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For the Smart Library Planning

IDT 688 Facility Design and Network Planning

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The current Conestoga Valley Middle School was built in 1996 and occupied in December 1996. The needs at the elementary level were part of the district wide building plan for the location of the new middle school construction site. The old Leola Elementary Building would have needed to be demolished and replaced to meet with current building standards. The long range district facility plan included renovating the middle school building in Leola to accommodate an elementary school and relocating the Middle School to the Horseshoe /Mount Sidney Road Area to create a high school and middle school campus. Our district has seen tremendous growth in population due mainly to the construction boom of the 1990's. Each elementary school has had a recent renovation and the High School has just completed their renovation project.

In the spring of 2006 there were rumors that the Middle School would need to be enlarged to accommodate this rise in enrollment. These rumors were confirmed when my building principal asked for volunteers from each area to serve on a facility review committee. This committee created goals for a new facility. We reviewed what was working in our building and what needed to be changed or upgraded to accommodate an increase in population. Of major concern in our building for all staff is the overcrowding problem with our hallways. The traffic congestion at various times of day and the difficulty in the stairwells played a major role in the ideas for the new design. It would

seem that adding a third floor that mirrored the current wings of our building is the best layout but the least advantageous to our goals of reducing the hallway congestion. Our building utilizes a team teaching approach and for each 125 students there are five core classes. Each core team is on a wing of the building. The building was created for four core teams and enough flex space to accommodate a spilt team of seventh and eighth graders in a team on 125. The population of 625 students is currently the maximum that is easily accommodated by our building.

Other concerns were in the special areas and in the office/nurse/guidance area. Each of these areas would see more traffic and the need for more staffing that would require additional teaching spaces if our student population goes over 625. We are already using the auditorium for chorus and band rehearsals because the current music rehearsal space is not large enough to house the students involved in these programs.

Each of these areas of concern was addressed in the Facility Committee Report recommendations. It was the plan to then work with an architectural firm to design the new space based upon these requirements and goals.

The projection of increase enrollment did not happen due to several reason's one of them being the decline in the new housing market. The current building is adequate for the current student population but there are still issues of needs that could be addressed. The problem with finding solutions that fit reasonably well into a schools budget is truly the creative

part of education. As you will see in my accompanying presentation some of the library needs have been solved in a creative way by our technology department. We are unable to build new spaces without a construction project but we are able to work creatively to solve our space issues.

One of the creative endeavors includes looking for grant money to the technology dreams come true. I will be applying for a LSTA grant for this coming school year. If my grant application is awarded I will have available a laptop cart for use with my integrated research lessons. This laptop cart would be available for use in the library and in the classrooms that are working on research projects.

My Middle School Library operates on a fully flexed schedule and we are usually booked weeks in advance by teachers wishing to collaborate on lessons involving research. Our building has two computer labs that are also available to be scheduled to meet students' technology needs. My faculty usually schedules three days in the library to begin the research process and then schedules two or more days in the computer lab for students to create their final projects. These major research projects usually are collaborative efforts of several core team teachers for example a Science/Communications Project or a History/Communications Projects. Students may spend two periods per day working on the project with two different teachers on their team. The projects have been highly successful and have been fine tuned each year by the Core team teachers. These projects also have a great deal of support from the Department Supervisors as a means to accomplishing PSSA Standards, Research 1.8 Standards and by

collaborating the teachers make the best use of curricular time. The library is utilized also for small research projects that help build the skills necessary for the larger projects that are completed in the second semester. Each team brings students to the library once a month to support our building literacy goals thus enabling students to borrow free reading material. The library is also a place where study hall students gather to complete assignments, locate reading materials or socialize. We keep monthly statistics about the number of students both in classes and from study halls that utilize the library space.

The Library Department also surveyed students and staff as a part of the curriculum review cycle and found that everyone wanted more access to the library. The only way to accomplish this is to make the library larger and to increase the library staff so that there are more people available to serve the needs of the faculty and staff. The library is a vital, energetic, dynamic, engaging environment that serves the needs of its community to the best of its ability. The Middle School Library is staffed with one full time librarian and one part time Library Aide.

