

Everybody's Schools:

*Addressing the Immediate
and Long-Term Facilities Needs of
Lafayette Parish Public Schools*

*A study conducted by
League of Women Voters of Lafayette*



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LAFAYETTE**

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ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LAFAYETTE

The League of Women Voters of Lafayette was organized in 1945. The program carried out by the Lafayette League complements and parallels the aims and program of the state and national Leagues, but focuses on local issues and the needs of the community. It is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Men are full members.

The League of Women Voters of Lafayette currently has observers at the meetings of the Lafayette Consolidated Government Council, the Lafayette School Board, the Lafayette Planning and Zoning Commission, the Council of Governments, and the Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team.

Each year the League adopts a program of policies and study. The membership hears researched viewpoints of the issue, then reaches consensus towards a position and possible action to be taken for the benefit of the community.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

The major emphases of the League of Women Voters of Lafayette are to safeguard democracy, increase community dialogue, mobilize people to vote and take action, and improve the quality of education

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The League of Women Voters of Lafayette wishes to thank the Lafayette Parish School Board for its invitation to the League and other community organizations and individuals “who want to help make better schools” to work in collaboration.

The League also thanks the staff of the Lafayette Parish School System, the Lafayette Police and Fire Departments, and the Sheriff’s Department for answering questions by interview, telephone, and/or e-mails, usually all three. The League appreciates the time spent by members of the Lafayette Parish Association of Educators and those of the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana (APEL), as well as the PTC (Parent-Teacher Club) Presidents and the staff of the non-public schools who answered survey questions for this study.

TIME FRAMEWORK

This study was, by necessity, conducted in a shorter time than most. The League had only just proposed to its members that it study the merits of a long-term facilities plan when four things occurred at the September 5 School Board meeting that pushed the issue to the forefront: Board Members Hunter Beasley and Greg Awbrey introduced the “Comprehensive School Construction and Renovation Program;” the Supervisor of Vocational Education gave an overview of the Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School including facility options, estimated costs, and student assignment options; the Board agreed to hold a tax workshop, subsequently held September 15, and also made plans to hold an “aggressive workshop” dealing with school facilities.

As a result, the League’s Study Resource Team felt that, in order for its findings and recommendations to be meaningful to the School Board and the community, its study should reach the public no later than mid-November.

COMMENDATIONS

1. The Lafayette Parish School System is to be commended for adopting and beginning use of the Environmental Protection Agency's HealthySEAT (Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool).

2. Gratitude is owed to the Sheriff's Department and to the Police and Fire Departments of Lafayette, Broussard, Carencro, Duson, Milton, and Youngsville, and the State Fire Marshall for their continued assistance and obvious concern in addressing safety in our schools, day and night.

3. We are indebted to the late Dr. David Thibodaux who worked so passionately for class size and facility issues in Lafayette's public schools.

4. School Board members Hunter Beasley and Greg Awbrey are recognized for continuing the work of Dr. David Thibodaux on class size and facilities issues.

5. The School Board's website, lpssonline.com, is acknowledged to be an excellent community and school system resource making a wealth of information easily accessible by the public and School System employees, including the agenda and packet of information distributed to the members of the School Board and School System supervisory staff several days in advance of each School Board meeting, minutes of each regular and special Board meeting, and sales tax revenue. Transparency of access of public school records is evident in the hard copy Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (June 30, 2006).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lafayette Parish voters have historically provided insufficient funding for Lafayette Parish School System instructional programming and capital improvements, across many School Boards and many Superintendents. The capital improvements budget, especially in the last ten years, has taken the brunt of cuts to raise teachers' salaries. The result to school facilities is an increasingly expensive inventory of unfunded repairs, renovation, and new construction. Many campuses are overcrowded, the Maintenance, Planning and Facilities Department is understaffed, and growing enrollment in non-public schools further segregates our schools and community. Many school campuses have old permanent core structures (cafeteria, office, athletic facilities, library, narrow main corridors), as the number of portable classrooms continues to increase. Twenty-five percent of the school system's total classrooms are now portable. Lafayette High School, the parish's oldest public high school, is the second-largest in the state, with approximately 2242 students; it has 31 portable classrooms.

Safety needs from inspections have not been adequately addressed at all schools, nor has the Southern Association's citation for short and long-term facilities improvement plans, although a review is due in 2010. Lafayette Parish, with the third highest per capita income in the state, rates 16th in spending per pupil in the state, 14th in rate of sales tax support for schools, and 27th in millage rate support for schools.

The proposed Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School Plan addresses workforce training responsive to community business needs, higher wages of high school graduates, and a curriculum relevant to students who might otherwise drop out early. Construction should be part of a long-term plan and any total tax initiative. Poverty has risen in Lafayette, with other indicators that place students in poverty at greater academic risk, calling for intensive early childhood education and health interventions. More classrooms will be needed for teaching the very young in the public schools.

Some have suggested a "pay as you go" method. Results of this study indicate too many schools are over-age and require immediate, extensive repairs; they have safety needs

that cannot wait. The delay in vocational-technical education is causing lower wages and unfilled skilled jobs in Lafayette's workforce. In the next 23 years, Lafayette Parish's population is expected to grow by 23%. The percentage of African-American students in Lafayette's public schools is nearly twice the percentage of African-Americans in Lafayette's population.

