

## MCPS BURNT MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



### MEETING NOTES – 04 Project #20042

**Meeting Date:** August 12th, 2020  
**Time:** 4:00pm  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting

**Issue/Revision Date:** August 14th, 2020

**Purpose:** Work Session #2

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#### ATTENDEES:

Dennis Cross	MCPS
DJ Connelly	MCPS
Rosa Perez	MCPS
Stacy Ashton	Burnt Mills ES
Troy Clarke	Burnt Mills ES
Felicia Lively	Burnt Mills ES
Michael Miehl	Burnt Mills ES
Carrie Grundmayer	Burnt Mills ES
Ebony Contreras	Burnt Mills ES
Christopher Graves	Burnt Mills ES
Smitha Mortis	Burnt Mills ES
Randy Mortis	Burnt Mills ES
Jordie Hannum	Burnt Mills ES
Rebecca Taylor	Burnt Mills ES
Theresa Chin	Burnt Mills ES
Kassandra Saravia	Burnt Mills ES
Michael Foster	MTFA
Meagan Jancy	MTFA
Braden Field	MTFA
Elizabeth Parry	MTFA
Nicole Ewald	MTFA
Shawn Benjaminson	Adtek Engineers
Mike Fahrner	Adtek Engineers
Jillian Storms	Maryland State Dept Education
Neil Joshi	Maryland State Dept Education
Dan Wallace	Burnt Mills Citizens Association
Sue Langton	Burnt Mills Community Homeowner

#### DISCUSSION:

##### 1. Project Team

- A. Representatives from MCPS Design and Construction were introduced with their respective roles
- B. The project design team from MTFA Architecture and Adtek Engineering were introduced with their respective roles.
- C. Dr. Ashton, Principal and Troy Clark, Assistant Principal of Burnt Mills Elementary School introduced themselves.

## 2. Presentation

- A. The design team reviewed the existing site conditions and noted aspects that will factor into the design solution.
  - 1. The design team discussed the challenges with existing vehicular access at Childs Road. Currently, all site access (buses, cars, service, and pedestrians) shares the same entrance, causing traffic congestion due to the narrow roadway. High volume of car traffic and lack of adequate parking on site is resulting in backups along Northwest Drive. Parents are also currently dropping students off along undesignated areas on Prelude Drive, which is a safety issue.
- B. The design team reviewed the feedback received through discussions with teachers and the leadership team of Burnt Mills, which summarized their vision for the school:
  - 1. Represent and serve the community
  - 2. Support family outreach and community events
  - 3. Be welcoming and comfortable
  - 4. Provide abundant daylight and views
  - 5. Opportunities for green spaces and outdoor classrooms
  - 6. Provide flexible collaboration spaces
  - 7. Address safety and security issues
  - 8. Provide adequate storage
  - 9. Be arranged to minimize noise and disruptions
- 2. The design team reviewed feedback from Work Session #1 on initial concept diagrams:
  - A. Site
    - 1. Separate car and bus traffic to improve safety
    - 2. Loading dock should be located away from child play areas with convenient access to kitchen
    - 3. Play fields and site elements should generally fit within existing tree line.
    - 4. Early childhood play areas directly outside of classrooms, with visibility from admin if possible.
  - B. Building:
    - 1. Entry identity should be close, orientating, and prominent from arrival.
    - 2. Administrative area should have visual control of student drop off, and play fields for safety and security.
    - 3. Media center should have a prominent civic identity near entry as visual icon and hub for the community
    - 4. Lacked a strong identity of the entrance with the parking lot and bus loop.
    - 5. Courtyard. Secured and flexible outdoor space.
  - C. The design team reviewed key issues related to vehicular access on the site:
    - 1. Maximize safety by eliminating conflicts between different forms of transportation
    - 2. Disperse traffic to multiple access points to reduce neighborhood impact

