

High School Educational Specifications

School Board Meeting

Erika Gulick

Facilities Planner/GIS Specialist

January 12, 2017



Alexandria City Public Schools

Every Student Succeeds

Essential Questions

1. What are Educational Specifications (Ed. Specs.)?
2. What input did ACPS educators provide regarding the High School Ed. Specs.?
3. What input did ACPS students have on the High School Ed. Specs.?
4. How have the High School Ed. Specs. been edited to reflect this input?
5. What additional concerns were raised?
6. How will the Ed. Specs. be used for facilities planning?

Introduction and Background

- An **Educational Specification** (Ed. Spec.) is a guiding planning document that describes the proposed outcomes of a school modernization or new construction project. An educational specification defines the programmatic, functional, spatial and environmental requirements of the educational facility
- ACPS presented the **Draft High School Educational Specifications** to the School Board on June 16, 2016.
- The **High School Ed. Specs.** were presented to the School Board on July 5, 2016. At that time, the School Board requested that staff research several issues including the utilization at the High School to determine if it is better for every teacher to be assigned to a classroom.

Teacher Engagement

Facilities staff met with department heads at T.C. Williams on October 24, 2016, and November 18, 2016, and discussed the High School Ed. Specs. The following are the comments received from the teaching staff:

- **Teacher Collaboration Rooms (TCRs)** seem appropriate; however, they should be expanded to allow for more **flexible use** and **personal teacher storage**.
- It was recommended that the amount of **TCR space** be represented in a ratio format so that future needs are met.
- **Science spaces** needed to be adjusted to allow for **more flexibility** and science suites should be outlined in the Ed. Specs.

Teacher Engagement (continued)

- A designated **space for testing** is needed to accommodate a large group of students without disrupting classroom activities.
- A **makerspace** should be included in the library for interdisciplinary uses.
- An **art studio** should be added to allow for the fine arts program to be appropriately scheduled.



Student Engagement

Facilities staff met with the student leadership team at T.C. Williams on December 5, 2016, and discussed the High School Ed. Specs. The following are the comments received from the students:

- To the extent possible, **restrooms** should be located in areas of **transition**, such as at hallway connections and high traffic areas to encourage use during class changes.
- Consideration should be given to the amount of time students spend on line in the **cafeteria** and limited, if possible. Outdoor and/or senior seating is desirable but only if enforced and secure. Furniture should be varying and flexible. The cafeteria should be a **central space** whereas the gymnasium could be on the perimeter of the building.

Student Engagement (continued)



- **Specialized student support centers/offices**, such as the College & Career Center, Math Center, Teen Wellness, nurse's office, etc., should have **designated spaces** and be near the cafeteria so that students are encouraged to use them.
- The organization of the **library** should allow for quiet study areas and group discussion spaces without one interfering with the other.

Changes Incorporated

- Teacher Collaboration Rooms (TCRs) were adjusted to **Teacher Collaboration Suites (TCSs)** which incorporate increased private storage space and a separate room for one-on-one instruction. The Ed. Spec. also specifies that 1 TCS should be provided for every 10 core classrooms.
- **Science** space(s), **art** space(s) and **library** space(s) were adjusted as proposed by the staff.
- A **Student Support, Testing and Community Gathering space** was added. The space is intended to be flexible to allow for designated rooms for student support spaces which could be opened up to a larger testing or community space if necessary. The space should be **centrally located**.

Changes Incorporated

- More description was added to the restroom narrative to stress that these should be located in high traffic/transition locations.
- More description was added to the cafeteria narrative to address student concerns about separate dining, varied seating and capacity.
- Text was added to the library narrative to address the need for the library to support both quiet and active learning spaces.



Impact

- These adjustments resulted in an overall proposed building square footage of **285,264**.
- Once adopted, ACPS will use these Ed. Specs. to continue the second phase of the **Long Range Educational Facilities Plan (LREFP)** and present them to the LREFP Work Group scheduled to meet January 30, 2017.
- The Ed. Specs. will also be considered as ACPS continues its **grade level feasibility study** to determine the best use of ACPS facilities.

Additional Concerns

Some additional concerns raised by the T.C. Williams staff and/or students were:

- Based on enrollment projections, a 1,600 student school may not be large enough for what ACPS needs.
- ACPS should consider efficient and best-use of space, especially given current capacity issues.
- While the Ed. Specs. will help provide the spaces for teacher collaboration and student achievement, adequate scheduling will ultimately contribute to the success of the teachers and students.

Summary and Recommendation

- The current draft of the High School Ed. Specs.: (CO)
 - Allows for **scheduling** to be made to be most convenient to the teachers
 - Promotes **teacher collaboration** and efficient space utilization
 - Supports grouping by subject matter so that classrooms maintain identities.
- Staff recommends that the School Board adopt the High School Ed. Specs. on January 26, 2016.

Questions and Discussion



Erika Gulick

Facilities Planner/GIS Specialist

(703) 619-8298

erika.gulick@acps.k12.va.us