The Lafayette Parish School Board needs a long-term facilities plan, coordinated with the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Department of Traffic, Transportation, and Planning, and the Police and Fire Departments, in place as soon as possible, as the costs are mounting: costs to the children's well being in the schools, in money to repair and rebuild, and in the loss of students leaving the school system. We need well-planned, new or newly repaired and updated, healthy schools that are prepared for new technology, with improved supervision capabilities indoors and out, that are limited to the right size for learning, safety, and administrator and teacher interaction with the students. We need them now.

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I. Unfunded Physical, Curricular, and Instructional Needs of the Schools

A. Lafayette Parish schools are old and many are overcrowded.

“It’s not sufficient to put band-aids. They [the schools] need major surgery. You can pick any part of town you want.”

— **Carl LaCombe, School Board President**
LPSB Workshop 3:30, 9-19-07

The February, 1996, “Building Program for Generic Middle School,” approved by Lafayette Parish School Board, suggests a school should be expected to be used 40-50 years into the future. Within a year, 60% of Lafayette’s public schools will be age 40 or over; almost 40% will be age 50 or over. Many in that age bracket, along with newer schools, have had additions – sometimes many additions – to the original school building, but the core space (library, cafeteria, office, athletic areas, main corridors) has not been modified to accommodate the growth in student enrollment.

There are currently 521 portable classrooms in use on 39 sites, for a total of 267 portable buildings. Lafayette Parish School Board owns 222 (86%) of these portable buildings, 25 of which are very old (“the Grey Ghosts”). Fifty-one of the buildings were purchased between the 2002-2003 to 2006-07 school years. Currently 45 of these portable buildings are rentals, including four 10-classroom modular wings.

Some schools have as many portable classrooms as permanent classrooms. In some cases there is no more room to expand on the campus and student enrollment is expected to increase, as in the cases of Green T. Lindon Elementary School in Youngsville and Lafayette High School. Ten-room portable wings with central halls and contained restrooms are now being used on some campuses because they take up less playground room than several double portable buildings with the required fire safety clearance between them.

In cases where classroom space has been increased by building permanent additions or through the use of temporary wings, the schools still suffer because the cafeteria, library,

office, parking, loading, playground, and other main areas were not originally built to accommodate so many students.

Despite being among Lafayette's newest schools, J. Wallace James (2002) and Ernest Gallet (1999) Elementary already have temporary buildings on their campuses. The enrollment at two elementary schools – Prairie and Ernest Gallet – exceeds that of Northside High school, which has 919 students. One middle school, Alleman (1958), also has more students than Northside High School.

Athletic Facilities

A 3-page article appeared in the Daily Advertiser on October 28, 2007 in the Sunday Sports section. Although three of the parish's five public high schools have advanced to the state championship football games from 2003-2006, their own locker rooms at home have received extremely low rankings from visiting teams who cannot take showers before traveling home on the bus after the games. The showers have been turned into equipment storage rooms because space from the original high school construction has not been expanded.

Most of the high school locker rooms are not air conditioned. The coach of Lafayette High School stated, "It's the same facilities that I played in back in the '70s. The only thing that's changed is there's a different coat of paint and some things are obviously worse than they were 25 years ago." James Simmons, Lafayette Parish Schools Athletic Director, stated that Acadiana High School's football facilities are the same as they were in the 1980's. The lockers are the original 1969 ones, according to the current coach. The locker rooms are crowded because the core original space was very small. It is very hot, especially in the summer practice time.

Only two schools, Lafayette High and Northside High, have all-weather tracks. Lafayette High has as many as five schools practicing on it on any given day, with many meets scheduled close together in track season for both school and city-recreation programs. The city does not contribute to the tracks' upkeep. Northside High's track is used for walking by many members of the community, according to Mr. Simmons, in addition to school use. Comeaux High's parents and coaches labored and held fundraisers, and

Brandon Stokely made a contribution, matched by a donation from the NFL, as well as additional funds from the Comeaux football fund, for enhanced athletic facilities beyond the other high schools. Carencro High School has a privately donated field house.

Air conditioning all of the high school gyms is the number one priority for Lafayette Public School System, according to James Simmons, Lafayette Parish Schools Athletic Director. Besides the daily physical education classes that use the unair-conditioned gyms, the high school students attend pep rallies and other school activities there. The public sits through basketball, volleyball, and wrestling games, paying admission, when people get so hot inside in August and early September that they go outside in the 95 degree weather to “cool off.”

The second priority for Mr. Simmons is increasing the size of the athletic facilities, which in some high schools will mean increasing the building size. The third priority is having all-weather tracks for the other three high schools, which neighborhood people could also use in off-times for walking and jogging. Adding lights at the baseball and softball fields would allow more parents and boosters to attend, as currently games must start at 3:30 in order to finish in daylight. Gate revenues would increase, as well.

Mr. Simmons further outlined the reciprocal agreement in place with Lafayette Consolidated Government to share facilities: Lafayette Parish School System uses the golf course, swimming pools, and tennis courts, while the municipal-recreation departments use the gyms and tracks that belong to the Lafayette Parish School System.

