

CHAPTER 8

EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

In the fall of 2001, the Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart (SCH) authorized a feasibility study for the school corporation. Directed by Dr. Robert L. Boyd, Professor at the Department of Educational Leadership, Indiana State University, a study committee of twenty-six community members were actively involved in the review of all aspects of the operation of the schools. In April, 2002 the completed "Feasibility Study of Community and Student Demographics, Educational Program, Education Facilities, and Capital Indebtedness for School City of Hobart" was presented to and subsequently accepted by the Board of School Trustees. The information provided in this section has been obtained from this source which is available in its entirety from the School City of Hobart.

Purposes of the Study

There were five major purposes of the study, as follows:

- A. An analysis of the population trends in the school community based on both school enrollment history and birth data.
- B. An assessment of community demographics and their potential impact on future educational needs in the community.
- C. An analysis of the general condition of the present facilities, sites, structural condition and environment of the buildings and how they measure up to today's standards and projected use as educational facilities into the 21st century.
- D. Assessment of the utilization of the present facilities in relation to the present program offerings. This to include new programs initiated during recent years and others indicative of modern educational programming. This would include but not be limited to Prime Time, technology education, individual and small group tutoring, guidance, art, music, physical education, special education and vocational education.
- E. Review the financial status of the school corporations including the debt service obligations and a projection of the ability of the school corporations to finance future building needs.

Community and School Demographics

1. The total population of Lake County decreased from 546,253 in 1970 to 484,564 in 2000. This is a decrease of 61,689 people or 11.3 percent. Federal Bureau of Census projections for 2020 predict a slight increase to 503,185. Over the past three decades from 1970 to 2000, the Hobart Township has grown by just 413, which represents a growth of 1.1 percent while the county decline was 11.3 percent. Population gains were recorded in the remaining townships, except for losses in Calumet (-40.8%) and North (-18.6%).
2. While speculation persists that limited population growth may occur in the area, planned housing developments throughout SCH strongly suggest that both primary and secondary housing markets will be unchanged from current levels through the early years of the new century. The September 2001, unemployment rate for Lake County was 4.7 percent, while the unemployment for the State of Indiana was 3.9 percent.
3. In 2000, Lake County had 208,910 persons employed. While the majority resided and worked in Lake County, other residents worked out of the county, primarily in Porter, LaPorte and Tippecanoe Counties and in the State of Illinois.
4. From 1990 to 2000 the public school student population of SCH decreased from 3,607 to 3,456 or 151 students for a percentage decrease of 4.19 percent. The 3,538 student enrollment for 2001-02 represents a continuation of a five-year stabilization in enrollment that began in 1996-97. The range of enrollment over the past seven years has been from a low of 3,474 in 1999 to a high of 3,618 in 1995. These data reflect the stabilization in student population over recent years. Comparing this to neighboring school corporations in Lake County, declines have been reported in River Forest, Lake Ridge, East Chicago, Lake Station, Gary, Hammond and Highland, while the rest have gained. From 1990 to 2000, the public school enrollment for all of Lake County declined from 88,857 to 78,989, a loss of 9,868 students or 11.11 percent.
5. The projections of future student population for SCH projects 219 kindergarten students per year to replace an average of 295 senior students exiting the system each year. Given the total school population of 3,538 together with the conclusions from a variety of data presented in 1-4 above, a projection of stability in total student population for the SCH for the beginning of the century is highly defensible.

The continued stability in total student population projected above will impact equally across the grade level organization of the school corporation. The elementary, grades K-5 population is projected to be 1,567 in 2008, just two students different from the current enrollment, while the middle school will decrease from 896 to 878 and the high school will increase from 1,073 to 1,163 by 2008.

Thus, in terms of needed educational space into the short-term future, the SCH can plan for approximately 1,600 elementary students, 900 middle grades and 1,200 high school students.