3. Route 29 access was explored as a possibility but deemed not feasible due to environmental impact and inability to get a left turn because of the median on Route 29, which will cause congestion issues on and off site.
  4. Maximize on-site parking to limit the use of off-site parking and provide convenience and safety to the community.
  5. Ensure handicap accessible routes from all points on site to the building.
  6. The design team noted there is a traffic study underway. The report will analyze issues such as: "which direction do most pedestrians take?" "What is the volume of cars and buses and at what times?" "What are the interactions between other streets and the site?"
3. The design team provided an overview of 3 refined design options and reiterated that all options accommodate the same program; just the layouts and adjacencies are different. Key differences include:
- A. Media Center in Courtyard
    1. Courtyard in center with two story ring of classrooms
    2. Separate entry for gym that has been removed for acoustics and safety
    3. Direct adjacencies of gym and multi-purpose to play courts and fields
  - B. Main Street
    1. Makes a block of the shared ancillary/civic spaces on one side and instructional spaces on the other separated by a strong axis through the building
    2. Efficient foot print and good utilization of a courtyard
    3. Media center on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor allows for elevated views and allows it to be a prominent element from the exterior
  - C. Civic Presence
    1. Stacking the admin and media serves as an anchor for the entrance point which orients and guides users into the building
    2. Lines efficient classroom wings around a courtyard
    3. Shared spaces aligned in a bar with direct access to parking, fields, and playgrounds
  - D. All of the options provide:
    1. Good safety and security
    2. ADA accessibility
    3. Sustainability
  - E. Key differences to highlight between the options:
    1. Media center on the ground floor creates a community hub verses Media Center on the second floor creates a focal point from the exterior and allows for site views.
    2. Separated entrances verses combined entrances

**4. MTFA facilitated a question and answer discussion with the online forum**

- Q1.** From Michael Mieh: I assume the traffic study takes into account school is not in session?

A1. Correct, the traffic study will look beyond pre-pandemic data. The study will look into the volume of traffic while students were in school, using historical data from up to 3 years old.

**Q2.** From Dan Wallace: Our teacher is in a wheelchair, making her sightline and that of drivers compromised in current spots.

A2. ADA issues will be addressed and fully compliant as the design continues to develop moving forward.

**Q3.** From Felicia Lively: Are the music/art area separate rooms? Is there space for a separate Instrumental Music Room?

A3. Yes, the Ed Specification provides separate spaces for Music, Instrumental Music Rooms, Art, and Dual purpose.

**Q4.** From Michael Miehl: I like "media center on courtyard" b/c of proximity of multi-purpose to gym and playground, music/art is not next to gym. Having media center on 2nd level sounds nice. Really like the idea of second floor views. In regards to the gym being next to music and art, he expressed concerns for sound disruptions.

A4. Design team expressed they will take these comments into account as we continue to move forward. The design team noted that as the design develops we will incorporate natural buffers that can be used to separate and isolate noise.

**Q5.** From Dan Wallace: So, going back to MDOT to see if a mitigated lane will allow bus access to be switched with car access is off the table? Buses have lousy sight lines to see pedestrians and the impact of a potential incident could be much greater than cars.

A5. This option is not entirely off the table, we are waiting for the results from the traffic study. Our initial feedback from MDOT was there are concerns about where larger volume of traffic is coming from, and currently that is identified as Prelude Dr. Once the traffic study is completed, we can look at flipping the access arrangement if the data supports it. The design team reminded the community that standard MCPS practice is to separate cars and buses. This site is unique in having multiple streets adjacent to the site to allow us to split car and buses entirely and provide safe access. The design team noted that although the sight line of a bus driver may seem worse, bus drivers are trained to look for students and pedestrians and a parent may not be as alert.

**Q6.** From Smitha Mortis: I'm assuming safety was taken into consideration in the plan? Or does that come later on?

A6. Yes, MCPS reiterated that site safety and security is a number one priority of MCPS. MCPS stated that an entry vestibule will provide a secure entrance in addition to other administrative procedures set in place for these events. Safety is taken into consideration at all stages and will continue to develop with the design.

**Q7.** From Rebecca Taylor; What is the distance between the play areas and the parking lot/drop off zones? Will there be fencing?

A7. The exact distance has not been established but fencing is typically provided surrounding the play areas.