In 1990 an out-of-state firm, Stanton Leggett & Associates, submitted “A Long Range Facilities Study,” a systematic effort to address these overall issues. The firm made recommendations for each school campus, including reports on demography, construction, maintenance and equipment needs, the fiscal capacity of Lafayette Parish, educational goals, and preferred buildings for the future. Projections were that Lafayette Parish’s growth would remain fairly even, but that within 10 years an additional 1,600 high school students would create the need for a new high school. The largest growth projections were in the southwest and southeast, with population north of the city remaining stable and population declining within the urban area to the extent that it would no longer be able to support a school.

The 1990 Leggett study proposed a \$10.5 million retrofit program, the purpose of which was to eliminate safety problems, solve some immediate space problems, stop continued deterioration, and institute a preventive maintenance program. It also proposed an additional \$24 million for additions, service improvements, and minimum equipment for the instructional program, as well as \$50 million for construction of new buildings. That would have represented \$84.5 million to address the needs of all the schools in 1990. At that time there were already 248 portable buildings on school campuses, as listed by campus in the facilities study.

The study recommended that Lafayette High be replaced or that extensive repairs be made, referring to it as a “hodge podge of buildings that are run down.” It noted that while the building at St. Antoine Elementary was structurally in good shape, its site was too small.

J. Wallace James was recommended abandoned. The location of Vermilion Elementary and its two-story classroom building with narrow, steep stairwells made it notable as a “limited school,” and recommended for providing a one-story school elsewhere. The study noted that Myrtle Place’s site was so limited by space for play or parking that its enrollment must be held to a very low number, a suggestion perhaps not fiscally practical.

The plan stated that seven new elementary schools were needed. It suggested that the old N. P. Moss be replaced and a new Moss Middle School be built as a science magnet school. In addition, the facilities study recommended the School Board consider “establishing true magnet elementary schools within predominantly Black neighborhoods in an effort to break the pattern of segregated facilities.”

The School Board took no immediate or large-scale action on this plan, although some of the individual items have been accomplished in the intervening years. In 1995 the School Board hired architect Paul LeMaire to determine the cost of bringing Paul Breaux Middle School up to high school standards. A cost was projected, but no action was taken.

Four new schools were built in 1999 by debt service against incoming sales tax revenue. Three were elementary schools – Ernest Gallet in Youngsville, Charles M. Burke near the Vermilion Parish line in the Ridge area, and Live Oak on North University. One middle school, N. P. Moss, was built on Teurlings Avenue. Three schools were closed by Lafayette Parish School Board due to court involvement – J. Wallace James, St. Antoine, and Vermilion Elementary – and a new magnet school, J. Wallace James, was built in 2002. Lafayette has built only one new elementary school despite the Leggett group’s 1990 recommendation that seven were needed.

In January 2005 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement Report for Lafayette Parish stated, “The creation of a comprehensive facility improvement and renovation plan must be completed as soon as possible.” Almost three years later such a plan has not been instituted. The report noted that the School Board maintains a prioritized list of “Unfunded Facility Improvement Projects” which in 2005 represented approximately \$139,000,000 in capital improvements. The Association recommended that this list represented a “first step” in the development of a more complete plan.

The 2005 report noted that “there are currently 1200 work orders processed . . . which have not been addressed due to insufficient staff.” Some of the maintenance issues noted were aging buildings, increased number of portable classrooms, and the need for computer and Internet wiring. The list included some significant expenditures, such as replacing roofs.

In its list of limitations and challenges facing the Lafayette Parish School System, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools noted aging facilities, limited instructional space, limited sources of funding, and problems securing the resources to address facility needs. It recommended that the school system develop both long- and short-term plans to address facilities maintenance, the building of new physical plants and securing funding necessary to address those issues.

The next review from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is scheduled to take place in 2010. In the meantime, without a long-term plan, \$50,000 was funded in the 2006-07 budget for a feasibility study for a new Southside school.

In the 2007-08 Self-Funded Construction Fund, the School Board is expected to spend the following:

\$1,000,000	new acquisitions for portable buildings including setup
\$375,000	existing lease payments on 32 buildings
\$383,000	new rentals including set up of 10 portable buildings
\$97,000	lease purchase for 10 portable buildings
\$100,000	furniture for new portables
\$60,000	relocations and setup (3 @ \$20,000)
\$2,015,000	TOTAL

Table 1: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS (46 sites)

**Group 1:
18 schools approaching age 50 and over**

1926	Lafayette Middle School* (extensive renovation in 1984)
1926	Moss Annex (former N. P. Moss Middle School)
1926	Judice Middle School (renovation in the 1950's)
1950	L. Leo Judice Elementary
1950	W. D. Smith Career Center
1952	Lafayette High School
1952	W. A. LeRosen Alternative School
1952	Vermilion Conference Center (former Vermilion Elementary School)
1958	Alleman Middle School
1958	Paul Breaux Middle School
1958	Carencro Heights Elementary School
1958	Central Office of the School Board
1958	J. W. Faulk Elementary School
1958	G. T. Lindon Elementary School
1958	S. J. Montgomery Elementary School
1958	Scott Middle School
1958	Truman Montessori School
1958	Westside Elementary School

*On the Louisiana Registry of Historic Places (reference: Center for Louisiana Studies, ULL)

