

Maury Modernization Survey Results (01/10/17)

Prior to the January 12 meeting with DCPS, the PTA asked the Maury community to weigh in on the options as presented, and rank them in order of preference.

Option 1: Build a larger renovation to expand to 539 students.

Option 2: Build a smaller renovation and create a cluster between Maury and Miner.

Option 3: Build a smaller renovation to expand to 457 students, requiring a boundary change to reduce number of in-bound students.

Survey Results

Total surveys returned=153 (145 online, 8 paper). Not everyone included rankings; some ranked two of three options, or just indicated one preferred option. The numbers below are based on surveys that indicated a rank of “1” or a preferred option.

Option 1: 55%

Option 2: 10%

Option 3: 35%

Comments/analysis are based on community survey only.

Teacher Survey

In December, the LSAT/SIT teacher representatives polled Maury staff on the same set of choices; they received 19 responses:

Option 1: 74%

Option 2: 5%

Option 3: 16%

Analysis Based on Comments

- There is overall frustration with what many view as non-choices, as there was very little supporting information; also, frustration with the lack of community input.
- There was some support for, but mostly strong opposition to Option 2.
- Of those in support of Option 2, many thought it was the best way to ease crowding and preserve Maury’s current size; others felt it could strengthen enrollment in Eliot-Hine.
- Many opposed to Option 2 felt it was presented with little forethought given the complexities of merging two schools, and served as a way to save money/time rather than deal with the results of the boundary expansion.
- Many would prefer the smaller, one-campus school attributes of Option 3, but felt a boundary change was not realistic or fair.
- Most voters who selected Option 1 as their first choice selected Option 3 as their second choice, and vice versa. Many believe either option could work *if* designed to adequately support enrollment *and* ensure maximum outdoor play space through creative means.
- There is great concern that both space and budget are lacking to do this project right; timing is also a concern.

Emergent Themes

For those who left comments (representative selection below), several themes emerged:

Frustration with options, lack of information

- *I do not have enough information to rank these options, and reject the premise that these are “options.”*
- *There are many unanswered questions. Can the budget be changed? Is a boundary change really an option? Do we know if a cluster would require a smaller building?*
- *I cannot vote for one or the other without further information. If a CLUSTER allows us to retain the maximum amount of outside space and “build” the smallest addition, then I would vote for a phased in cluster model. If we were CONFIDENT the city would change our boundaries to reduce our growth plan AND we knew how much outside space we would have to sacrifice, I would probably be more in favor of the THIRD option.*
- *It seems like none of the options—nor the expansion/renovation/modernization process itself—have been planned out in detail or evaluated with regard to budget, academic experience, or physical school implications.*

Frustration with the process

- *This process has been handled very badly by the DC government. The idea that you’re going to hold one public meeting and then make a bad decision on January 13 that we will all have to live with for the next decade is unacceptable. Everyone involved from the DC government ought to be ashamed.*
- *DCPS leadership has consistently mishandled this entire process. It is now clear that the original enrollment projections (used to drive the \$18.5M budget envelope) were completely botched. At this point, we just need more budget to do what needs to be done: build a school for 539 students.*
- *Budget needs to be increased. Do it right once! Let’s not spend 18 million on a stop gap.*

Anger that the recent boundary change put Maury in this position

- *The school was over capacity and using exterior trailers as classrooms when DCPS expanded the boundary. DCPS made a mistake and miscalculation to expand the boundary. If DCPS is not willing to readjust the boundary, then DCPS needs to build the school needed to accommodate all of the children both inside and outside.*
- *DCPS is asking us to fix a problem that they created. They never should have expanded Maury’s boundaries. The primary issues we encounter with any proposal are too many students and not enough money. Since it sounds like adding more money for the project is not possible we must reduce the number of students.*
- *[i]t was incredibly irresponsible of DCPS to expand the Maury boundary in the manner it did and honestly families currently enrolled in the school should not have to pay for the city’s mistake by having a cluster model thrust upon the school at the 24th hour without the requisite community engagement. A cluster might have been a feasible option had it been raised 2 years ago; it is not an appropriate last ditch effort to fix the mess DCPS created.*

