

MSAD #1 DISTRICT WIDE FACILITIES RIGHT-SIZING & REPURPOSING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



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BACKGROUND / WORK TO DATE

Q: How did this process begin?

A: In 2015 Superintendent Carpenter was tasked with developing a Capital Improvement Plan. This effort led to research on the condition of the District's buildings and the realization that some of MSAD #1's schools were much larger than needed to efficiently deliver education to its students.

Q: What steps has the District taken to gather input?

A: The administration held several meetings with the School Board and staff to discuss the District's facilities. Additionally, the Board chair sent letters to all surrounding districts to collaborate on facilities development but received no responses. A Strategic Planning Committee was convened to consider the issues facing the District and the various options (see below for more detail on options) that had been developed.

MEETING DATES FOR RIGHT-SIZING/RE-PURPOSING:

Board of Directors:

November 12, 2015
December 9, 2015
January 13, 2016
April 13, 2016
August 3, 2016
January 11, 2017

Staff Presentation and Discussion	November 15, 2016
Transportation Staff	November 16, 2016
PIHS Staff	December 6, 2016
PIMS Staff	December 13, 2016
Pine/Zippel/Mapleton Staff	December 15, 2016
Final Presentation/Discussion	January 20, 2017
Public Forum/UMPI	March 16, 2017
Public Meeting/Update	June 22, 2017

Strategic Planning Committee:

February 27, 2017
March 20, 2017

Building and Grounds Committee:

December 14, 2015
March 21, 2016
September 12, 2016
November 2, 2016
December 14, 2016
January 5, 2017
Public Forum March 16, 2017

Q: How many options were considered?

A: Many options to reduce the size of schools were considered. Some of this can be found on the District website, www.sad1.org. The following is a partial list of options considered:

- Fix all our current schools and maintain the status quo.
- Move the students from Pine Street Elementary and Zippel Elementary into Presque Isle Middle School (PIMS) and then move PIMS students to Presque Isle High School (PIHS). Administration would move to Zippel.
- Turn PIHS into PreK to 8 and move PIHS to the current PIMS location.
- Build a new regional High School.
- Build a new High School at the school farm.
- Build a new elementary school as an addition to PIMS.
- Build a new elementary school on a location to be determined.
- Expand Pine Street into a Pre-K to 5 and close Zippel.

Q: The Strategic Planning Committee met many times, did they make a recommendation?

A: After reviewing the options developed, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended closing Pine Street Elementary and using Zippel as an Administrative building, including Adult Education. The Committee recommended that PIMS become a Pre-K to Grade 5 School and PIHS be separated into two schools-- a High School and a Middle School. It is believed that this strategy would normalize the cost per student across the District, allow the square foot per student cost to approach State Guidelines, and allow Mapleton Elementary and the new elementary school at PIMS to be more comparable in space, with both sharing a Pre-K to Grade 5 educational model in one building.

STATUS OF FUNDING SOURCES / REGIONALIZATION

Q: Has the District submitted requests for State funding to pay for new schools?

A: Yes, the District has explored many avenues for State funding:

1. The District applied with MSAD #45 (Washburn) in April 2017 for a regional, consolidated 9-16 high school. We were notified in June that our application was not selected to proceed to the next round of evaluation. This is a pilot program and the response gave very little detail on why we were not selected.
2. The District also applied for a State-funded new school or major renovation under the Major Capital School Construction Program. Selection and ranking will be announced in March-April 2018 (per the Department of Education website proposed timeline). If the District ranks highest on the State's list it would most likely be a 6- to 8-year process before construction is completed. Schools ranking farther down the list would be longer, as much as 15 years.
3. Many avenues are being pursued with the State for minor renovation funding and/or down-sizing. At this point there are no programs open for application and the State is giving no indication of future funding for programs.

Q: Has the District approached other school systems in the area to cooperate?

A: Yes. The Board Chair sent a letter to all surrounding districts in the winter of 2016, but none responded. We followed up in the winter of 2017 because of the regional 9-16 high school pilot program referenced earlier. Only Washburn expressed interest. As mentioned earlier, we applied for this pilot program and we were not selected.

Q: Is it true Washburn is closing its high school? Any others?

A: No, Washburn is reviewing its costs to operate the entire school district and the high school. One approach was a local committee was formed to consider the high school, but the committee advised against closing. We are aware of no other districts who are considering closing a high school.