**Group 2:
10 schools approaching age 40 - 49**

1960	Northside High School
1961	Katherine Drexel Elementary School
1962	Edgar Martin Middle School
1965	Comeaux High School
1966	Acadian Middle School
1966	J. Wallace James Elementary School (recently sold to the Sheriff's Department)
1967	Plantation Elementary School
1967	Prairie Elementary School
1967	St. Antoine Elementary School (on lease-purchase to the Sheriff's Department)
1968	Acadiana High School

**Group 3:
13 schools approaching age 25 - 39**

1969	Carencro High School
1970	Broadmoor Elementary School
1970	Woodvale Elementary School
1980	Ossun Elementary School
1981	Alice Boucher Elementary School
1981	Broussard Middle School
1981	Carencro Middle School
1981	Duson Elementary School
1981	Milton Elementary School
1981	Ridge Elementary School
1982	Evangeline Elementary School
1982	Myrtle Place Elementary School (cafeteria 1950)
1982	Youngsville Middle School

**Group 4:
5 schools age 8 and under**

1999	Charles Burke Elementary School
1999	Ernest Gallet Elementary School
1999	Live Oak Elementary School
1999	N. P. Moss Middle School
2002	J. Wallace James Elementary School (court ordered)

Table 2: SCHOOLS BY ENROLLMENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2007

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: Total 23 sites

School	Enrollment	Grades	Year Built	Portable Classrooms
Prairie	954	PK-5	1967	33
Ernest Gallet	949	K-5	1999	8
Ossun	856	K-5	1980	4
Milton	756	K-8	1981	13
J. Wallace James	742	PK-5	2002	6
Live Oak	728	K-5	1999	2
Truman Montessori*	713	PK	1958	0
Ridge	674	K-5	1981	12
Katherine Drexel	660	PK-4	1961	16
Broadmoor	646	K-4	1970	25
Woodvale	646	K-4	1970	22
Charles M. Burke	644	K-5	1999	0
Green T. Lindon	642	PK-4	1958	21
Evangeline	631	PK-4	1982	30
S. J. Montgomery	609	K-5	1958	4
Alice Boucher	586	K-5	1981	17
J. W. Faulk	552	PK-5	1958	0
Plantation	551	K-5	1967	20
Carencro Heights	433	PK-5	1958	7
Westside	430	2-4	1958	4
Myrtle Place	286	K-5	1982	6
L. Leo Judice	280	PK-1	1950	7
Duson	237	K-5	1981	9

* Pre-school only

MIDDLE SCHOOLS: Total 12 sites

School	Enrollment	Grades	Year Built	Portable Classrooms
L.J. Alleman	937	5-8	1958	24
Scott Middle	881	5-8	1958	16
Edgar Martin	781	5-8	1962	13
Milton	756	K-8	1981	13
Youngsville Middle	691	5-8	1982	6
Paul Breaux	664	6-8	1958	6
Carencro Middle	662	6-8	1958	18
Judice Middle	608	6-8	1927	1
N.P. Moss	586	6-8	1999	0
Broussard Middle	578	5-8	1981	6
Acadian Middle	532	5-8	1966	6
Lafayette Middle	439	6-8	1926	0

HIGH SCHOOLS: Total 5 sites

School	Enrollment	Grades	Year Built	Portable Classrooms
Lafayette High	2,301	9-12	1952	31
Ovey Comeaux	1,891	9-12	1965	31
Acadiana High	1,718	9-12	1968	31
Carencro High	1,362	9-12	1969	14
Northside High	919	9-12	1960	4

Recommendations:

- 1) 7-9% of the General Fund Budget should be dedicated annually to scheduled preventive maintenance of school facilities.
- 2) An annual report of projects completed and those in process should be made as the long-term facilities plan is put into place. At eight years from date of the initial long-term facilities plan, the first stage of the next long-term facilities plan should begin, in an on-going system, initiated by the Planning Director, directed to the School Board, Superintendent's staff, principals, and their faculty and staff.
- 3) The School Board should develop a policy and include it in the long-term facilities plan to limit the placement of a portable classroom on a campus to short-term and specific circumstances, subject to annual review of each such placement to determine the need or its continuation.
- 4) All other school employees have a supervisor, coordinator, or lead person at the School Board office in charge except the category of head custodians, who are currently each individually under the direct supervision of that school's principal. The head custodians would benefit from a monthly inservice as a group, and unannounced site inspections by a person in a supervisory role to whom all custodians are responsible. This new supervisor could benefit from the site-based assessments of HealthySEAT (Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool) for cleanliness of specific areas of the schools as needed, as ratings are included.
- 5) The planning team should make all reasonable effort to preserve and protect school buildings that are on or eligible for local or state historic registers. If for safety, educational, economic or other reasons, it is not feasible to renovate an existing building, Lafayette Parish School Board is encouraged to develop an adaptive reuse for it that incorporates an historic easement or covenant to avoid the building's abandonment or demolition.