**Q8.** From Smitha Mortis; Also, will there be roof access? Would a “green roof” be an option, maybe for part of the roof? Maybe a living roof with planters? Other schools have this and thought it would be nice to have this feature

A8. We are going to be designing under the Green Globe standard and will look for opportunities for sustainable features where possible. The desire for green space is also driving the courtyard design to house plants and be used for learning. MCPS stated that they only implement green roofs if they have to, but usually they like to keep them open for Photovoltaic panels. MCPS stated that the other schools that have a green roof system were designed due to stormwater management issues. MCPS also reiterated that due to safety, students cannot occupy the roof, and they don't particularly like staff up there either.

**Q9.** From Stacy Ashton; I like the first design having the media center in the front creates a community feel.

A9. The design team appreciates the feedback and will continue to develop the design with this comment in mind.

**Q10.** From Smitha Mortis; Also, for the traffic study, BMES is also a bus transfer point for some of the Immersion middle school kids - so that's another variable to consider if you haven't already.

A10. We will be sure to factor in this variable with the study.

**Q11.** From Adeola Fasola; I like the main street design (1\_ it keeps the media center separate and makes it a potentially quiet space and (2) keeps all the play spaces on the same side of the building

A11. We will keep these comments in mind as we continue to refine the design.

**Q12.** From Michael Miehl; “Media Center on courtyard” seems to have shorter distances from multi-purpose room and play area so students can get there faster. Students would be exiting the main entrance (near admin) to go to the play areas. In “civic presence,” looks like they would be going out of a secondary entrance, not near the admin. I like how “Media enter” and “Main street” have entrances very close together for security purposes.

A12. The design team asked: “Is it critical to have oversight when students are leaving to go to play?” Typically students are accompanied by staff.

**Q13.** From Michael Miehl; Although not critical, he likes the idea admin has visibility and students are entering or leaving through a secure and tightly monitored way. Their current situation does not provide this feature. Michael reiterated the preference for playgrounds to be close to the multipurpose room so students don't have to weave through the school to get there.

A13. We will keep these comments in mind as we continue to move forward with the design.

**Q14.** From Dan Wallace; Regarding the traffic issues, I would feel more confident if you had just one model of bus traffic from Prelude. Since most students will be coming by bus now that Spanish Immersion students coming from around the east county have bus transportation, car drop-offs have been reduced. In traffic movement situations, buses are fewer, but they take up more room waiting for lights to change. The 2013 Feasibility study had this as an option which indicates that it might be possible now. Dan stated – he would like to see a model where the buses enter off Prelude Drive and the cars off Childs Street. He believes there are way too many people who come through that neighborhood and cars would be easiest to handle. He expressed concerns over the amount of buses that would be coming through due to the Spanish Immersion Program.

A14. The design team responded to these concerns:

- a. The design team reiterated previous statements on this topic and noted that once the traffic study comes in they will continue to look into the feasibility of reversing bus and car access. The design team noted that both loops are designed to be able to accommodate both types of vehicle uses which provides flexibility to change things in the future.
- b. The design team reiterated the safety issues currently driving the decision of having cars enter off Prelude Drive. They noted that in their findings from speaking to MDOT and teachers of the school that a lot of parents are dropping students off in undesignated spots on Prelude Drive. By placing the car entrance off Prelude, the goal is to ease accessibility and get cars off the street to ensure the safety of the students and eliminate congestion.

**Q15.** From Felicia Lively; I really like Civic Presence and Media Center on Courtyard second. On Main Street it appears the music room faces the bus loop -which eliminates a green view.

A15. Design team noted they will strive to preserve green views as best as possible.

**Q16.** From Randy Mortis; Does the kitchen incorporate the cafeteria where the scholars will be having lunch?

A16. The kitchen serves the Multipurpose Room, where the students have lunch.

**Q17.** From Adeola Fasola; What's the total capacity of this new school building? What about the potential growth, this area is continuing growing, what will happen after this?

A17. The building capacity is for 647 students with core spaces incorporated for a master plan of 740. The building will be outfitted with shell space for 4 additional classrooms to be finished in the future. After demographic studies and growth calculations, MCPS established the max occupants that current schools are built to is 740 students, which BMES will be designed to. MCPS stated they try to be thoughtful with how they spend their money and they don't want to over build, but there is wiggle room.

**Q18.** From Adeola Fasola; Can the cafeteria hold all the students at the same time, or will lunch times still be staggered?

