

Frequently Asked Questions about Hawthorn's Educational Facilities Master Plan

Why didn't the district know this was going to happen?

The district has been experiencing growth for many years. We work with a demographer to help us predict the growth patterns in our district boundaries so that we can be prepared for new students and families. We began to experience much higher than projected growth during the 2015-2016 school year, though, and the projections for the future have increased to reflect this. Additionally, we have new housing developments within the boundary area of the district, which adds to the increasing enrollment projections.

Please visit <http://www.vernonhills.org/index.aspx?NID=175>

Why haven't we done anything about overcrowding before now?

The district has taken several recent steps to resolve the space issues at Hawthorn:

- * Reorganization and implementation of district boundaries in order to utilize all buildings to their functional capacity
- * Moving our Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten programs from Aspen and Elementary North, where they had been previously housed, to the Lincoln building in Mundelein

Elementary North

- * The removal of the Employee Daycare to free up 4 classrooms
- * PE in the cafeteria

Townline/Dual Language

- * TL Enrichment on the stage

- * TL/DL Health on a cart
- * TL Art in a fitness room
- * TL Music on a cart
- * DL enrichment moved to learning center office space
- * Both conference rooms in main office converted for TL LBS1 classes

Elementary South

- * Installation of 2 portable Art classrooms
- * Music on the stage
- * Unused cafeteria warming kitchen converted into a Music practice space
- * Story room in the library converted to LBS1 classroom
- * ELL and Special Education teachers sharing classrooms

Aspen Elementary

- * Elementary South using the small gym at Aspen for PE classes
- * Band/Orchestra on the stage
- * Music and or PE in the fitness room
- * Library Office/Storage converted to ELL classroom

Middle South

- * PE/Health in the hallways
- * Chorus in Lunchroom
- * Writing on a cart
- * Lunch times nearing capacity

Middle North

- * PE in Lunchroom

[Did reorganizing our district and implementing boundaries cause the overcrowding?](#)

No, reorganization did not cause this issue to occur. Continued growth at unexpected levels across the district has caused the crowding issues faster than projected and most buildings are experiencing the effects. In fact, reorganizing allowed all of our schools to be utilized to their functional capacities.

[Did grandfathering cause the overcrowding?](#)

No, grandfathering did not cause the issue. Grandfathering has resulted in a few extra classrooms being needed for a short period of time in some buildings. All buildings are at or very near capacity and there wouldn't have been room to have grandfathered students go to their new boundary schools. Continued growth at unexpected levels across the district has caused the crowding issues faster than projected and most buildings are experiencing the effects.

[Where is the Dual Language expansion conversation in relationship to a Master Facilities Plan?](#)

There have been parent surveys over the past few years on this topic. The feedback has been positive for an expansion of Dual Language programming into a middle school setting to preserve the middle school experience for students, as well as, provide an extension of the philosophy of Dual Language. We are currently looking at our space in the middle schools and our staffing plan to assess the viability of this expansion.

[Who was representing Dual Language on the Core Team for the Master Facilities Plan?](#)

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction represents program needs within the district. She provides a voice for the Dual Language program.

Who will make the decision about what plan will be implemented in order to resolve the overcrowding at Hawthorn?

The Board of Education will make the final decision on how to resolve the issue of continued growth and its impact on space needs. This will be done with input and feedback from the Core Team and the community.

What will happen if we do nothing?

There would be major impacts on class sizes and program offerings. The district could apply for a Physical Education waiver from the state for a two-year period of time in order to minimize the impact on our gym facilities for a short time. Losing full day kindergarten, the reduction of some arts/music programming and having to continue our lease in Mundelein would all be possibilities should we not engage with a comprehensive plan to address our growth.

Why did Hawthorn initiate Full Day Kindergarten if we were experiencing crowded buildings?

At the time we were planning for the reorganization of the district, we already had three kindergarten options in the district. Extended Day Kindergarten for at-risk students was at Elementary North, South and the School of Dual Language. Tuition-Based Full Day Kindergarten was at Elementary North and South. These programs were intended to support our students with early intervention in order to support their achievement. Because of these programs already being in existence, the overall increase of kindergarten classrooms and teachers in order to implement Full Day Kindergarten for all students was only 4 additional classrooms across the entire district. Doing this not only supported the community's commitment to early intervention services, it provided those services at all of our elementary buildings instead of just some of the buildings. Full Day Kindergarten also saves parents money on day-care. Removing the Full Day program would not be able to solve our growth issues by itself.

