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Assessment of Buildings Presented at Second School Facilities Steering Committee Meeting

Last night, at the second meeting of the Steering Committee for the Iowa City Community School District's Facilities Master Plan Process, members were presented with an assessment of the condition of buildings by professionals from BLDD Architects. The assessment covered not only the physical condition of the buildings with respect to things like roofs, window and doors, but also analyzed the building with respect to things like safety and security and how the building affects educational delivery. A draft of building capacity analysis was presented as well.

"The condition of building can either enhance a teacher's ability to provide outstanding instruction, or it can impair that ability," commented Barbara Meek, a co-team leader for BLDD. "But the building is rarely neutral. While the Iowa City Community School District's buildings, overall, received good scores, there are improvements needing to be made to enhance instruction and provide for safer, healthier and more cost effective buildings."

In the assessment led by BLDD, a team of professionals scored all buildings on a wide variety of criteria measuring educational adequacy. "The phrase 'educational adequacy' is a misnomer," commented Sam Johnson, the other BLDD co-team leader. "It's more than an everyday definition of 'adequate.' For school architects, it's a measure indicating the degree to which a building enhances the ability to provide children with a great

education and includes things like lighting, acoustics, indoor air quality and many other factors associated with student achievement.”

Following the presentation by BLDD, the Steering Committee discussed needs prioritization and other work that will occur at Visioning Workshops, held in early April, to which the entire community will be invited.

“These are the facts and figures our community needs to make good decisions about our school buildings,” commented Stephen Murley, Superintendent. “Armed with this data, our community will be able to make cost-efficient and fact-based decisions regarding upgrades and improvements to our school facilities.”

The entire Iowa City Community School District community will have opportunities to weigh-in on the development of the Facilities Master Plan. Scheduled as part of the process are “Visioning Workshops” on April 6 (at 9:00 a.m.), April 8 (at 9 a.m., with childcare available) and April 9 (at 6:00 p.m.). All members of the community are invited.

“This is a great process,” continued Murley. “The focus is on what is best for kids and what is best for taxpayers. With that perspective, and armed with good solid data, we can make good decisions about our school buildings and how they can continue to serve our community for the next generation of students.”

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 17 to review input from the Visioning Workshops.

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