

Expansion of the Pine-Richland High School

Developed by
The High School
Expansion Committee



Presented to the
Pine-Richland Board of School
Directors for its consideration
and appropriate action.

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Acknowledgements

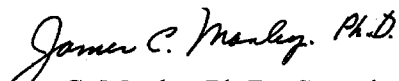
It is with sincere appreciation and genuine gratitude that we recognize the dedicated involvement of those who participated on the Pine-Richland High School Expansion Project Committee. A significant asset to the Pine-Richland School District is the diverse talents and expertise of its staff and community. This report could not have been completed without the Committee's commitment, propensity for thorough research and discussion, and outstanding individual abilities. Their combined talents and efforts have resulted in recommendations that promote visionary future development of the Pine-Richland High School and secondary campus.

We are most appreciative of the Committee's recommendation and the Board of Education's approval for Dr. Shelby Stewman, professor of demography and sociology at Carnegie Mellon University, to conduct a district demographic study. His unique abilities to provide enrollment projections provide an invaluable resource.

School Board involvement was evident and important throughout the Committee's process. Initially, Board members approved the formation of a task force committee to determine if the need for a high school expansion was warranted. The Board stayed involved through district communications, attendance at meetings, and/or by approving Committee recommendations. Their collective expertise and guidance is appreciated.

Committee configuration was unique and exceptional. It represented a talented cross-section of 44 individuals comprised of community members, staff, and students. We are particularly appreciative of the time Joe Sigado extended to the pre-planning and discussions. Also, commendation is given to the editing sub-committee: Donna Stephenson, Janet Radar and Lisa Murslack for their dedicated assistance in reviewing drafts and finalizing this report. In addition, commendation is given to the Classrooms for the Future Coach, Danielle Czegan, for developing and analyzing survey results.

Other members of this community and staff contributed greatly to the work of the Committee. Their names are listed on the Committee page. To everyone who supported the work of the Pine-Richland High School Expansion Committee, particularly administrative assistants, Carolyn Boice and Jan Hopper, we extend a heartfelt "Thank you!"


James C. Manley Ph.D., Superintendent


Bille P. Rondinelli Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent/Secondary

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- Preserve the 9-12 high school grade configuration.
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- Expand music and art areas
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- Expand the central administrative offices
- Continue to make safety and security of students and staff a high priority
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I. Introduction

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pine-Richland School District is one of the few school districts in Pennsylvania experiencing continuous growth. A district facility example that illustrates the growth is the initial construction and subsequent expansion of the Pine-Richland High School. The Pine-Richland High School, originally built to accommodate 750 students, was dedicated in 1993. However, in order to accommodate the increase in student enrollment, the building was expanded and rededicated in 2000 and provided the high school with a capacity to meet a population of 1500. Pine-Richland's 2008 high school (9-12) enrollment is expected to be 1450.

Eckles Architecture, original designers of the high school facility, also directed the expansion project that completed in 2000. The firm designed the original building with the intent of accommodating and expanding the facility for future enrollment increases. Therefore, the expansion project features similar opportunities to accommodate the high school's continuous growth and necessary additions.

The district's Long-Range Facilities Plan (2003) along with Pine-Richland's Strategic Plan (2006) and Operational Plan (2007) acknowledge the district's growth and transformation process. Additionally, the documents establish an expectation for high levels of excellence and envision a personalized and rigorous learning environment for all students. The Transformation Blueprint (2007), also details that the secondary program will feature college and career readiness with an emphasis on providing students with a competitive advantage in the changing global society that we live and work.

Change is inevitable in education. Pine-Richland High School strives to maintain a state of the art facility that meets the size and needs of its community of learners. With Board of Education approval, Superintendent Dr. James C. Manley commissioned a High School Expansion Committee to examine the essential question:

Do to the current high school enrollment numbers and projections, academic/curricular programs, and student activities warrant a renovation and/or facility expansion in order to promote high levels of excellence, customized learning, and rigor in a state of the art Pine-Richland School District facility?

The High School Expansion Committee

Dr. James Manley and Dr. Bille Rondinelli, Assistant Superintendent/Secondary, facilitated the first High School Expansion Committee meeting (referred to as "Committee" in this report) held on October 29, 2007. The first meeting was well attended with 36 of the 44 Committee members attending this session. The list of committee members is in Appendix A.

The Committee members represent an excellent cross-section of staff and community. Their diversity and expertise provided the foundation for Committee considerations and recommendations that address the high school facility and its associated challenges. Serving on this Committee were: 22 community members, 15 Pine-Richland administrators and other staff and 7 students (predominately ninth graders and two seniors).

Members of the Committee were given an opportunity to tour both the high school and middle school buildings in order to gain an understanding of the layout for both buildings and the potential expansion for these buildings.

II. Demographics

In February of this year, the School Board commissioned Dr. Shelby Stewman to conduct a demographic analysis of our district on the recommendation of the Committee. His comprehensive study predicts that our high school student enrollment will grow by an additional 330 students in each of the next two five-year periods or 48% over the next ten years.