Won't more people want to move here if we do all this and won't it cause more overcrowding?

People are already moving to our great community. This may create more interest in our community, but we already have a great reputation. We have also planned for the series C (High Growth) model to prepare for that level of growth within these plans.

What are these new housing developments we are hearing about? Can we say we don't want them?

The new developments are at Cuneo Mansion Property (128 single family homes), Woodland Chase (new single family homes currently within the boundaries of Hawthorn 73 and Lincolnshire 103), Gregg's Landing Riviera Estates (61 single family custom homes) and Mellody Farms (mixed use housing development). We have shared the concern that these developments will impact our need for space. The district does receive some minimal impact fees, but these are not large enough to build a building. We do not have the ability to refuse to take these students or stop their development. Once these developments are complete, we will receive additional tax dollars from the new houses, however, this money cannot help us with building additional space now.

Isn't there room at Townline?

There isn't space at the Townline building. We have three classrooms between Townline and Dual Language that have been repurposed and will need to be used for their original purpose in the next two years. Please see above.

Are we doing enough? Can we bring the Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten programming back into our district schools if we are making more space?

All of the Facilities Master Plans include this programming being moved back into district owned facilities.

[Will any of these plans address future curricular needs of the district, in order to prepare our students for their lives beyond Hawthorn?](#)

At this time, enrollment increases are the primary concern for the Master Plan recommendations. However, the Core Team, Administrative Team and Faculty, have all expressed the need to update and add on to our current facilities, spaces which will be conducive to skill development for the future. For example: Inquiry, Research, Design, Exploration, Entrepreneurial Efforts, Collaboration, Engineering, etc.

In addition, Hawthorn is working diligently to update our wireless infrastructure in order to support a personalized learning environment with devices for all students. The future is exciting! We have an opportunity to not only accommodate for our current students and provide spaces which will be large enough to engage them in authentic learning experiences, but we can also plan for spaces which will provide a learning environment of the future.

We are proud to partner with our high school districts in preparing our students for the future. Districts 128, 120 and 125 have all experienced successes in part due to the hard work and diligence of the Hawthorn teachers and staff. We have an obligation to our community to continue that good work on behalf of our students and families.

[The plans include Library Media Center renovations and some include IDEA centers. What are these and what will students be doing there?](#)

In order to address the Mission and Vision of the district:

Inspiring all students to embrace learning in an ever-changing world.

In partnership with our community, Hawthorn District 73 will:

- *Support and sustain high expectations for growth and achievement*
- *Foster creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking.*
- *Develop the social, emotional, and intellectual growth of the whole child.*
- *Create an environment that supports joyful learning.*
- *Promote global awareness in each child.*
- *Recognize and celebrate success.*

each of the plans presented to the community on October 19th, try to incorporate some new or newly renovated spaces which will be intended for the facilitation of future skills like those listed above.

The library media renovations will include small maker spaces where students can collaborate on design and engineering with tools specific to that purpose. They will reflect a need for students to become presenters and better communicators by including spaces where students can debate and engage in critical conversations with their peers or teachers. These spaces will still contain print materials, but they will also include technology for research and experimentation.

Included in one of our plans are two campus wide IDEA centers. IDEA stands for Inquire, Design, Explain and Advance. With these two standalone facilities, we would hope to move in the direction of districts across the country who realize that the correct space can inspire students to engage in authentic problem solving and critical thinking in a way that traditional school facilities often cannot. By having one on each campus, we believe we could give students a chance to visit the centers at strategic times of the year, when a space like this would support their content. For example, when 2nd graders across the district are engaged in their unit about ecosystems, the IDEA center could serve as an immersive space where resources are combined and experts are brought in, to give students a “museum like” experience which can lead to a deeper understanding of concepts like adaptation and patterns. Experimentation, design and collaboration could be supported in an area which is designed specifically for those purposes and which gives the student every-

thing they need to construct their own knowledge and build their own conclusions through research, observation and debate.