- 6) The Lafayette Parish School System should inventory its Section 12 lands in light of projected needs and develop its plans to manage this inventory.*
- 7) Consider community character and architecture in the design and appearance of the schools.*
- 8) In order to maximize student performance, designs for new schools and major school renovations should incorporate daylighting techniques to save on energy bills, and connect people to the outdoors. Exterior shading, carefully placed windows, low-transmittance glass, window blinds, and paint and fabric colors are examples of daylighting techniques.
- 9) Provide for professional, safety-conscious, low landscaping of the front of the buildings for good first and continuing impressions. The schools are polling places for the voters who support them. Each class or grade level might adopt an area inside or outside the school for care and attention to build decision-making skills, ownership, and school pride.

*Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team: Education Subcommittee

B. Student and staff physical safety needs are not all met by many facilities.

“We need a plan of action to look at not for next year or the year after, but ten years from now.”

– Travis Morgan,
Lafayette Fire Prevention Inspector

The Lafayette Parish Sheriff’s Department completed a safety assessment of the vulnerabilities of all areas of each of the public schools in May, 2006. The Sheriff’s Department assessment was conducted through the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Grant, at the request of the Risk Management Director. The Sheriff’s Department used checklists supplied by the Department of Homeland Security and other governmental agencies. After receiving the assessment and recommendations from the study, the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Grant Coordinator and the school principals submitted work orders for the areas of need to the Maintenance, Planning, and Facilities Department. The majority of these have not been addressed due to lack of funding.

Some of the needs, however, have been addressed by the Maintenance, Planning and Facilities Department; others were paid for by the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Grant funds or by Parent Teacher Club or school funds. Schools lacking these resources have had fewer requests completed.

The Lafayette Parish School Board is currently in non-compliance with the Lafayette Fire Department due to issues with many of the schools’ entrances, including maintenance of fire lanes with bus and parent pick-up lanes, which is a problem due to the lack of space on so many campuses. Prior to imposing fines on the Lafayette Parish School Board for not providing a plan of action as requested several years ago, the Lafayette Fire Department has sought legal assistance about the pertinent 1965 ordinance. The Fire Department is responsible for inspecting all schools within the city limits, while the State Fire Marshall is responsible for inspecting schools outside the city limits. All fire departments respond to fire calls as needed. The newest schools are in compliance with fire safety ordinances.

The Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Grant funding expires in September, 2008, but the grant coordinator anticipates that some of its mental health and nursing services may continue

through other federal sources, as these have been an important component of early behavioral and health intervention. One of the difficulties, however, is that no private space exists for the therapist or nurse to see the child in many schools. They have had to meet under a tree or in the hall, contrary to the ethical consideration of confidentiality.

The Office of Child Welfare and Attendance has begun the positive behavioral support program parish-wide, but on large and crowded campuses it is often difficult for administrators to problem-solve because they sometimes do not know the student personally. When an elementary school principal has 450 or 500 students on the campus, it is possible to know the child's parents, brothers and sisters, and background, and to conference with the child and family in a more personal way – but over half of the elementary schools have right at 650-950 students. In a high school of 1200-1500, rather than 2300 or 1800, it is possible to recognize and get to know the freshmen. Instead, in schools so large, administrators most often get to know the highest achievers and those most often disciplined. They are less likely to become acquainted with those in between, who may be troubled. Students often respond to this anonymity with a lack of investment and ownership in the school, and lack of accountability. It is important for the principal of the school to interact with students, to know them and their issues.

In any physically crowded areas of the schools where the students cannot avoid bumping into one another, they become more stressed due to the lack of personal space and feel a loss of respect. They also need the key ingredient to student motivation in school achievement—a relationship with someone important at their school. The administrators and teachers are also frustrated and additionally stressed by not knowing the names of the many students they see in the halls, but they lack the time to get to know so many students well.

The 1996 school population standards set by Lafayette Parish School Board are 750 students for an elementary school, with an additional 15% anticipated increase in students. Under this standard, an elementary school needs to hold an additional 113 students, for a maximum of 863 students. This is a very large elementary school.

The 1996 standards set by Lafayette Parish School Board are 840 for a middle school, with an additional 15% anticipated increase in students, which would hold an additional 126 students, for a maximum of 966 students. This is a large middle school.

These standards were used in designing the four schools built in 1999 (Gallet, Live Oak, Burke, and N. P. Moss) and J. Wallace James in 2002.

Setting size limits on enrollment and growth percentage restrictions is accepted practice, but by not sticking to those limits and adding portable buildings, Lafayette Parish School Board has grown temporary schools in some parts of the parish.

HealthySEAT

On May 2, 2007, the School Board adopted the Healthy School Environmental Assessment Tool (HealthySEAT), a tool provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as the official environmental assessment guideline for the Lafayette Parish School System. It is a web-based guide with connecting links to the appropriate standards for the subject being addressed. School systems may adopt and implement it without cost. Lafayette Parish School System is one of the very few, if not the only, school district in Louisiana to have adopted HealthySEAT. It is mandatory for all schools in New Hampshire and will be mandatory also in California and Utah with the completion of the revised edition II.

The Lafayette Parish School System Safety and Environmental Compliance Officer, using HealthySEAT, has targeted some areas of need that will require funding, as that office continues its initial stages of implementing this assessment and on-going management tool.

Plantation Elementary School was closed for two days for cleaning this spring due to the School Board's desire to ease the parents' concerns about mold. Pre-cleaning testing, performed before the classroom air conditioning units were cleaned, and post-cleaning testing (performed afterward) revealed that there were no abnormal levels of mold present in the building.

