

District: Norfolk  
School Name: Freeman Centennial Elementary School  
Category: Preferred Schematic

Recommendation:

That the Executive Director is authorized to approve Norfolk, as part of its Invitation for Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for the replacement of the existing Freeman Centennial Elementary School. MSBA staff and the District have collaborated on evaluating the options and concluded that the District's preferred solution to replace the existing Freeman Centennial Elementary School with a new facility is the most cost effective and educationally sound solution.

Background:

The Freeman-Centennial Elementary School, the district's prioritized Statement of Interest, opened in 1950. A classroom addition was built in 1954, followed by a classroom and auditorium addition in 1964. The Centennial School was added to the Freeman in 1970. In December of 2002, a feasibility study was conducted by the District which included addition/renovation and replacement options for the school.

The main building of the existing Freeman-Centennial Elementary School is approximately 80,328 gross square feet, and the 2008-2009 enrollment was 563 students. The District has identified a number of building issues associated with the HVAC, electrical, and life safety systems. In addition to the physical plant issues, the District has identified programmatic deficiencies as a result of overcrowding and the existing open classroom floor plan. Twelve classrooms are part of the Centennial building's open floor plan which offers no substantial room divisions and poses a noise problem in each class. Other classrooms are undersized with poor ventilation. Thirty-six doors are arranged around the building creating a safety issue. The District believes that the only viable solution is to construct a new Freeman-Centennial Elementary School on the existing site.

On November 27, 2008, the MSBA Board of Directors approved staff's recommendation to issue an invitation into the Feasibility Invitation category to further study the problems identified at the Freeman-Centennial Elementary School.

Discussion:

The Feasibility Study completed by Flansburgh Architects evaluated several district wide options that met the programmatic and enrollment needs including no build options, two addition/renovation options and six new construction options. These ten design alternatives were reviewed and evaluated against a list of project goals approved by the School Building Committee. The Committee also reviewed and compared preliminary construction and site costs. After extensive review, the Committee chose one of the addition/renovation options and one of the new construction options for further development and study as shown below.

	Options	Square Footage	District's Proposed Total Project Budget
B2	Addition/Renovation – renovate the 1970s building and demolish the existing Freeman building	101,244sf	\$30,716,924
G2	New two-story facility	99,167sf	\$29,055,931

The District has concluded that a new two-story facility is the most cost effective solution to meet its program. The new construction option has the following advantages over the renovation:

- Renovation can only partially resolve the circulation and space configuration issues and will not allow for improved energy efficiency in 40% of the existing building;
- Renovation does not improve the adjacencies of the existing facility and still results in some undersized and inadequate spaces for the program; and
- Renovation requires multiple phases disrupting the students and extending the construction process, thereby increasing escalation and the overall construction costs.

The MSBA has reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study and the enrollment data with the District. Staff reviewed the information provided from Norfolk and found:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed including an executed Initial Certificate of Compliance; the composition of the School Building Committee for MSBA approval; and the enrollment questionnaire.
- 2) The MSBA has completed an enrollment projection utilizing the enrollment questionnaire completed by Norfolk. The MSBA and the District have agreed to a design enrollment of 585 students for a replacement of the Freeman-Centennial Elementary School on the existing site with three Pre-Kindergarten classrooms.
- 3) The MSBA reviewed the Feasibility Study as well as the additional cost estimate data provided by Flansburgh and concluded that the number of options studied is reasonable and that the resulting school building can meet the Educational Specifications as well as the enrollment projections in a cost effective manner.
- 4) The District and its Designer will need to further review the square footage associated with each of the programs during the schematic design phase and to explore additional savings and efficiencies. The MSBA will need to review and approve the final educational space summary and the total square footage allowed in the building in accordance with MSBA guidelines.
- 5) In addition to continuing to refine the design, the MSBA will require the District to perform an extensive value engineering effort during design to control the costs of the project moving forward.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that Norfolk be approved to proceed into schematic design for the construction of a new Freeman Centennial Elementary School on the existing site.