A18. The new Multi-Purpose Room will be considerably larger than the current. At this time, the exact seating capacity of this space is unknown but will be provided later in the design. Staggering lunches is a user preference and determined by the school. Ideally, school will continue to run lunches based off grades.

**Q19.** From Ebony C; There won't be a place to cook food for the kids? Right now our cafeteria kitchen is so small, we can't cook much of anything even if we wanted to. Will the new kitchen for the cafeteria enable us to cook if we decide to in the future?

A19. The school will be designed according to the Educational Specifications. This includes a serving area, dry food storage, and walk-in freezer. MCPS Elementary Schools are considered warming kitchens meaning food arrives daily and then is heated up.

**Q20.** From Adeola Fasola; Is a 3-story building an option to prevent overcrowding within the next decade?

A20. We will be providing the same square footage per the Educational Specification, regardless of the number of stories.

**Q21.** Can you talk about LEED measures?

A21. We are not far enough in the design process to discuss specifics, but we are aiming to achieve the Green Globes Certification. This is similar to LEED, but has a different points system. We are aiming to achieve two "Globes" which will be developed and outlined more as we go through Design Development. Some examples of goals we will be aiming for include energy efficiencies, daylighting controls, acoustical treatments, site aspects, storm water management, etc. MCPS is dedicated to sustainability and will remain actively involved.

**Q22.** From Jordie Hannum; Would someone from BMES note where alternate site plans for kids during construction might be?

A22. They will go to the Fairland Center located not far from the school. The address to Fairland Center is: 13313 Old Columbia Pike.

**Q23.** From Rebecca Taylor; Is that 740 the allowed # of students in the building (w/o portables) or including students in portables? Gary may have addressed that, but he went out at the end of his statement.

A23. Yes, this is without portables. Growth rates are not certain, but this is what is predicted.

**Q24.** From Smitha Mortis; I think the concern about capacity is that BMES has about 580 kids now and several portables - and that number continues to grow. MCPS has heard from the community that Immersion programs have high demand and it would be helpful to have enough capacity to have more than one immersion class per grade.

A24. We have accounted for these classrooms and growth. We've heard from Dr. Ashton that 2 Immersion classes per grade is the vision. We have based our numbers on multiple models predicting area growth. BMES will also have a new PEP program that will have 3 classrooms designated to it. If the enrollment in this program is low, there is flexibility to capture these spaces to be used towards the Spanish Immersion Program if needed.

**Q25.** From Sue Langton; Do we have to have basketball courts. They attract party players on weekends.

A25. Yes, Basketball courts are part of the Educational Specification Requirements. On previous projects we have been implementing design techniques such as half courts, or backboard to backboard to discourage others from using the courts for full games.

**Q26.** From Dan Wallace; Is solar power in combination with other energy-efficient sources possible?

A26. MCPS looks at onsite energy options. MCPS stated that they are currently still working through how they handle their solar but are committed to utilizing onsite renewables when they make sense.

**Q27.** One attendee stated they are still extremely concerned about the design of safety measures and would like hearing or seeing more specifics on this matter.

A27. MCPS reiterated that safety is their number one priority and not taken lightly. MCPS walked through the design aspects of the security vestibule to monitor anyone entering, leaving, and currently within the building. Safety continues to be implemented into the design as we specify doors, glass, materials, etc. NFPA has a new section of code related to security which MCPS will be designing to. MCPS noted that they typically like design layouts that allow for good sight lines and open spaces to also offset the issues regarding bullying.

**Q28.** What is the grey area in the center of the Civic plan?

A28. This space is represents a double volume space that provides a connection between the Admin and the Media Center. While it is only currently shown in the "Civic Presence" scheme, this design feature would hopefully be incorporated into any refined design scheme.

**Q29.** From Sue Langton; As a home owner that backs up to the school.. can you build a berm and plant lots of evergreens for noise and privacy?

A29. Our goal is to protect as many trees as possible, and implementing a berm would have a tremendous impact on those trees and would not be feasible from a site impact and layout standpoint.

**Q30.** Do classrooms on the lower level have doors that lead directly to outside?

A30. Pre-K will have doors directly to the exterior with direct, secure access to the play area. Kindergarten classrooms are optional to provide this connection. Other classrooms don't have doors to the outside as it presents a security risk.