Recommendations:

- 1) The Police and Fire Departments should be involved both in the design and in the stages of walk-through of renovation and construction of schools for safety, supervision, and security issues.

- 2) When considering a school's current size and design, the principal's ability to restrict access to the campus should be a major consideration.
- 3) According to the Environmental Protection Agency's HealthySEAT assessment standards checklist, adopted by Lafayette Parish School system on May 2, 2007, for mold prevention:
 - There are no wet or damp areas
 - Indoor relative humidity is maintained below 60%
 - All school structures (including portable structures) are inspected for visible mold, moldy odors, moisture, stains or discoloration, and water leakage on a regular basis

For mold containment and clean-up:

- All moisture and mold problems are investigated and evaluated
 - Communication with all building occupants occurs at each stage of the mold remediation process, as appropriate
 - If visible mold is present, a remediation plan is developed and implemented
- 4) The League of Women Voters of Lafayette also recommends that visible mold, implementation plans to address it, and all corrective action be reported regularly to the Lafayette Parish School Board.
 - 5) Closed circuit cameras should be installed in "blind" areas of buildings and campuses where students gather for easier, improved supervision, if these areas cannot be renovated for better visibility.
 - 6) Funds should be allocated to all the schools for annual replacement of portable communication devices to duty personnel, custodians, administrators, and those they designate as emergency responders (durable walkie-talkies, "screamers," or what the long-term facilities assessment plan calls for).
 - 7) For coordination purposes, regularly scheduled meetings of the Security Resource Officers (SRO) from all of the contributing municipalities and Lafayette Police Departments would assist in determining monthly statistics, assessing progress, and needs.

- 8) In considering the purchase of mapping software, municipal and Lafayette Police Departments, and the Sheriff's Department might consider the same program in order to coordinate more efficiently in a crisis/disaster scenario.
- 9) An attractive fence placed around each school, while not an effective barrier, indicates a non-student is subject to be challenged.
- 10) Parking lots for visitors, students, and staff should be in front of the building to allow natural surveillance by passers-by, police, and school staff.
- 11) Lafayette Consolidated Government should increase pedestrian networks around schools, utilizing funding from the "Safe Routes to School" Program, as well as implementing physical improvements (such as traffic calming devices) near educational facilities to ensure safe access.*

*Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team Education Subcommittee

C. High schools lack high tech facilities for workforce training and combating dropout rates.

“9th grade absences are 20 times more predictive of eventual graduation than 8th grade test scores.”

– **Craig Gerald,**
“Research about Preventing Dropouts,”
3-27-07, www.centerforpubliceducation.org

Beginning in 1991 each superintendent has asked a committee, including the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, to look at a comprehensive vocational high school for Lafayette Parish. In 1995 a study was funded to determine the cost of converting the Paul Breaux Middle School and W. D. Smith Career Center campuses jointly into one such high school, but the project was dropped. Under various superintendents, model programs were visited in several states and the most successful components of all of them were selected for a school in Lafayette Parish, the Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School, more commonly referred to as the “Comprehensive High School.”

This program exists as a philosophical concept at present, relative to curriculum offerings that are in tune with the local job market, internships with local businesses, and hands-on applications of math and science and writing designed to attract many students who do not find the traditional offerings “relevant.” Yet in such an integrated curriculum, the high school would include all of the rigorous core academic courses needed for entry into college, if a student chose to pursue a degree. The difference is that the student might also be already certified as a pharmacy tech upon graduation from high school when he or she starts college, and could better support college tuition with a part-time job, or become a full-time employee at a higher salaried job right out of high school.

The program is to be a state-of-the-art facility with industry-based equipment and highly qualified staff, high skill majors, with an active advisory council, active business and industry partners, intensive marketing, and extracurricular activities. It would offer career pathways—Exploratory in the freshman year (business education, trade and industry, technology, art, health occupation, and family and consumer sciences), then a choice of Manufacturing (automotive technician, construction, plumbing, drafting, carpentry, cabinet making, electronics/electricity, welding), Business/Information Systems (advertising and sales promotion, entrepreneurship, travel & tourism, marketing, cooperative office

education, Computers for LA's Kids), and Health/Human Services (medical records, cosmetology, first responder/EMT, dentistry, certified nursing assistant, law enforcement, Prostart/culinary, early childhood development), Arts/Humanities (nursery/landscaping, television production, photography, fashion design, graphic arts, commercial arts). Students might be dually enrolled in Louisiana Technical College, or on internships, as they are more effectively guided from high school into post-secondary learning.

Review of the standards of the National Career Academy Coalition (www.ncacine.org) indicates such a program as was presented to the Lafayette Parish School Board on September 15, 2007.

This high school is also planned as a full-service educational facility, including athletic programs, gyms and stadium, and will require extensive land. It should attract students from all five existing high schools, thus reducing the overcrowded conditions somewhat at four campuses. It would accommodate approximately 1200-1500 students, according to the Superintendent. It would also serve as a Community Career Center after hours.