Educational Program

1. The SCH has a commitment to the following elementary school programs:
 - A. A strong and child centered, basically self-contained educational program at the elementary school level that allows for individual teacher creativity in the delivery methods utilized.
 - B. Prime Time reduced class size in grades K through 3, primarily with classroom teachers as well as relatively low pupil teacher ratios at grades four through six.
 - C. A full scope of special education programs, and a full complement of remedial and support programs for students at the elementary school.
 - D. Art, music and physical education are delivered by special teachers trained in their respective area of the curriculum. The use of technology as integral to the delivery of the curriculum is well beyond most Indiana school corporations.
2. The changing nature of elementary school programs in recent years has resulted in a decrease in the functional pupil capacity of elementary schools in the SCH. Prime Time guidelines call for kindergarten and grade one classes of 18 or less and grade two and three classes of 20 or less. In addition, modern educational programs require space for art, music, special education, learning/media, technology and a host of small and large group instructional areas. The elementary schools have a number of classroom spaces being utilized for special purposes including art, music, computer labs, special education and remedial education programs. The George Earle Elementary School is being utilized at 96.3 percent of its program delivery capacity, while Joan Martin is at 98.9, Liberty at 90.6, and Ridge View at 92.2. Taken together, the four schools have a student capacity of 1,638 and with a total enrollment of 1,563 students, they are being utilized at 95.4 percent of their functional program delivery capacity.

3. The SCH middle school year's educational program (grades 6 through 8) is moving toward a modern middle grades educational program. This program reflects the developing use of core curriculum, advisor/advisee programs and appropriate extra-curricular programs offered to students in emerging and modern middle grades programs.
4. The Hobart High School is operating a comprehensive high school educational program within its financial constraints that is consistent with the values of the community and the needs of the secondary students into the 21st century

Facilities

1. There are space limitations, in terms of the total amount of modern and "appropriate" classroom space for current and future student populations at the secondary level in the SCH. The middle school was assessed in this study as:

INADEQUATE - DISCONTINUE USE:

(Facility has outlived its usefulness as an appropriate educational facility and generally would require more capital expenditure to remodel than to replace the facility. Further, remodeling would yield spaces less than appropriate for the delivery of modern educational programming into the 21st century.)

2. Hobart High School was assessed in this study as:

INADEQUATE - REMODEL:

(Facility is generally structurally sound, but contains spaces that are less than appropriate for educational programming into the 21st century and shows the need for attention to several areas as well as the need for immediate attention to major cosmetic renovation. Its functional capacity after remodeling would provide for effective and efficient educational programming.)

Finance

1. The SCH 2001 total assessed value is \$87,002,305 having increased by \$18,668,540 or 27.3 percent since 1996. In 2000 the SCH had an assessed value per student of \$22,841. The assessed value per student trailed the state average assessed value per student of \$58,580 by \$35,739 per student and represented the 290th lowest assessed value per student among the 294 school corporations in Indiana.
2. The total school tax rate of the SCH, payable 2001, was \$9.55. The individual fund tax rates for 2001 were: General Fund, \$5.57; Debt Service

Fund, \$1.89; Capital Projects Fund, \$1.09; Transportation Fund, \$0.81; and Pre-School Special Education Fund, \$0.01. The total tax rate has decreased \$0.17 over the past five years.

3. Indiana school corporations finance capital improvements in educational facilities from the Debt Service and Capital Projects Funds. Both funds secure the majority of their resources from local property tax levies. The SCH has kept pace with other Indiana school corporations in terms of facilities at both the elementary and high school levels. The SCH has \$7,885,000 of capital debt outstanding as of July 2002. As a capital debt to assessed value ratio, that represents a 9.1 percent debt to assessed value ratio. Acceptable debt to assessed value ratios are believed to be between 25 to 30 percent of assessed value less outstanding capital debt. In terms of the SCH, they have available between 13 and 18 million dollars in capital debt leeway.
4. Based on a total assessed value of \$90,000,000 each one million dollars of long-term capital debt at 5.5 percent interest would add \$0.0968 to the school tax rate.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are submitted by the researcher and are drawn from the analysis of data presented in this study. The recommendations reflect the consensus of the community committee that participated in this study.

