AMSTERDAM RURAL SCHOOL EXPANSION SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction:

On August 28, 2006 representatives from CTA Architects Engineers met with the Amsterdam school board to discuss overcrowding issues and space needs for the elementary school. Attendees at this meeting included: Kristy Johnson, Ken Kreitzer, John Fowler, Wayne Freeman, Marjorie Hennessy, & Nick Salmon.

The outcome of this meeting resulted in CTA representatives being tasked to research and design expansion options for the school board to present and discuss with members of the school district.

Visioning Workshop:

Prior to concept development an envisioning workshop was held to identify the schools identity, needs, opportunities and constraints. The following information was collected:

Goals of Visioning Workshop
- Gather Background Information/Clarify Education Needs
- Identify Community Values
- Identify Viable Options
- Next Steps

Background Information/Education Needs:

- Site.
  - The existing school is located on a 2.875 acre site. It does not include the baseball field.
  - Water is provided from a well, east of the original school.
  - The buildings are connected to the community sewer system.
  - An additional 5-1/2 acres will be donated to the school, east of the existing property, and re-graded to provide a suitable building site.

- Facility.
  - 4 classrooms are located in the 1996 building (5,768 SF). 2 Classrooms, Music/Title 1 and the Library/computer are located in the original 1970's-1980s building (3,312 SF). The school does not have a Gym/Cafeteria/ Commons, Library, Music Room, Special Education or adequate administrative/counseling offices. Physical Education classes are conducted outdoors when the temperature is above zero.
  - Data connections do not existing between the two buildings.
  - In general, the building envelopes of both buildings and interior finishes of the newer building are performing well. The toilets in the newer building often run. The mechanical and electrical systems in the older building are not adequate.
  - The new building can be expanded to the north.

- Organization.
  - The special education aide is from Madison/Gallatin Cooperative, counselors, tutors, speech share an office.
  - The school district operates with a Business Manager/Clerk, Supervising Teacher and no Principal. The Gallatin County Superintendent is Superintendent.
  - Need a 1/2-time principal if 9-17 FTE staff. More than one principal would be needed if over 250 students and/or 18-29 FTE staff.
  - Only five FT teachers now. Kindergarten is three days per week (all day).
• **Grade Levels.**
  - Currently K-6 (K,1,2,3,4,5/6), Grades 7 and 8 go to Manhattan or Manhattan Christian.
  - Could be K-8, or some other configuration, but would require both boards to approve.

• **Current Enrollment.**
  - 92 children, enrolled as follows: K (14), 1(23), 2(14), 3(14), 4(14), 5/6(13).
  - Grades have been combined as needed over time. Grouping grades K-2 does not work well due to range of reading abilities.
  - Enrollment is steady during the year. Not a lot of transient students.

• **Projected Enrollment.**
  - 175 kids are projected from Ecton Ranch/ViaVerda Ranch. Those students are likely to be dispersed over all 13 grades (about 14 per grade), and will arrive over time (perhaps five to ten years, or more).
  - Other developments are expected and currently underway within the district boundaries.

• **District Boundaries.**
  - The District boundaries are roughly 100 Square miles.

• **Bonding Capacity.**
  - The debt limit for the School District is $1,030,471. This accounts for $260,000 in debt on the 1996 bond.
  - The School District has no other debt obligations.
  - Recently conducted a survey of community regarding expansion. Seventy-five responses were received 65-70 were negative.

• **Limits to Expansion:**
  - Any future expansion would need to preserve the baseball field, memorial benches and trees.
  - Existing utilities are identified on the 1996 site plan.
  - The grade of the donated land may be modified to produce an adequate building site.
  - The school is served by the community sewer. There is no limit on sewer discharge.
  - The capacity of the existing well will need to be determined. The water pressure and depth of the well may need to be improved.

• **What Works?**
  - The school has good teachers who teach the basics well, and develop curriculum together.
  - Small class sizes.
  - Good community support, as shown in attendance at school events, assistance with ski trips, swim lessons, volunteers and the PAC.

**Vision/Values:**

• **What is your vision for the district?**
  - Don't lose identity as a School District.
  - Stay small (both in class size and school size).
  - Maintain K-6, or expand back to K-8 (as original charter defines).
  - Have a real cafeteria/assembly area/multipurpose room.
  - Eventually have a Pre-K program.