Three site options and their costs were presented at the request of the Lafayette Parish School Board: a new school, redoing Paul Breaux Middle and the W. D. Smith Career Center, and re-gearing the new N. P. Moss Middle School. The costs given for these three options is about \$64 million, \$44 million, and about \$37 million, respectively. There are fewer students to relocate from N. P. Moss than from Paul Breaux Middle. No plan for relocation was given and no decision was made at the September 15 School Board meeting when the plan for the new high school was presented, along with the three cost options.

The five academies of choice are not part of the current discussion of the committee for the Comprehensive High School. The five academies are: Academy of Design, Comeaux High School (graphic, visual and design arts, including the bench jewelry facility); Academy of Business & Finance, Acadiana High School (business & financial literacy for the community and workforce); Academy of Information and Technology, Carencro High School (digital media, web design, programming, databases, networking, and computer maintenance, towards IT industry certification and/or advance college credit, and paid internship opportunities); Academy of Health Careers, Lafayette High School (School-to-Career emphasis, integrated curriculum); and Academy of Engineering, Northside High School (preparing students for post-secondary in engineering or industrial technology with courses

in Drafting I & II, General Technology Ed., and Technology Ed. Computer Applications, as well as Engineering I & II).

Admission to any of these five academies is by required grade point average, student and parent interview, and then lottery, regardless of school zone.

According to Craig Gerald's review of the literature, "Career Academies, small schools within schools that combine challenging academics with career and technical training, reduce four-year drop-out rates by one-third." Increasing the career pathways and number of students who can be served, as well as engaging ninth graders in career exploration, gives more students more career choices with higher salaries with their high school diploma.

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue offering and actively recruiting for an academy on the campus of each of the five high schools, in addition to the new comprehensive career and technical academy high school. In this way more students are offered career education options; more students are actively engaged earlier in real-life curricular relevance, reducing the drop-out rate across the parish, and increasing wages of those entering the workforce as skilled and educated employees.
- 2) Consider transportation costs and growth projections for the next 40 years in determining the location and the new Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School. While the N.P. Moss location may be the least costly to build, it is the farthest from where a large majority of current high school students live.
- 3) Interviews with Lafayette Parish School System staff members and compilation of teacher and PTC questionnaire responses indicated desired high school student enrollment at 1200-1500 students and elementary school enrollment at 400-500 students.
- 4) Meet and discuss well in advance of any tax proposition for building a new Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School, a specific plan for the relocation of those students affected by any school closing that would occur.

- 5) Follow the recommendation of the Lafayette Police Department to avoid maintaining middle school students on the campus of the new comprehensive career and technical academy high school, as this is not best practice in terms of campus safety or campus supervision.

- 6) Consult with Lafayette Consolidated Government growth projections and calculate student enrollment in upcoming grades to determine whether an additional high school will be needed in the near future and where.

D. Current facilities do not allow for best practices in student learning.

“Decisions about school facilities, once translated into brick-and-mortar, affect the daily performance of the generations of teachers and students who use them.”

–**Mark Schneider**, “Do School Facilities Affect Academic Outcomes?”

Too Few Classrooms

Any study of school facilities must acknowledge the central purpose of schools: to facilitate education. While the quality of school buildings and rooms and the possession of appropriate equipment are critical to education, an even more basic consideration is the simple availability of enough space to educate well.

The Lafayette Parish School System is clearly hard put to find an adequate number of classrooms to serve the student population. Currently, 267 temporary buildings provide classrooms on 38 campuses, representing approximately 25% of the total number of classrooms. The oldest of these temporary classrooms have been in place since the mid-1960’s.

Interviews with teachers reveal that even when temporary classrooms are moved to campuses, the problems of too little instructional space are not automatically or immediately resolved. Although several new temporary buildings were located on one school’s campus over the summer break, those buildings were not yet in use by mid-October because they had not yet met code requirements. Classes that would eventually inhabit those classrooms had been meeting since the beginning of the school year on stage in the cafeteria and in the physical education room, and the physical education classes were meeting outdoors or in the school’s hallways. On another campus, the increased need for “regular” classrooms has resulted in grade-level classes moving into the music room, causing the music teacher to move room to room with all the materials.

Lafayette High School has had roving subject-area teachers for at least fifteen years, sometimes more than ten in a given year, who have to carry or push their materials in carts or buggies from room to room each class period every day. Moreover, the core subject teacher bumped from the classroom during his or her planning period loses the ability to

access instructional materials around the classroom to work on a unit or use the computer. At this high school there is no other computer available to use with access to student data, and no place to go to work but the school library, the teacher's lounge, or the hall. There is no time when the bell rings and the students begin entering for the next class to put away materials and gather up what is needed to work on. In some cases, the teacher must leave immediately for duty. In the block schedule a "bumped" teacher may lose 90 minutes of valuable planning time for 150-165 students every day of an entire school year due to the shortage of classrooms.

Block scheduling has also caused some elective classes to be much larger than the limits of the actual class size, according to teacher report.

With almost all of Lafayette's public schools serving student populations well beyond the number they were originally designed to serve, and with the use of portable buildings burgeoning, it is clear that Lafayette has too few classrooms.

This situation leads inevitably to putting more students in classes than they were designed to hold. Recent research suggests that, especially for the lower grades, class sizes should be smaller than they are currently in Lafayette, and that, consequently, the classroom crunch is even more serious in its educational implications than it might appear at first glance.