Clearly, in light of the sufficient, modern and appropriate educational and support facilities at the elementary school level of the educational program, the major challenge to the future delivery of modern educational programs rests with how secondary facilities are modernized for the grade configuration of the school corporation. That challenge includes the facts, as documented in this study, that the middle school facility is inadequate for continued use and the fact that the high school facility has a number of major facility issues that need attention. In addition, the current capital debt outstanding position of the corporation does not retire until 2007, the low taxable assessed wealth, and the relatively high total school tax rate, taken together, present some major financial and political obstacles toward achieving all that needs to be accomplished. However, given the historically low interest rates currently available through public municipal bond issues and the State of Indiana, Common School Loan program, delay may be more costly in the long term than moving forward with a plan in the short term.

In light of the above challenges, the committee studies a number of options in the process of developing recommendations for Board consideration. Among those options were the following: a major renovation of both the current middle school and high school facilities; building a new middle school on a new site and complete a renovation of the current high school facility; building both a new middle school and high school on the same

site connected by shared support facilities; and building a new high school and renovating the current high school for middle grades education. While each of these options have some positive and negative considerations, they all have the common thread of major additional capital debt for the corporation. Thus, the Board will have to seek a solution consistent with the financial ability of the school corporation.

The community study committee recommends that the school corporation:

1. Maintain annual estimates of future student populations and their enrollment within the grade configuration of the school corporation.
2. Continue the sound custodial and facility maintenance program that has extended the life of the current school facilities.
3. Continue to evaluate, develop and implement sound educational programs throughout the grade configuration of the corporation to ensure program equity across the grades of the corporation.
4. Plan for the discontinued use of the Hobart Middle School facility.
5. Plan for the construction of a new Hobart High School facility.
6. Plan for the renovation and infrastructure updates in the current Hobart High School and use that facility for middle grades education in the future.
7. Plan for the renovation and infrastructure updates at the George Earle, Ridge View and Liberty elementary schools.

TABLE 17

HOBART ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
ENROLLMENT CAPACITY & UTILIZATION

<u>School</u>	Total Capacity prior to <u>Prime Time</u>	Total Capacity with <u>Prime Time</u>	2001-02 <u>Enrollment</u>	% Utilized prior to <u>Prime Time</u>	% Utilized with <u>Prime Time</u>
Joan Martin	775	641	634	81.8%	98.9%
George Earle	425	351	338	79.5%	96.3%
Liberty	450	376	342	76.0%	90.6%
Ridge View	325	270	249	76.6%	92.2%

Source: School City of Hobart (Feasibility Study - April 2002)

TABLE 18

HOBART MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT CAPACITY & UTILIZATION

School	Actual* Capacity (%)	Functional* Capacity (%)	Room Utilization	2001-02 Enrollment	Current Actual Utilization	Current Functional Utilization
Middle School	1,365 (62.7)	1,024 (83.6)	74.5%	896	65.6%	87.5%
High School	1,610 (64.0)	1,208 (85.2)	75.8%	1,073	66.6%	88.8%

* Actual capacity is based upon the number of approved pupil stations for the general and special purpose classrooms. Functional Capacity of the general and special purpose classrooms is based on a standard of 75% of the total number of approved pupil stations.

Source: School City of Hobart (Feasibility Study - April 2002)

TABLE 19
GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>DATES OF ADDITIONS</u>	<u>GENERAL ASSESSMENT*</u>
Joan Martin	1994	N/A	Adequate - 20 plus years of functional life
George Earle	1962	1978	Adequate - 20 plus years of functional life
Liberty	1955	1958, 1968, 1980	Adequate - 20 plus years of functional life
Ridgeview	1955	1957	Adequate - 20 plus years of functional life
Middle School	1923	1939, 1953, 1961 1967, 1971, 1981	Inadequate - Discontinue Use
High School	1957	1962, 1964, 1969 1970, 1974, 1977 1978, 1980, 1984	Inadequate - Remodel

* General Assessment classifies each facility into one of four categories:

ADEQUATE - 20 PLUS YEARS OF FUNCTIONAL LIFE: Facility is generally structurally sound, well maintained, and contains spaces that are appropriate for a modern educational program. Its functional student capacity provides for effective and efficient educational programming.

