

# Middletown Campus Feasibility – Frequently Asked Questions

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## What was the purpose of the feasibility study?

The Middletown Campus Feasibility Study considered the Middletown Campus which consists of Middletown Elementary (grades 3-5), Middletown Middle (grades 6-8) and Middletown High (grades 9-12). The purpose of the study was to identify school renovation and additional space needs for each school, options for meeting those requirements, and estimated costs for each option. The team considered the existing buildings' physical condition and the ability to provide space for our current educational programs within the existing buildings. Furthermore, the team considered construction phasing, project schedules, traffic flow and available space for relocating students in the development of a concept master plan.

## What options were considered?

The feasibility study considered renovation, renovation with addition(s) and new construction for each of the three buildings.

## What is the feasibility study's recommendation?

The feasibility study team is recommending replacement of all three buildings with a new high school building and a building for colocation of the elementary school (grades 3-5) and middle school (grades 6-8). The co-located building for the elementary school and middle school will be designed to accommodate separate elementary and middle school spaces with limited shared spaces. This recommendation allows FCPS to provide brand new buildings for all the students on the campus in the shortest amount of time with the least disruption to students, and at a lower cost than constructing three new buildings. A co-located elementary and middle school building will allow for a smaller building footprint on the site and a more efficient use of the campus. Middletown Primary located on the south side of Middletown was not a part of this study and will continue to serve grades Pre-K through 2.

## Will the proposed elementary and middle building operate as one school?

No. The building will house two separate schools under one roof with separate administrative teams. Students will not interact unless both principals specifically plan for that interaction to occur. Some building functions will be shared, such as the bus loop, kitchen, custodial services, mechanical room and maintenance area. Other possible shared spaces will allow for more flexibility in programming and after-hours usage such as the media center, two gymnasiums, cafeterias and stage. Each school will have its own outdoor play areas. The educational specifications for the co-located building will be presented to the Board of Education at an upcoming meeting.

## When will the construction projects take place?

In the 2022 Educational Facilities Master Plan, the first capital project is scheduled to begin design in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. FCPS has requested funding to begin the design of the elementary and middle building in July 2023 (FY2024). The design and construction process for the first building will take 4-5 years. The high school building replacement will follow afterwards, with schedule to be determined based on available funding. Construction of the high school is expected to take approximately 24 months.

### Will students move into relocatable classrooms as part of the construction process?

The recommendation to replace all three schools in two buildings allows the students to remain in the existing buildings throughout the construction process while the new buildings are constructed. After the new buildings are ready the students will move in and the old buildings will be demolished. FCPS does not anticipate the need for relocatable classrooms in order to complete the construction projects. Existing relocatable classrooms will remain in place until the old buildings are demolished.

### Will any students be adversely impacted by the proposed construction schedule?

The concept campus master plan anticipates that the new building for the elementary school and middle school will be constructed on existing green space. Therefore, elementary and middle school students will remain in their existing buildings until the new building is complete. Alternative recreation areas will be determined during the design process. Once the new co-located building is open, the elementary and middle school students will occupy the new building and the old middle and elementary school buildings will be demolished. It is expected that site work, such as playfields and parking, will follow for the new elementary and middle building. Similarly, the high school students will remain in the existing building while the new building is constructed. Once the new high school is complete the students will move into the new building and the old building will be demolished. The final step in the process will be the completion of site features such as athletic fields and parking areas. This proposed construction schedule limits the impact of construction on any one group of students. During design, every effort will be made to locate the construction areas away from existing buildings and limit the impact on students. During the construction process fencing and security measures will be in use to separate workers and equipment from students.

### Will any sports facilities be relocated as part of the project?

The concept master plan anticipates relocation of the stadium to provide sufficient space near the front of the site for a new high school building. As envisioned, the new stadium and track and field could be constructed prior to the demolition of the old stadium. During the design phase for the first construction project, the selected architect will develop a more detailed master plan, which may result in changes to the overall site layout. If any sports facilities are displaced during the construction project, alternate practice and competition locations will be determined.