Q. Do the new referendums (State Budget) that passed mean more revenue for schools?

A. The new State budget requires that a portion (50%) of the education subsidy be utilized for property tax reduction. Other portions of the funding are directed to specific programs by the State. These funds are being utilized as directed and will not directly benefit any school construction or renovations.

BUILDINGS, ENROLLMENT, AND OTHER DATA

Q: Why are we considering changing schools or closing schools at all?

A: MSAD #1 administration, staff, and Board of Directors do not want to close a school, but *do* desire to improve education in a fiscally responsible way. The evaluation of a school closure stemmed from a desire to sustain and improve education and to look at the efficiency of individual facilities.

The District looked at ways to increase investment in students and classrooms. One way to increase student funding is to decrease costs in other areas. As a separate project the District was drafting a Capital Improvement Plan for its buildings. During this planning project it began to appear that the buildings were larger than needed to accommodate the current student enrollment. This led to analysis of building size, capital needs, cost to operate, historical enrollment, etc.

Table 1 (below) shows operations cost and student capacity data for District schools. Two things stand out:

1. PIMS and PIHS are more costly to operate per student.
2. Pine Street is the District’s most crowded building.

TABLE 1: EXISTING CONFIGURATION									
School	Square Feet (sf)	Annual Operations (2016-2017)*	Student Population	Cost per Student	MSO Population**	Square Feet per MSO	State Guideline (sf)	% of State Guideline	cost per sf
Mapleton Elementary (PreK-5)	45,000	\$196,215.69	230	\$853.11	213	211	140	151%	\$4.36
Pine Street Elementary (PreK-2)	33,750	\$179,333.10	347	\$516.81	265	127	140	91%	\$5.31
Zippel Elementary (3-5)	49,600	\$196,343.08	265	\$740.92	265	187	140	134%	\$3.96
Presque Isle Middle School (6-8)	100,000	\$491,407.59	345	\$1,424.37	345	290	160	181%	\$4.91
Presque Isle High School (9-12)	199,000	\$693,722.48	561	\$1,236.58	561	355	185	192%	\$3.49
Total Area all Schools		427,350							
Total Annual Operations Cost		\$1,757,021.94							
Average Cost per SF of area		\$4.11							

* Includes custodians, water/sewer, refuse, snow removal, phone, supplies, electricity, and propane/heating oil

** MSO= Most Students at Once. Since Pre-K and Kindergarten are half-day programs only one-half of the Pre-K and K students are in the building at one time

Table 2 (below) shows the effect of the Strategic Committee’s recommendation to close Pine Street, and to stop using Zippel for K-12 education, consolidating the two elementary schools into PIMS and consolidating the Middle School and High School at PIHS.

TABLE 2: PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION								
School	Square Feet (sf)	Annual Operations (2016-2017)*	Student Population	Cost per Student	MSO Population**	Square Feet per MSO	State Guideline (sf)	% of State Guideline
Mapleton Elementary (PreK-5)	45,000	\$196,215.69	230	\$853.11	213	211	140	151%
Pine Street Elementary (PreK-2)	CLOSED							
Zippel Elementary (3-5)	CLOSED							
Presque Isle Middle School (PreK-5)	100,000	\$491,407.59	612	\$802.95	530	189	140	135%
Presque Isle High School (6-12)	199,000	\$693,722.48	906	\$765.70	906	220	185	119%
Total Area all Schools	344,000							
Total Annual Operations Cost		\$1,381,345.76						
Average Cost per SF of area	\$4.02							