Strong opposition to cluster, how it was presented

- *I will not hesitate to leave Maury if I feel railroaded by the city into an elementary school scheme that involves two campuses and over 725 elementary schoolers, when the motivation appears to be purely financial. The work that the families, the administration, and the PTA have done to make Maury the amazing school it is today should be a source of pride for the city, and thusly rewarded with a facility designed to meet its needs; not dismantled and merged into a cluster in some slapdash plan because it is the cheapest option.*
- *I am infuriated that DCPS thinks something that disruptive to two distinct school communities is a proper response to one school's building renovation.*
- *The cluster idea is a 0 to me. There are too many unknowns in terms of what building would host what grades, who would lead it, staffing issues and most importantly removing the small community feel of Maury which is why we have stayed with the school.*
- *Option 2 has the potential for massive failure. There is no plan in place to create this cluster. Years of planning would be needed to make this a success. Splitting up families who would have to do simultaneous drop offs of really small kids at two different locations would lead to more absences and would kill a lot of the thriving parent involvement at Maury.*
- *At a time when DCPS wants to increase enrollment in its public schools, why is DCPS choosing now to threaten Maury with the upheaval that a cluster would bring when Maury is doing what we are supposed to be doing?*

Concerns about space, how to “right-size” to accommodate larger enrollment

- *I am very concerned about a reduction in outdoor play space for our children, especially since we anticipate having so many MORE children. This problem seems easily mitigated by eliminating on-site parking entirely and providing Residential Parking Permits to staff for nearby on-street parking.*
- *What's going to happen with the playground at Maury and what kind of recess will the children have?*
- *I feel strongly that our site is too small to “right-size” all of the components required for a 21st century elementary school for 500+ students. Every renovation option presents compromises (staff parking, outdoor play spaces, sizing of shared amenity spaces) that are the result of poor planning on the part of DCPS.*
- *It's time to think outside of the box—a three or four-story building, a rooftop playground, a commitment to buy additional property on the block to expand our footprint, parking permits so teachers and staff can use the ample street parking available in our neighborhood during the day.... Our children deserve a neighborhood school that is inclusive, that is thriving, and that fits all of them with enough room for whole-school morning meetings, community gatherings, and outdoor play.*
- *As a homeowner half a block a way and a taxpayer, I am NOT in favor of building a huge school that may some day sit under-utilized.... It is a waste of scarce resources to build and build instead of use what we have.*

A redrawn boundary must be fair to affected families

- *My question is could a building for 457 students accommodate all current Maury families, grandfathering currently enrolled families who might fall outside of a redrawn boundary so that siblings are treated as having in-boundary status?*
- *I would only agree with Option 3 if the current students (and their siblings) can remain at Maury ES, and nobody is “kicked out” because they live out of boundary all of a sudden.*

Funding disparity with other modernization projects

- *Please ask DCPS: How much money they have spent on renovating schools in Northwest over the past few years? During that same time period, how many times did DCPS place those same schools in a cluster in order to save a few dollars? Why is a cluster only seen as an option to save money in Ward 6?*
- *Please explain the logic behind a modernization budget for Maury of \$18.5M.... Why all the hand-wringing about hard choices to work within our budget and keep other schools’ needs in mind when Maury is clearly being shorted?*
- *The following table includes all current Elementary School Modernization Projects. While modernization types do vary, this information is very telling. To me, this is striking in that the next closest \$ per student is 2 times that of what they’ve currently budgeted for Maury. In short, we’re going to need a bigger budget.*

School	Ward	Students (as projected in Ed Specs)	Budget (\$M)	\$ per student	X times greater than Maury \$ per student
Kimball ES	7	400	59	147,500	4.3
Marie Reed ES	1	486	61.5	126,543	3.7
Bancroft ES	1	550	68	123,636	3.6
Murch ES	3	730	83.3	114,110	3.3
Lafayette ES	4	805	78.6	97,640	2.8
Van Ness	6	336	32.4	96,429	2.8
Payne ES	6	325	28	86,154	2.5
Orr ES	8	468	38	81,197	2.4
Powell ES*	4	512	40	78,125	2.3
Watkins ES	6	550	39.4	71,636	2.1
Shepherd ES	4	400	28	70,000	2
Stanton ES*	8	526	36	68,441	2
Maury ES	6	539	18.5	34,323	

** Projected enrollment not available in modernization information, therefore current enrollment was used.*

Sources:

<https://sites.google.com/a/dc.gov/dcps-school-modernizations/home>; <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-school-projects>