Minutes of the October 4, 2021 Finance & Facilities Committee Meeting

Attending the meeting:  J Ponds, P Church, E Scherzer and N Cipriano

The Committee picked up the discussion of opening windows because visual observations of window openings around the District did not reflect the uniform policy discussed at the prior meeting.

There continued to be disagreements over which regulations applied to how much windows could be opened.

The Committee Chair asked if the Architect for the District could prepare for the Committee a clear analysis of all of the building, fire and school regulations (including IBC 2406.4.4 and 1015.2.1) that apply to answer the following questions:

- Are window openings in our schools limited by any relevant codes? If so which ones?
- If they are limited, is the limitation 4 inches or 6 inches?
- Is there a difference between window openings allowed on the first floors (if those windows are less than 6 feet above the outside ground level and upper floor window openings? If so, which codes apply?
- Are there any fire or other regulations which prevent the installation of window guards or bars across window openings? Or do the installation of guards/bars on windows allow them to be open further to let in fresh air?
- Are window stops which prevent opening of windows more than 4 inches allowed? Do any codes or regulations apply to these window stops?
- Is there any regulation limiting the opening of the tops of windows? Is the opening of the tops of windows limited in any way by furniture (for example bookcases) which may be installed next to a window?

In the meantime, the Committee agreed that all windows should be opened either from the top or at least 4 to 6 inches from the bottom except in the Bullock school.

Following up on the installation of air purifiers in large rooms where students may have to eat unmasked, it was reported that excess air purifiers have been installed in each such room (cafeterias and gyms primarily) so that each such room will have 2 or 3 of them.

There was a discussion of the use of plastic shields in classrooms and it was agreed that all such shields should be clear. The use of these shields is a District policy and should not vary from school to school. It was recommended that this policy be clarified for all schools so that policy is uniform throughout the District.
Hurricane Ida storm damages were discussed. It was reported by the BA that the District’s current damage assessment is at $1.4 million and growing as bills come in and as further assessments of damages continue. Recent reports of damages include 2 crew boats which cost $70,000, needed replacement of the Hillside gymnasium floor at a cost of approximately $200,000, fire boxes at Bradford, new pumps needed and continuing reports of lost textbooks and other supplies. Some asbestos abatement has been required. This storm also pointed out the importance of the on-going building masonry work. It is conceivable that when final bills are submitted the total costs could approach $10 million. These bills will be offset by insurance and by Federal and State FEMA aid. It is too soon to assess the overall impact on District finances.

The Board of School Estimate meeting was discussed, and a brief report was given by the Superintendent. A more complete report is expected in at the full BOE meeting on October 6.

The Committee noted that the Long-Range Facilities plan presented at the BOSE had not been presented at the Facilities and Finance Committee meeting, but hoped that there could be a full presentation of this report at future F and F Committee meetings.