium (one of two) takes up the former auditorium and the former gym has become the new theater, performing and visual arts space. A new two-storey media center and a black-box theater have
been inserted into what were the old library and a bank of classrooms.

The old building was 271,300 gross square feet including the old pool; the new building is 421,104 square feet which includes underground parking; total budget was 124,201,300 dollars - not including the cost of the adjoining D.C. Recreation pool which opened in August 2009 (the pool itself is 54,765 sq. ft. and cost 34,702,787 dollars).*

Janney Elementary School (Ward 3) is now occupying its fully modernized and expanded building. The addition includes a new media center and gymnasium, as well as music, art and science classrooms.

Immediately next to the Tenleytown Metro and Library, the school includes underground parking for 50 cars which provides the school and community space for a full schoolyard with an artificial turf field, a basketball court, a wildlife habitat and butterfly garden and separate play areas for early childhood and older students. All interior spaces are now student-occupied and the exterior space is expected to be completed before winter break.

Current enrollment is about up to the 550 planned student capacity. Square footage of the original building was 42,761 sq. ft., the addition adds 41,639 sq. ft. for a total of 84,400 square feet of program space; 18,704 square feet of underground parking makes for a total of 103,104 square feet of new public infrastructure.

* All dollar amounts and square-footages are un-audited. All square footages are as reported and have not been confirmed by DC General Services Administration.

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**Building Educational Success Together Collaborative Meeting**

The 21st Century School Fund's national collaborative, *Building Educational Success Together* (BEST) met on October 4th & 5th to discuss and strategize on school facilities issues at BEST partner cities and nationally. Participants included the Californians for School Facilities; Jared Bernstein, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (D.C.); Kathleen Moore, California Department of Education; Jackie Leavy, Chicago Educational Facility Planning Task Force (IL); Andrea Lee, Grand Boulevard Federation (Chicago, IL); Cecile Carroll, Blocks Together (Chicago, IL); Xian Barrett, Teacher Chicago Public Schools; Frank Patinella, ACLU Maryland (MD); Steve English, Advancement Project (CA); Jeff Vincent, Center for Cities and Schools UC Berkeley (CA); Adam Levner, Critical Exposure (D.C.); Claire Barnett, Healthy Schools Network (NY); Letitia Mosby, Service Employees International Union; Kathy Padian, New Orleans School Facility Project (LA); Jim Wilson, JFW Inc.(MD); Shelton Lee, Bintech Systems LLC (MD). Joan Ponesssa, Education Law Center (NJ)

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**Model Policies in Support of High Performance School Buildings for All Children**

Improving school facilities management enhances the delivery of educational programs and services for students and teachers. The 21st Century School Fund along with its Building Educational Success Together Partners have developed model PK-12 school facility policies to provide policy guidance and recommendations on school facility and community planning, schools as centers of communities, facilities management and facilities funding to elected and appointed officials and administrators at the State, local, and school district level.
View and download the Model Policies in Support of High Performance School Buildings for All Children. You can also find them on the 21CSF publications page, www.21csf.org/csf-home/publications.asp. We invite comments, critique and additions to this work. It is an ongoing effort. We are especially interested in how policy is being translated into practice. info@21csf.org.