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## **FACILITY UTILIZATION GUIDELINES**

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Every school shall have a predefined set of spaces (regular classrooms, special classrooms, Computer, Art, Special Education, Pre-K, etc.) by grade (elementary school, middle school, high school) that their capacity is based upon. In consideration of district programming, schools should have the autonomy to deviate from this organization based on the needs and priorities of their students and school community, but it will not change their capacity calculations.

### **Program Capacity**

The Program Capacity is a student capacity measure that accounts for the current educational program and its ability to be reasonably accommodated in an existing facility.

#### **Elementary Schools**

An elementary school's capacity is expressed in terms of the number of available regular classrooms, Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. The number of available classrooms is determined by first placing all non-standard classroom uses in the building (reading, Gifted, resource, counselor, ESL, OT, speech, psychology, foreign language, computer labs, center based programs, early childhood, art, music, PE, media center, cafeteria, administration). The resulting available standard classrooms are then counted. Program capacity figures for elementary schools do not include use of pod spaces as classrooms (see Use of Pod Spaces below).

#### **Middle Schools**

A middle school's capacity is expressed in terms of the maximum number of students that can be accommodated in the number of available regular classrooms, 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. The number of available classrooms is determined by first placing all standard uses in the building, and then multiplying the maximum Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) for middle schools, which is 30 pupils per teacher. Spaces used for elective classes such as music, technology, family and consumer science, foreign language, etc., are not calculated into the capacity of the building. Also, middle school teacher plan time is incorporated using this capacity calculation method.

This approach to calculating capacity recognizes that middle schools operate like high schools some of the time and like elementary schools some of the time. They are a hybrid. Each grade at the middle school level occupies one pod or area of the building in which the core teachers for students reside.

## **High Schools**

High schools operate on a totally different basis than elementary schools. Students are not in self-contained environments, occasionally traveling to another location for a special class. At the high school level, students typically change classes each period. The high schools are transitioning and undergoing significant changes in program delivery. Some schools have adopted block or modified block scheduling and/or various teaming approaches.

The method used to calculate capacity is a “utilization factor.” This method allows for flexibility for a high school to deliver a traditional departmentalized program or newer evolving methods of program delivery. There may be a specialized space such as a vocational/technical lab for which there is insufficient enrollment to conduct a class each period of the day. At other times, it is just not possible to maintain an average class enrollment of 25 students, for example, and there needs to be some room to adjust.

The utilization factor applied to high schools is 85%. This represents an approximate utilization of five out of six periods in a six period day or six out of seven periods in a seven period day. Some spaces will be used more than 85% of the time whereas others may be used less. Using the 85% utilization factor in a school that uses a block schedule would mean that a room would be available one period every other day on the alternating block schedule, or that approximately half of the rooms would be used 100% and the other half would be utilized 75% in the schools that have the same four periods every day.

## **Current Capacity**

The Current Capacity is a capacity measure reflective of the Program Capacity MINUS any special district programs (i.e. early childhood education, center-based programs, etc.) that may exist in the building from year to year. Special programs are district programs and not building specific (see Special Programs below).

## **Use of Pod Spaces**

Several schools have pod spaces, which are large open spaces around which classrooms are organized. Pod spaces are not considered in the program capacity of a building. In high enrollment situations, those schools that have pod spaces that can be adapted for instructional, support or special program uses should do so before the use of mobile classrooms is considered. However, ideally at least one pod space should remain open and available for the school’s use. Schools desiring to utilize their pod space for alternative uses may choose to do

so.

The use of pod spaces should be short-term. It is recognized that when schools exceed their program capacities, stresses can be placed on the common or fixed areas, such as the cafeteria, gymnasiums, and hallways. The use of pod spaces at a facility should coincide with a long-term plan to address the high enrollment situation at that school.