Table 1
Projected High School Student Enrollment Growth

Year	Enrollment	Increase	% Increase (rounded)
2007	1383		
2012	1713	330	24%
2017	2047	334	20%
	Total	664	48%

Enrollment data is from Table 21 from Demographic School Analysis: Population Projections for the Pine-Richland School District. Increase and % Increase are calculations.

This expected growth is consistent with the growth experienced over the prior five-year period. High school enrollment grew from 1141 students in 2002, an increase of 242 students or 21%.

Two main drivers of our substantial growth are a stable level of births, averaging 213 per year, and a very large net in-migration of families with preschool children. Dr. Stewman determined that for every 100 births, 136 students enter Kindergarten five years later. This Kindergarten class then grows to 155 students in Grade 1.

The other factor is new housing construction. Dr. Stewman determined that new housing accounts for 41% of the enrollment growth in our district. The sub-prime mortgage crisis has resulted in a slowdown in new single-family homes in our district. However, it is reasonable to expect that new housing development in our district will recover over the next five years, especially with the Westinghouse Corporation relocation of its headquarters and nearly 2000 employees to Cranberry Township by 2010. In the meantime, a sizable housing backlog will support migration into our district.

These factors are impacting growth at all levels, especially at the high school level as enrollment has accumulated over several years. For example, there were 338 students in the 2008 graduating class. In 1995, these recent graduates were in kindergarten, the class size then was 204 students, which represents a growth of 66% in the size of this cohort.

III. Impact of Expected Growth on High School Capacity Utilization

In an effort to quantify the current use of the high school for the Committee, the high school administration determined the building use period by period. The areas of the building were defined as regular/specialty use, non-instructional, professional development, program specific, and teacher preparation. Each period was mapped with a color code to better visualize the building use. From this analysis, it was concluded that 2007-08 regular classroom daily use was at 79%, program specific rooms at 100% and specialty rooms at 72%. Non-instructional and professional development space is very limited and a current need exists for additional space.

The high school functional capacity of 1500 students is defined as that level where the educational programs could be negatively impacted due to space limitation. (Long Range Facilities Study, 2003)² According to Dr. Stewman's analysis, the high school population will expand to 1450 in the 2008 school year and to 1509 in 2009, exceeding high school functional capacity in just two years.

As the high school approaches and exceeds the 1500 student functional capacity, limitations are placed on administrators for scheduling classes and the quality of education is impacted. For example, in 2008-09 all science classrooms will be at 100% utilization. As the student population grows, regular and special education classrooms will be needed. For instance, as the high school population grows to 1659 in 2011-12 (+ 276 students) potentially 11 additional classrooms will be needed to accommodate the master schedule. Furthermore, art and music rooms are already at capacity and there will be a problem in finding additional space for these subject rooms.

It has been the observation of the Superintendent in his 37 years in administration and working closely with high school principals, that when the building utilization reaches 85% of capacity, the scheduling of courses is jeopardized. Teachers must travel between classrooms resulting in potential supervision problems while classrooms are temporarily unsupervised. Precious instructional time is lost as these teachers must unpack and repack for each class and students miss out on the opportunity to interact with these teachers between classes. As students enter a classroom, teachers know that this is a wonderful time to connect with students and to strengthen rapport with them.

In terms of functional capacity, once this threshold is reached, it becomes more difficult for students and staff to navigate the building. This can create an increase in discipline and safety problems especially when students bump into one another at major hallway intersections. A feeling of being in a "cramped" atmosphere prevails and scheduling lunch periods within reasonable time limits becomes a bigger challenge.

According to Dr. Stewman's demographic analysis, we are rapidly approaching and will soon surpass the high school's functional capacity. A clear sense of urgency exists for the facility planning process to continue.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

At the first expansion meeting, members divided into small groups and discussed these questions:

- What is different in today's student needs?
- What is different in today's educator needs?
- What is different in today's community needs?

From these small group discussions, the Committee identified a list of criteria for use in developing and evaluating various high school expansion options.

- **Personalization and Rigor** – What facilities' design is necessary to promote a customized and personalized learning environment for students?
- **Global Competitiveness** – What are the classroom and technology initiatives (i.e., on-line learning) that will help students compete in a global marketplace?
- **Length of Day** – Does a flexible schedule allow for more efficient use of space while still meeting the academic and relevancy needs of learners?
- **College Readiness for Seniors** – What considerations should be made for seniors to help prepare them for a seamless transition to college?
- **Safety and Security** – How can the design incorporate measures to address safety and security with a specific focus on traffic patterns and parking accommodations?
- **Cost Effectiveness** – How can the project minimize costs for taxpayers by evaluating the current use of space in the high school to determine how this space could be better utilized?
- **Common Space for Collaboration** – How can a more relaxed atmosphere be developed to give students opportunities for collaboration, socialization and a chance to enjoy lunch?
- **Respectful Environment** – How might the design incorporate ways of easing the navigation of students from one part of the high school building to another?
- **Stimulating Learning Design** – How might the design allow for a bright and healthy climate by providing an abundance of natural light and incorporating green building strategies?
- **Adequate Space for Activities** – How can the practice fields be undisturbed in the expansion project along with providing adequate space for all activities?

The above criterion was used as a reference for evaluating various options to accommodate student enrollment increases. The Committee believed it was imperative to explore other options beyond the traditional approach of bricks and mortar expansion.