5. MTFA asked for feedback on the different options that can help the design team work towards developing a scheme that reflects what BMES envisions for their new school. The following is a summary of some of the comments:
- A. From Michael Miehli;
    - 1. I like media center and Main Street because it appears that students will need to go through the main entrance to go to the playgrounds (I feel that is more secure).
    - 2. I think all of them do a good job to make it more obvious for visitors where they need to go (main office) to check in.
    - 3. The Main Street option does not appear to separate kid's play areas.
    - 4. I also am in favor of Media Center on Courtyard because of proximity of multipurpose room to playgrounds, the proximity of main entrance to the playgrounds, the orientation of the building with respect to the car drop off, the separated younger play area from older children play area, and the media center facing the courtyard (although I do like the idea of having it stacked / higher ceilings from the other designs).
    - 5. Playground and cafeteria need to be very close to provide ease of access.
    - 6. K play and Pre-k play right outside from a planning standpoint please.
  - B. From Smitha Mortis; Civic Presence looks great to me - I like the upper level media center too. Media on second floor can be great for light and views. Also like the different exit points. The courtyard is an excellent addition (and option for plants since the living roof is not viable) :)
  - C. From Rebecca Taylor; I like the 2nd floor media center, too. Second choice would be the Main Street plan.
  - D. From Cassandra Saravia; i like second floor media center, I think it could be a much more bright and welcoming space. and love the courtyard
  - E. From Dan Wallace;
    - 1. Not crazy about the kindergarten and PEP playgrounds so close to bus traffic in Media Center on Courtyard.
    - 2. Feels the only option that watches kids arrive is the civic.
    - 3. Noted the lack of visibility of kids entering the school from the bus loop in the Main Street Option.
    - 4. Strange to see that Burnt Mills not getting the front side of the building anymore. If you're looking for a presence to the community, you're essentially providing a back door view to community.
  - F. From Dr. Stacy Ashton –
    - 1. She likes the Media Center Option. Likes the media center be the focal point, closer proximity to the play fields. She could come to consensus with the media on second floor but noted that this doesn't feel as much like an elementary school to her. She could be convinced to place the Media Center on the top if there was some sort of connection to the main floor.
    - 2. Likes the K and Pep play areas separate from the rest of the play areas, keeping younger children separated and away.
    - 3. She dislikes Main Street due to the gym in the front of the school rather than in the back. She expressed concerns that would be difficult to see students using the bus loop in this option. She stated the majority of student's school access by bus and that there are not a lot of walkers. She really likes front design facing the parking lot and buses. She does like the meeting of the bus loop and the drop off in the civic presence option.

4. She dislikes music and art in the back by MP and gym. Trying to imagine the face of the building – feels media center and Main Street are oriented correctly where civic doesn't seem to be.
  5. She likes open spaces, vestibule when you walk in, provides more options for gatherings with parents and not always have to use the media center and the multi-purpose room.
- G. From Cassandra Saravia; I agree on separating pep/pre-k playgrounds. I think it would be helpful to continue working on the civic presence layout
- H. From Carrie Grundmayer; Separate play areas for PK/K is a nice option. Difficult decision on the library - it is nice to have it as the hub when you walk in but a library with high ceilings and in a quieter space might be nice as well. The bus loop and car loop/parking being close creates better safety in terms of monitoring.
- I. From Ebony – Likes the media center on the courtyard. She really likes Dr. Ashton's remarks as she is knowledgeable on how the building is used. Expressed the need for a separation of music spaces.
- 6. MTFA thanked everyone for attending and noted they will coordinate with MCPS to notify all parties when future meetings are scheduled. MTFA reminded everyone that the presentation, meeting notes, and future information will be posted to the school's construction project website:**
- A. <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/construction/project/burntmillses.aspx>

**NEXT MEETING:** Work Session #3/Future Meeting – Dates and times to be determined.

*These notes represent a summary and the substance of discussions and decisions reached at the meeting. Please contact MTFA Architecture at once if additions or corrections should be made. Otherwise they will stand as an accurate record of the meeting.*

Meeting Notes by: Elizabeth Parry

CC: File  
Attendees

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