• **How does your vision relate to the Manhattan School District or other schools in the area?**
  - Two students from the Amsterdam School District attend Manhattan K-6 schools.
• More kids are coming from the MSD to attend Amsterdam School.
• Stay small (both in class size and school size).
• Tuition at Manhattan Christian School (MCS) is increasing, impacts enrollment.
• MCS buses pick up kids for the Amsterdam School
• Use MSD buses for field trips
• Have a verbal agreement with MSD to take kids from Amsterdam in 7th and 8th grades.
• Growth in MSD may require ASD to retain grades 7 & 8.

**Desired School Size (population).**
• Each Teacher currently knows every child (currently 93 children).
• This is possible because of past relationships, rotating recess shifts, etc.
• Need a 1/2 time principal if 9-17 FTE staff. More than one principal would be needed if over 250 students and/or 18-29 FTE staff.
• If the school has a population of 300 students, teachers will still know 90% of the kids.

**Desired Class Size.**
• Grades K-2 (20) = aides 1/2 hour for every child over 20 (i.e. 24 students would require an aid for 2 hours a day 10 hours a week, or 1/4 time).
• Grades 3-6 (24) = Never been higher until this year. Aides would be required for greater than 24 students.
• Currently combined fifth and sixth grades
• Fourteen students/class are more desirable than 20 or more.
• Funding dictates class sizes and the ability to combine
• Rooms are small for more than 20 students, especially kindergarten.

**Desired Class Groupings.**
• Currently one class per grade, with the exception of combined fifth and sixth grades.
  Will need multiple classes in the next few years
  o Students benefit from keeping classes small
  o Improve student/teacher ratio
  o Curriculum development is jointly planned over all grade levels.
  o Teachers occasionally change grade levels from year to year.
• Combining grades K-1-2 is not good because of difference in reading abilities.
• Combining grades 4-5-6 has worked well.

**Desired Grade Levels.**
• Current configuration provides good transitions between grades.
• Kids stay with teachers and friends longer in a K-8 configuration.
• Would like to keep K-8 as in the charter.

**Special Program Offerings.**
• Title 1.
• Special Education.
  o Two times per week teacher and 1/2 time aide.
  o Meet needs of all students.
• Reading/Math enrichment.
• After school science projects, tutoring, hands-on/ project based learning.
• Full time music program.
• Would like to have a shop program if grades 7 and 8 were retained.

**Community connections & use of facilities.**
• Community members volunteer as readers.
- Music performance
- Track and Field Day
- Spring Fling (PAC)
- Parents chaperone trips and ski/swim days
- Three parent-teacher conferences per year
- No adult education classes or use of library (other resources are available in the valley)

Constraints/Opportunities:

- **What is the capacity of the existing school?**
  - Six classrooms x 15-20 kids = 90-120 (but school facilities do not include adequate PE, music, library, Title 1, etc.) Should only have 72 students based on typical elementary school of 125 SF/per student.
  - The current music/title 1 and library/computer lab could be restored as classrooms, but the music, Title 1, library and computer lab would no longer be housed.
  - Increasing classroom capacity with portable classrooms is not desired.

- **How much land do you need?**
  - CEFPI recommends 10 acres + 1/100 kids = 11 acres for 100 kids, 13 acres for 300 kids. WY recommends Four acres + 1/100 kids = Five acres for 100 kids, Seven acres for 300 kids.
  - The school is currently using approximately four to five acres of land which is adequate for current enrollment, but additional acreage would be needed for 300 students.
  - Ecton Ranch/ViaVerda Ranch plans to donate approximately 5-1/2 acres and is flexible on configuration. School will have use of creek for educational purposes and use of community center planned for new development as well as all open space areas in new development.

  - **How much capacity can be achieved from existing bonding capacity?**
    - $493,500 - bought the total cost of the 1996 building for about $85/ SF.
    - Current capacity is $1,030,471, according to DA Davidson, and accounts for current debt of $260,000.
    - Using todays total project costs of about $170-$185/SF, $1,000,000 could provide about 5,400,5,800 SF or 4-5 classrooms. A facility of this size can accommodate about 60-80 students.
    - Ecton Ranch/NiaVerda Ranch will bring around 98 kids for grades K or 14 students per grade. Students are likely to enter the school system over a five to ten year time period.
    - Even a small addition should account for future expansion to 300 students, including the other needs of school identified above.