In my dream project, the next step in the facility design process is to work with an architectural firm to create the space. These firms are SME Subject Matter Experts on ADA requirements, designing to accommodate heating and cooling systems, understand the land elevation problems of water tables, rock bases and other unknown variables. They will know the current trends in building materials and will take your suggestions into their planning. Eventually, even the color scheme will be chosen and you might have

a choice between red and blue. I have found they do not always understand how a design would effect the teaching environment. For example in the Smoketown Elementary Project the architect thought a second floor reading balcony would be a nice space for an elementary library. Supervision of a second floor space never entered her mind. Also the library shelving company sent a specialist to work with me to design the new shelving and she saw no problem with eight foot high book shelves in an elementary building which would fill the entire floor plan with shelving and no sight light from one end of the room to the other for the library staff. Sometimes their vision and your vision are not the same. If you are lucky your voice will be heard but if not and specifications are sent out for bid without your input you may end up with shelving like mine in a middle school library. I have metal shelving. But the shelving comes with metal books ends attached with plastic pieces that over time become brittle and break off as you slide them into place. Sometimes just looking at them strange will cause them to break. The bookshelves also have what is called a kick plate at the bottom. It too is metal and makes a lovely noise every time your foot touches the plate, in a middle school it is at least twenty times per hours. It is like the chiming of the bookshelves. Both of these things are embarrassing for the young people who use the library. This point illustrates that good specifications are important.

So I am dreaming big! Pretending that the building project is a go! And that there will be funding in the plan to create a LIBRARY Computer lab/Teaching space!

I would envision partner projects because most research projects are individual or partnered. The seating should include space for print resources as well as online resources. Students would be using online tools to collaborate as well as shared network files to share their projects with the class and the teacher. Students should be able to access their files from anywhere in the building, in any of the computer labs or the new library laptop lab space. The chairs should be adjustable height, and comfortable. The computers will have the Open Office Suite, Audacity and OPAC as well as Adobe reader and window media player available.

Open Source Software for libraries like Course Management (Moodle), Graphics, Mind Mapping, Multimedia, Utilities, Web Authoring, Web Browser Firefox, and Wikis. These tools provide opportunities for students to utilize the software both at home and at school. These software pieces appeal to a generation of technology driven students who create their own content via sites like Xanga, Facebook, Second Life etc... Students have no problem uploading their pictures to the internet to share with friends or creating stories and writing about their events. Finding others who have the same interests and enjoy the same pastimes has become essential to their online life. Marketing of pets the Webkinz to children only encourage younger and younger students to venture online to interact with others. We need to appeal to their creativity and open the doors of opportunity for them. Not say "well you don't have that software at home, so you can't work on this outside of class."

And Web tools... Easy Bib, Weebly, Podbean, Gabcast, QuickThumbnail, Picasa, Quizlet, Google Pages, SlideShare, Google Video, floor planner and others create an opportunity for students to become producers of content and not just consumers.

My special focus is not a piece of software or hardware to be utilized but a philosophy of design. It is part of my philosophy of librarianship. Access to information is at the center of my beliefs. The more services that can be provided to students and the better we can teach them to utilize those sources in their everyday life, the better they will be able to face the challenges of the future. My core focus on Universal Design and access to free and subscription online tools is the center of my library program.

Creating space that is comfortable for all types of users and a philosophical belief that every one should have access to information, resources and facilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. To make your student services accessible and useful to everyone, employ the principles of universal design. Universal design truly means looking toward a broader range of abilities and trying to provide services that will ensure everyone's access to information. There are designs you can make that ensure access to print resources and computer resources. There are policies that you can create that will ensure services are provided to those who are unable to utilize your facility or your resources. Listening to your clientele to provide specialized resources that are also middle school appropriate is also part of the philosophy for example the Manga Collection in my library supports a small but avid readership.

Sometimes just being willing to make accommodations or offering services that will help a student can be a welcoming and refreshing change.

This is also why the library does not need to be called a media center but an information center. The place you can go to 24/7 to get the answers you need when you need them.