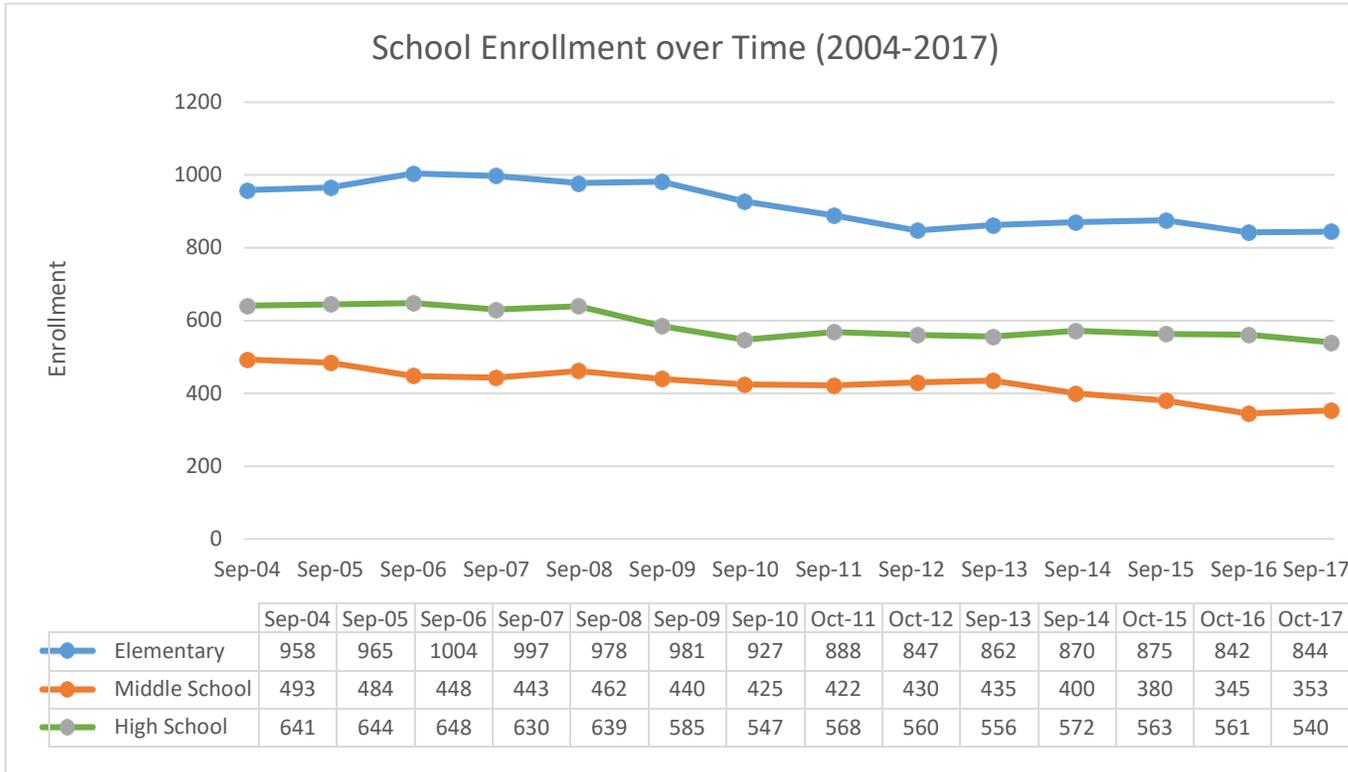
* Includes custodians, water/sewer, refuse, snow removal, phone, supplies, electricity, and propane/heating oil

** MSO= Most Students at Once. Since Pre-K and Kindergarten are half-day programs only one-half of the Pre-K and K students are in the building at one time

The result is that our cost per student would be standardized across the District, square feet per student would approach State guidelines, Mapleton Elementary and the new elementary school at PIMS would be more comparable in space, and both would share a Pre-K to 5 educational model in one building.

Q: How fast is enrollment decreasing?

A: Over the past 13 years, MSAD #1 has averaged a total enrollment decrease of approximately 1.7% per year. Below is a chart of the historic enrollments from 2004-2017.



Q: What are the projected enrollments based upon 1.7% per year decline?

A: Below is a table that extrapolates a 1.7% decline over the next ten years.

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028
Elementary Schools	844	830	816	802	788	775	761	749	736	723	711
Middle Schools	353	347	341	335	330	324	318	313	308	303	297
High School	540	531	522	513	504	496	487	479	471	463	455

RIGHT-SIZING OPTIONS AND MAPLETON ELEMENTARY

Q: Why didn't the District consider closing Mapleton Elementary?

A: The District did consider closing Mapleton as a potential option. The right-sizing and repurposing is a district-wide review to develop a 20-year plan that maximizes our limited funds for maintenance, capital-improvement, and new construction. In addition, we are working with Oak Point Associates to summarize, verify, and evaluate our work to date and any other items we may not have considered. Please note that the community where the school is located must also vote to close the school. In summary these are some of the considerations:

MAPLETON ELEMENTARY:

- Built in 1975, it is the second newest building in the District.
- Operates in a Kindergarten to Grade 5 model that is currently the desired grade leveling we want in an elementary school.
- Approximately 246 students attend Mapleton Elementary (2017-2018).
 - Closing Mapleton and moving that many students into Presque Isle would not address, or would create, these concerns:
 - Require an addition of at least 40,000 square feet of space (the size of Zippel). New construction costs would be a minimum of \$8,000,000 and would not be a savings to the District because the operational cost at Mapleton Elementary would be transferred to the new building.
 - PreK to 5th grade is our desired model so for equity it makes more sense to transition Presque Isle and Westfield to this model.
 - Even moving one grade to the Middle School (for instance 5th grade) does not achieve our goal of having Pre-K to 5th grade elementary schools throughout the District.
 - Even, if PIMS was able to be realigned to take all 5th grade students, the District would still need to operate Pine Street and Zippel. Furthermore, it would leave PIHS significantly under capacity.
 - The additional ride time is not in the best educational interest of these students.
 - Runs the risk that Maine DOE would support a separation of these communities from MSAD #1. (The District is attempting to cost estimate this scenario, but with so many variables it has become a challenge. In summary Mapleton, Castle Hill, and Chapman have about 40 students per grade level. That could result in losing an estimated 240 students at the elementary grade level and 520 district-wide.
 - An area as large as MSAD #1 lends itself better to two elementary schools based upon current enrollments. (Without question one large "super" elementary school for all 800+ students has some merit but cost and location don't seem to fit our situation. A school that large could cost as much as \$25,000,000 and then the location to best serve all the students would probably not be near any existing schools.

PINE STREET ELEMENTARY:

- Built in 1954, it is the oldest building in the District (except for one wing of PIHS built in 1948).
- Is overcrowded, with 128 square feet per student compared to the State guideline of 140.
- Does not have a library, art room, or computer area. All other MSAD #1 elementary schools have these educational spaces.
- The roof alone could necessitate a \$2,000,000 project. Even if repaired, the building is too small for the current use.

ZIPPEL ELEMENTARY:

- Built in 1959, it is newer than Pine Street and PIHS, but older than PIMS and Mapleton Elementary.
 - The age of this building is a concern and it will require some capital repairs. However, as long as the District operates five schools there does not seem to be enough money to make the needed capital investments at Zippel.
- Operates at 187 square feet per student which is 23 feet less than Mapleton but above the 140 recommended by the State.
 - The problem is that only 2 classes are open for use. This prevents an entire grade from moving into the school. The District does not want to split grades within Presque Isle. (Zippel appears to have room for approximately 45 more students but in order to move a full grade we would need room for a minimum of 90 students.)
- Proximity to PIHS is an asset. The building may be of better use as administrative space, adult education, some portions of CTE, etc. The District has requested that Oak Point Associates evaluate the cost and educational impacts of Zippel as an administrative facility.

PRESQUE ISLE MIDDLE SCHOOL (PIMS):

- PIMS was renovated, with an addition, in 2005. The original building was renovated to some extent, but the original heating system remained and we may need to update that system soon.
- Operates at 290 square feet per student which is 130 feet more than the State recommends.
- If all Pine Street and Zippel Students attended it would operate at 189 square feet per student (49 feet more than the State recommends). *See table on page 6.*
- Physically, one of the best schools in the District but at 10 years since the renovation and addition, capital maintenance is a growing need.

PRESQUE ISLE HIGH SCHOOL (PIHS):

- Built in many phases, but clearly the second oldest building in the District.
- Operates at 365 square feet per student, which is almost double the State recommendation of 185 for high school students. Even removing 39,000 square feet from the calculation for CTE leaves these number at 285 per student, 100 square feet more than the State recommends.
- Without State funding, replacement is financially not a viable option. If the State did fund a new high school, it would only fund a building that

met State square feet per student requirements-this would be a much smaller than our current high school.

- In the short-term, capital improvements could allow for 20+ more years of operation.
- The two-gym design is a major asset. Any State-funded project would most likely not include a two-gym high school.
- CTE (Vocational) is housed in the building. The combined location of the HS and CTE programs is an asset and efficient. (The State will also be hesitant to construct a building with CTE unless other CTE centers were to collocate.)
- Relocating the middle school students into a separate area of PIHS would improve the efficiency of the building on per student cost. (See updated layouts by Oak Point Associates.) The revised area would be 220 square feet per student. Removing the 39,000 for CTE would lower this to 176 per student.
- Overall PIHS is considered the District's most versatile building due to its size. However, it is also the most expensive to keep up due to its size and disproportionate area per student.

Q: The above information is good but the data shared shows that Mapleton should be more closely considered, because...

1. The average cost per student is more than double at Mapleton than at Pine Street.

A: True, except that it doesn't take into consideration that Pine Street is overcrowded and lacks a library, art room and computer space. Part of the right-sizing initiative is creating equity between the educational environments of District schools.