- **What happens when the school can no longer meet the needs of a growing population?**
  - Install portables in parking lot. Seek emergency funding.
  - Should retain grades K-6 at a minimum. Shedding grades to the Manhattan School District is not acceptable.
  - A second school site has not been feasible because it would require additional funds to purchase land unless it was donated.
  - Would not like to split district, currently the district has been adding land to district.
  - Want to retain sense of a small school.
  - Maybe the school should incorporate into K-12 and not send kids to Manhattan.
Next Steps:

- **Educational Vision & Programming Phase:**
  - The School Board should consider conducting a short workshop clarifying the educational vision with teachers, students, administrators, staff and the community. Such a workshop can be used to help the community understand the needs of the School District and for the School District to open the process to the community. This phase would typically take place over one to two days during the winter term.

- **Bonding:**
  - If the School Board chooses to proceed with the project, a bond would need to be supported by the community. CTA recommends that the board consider the following keys to a successful bond:
    - *Planning process is visible to Community and the community is involved.*
    - *Needs are clearly defined*
    - *Consequences of doing nothing are clear*
    - *Educational impact of plan is inspirational*
    - *Clearly defined financial request*
    - *Impact of inflation, value of proceeding now*
    - *Engage highly visible supporters, senior citizens, community leaders, etc.*
    - *Adequate time to meet with supporters*
    - *Provide quick responses to questions*

  - Community outreach in advance of the bond should be planned for at least two months prior to a mail ballot or the May (2007) School Election.

- **Selection of Architects and Engineers:**
  - If the School Board chooses to proceed with the project, requests for qualifications would be issued, and a team of architects and engineers would be selected to develop the design of the facility with the school district and community. This process typically takes about four to six weeks, and should be coordinated with the bond effort. The architecture and engineering team should assist the School District with the selection of additional consultants focused on asbestos surveys and reports, soil investigations and civil engineering.

- **Design Phases:**
  - As the project develops, a series of design phases should be coordinated with the school calendar. The schematic design phase should be completed prior to the end of the 2006-07 school year in order to maximize input from faculty, staff, administrators and the community. The design team can refine that input during the summer months and return with Design Development documents at the start of the 2007-08 school year. Construction Documents for the project can be prepared during the fall, with the intent on releasing the drawings for bid in January, 2008.

- **Bidding Negotiation Phase:**
  - The bidding and negotiating phase typically lasts approximately six to eight weeks. During the first three to four weeks contractors review the construction documents, ask questions of the design team and submit bids. After bids are opened, the School District and design team identify the lowest responsible bidder and provide a notice of award. The contractor typically takes about three to four weeks to provide the documentation necessary to enter into a contract with the school district to construct the facility. This includes securing bonds, insurance, providing a detailed project schedule.
• **Construction Administration Phase:**
  - The construction administration phase begins after the contract is signed. The contractor initially prepares shop drawings and provides submittals of the products to be installed in the project. Due to the proximity to the existing classrooms, construction is likely begin in May of 2008 and continue until August of 2008. The design team makes weekly (or more frequent) site visits to track the compliance with the project schedule and construction documents, and to respond to questions that arise.

• **Project Closeout Phase:**
  - Once the work is complete, the contractor requests final payment and issues a punch list of items to be completed prior to the release of 5% retainage on the project. The design team and the school district review the project with the contractor and identify any additional items to be completed prior to final payment.

• **Owner Transition & Warranty:**
  - Upon substantial completion, the School District officially takes possession of the facility, and the warranty period begins.

**Conceptual Development:**

September 21, 2006 representatives from CTA Architects Engineers met with school board members and district parents to discuss proposed expansion needs for the Amsterdam Rural School, information from the visioning workshop listed above along with two concepts and their corresponding cost estimates were presented to the attendees. (See attached concepts/cost estimates).

Attendees at the September 2006 meeting included the following: Wayne Freeman, Nick Salmon, Barney Lindley, Angela Hansen, Dustin Matosich, Steve Johnson, John Fowler, Ken & Peggy Kreitzer, Cori Huttinga, Kristy Johnson, Jamie Wubben, David Hincheloff, Eric Kellogg, Kirsten Smith, Andrea Stevenson, Sharon Roe, Carrie Johnson, Tracy & Angie Dowton, Jean SeUes.

Based on the summary of information presented from the Visioning Workshop and the two concepts the following responses/concerns were expressed from the meetings attendees:

- Bonding increases
  - Based on tax base

- Availability of land to the east of the school.
  - Potentially could be next spring/fall before land will be available. Timing of development to the east of school.