### Will the new high school have a pool?

The existing pool is in need of significant renovations. FCPS will consider inclusion of a pool during the planning phase for the high school project, anticipated to begin in several years.

### How will FCPS consider changes to education practices and programs in the replacement buildings?

The current educational specifications for our schools prioritize flexibility to allow for changes in student enrollments, and changes to the educational program. There are also a variety of smaller spaces that can be used flexibly for student collaboration or work with teacher specialists. Additionally, FCPS is opting for an increase in flexible furnishings rather than fixed cabinetry to allow educators to rearrange their spaces as needed.

### Was traffic circulation on campus a part of the study?

FCPS is aware that traffic circulation on campus is currently a challenge. The consultant evaluated the existing traffic pattern and considered traffic flow in the development of the feasibility study options and concept master plan. Implementation of the long-term strategies will likely be tied to capital funding for one or more of the building projects. FCPS is coordinating with the Town of Middletown to determine if short term solutions may also be feasible.

### How did FCPS determine the priority order for the replacement of the three schools on the Middletown Campus?

FCPS considered the physical condition of the buildings as well as the educational improvements needed. Other factors included security, availability of funding, construction phasing considerations and potential impacts on students. The modernization of the Middletown school buildings was considered as part of a campus wide plan. The available space on the site and construction phasing considerations led to the recommendation to replace the elementary school and middle school first in a co-located building.

### Which of the Middletown schools is most critical in terms of building condition?

One measure of building condition is the Facility Condition Index (FCI). The FCI calculation compares the cost of required building system upgrades to the total replacement cost of the building. The FCI scores for the schools are: MMS-56%, MES-33%, MHS-30%. Because of the age of the middle school, its FCI is highest. FCI scores were considered along with other factors to determine the priority order for the projects.

### How does FCPS prioritize amongst all proposed capital projects?

FCPS updates a 10-year Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) each year in June and includes a list of proposed major capital projects. The priority order of all projects is considered each year based on building conditions, enrollment projections, educational program needs and State and County funding availability. Middletown ES, Middletown MS and Middletown HS are currently shown on the 2022 10-year construction funding schedule as Middletown school building 1, 2 and 3. Following approval of the feasibility study recommendations, the EFMP will be updated in June 2023 to reflect the proposed project schedule for the Middletown Campus as well as other construction project priorities.

### How did FCPS consider residential growth and enrollment projections in the feasibility study?

Current and projected enrollments were evaluated along with current and anticipated approved residential developments for the Middletown attendance areas as part of this study. The feasibility study evaluated the buildings against a prototype educational specification, with the elementary school being evaluated at its current capacity due to the existing primary school. The middle and high schools were evaluated at the current BOE approved capacities for schools at those levels (900 for middle and 1600 for high).

### Is there any asbestos in the buildings?

Due to the age of the buildings, there is likely some asbestos. Any asbestos currently present in the buildings does not pose a risk to the occupants unless it is disturbed. The feasibility study helped to identify any hazardous materials that may be present in the building based on material type and appearance. During the future design phase for each building, a full hazardous materials abatement study will be conducted. Any asbestos or other hazardous materials that need to be disturbed by demolition or construction will be abated during the construction phase.

### How will sustainability be considered?

FCPS designs all buildings to LEED Silver standards and incorporates sustainable strategies where possible.

### Can any pandemic recovery funding be used for improvement of the Middletown schools?

The federal recovery funding has to be spent within a limited time frame. Due to the long-term nature of the capital projects contemplated for the Middletown Campus, that funding is not appropriate for these buildings. Recovery funding is being used at other buildings that do not have major capital projects planned for the foreseeable future.

### Is Middletown Elementary the only open-space type building left in the FCPS system?

No. Middletown High School is also an open space school. FCPS has eight other elementary schools, four middle schools and one other high school that have full or partial open-space classrooms.

Questions and comments regarding the feasibility study should be directed to [Middletown.Campus@fcps.org](mailto:Middletown.Campus@fcps.org).