

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Community Background**

The Centralia School District is located in Lewis County, named after Meriwether Lewis. Lewis County is in the Southwest portion of Washington state and is situated between the metro areas of Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon. The county covers an area of nearly 2,436 square miles of farming valleys, forested mountains, lakes, and rivers.

The Centralia School District serves students living in the city of Centralia. There are multiple school districts serving students in the surrounding small towns and county areas. Centralia, with a population of over 16,000, is the largest city in the county. Centralia has a total area of 7.56 square miles.

The community served by the Centralia School District is economically tied to several major industries. In the past decade, reduction in jobs related to coal mining has impacted the area, but increases in light industry and retail businesses have offset this reduction. Even so, unemployment in Centralia remains among the highest in the state at 8.5%, similar to Lewis county as a whole.

According to 2014 US Census data, the per capita income in Centralia was approximately \$18,980, and the median family income in the city was \$37,230. Approximately 24% of the population is defined, by government standards, as living in poverty.

### **1.2 School District Information**

The Centralia School District Board consists of five members, elected by registered voters in the school district. The board hires a superintendent to serve as their chief executive officer. The educational programs are offered in five “categories” of school organizational types: (1) three K-3 primary schools, (2) two grades 4-6 elementary schools, (3) one grades 7-8 middle school, (4) one grades 9-12 high school, and (5) one grades 11-12 secondary alternative school.

The activities of the District are guided by its Mission Statement:

*Through attending Centralia Schools, students will graduate career and college ready, successfully prepared for a diverse and changing world.*

The mission statement is further supported by the District’s Vision Statement:

*A Learning Community – Educating Each Student – Exceeding Expectations.*

These goals are included in the District’s Strategic Plan:

- *Student Learning – As each student progresses through the Centralia School District, each student will meet or exceed district and state standards and graduate on-time, college and career ready.*
- *Cultural Competence – Staff and students will develop an understanding and appreciation for the value of diversity. Staff and students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills to work with and support one another.*
- *Wellness – Support the physical, social, emotional and mental well-being of students and staff.*
- *Operations – Our collective community supports a safe, healthy, and efficient environment.*
- *Community Involvement / Partnerships – Foster relationships and programs that support student achievement.*

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

Preceding this study, the Centralia School District was aware of potential long term growth in the community and the corresponding demand on school facilities. In addition, the District was fully aware that, over time, the physical condition of all school buildings decline and that, in some instances, the older buildings were having limited success in keeping up with the modern curriculum, especially those elements related to technology. The School Board has taken seriously its charge to protect and preserve the school facility assets owned by the community and to ensure that their educational mission is supported by appropriate, cost-effective facilities.

Therefore, the District felt it was important to understand the current condition of its educational facilities. Further, the Board determined that they needed a data-driven plan to help them map the future of the district and how they might improve educational facilities.

In commissioning this study, the Superintendent had several guidelines:

- The consultants were to provide the District with an independent, third-party, data-driven professional assessment of the condition of its facilities, both physically and functionally.
- The consultants were to coordinate their work with a planning committee.
- The work of the consultants and Committee was to demonstrate how best to improve existing facilities in the following areas:

- a) Provide for the safety and security of students and staff;
  - b) Provide for student enrollments;
  - c) Improve the physical condition of buildings; and
  - d) Improve the educational adequacy of the facilities.
- The work of the consultants and Committee was to demonstrate a plan for effective and efficient facilities, especially given “tightening” school finance trends.
  - Reduction of personnel was not a goal of this study.
  - Individual personalities were not factors in the study.
  - The collective efforts of the consultants, the Committee, the staff, and the Board were to determine facility improvement options that will help make an excellent school system even better!

#### **1.4 Methodology and Plan of Work**

Prior to the commencement of the Facility Master Plan effort, a detailed plan of work was developed. The many sub-tasks were grouped under the following major work tasks:

- a. Project Initiation
- b. Interviews
- c. Enrollment Projections
- d. Capacity Analysis
- e. Facility Assessments
- f. Develop Options
- g. Final Report

The methodology used for this project primarily fell into three categories: (1) the gathering of information and data, (2) the analysis of that information and data, and (3) the development of options for improving facilities based on the data and the analysis.

The consulting team consisted of four individuals with collective experience in architecture, school facility planning, school administration, school finance, and school operations.

#### **1.5 Data Sources**

Data and information was collected from a variety of sources including, but not limited to:

- a. School District policies and procedures,
- b. Physical condition reports,
- c. Floor plans or diagrams of school facilities,
- d. Description of program uses of facilities,
- e. Grade configuration information,
- f. Student enrollment histories and District projections,
- g. School class size protocols, and
- h. Miscellaneous websites.