- Impacts of timing of development to expansion of school site.
  - Projected two to four years.

- How many phases in plan - Approx. 3* based on ability of school district to bond for the money.
  - Phase 1 - Fall 2008
  - Phase 2 - Fall 2010
  - Phase 3 - Future
  - *The cost estimate and second building have been broken into three logical phases. Phase 3 could be lumped into phase 2 if desired by the community.

- Other sources of funding available besides taxing residents
  - Consider grants
  - Fuels for School
• Build Lease Programs
• State Building Program
• Grant Writing opportunities - CTA will assist in this process by identifying potential sources for capital funds as well as programming funding. CTA staff has agreed to draft grants to selected funding sources for the District's use.
• Positive and Creative Funding

• Adjacent land includes drainage ditch for irrigation - how would this be dealt with
  • Relocation of drainage ditch

• Dynamic of Amsterdam and Manhattan Christian School. Public vs. Private funding.
  • Manhattan Christian School Expansion - $4 million - private funding.

• How to address community dynamics - addressing the number of fixed income citizens and how funding can be achieved.
  • Define needs - Communication - Key to Success. School district should begin dialogue - through a series of questions/answers - opportunities at open house, mailer - questionnaire to parents. Things to consider: **How much more information is needed prior to approaching the community?**
  • Sell self
  • Provide clear picture/outcome
  • Participation of community - lack thereof.
  • Include/Hire a Public Relations/Educational Facilitator.

• Manhattan Public Schools also seeking funding for expansion.
  • Timing will be an issue.
  • Possible to consider a joint visioning program for expansion with Manhattan Public Schools.

• Manhattan District is currently not accepting out of district students.
  • Amsterdam may need to consider this option given current capacity and current facilities.

• Possibility of funding of school expansion from Ecton Ranch developer -
  • Discussions with developer (CTA) voluntary mitigation funding.
  • CTA has pledged to give to the school district an average of $1,000/lot sold on its property to be used entirely at the discretion of the Amsterdam School District. This donation will be effective if the development proceeds to final plat and lots are conveyed.

• CTA's role in assisting the school district with their needs.
  • Willing to help facilitate discussions and research additional funding sources for district.
  • Write grants for the school district to selected funding sources.
  • Provide initial planning efforts for school.
  • Donate approximately 5 1/2 acres of land for school expansion to the school district.
  • Perform preliminary site work to shape the donated land into a usable space.
  • Contribute an average of $1,000 per lot as lots sell on the Ecton Ranch project.
  • Provide unlimited use of community center, open space, and play areas.
Cost Estimates:

- Based on the draft conceptual plan developed by CTA from input by the School District and initial parent workshop, a cost estimate suitable for programming and bonding purposes has been derived. Costs are estimated in 2006 dollars.

Phase 1

5,600 SF Expansion @ $165/SF $924,000
Site Work/Architecture/Misc. $80,000
Furniture $75,000
Total Phase 1 $1,079,000

Phase 2

12,000 SF Expansion @ $175/SF $2,100,000
(library initially serves as lunch/multipurpose room)
Site Work/Architecture/Misc. $200,000
Furniture $150,000
Total Phase 2 $2,450,000

Phase 3

Demolition older building $100,000
13,500 SF Expansion @ $175/SF $2,362,500
Site Work/Architecture/Misc. $250,000
Furniture $2,862,500
Total Phase 3

Grant sources:

- The following is a list of grant sources that contribute to primary and/or secondary education. This is a partial list but has been deemed most probable to respond. CTA has offered to develop several grant requests for these potential funding sources. A steering committee should be developed by the District to pursue these grant sources.

  - Charles M. Bair Memorial Trust Fund
  - Sample Foundation INC
  - First Interstate Bank System Foundation INC
  - The Cinnabar Foundation
  - Gilhousen Family Foundation
  - Lippard Clawiter Foundation INC
  - Cobb Foundation
  - Kingsbury Memorial Foundation
  - Rob and Terry Ryan Foundation INC
  - Dennis R Washington Foundation INC
  - Morris and Helen Saver Foundation
LEGEND:
A Existing Building
B 5,600 Sq. Ft. Expansion
C Bus Drop
D Parking Lot
E Baseball Field
F Future Expansion
G Multi Purpose
H Playground
I Play Field
J Parallel Parking
K Ball Court

Amsterdam School
- Master Plan -
Amsterdam, Montana