### **Use of Mobile Classrooms**

Where possible, mobile classroom(s) may be moved to a school campus to accommodate high enrollment situations. It is recognized that when schools exceed their capacities, stresses can be placed on the common or fixed areas, such as the cafeteria, gymnasiums, and hallways. Because of this, the use of mobile classrooms at a facility should be short-term and should coincide with a long-term plan to address the high enrollment situation at that school. Moving a mobile classroom(s) to a school will be considered and evaluated by district administration on an individual basis. District administration will consider a number of factors, including but not limited to: current building utilization, the location of existing special programs, projected change in enrollment, planned boundary changes, planned new construction including new facilities and building additions, and planned program changes. At the elementary school level, it is recommended that mobile classrooms be *considered* if that school's enrollment is projected to exceed its total number of available instructional spaces and all but one pod space. At the middle school and high school levels, it is recommended that mobile classrooms be *considered* if that school's enrollment is projected to exceed 110% of its program capacity. Depending on the circumstances, it is possible that mobile classrooms could be moved to a school a year or two ahead of anticipated growth pressures, or could stay in place after the enrollment pressures have eased.

### **Special Programs**

Special programs include the placement of early childhood programs and center-based programs in our schools. It is the fundamental belief of the special education department that our programs and students should not be considered a more movable population than any other group of students. While one solution may be to move these programs, the district should make a concerted effort to create long-term and stable settings for these programs.

#### **Early Childhood Programs**

Early Childhood (ECSE) classrooms are housed at HLC and in satellite sites dispersed geographically across the district. The distribution pattern allows buildings to be more fully utilized with the HLC serving as the program hub.

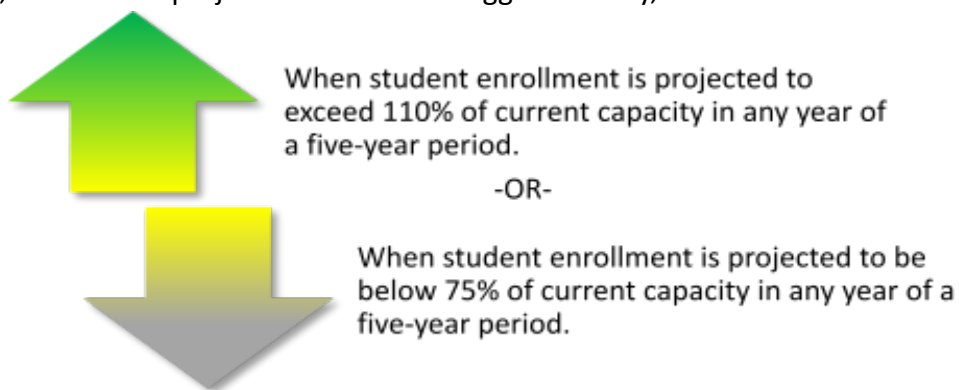
### **Center-Based Programs**

Long-term placement of center-based programs such as the SMD Program at Valley Park Elementary School, and the LIFT program at Mission Trail Elementary School, present challenges at the elementary level. Students in these programs are very sensitive to transitions. A goal is to minimize the number of program relocations to reduce the number of transitions for this student population. A fiscal consideration is also attached to the relocation of center-based programs. The spaces used often require remodeling to include plumbing, storage, sensory and time-out areas. Reducing the number of relocations will reduce this associated cost. Geographic distribution of center-based programs within each feeder system is desirable so that students who are assigned together in elementary school will be able to attend middle and high school together. Because of space restrictions at some schools or the reluctance to move classrooms already established, this model is not always achievable. As a second consideration, it is desirable to place only one center-based program within a given school because of the additional administrative and team time required due to the intensity and frequency of meetings associated with these high need programs. In addition, placing multiple programs in one location because there is more space there can skew the student population norms and overly tax the resources of a building. Thus, it is desirable to locate the programs in stable, long-term places throughout the district.

### **Enrollment Study Triggers**

A plan to address a facility's enrollment decline or growth may be developed if that school's enrollment exceeds or falls below a predetermined level. It is important to note that even if a school does not trigger a study of its enrollment because it is outside of the established parameters stated below, it is possible for that school to be involved in a boundary change as part of a comprehensive boundary master plan.

Likewise, if a school's projected enrollment triggers a study, it does not mean that the school's



boundary will be changed. Standard parameters include:

### **Before and After School YMCA Care**

All elementary schools will accommodate before and after school YMCA care. Generally, their use of facility space is limited to the cafeteria and gymnasium areas.

### **Community Use**

Board of Education policy #2290 "Use of District Facilities" states: "District facilities shall be used to the fullest extent possible by community groups and agencies. However, school activities directly related to meeting the educational needs of students shall have priority when scheduling District facilities." Also, the school district has developed administrative guidelines that assist in organizing and defining the community use of district facilities.