

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Tier II Committee

**FROM:** Steve Carter, Facilitator

**SUBJECT:** Central High School: Renovation versus New

## Introduction:

Following the May 26 meeting, I was concerned that the Tier II Committee had not adequately discussed this issue and was leaving a major issue without a clear recommendation to the Board of Education. While there were a very few prior issues left open, e.g. two or three story new Dr. Howard, they were not as significant as the Central High School question. In addition, some Committee members were not able to be present for the meeting. And, finally, the discussion mostly addressed one option (new) and not the other (renovation). I have tried to balance this by providing the following information for your consideration.

## Recommendation:

Poll the options for Central High School, renovation and expand or new and demolition, again at the June 9 meeting.

## Summary:

Reasons for renovating Central:

1. Renovation is more consistent with BOE policies.
2. Renovation will be less expensive than building a new school.
3. A renovated building will have higher quality features.
4. Renovation will preserve an historic building.
5. Renovation will conserve resources and be more sustainable.
6. The renovation plan provides the best approach for traffic safety.
7. Renovation will have less impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
8. When considering the referendum, renovation will receive more support.

## Discussion:

1. Board Policy: 451 Buildings and Grounds Management- Capital Improvement

### Stewardship of the District's Capital Assets

*It will be a steward of its facilities by reinvesting in District physical assets at a level adequate to protect the investment made in those facilities to maximize the life and use of existing school and support facilities and minimize rehabilitation and replacement cost over the life cycle of the improvement.*

### Criteria for Evaluating Relative Priority of Products

*Existing Facilities- Projects designed to maximize the life and use of existing school and support facilities are a priority.*

## 2. Costs

It is less expensive to renovate an existing school than to build a new school of the same quality. National statistics and building trends show that renovated schools are 30% less costly compared to building new schools.

Central Renovated provides 15,000 sf of more space for less dollars.

Renovation also provides more opportunities for phased construction based on priorities, an important factor given the limited resources available.

## 3. Quality and Price

The quality of materials in new construction in many respects would be reduced because the cost to replicate that quality today would be prohibitive:

- Terrazzo floors would be replaced with vinyl tile, and polished concrete.
- Glazed tile and plaster walls would be replaced with painted concrete block or painted drywall.
- Wood doors and frames would be replaced with painted hollow metal.
- Plaster ceilings would be replaced with acoustic tile.
- Ceramic tile and wood base would be replaced with vinyl base.
- Limestone and masonry would be replaced or minimized.
- The reinforced concrete structural system will likely be replaced with a lighter steel structure.

Desirable design features will also change in new construction because of cost:

- School corridors would not be as wide.
- Ceiling heights would be reduced to decrease volume of space.
- Less natural light would be provided than with the historic window configurations.

Even today with Centennial and Central in their present condition, Central provides the better quality of space and materials.

## 4. Unique Historic Character

A well-constructed, historic building will be preserved intact.

Preserving Central is the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County's (PACA) top priority.

## 5. Sustainability

The potential loss and abandonment of the existing Central High School to build a new high school is a waste of resources. Renovating an existing building reduces waste intended for landfills.

According to the School Construction Report from School Planning and Management the construction and operation of buildings account for 48% of the US greenhouse gas emissions. Reusing and retrofitting existing buildings can reduce these emissions dramatically.

Renovation provides a sustainable approach, removing what is no longer functional and not of value while reusing areas that continue to be useful.

## 6. Life Safety- Drop Off & Parking

*Tier 1 programming shows as a priority transportation spaces for safe and efficient pickup/drop off including separate access lanes /loading zones for buses and single occupancy vehicles.*

Renovated Central maintains the internal drop off system on the proposed vacated Park & Lynn (secondary streets) internal to the campus, adjacent to the school, and separate from two major arterial streets, University Avenue and Church Street.

A new Central Building (Old Y site) provides drop off located on Church (a major arterial street) and Hill Streets, both on the perimeter of the site, mixing drop off with through traffic.

Renovated Central parking is located on site and adjacent to the building.

New Central (Old Y Site) has all parking separated from campus across a major arterial street (Church Street). A pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect parking and the New Central building. Adherence to its use by students is a major safety concern.

## 7. Neighborhood Impact

Vehicle traffic will be routed to Church and Hill Streets, adversely affecting the Hill and Washington neighborhoods with the increased number of cars.

Renovating Central within basically its current footprint will cause less disruption in the surrounding neighborhood.

A renovated Central is more compatible in building scale to the neighborhood.

Renovation has neighborhood support and support from Keep Central Central (KCC).

## 8. Referendum

It will definitely receive more support and less organized opposition in a referendum.