2. Mapleton is a larger school than Pine Street with fewer students.

A: Again, this is true, but that doesn't acknowledge that Pine Street is over-crowded. Since Mapleton is in better shape and has capacity the District could consider busing more students from Presque Isle to Mapleton. However, the District held a meeting in the spring of 2016 where parents were offered the ability to send children to other elementary schools within the district. No parents requested a transfer, even when the District shared data on smaller class sizes. This underscores that class size, although important, is just one factor in how parents choose or evaluate a school.

In addition, closing Mapleton does nothing to help balance class sizes or return the District entirely to a K to 5 elementary model.

Finally, Mapleton has the third greatest capacity, after PIMS and PIHS. Both the Middle School and the High School have more room and changes to grades 6 to 12 are borne by all five MSAD #1 communities because those students already attend the same schools.

3. Mapleton has a smaller number of students per classroom.

A: The District tries to balance class sizes but parental choice always takes precedence. Right-sizing is expected to reduce this discrepancy.

4. Mapleton is getting "affluent" parents from Presque Isle taking their students to Mapleton.

A: MSAD #1 has a parental choice model at this time, and the District will bus any student to any elementary school. This is intended to remove many of the socioeconomic barriers to attending a school farther away from home. There is no data that school has that shows a

high number of parents driving or sending their kids to Mapleton. In fact, the number is about equal of those that choose to come in PI from Mapleton and those from PI that go out to Mapleton.

5. Major Capital repairs should show the cost of all our buildings not just the big project at Pine Street.

A: Agreed. We have asked Oak Point Associates to give a 20-year estimate for all 5 schools. This is only an estimate but based upon consistent review and comparison. This will be made available soon.

Additionally, the cost of repair at Pine Street is only part of the problem. Pine is overcrowded and the lack of space leads to sacrifices in educational programming that is currently provided in the other elementary schools. (Computer Lab, library, art, music, etc.).

6. Why does the District want to bus students from Presque Isle to Mapleton?

A: This idea was shared as one way to balance class sizes across the District. Right-sizing is focused on equalizing the elementary models of all five communities. Building new schools is by far the best option but unless State funding is obtained, it is not cost effective. The models being considered were based upon minimal to no State support.

7. A perception exists that Presque Isle subsidizes the other communities. So, isn't closing Pine Street and leaving Mapleton Elementary just another example of this inequity?

A: Under State school funding formulas each of the five MSAD #1 communities pays local taxes equal to its percent valuation, which is equitable both by valuation and enrollment. The District is focused more on educational equity across programs and quality of educational space. Unless the overcrowding at Pine Street is alleviated the educational environments are not equitable. The way that seems to make the most educational and fiscal sense is to move Pre-K to Grade 5 to PIMS and renovate PIHS to be both a middle school and a high school.

8. If grades 6 to 12 are all bused to Presque Isle why not just bus grades PreK to 5 in to Presque Isle from Mapleton and Castle Hill?

A: The distance of busing is a difficult item to determine with specificity. However, MSAD #1 tends to believe that as students get older longer busing distances are less problematic. We are trying to sustain local elementary schools. We feel it is better for the students and the communities. Without question that brings challenges. But our administrators and staff work continually to adapt and improve. It would be our suggestion that two comparable elementary schools (one in Presque Isle and one in Mapleton) would provide the most equity.

Q: Does the right-sizing and repurposing plan encompass all of the District's grade levels or is it just a quick fix?

A: This planning process is intended to allow for 20 years of operation. It is MSAD #1's hope that during those 20 years that State funding for a new school would be obtained. However, State funding is highly competitive and still has some local cost. This strategic planning is helping us continue to operate for the next 20 years in a cost-effective and educationally sound fashion.

[The approach was to look at the current buildings, determine the needs (maintenance and capital), consider the space available, consider educational models as a District, and then determine the best educational plan moving forward for the use of buildings so that the limited

funds can be best directed to education, instead of toward building maintenance.]

Q: If administration, adult education, and other services are being moved out of PIHS, where will they go?

A: Oak Point Associates is reviewing these options to give a cost comparison. Two options that we are currently considering are using Zippel for administration or renting space. Renting is an option but many of the spaces would require improvements. Using Zippel as administrative space also leaves room for flexibility in the event enrollments start to increase.

Q. Has MSAD #1 considered making PIHS a Pre-K to 8 facility, and moving grades 9-12 to PIMS?

A: Yes, but the cost to redesign PIHS for elementary students would be much higher than what is being proposed currently.