MARGINALLY ADEQUATE IN THE SHORT TERM: Facility may be generally structurally sound and well maintained, but contains spaces that are less than appropriate for educational programming into the 21st century and shows the need for attention to several areas that go beyond normal cosmetic attention. Such a facility often requires extensive study to determine its feasibility for remodel or discontinued use in the long term. Its functional capacity is marginal in terms of effective and efficient educational programming.

INADEQUATE - REMODEL: Facility is generally structurally sound, but contained spaces that are less than appropriate for educational programming into the 21st century and shows the need for attention to several areas as well as the need for immediate attention to major cosmetic renovation. Its functional capacity after remodeling would provide for effective and efficient educational programming.

INADEQUATE - DISCONTINUE USE: Facility has outlived its usefulness as an appropriate educational facility and generally would require more capital expenditure to remodel than to replace the facility. Further, remodeling would yield spaces less than appropriate for the delivery of modern educational programming into the 21st century.

Source: School City of Hobart (Feasibility Study - April 2002)

TABLE 20
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

<u>SEX</u>	<u>PERSONS</u>
Male	12,313
Female	13,050
 <u>AGE</u>	
<5	1,537
5-9	1,634
10-14	1,703
15-19	1,735
20-24	1,545
25-34	3,458
35-44	4,082
45-54	3,500
55-59	1,282
60-64	1,062
65-74	1,933
75-84	1,451
>85	441
Median	37.7
<18 (%)	5,973 (23.6)
>65 (%)	3,825 (15.1)
Total	25,363

Source: 2000 Census of Population and Housing

TABLE 21
EDUCATIONAL DATA

	<u>ENROLLMENT</u>	<u>%</u>
Total Enrolled	6,098	
Pre-school	394	6.5
Kindergarten	264	4.3
Elementary/Middle School (Grades 1-8)	2,863	46.9
High School (Grades 9-12)	1,375	22.5
College	1,202	19.7
<u>ATTAINMENT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>%</u>
<9 th Grade	724	4.2
9 th - 12 th	1,972	11.5
High School Graduate	6,906	40.3
Some College	4,191	24.5
Associate Degree	898	5.2
Bachelor's Degree	1,681	9.8
Graduate/Prof. Degree	758	4.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

TABLE 22

ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART FACILITIES

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
1995-96	223	291	289	253	241	255	284	300	282	306	316	307	271
1996-97	254	259	284	279	237	248	249	278	306	288	284	291	288
1997-98	227	288	270	283	281	242	255	257	275	306	280	278	277
1998-99	223	246	268	265	283	294	246	271	264	293	311	269	261
1999-00	221	250	250	271	263	287	287	255	276	263	281	302	269
2000-01	241	263	237	259	285	265	327	284	244	290	268	272	291
2001-02	251	271	242	242	270	293	283	323	290	262	283	268	260
2002-03	249	289	276	258	242	286	299	254	277	299	254	277	269
2003-04	263	295	270	266	241	255	255	287	288	309	303	248	254

Year 2003 projected
 Source: School City of Hobart

TABLE 23

ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART FACILITIES
BY SCHOOL TYPE

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>K-5</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1994	1546	878	1177	3601
1995	1552	866	1200	3618
1996	1561	833	1151	3545
1997	1591	787	1141	3519
1998	1579	781	1134	3494
1999	1542	818	1115	3475
2000	1550	855	1121	3526
2001	1569	896	1073	3538
2002	1600	830	1099	3529
2003	1590	830	1114	3534

Year 2003 projected

Source: School City of Hobart

TABLE 24

2000 ASSESSED VALUATION
PER STUDENT COMPARISON

<u>SCHOOL CORPORATION</u>	<u>AV/STUDENT</u>	<u>TAX RATE</u>
Whiting	\$ 122,118	6.19
East Chicago	89,008	7.67
Griffith	34,829	6.49
Merrillville	62,444	7.19
Munster	55,761	6.99
Lake Central	54,893	5.45
Highland	48,453	6.83
Crown Point	43,540	6.28
Hanover	37,268	5.57
Tri-Creek	36,339	7.36
Gary	35,948	7.74
Hammond	28,746	10.39
Hobart	22,841	9.98
Lake Ridge	21,445	8.91
River Forest	15,454	9.17
Lake Station	15,695	8.66

Source: School City of Hobart, 2002