The research supporting small class size as a reliable method of improving student achievement is well established. The large scale, rigorous study in this area is the Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio Study, commonly known as the STAR Study. It was a longitudinal, random-assignment experimental study of reduced class size undertaken as a precursor to Tennessee's successful reform of education.

The issue of class size was explored locally when Dr. Charles Achilles, a noted educator and principal investigator in the STAR Study, visited Lafayette in 2004 at the invitation of concerned school officials and the Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Achilles made a strong research-based case for reducing the number of children per classroom to 13 – 17 in grades K through 3 to improve student achievement and reduce the performance gap between minority and white students.

Dr. Achilles' research involved 79 schools in 42 systems which included more than 6,000

elementary students per grade level from inner-city, urban, suburban, and rural areas. The study found that small classes of 13 to 17 students scored highest on the Stanford Achievement Test and the Basic Skills First Test, with the greatest gains on the Stanford Achievement Test occurring in inner-city schools, without any other systematic changes occurring in the classrooms. These effects were strongest for students of lower socio-economic status and for African-American students.

Follow-up studies indicate that through the eighth grade, small-class students continue to outperform their peers on standardized achievement tests, are more likely to be enrolled in college-bound courses in the ninth and 10th grades, and had higher grade-point averages than students who had attended regular classes.

With its lengthy time frame, large sample size, wide range of school types, powerful experimental design, and singular focus on changing only the class size variable, the STAR study represents the landmark in educational research on this topic. Earlier studies, chiefly survey research rather than experimental studies, on the balance also found small classroom size a valuable educational tool.

A somewhat similar large-scale study in Wisconsin (the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education evaluation – known as SAGE) has also documented the benefits of small class sizes. Another large-scale policy initiative, the California Class Size Reduction Initiative, used a different definition of “small.” Class sizes there did not fall into the 13-17 student range recommended by earlier research and did not fall below 20 students per classroom in the lower grades. The results, while significant, were not nearly as impressive as in the Tennessee and Wisconsin studies. (California’s program was beset by numerous other difficulties as well.)

A review of the research on small class size leads to the conclusion that Lafayette’s classroom crunch has educational consequences and hinders our attempts to ensure a fair start in life and equal access to further education for our students. Aging plant and larger classroom sizes have a direct as well as indirect effect on student achievement. These implications have not gone unnoticed by those working to improve education in Lafayette Parish.

Actual class size in Lafayette Public schools has been lowered over time. At the School Board meeting of August 16, 2006, the late Dr. David Thibodaux, a staunch advocate of smaller

class sizes in Lafayette public schools, requested that the Board review information on actual class size since 2001. Minutes from the April 5, 2000, and May 2, 2001 meetings show that the Board approved the following “class sizes.” The most recent actual class size data was provided by the Director of Human Resources, Lawrence Lilly.

April 4, 2000

Grades K-4: 21-1
Grades 5 & 8: 25-1
Grades 6 & 7, 9-12: 28-1

May 2, 2001

Grades K-4: 22-1
Grades 5 & 8: 26-1
Grades 6 & 7, 9-12: 29-1

October 22, 2007

Grades K-3: 21-1
Grade 4: 23-1
Grades 5-12: 26-1

These minutes also show that it was recommended that four schools which absorbed displaced students from J.W. James Elementary and St. Antoine Elementary receive additional funds from a class size reduction grant to “reduce class sizes” in first grade to a maximum of 18-1. Currently, additional teachers are allocated to Title I schools based on School Performance Scores and available funding. They are assigned to individual or small-group tutoring or supplemental teaching in the classroom at the discretion of the principal, according to Superintendent Lemoine.

Examination of current class size data in all of the elementary schools for grades K-3 by the League of Women Voters reveals that the Lafayette Parish School System is maintaining the limits as set for actual class size for these grade levels.

Without an adequate number of classrooms, Lafayette School System has no choice but to maintain classes that are: too large for effective instruction; too large to employ the educational methods proven to be most effective; too large to allow for experimentation with novel approaches to educational challenges; and too large to discipline in ways that enhance rather than limit education.

Environmental Considerations

Lafayette Parish School System has adopted HealthySEAT as its environmental assessment guide. Research indicates that students will learn, grow, behave, and perform optimally in a smartly designed, high-performance environment as outlined in HealthySEAT.

According to a comprehensive study (Cash, Earthman & Hines, 1997) covering 325 public schools in three districts, the adverse effect of dilapidated, crowded educational facilities on

academic performance was significant. Cash found a positive relationship between poor building condition and lowered academic performance, delinquent behavior and absenteeism. His findings also suggest that quality facilities, coupled with strong academic programs, are conditions essential to optimum student learning.

Ayers (1999) examined the relationship between high school facilities and student achievement by using the Design Appraisal Scale for High Schools (DASH-1) to measure the different design variables and to determine a total quality score for each school in the study. Based on the results of the analyses, school-design variables explained approximately six percent of the variance in English and social studies performance, three percent in science performance, and two percent in both mathematics and writing performance.

Lighting

Natural lighting in the classroom is frequently underused and artificial lighting is frequently overused or misused. In fact, some children spend six continuous hours or more in school facilities illuminated by artificial light. Over the past 100 years, the amount of outdoor light the population is generally exposed to has declined (Lieberman, 1991).

A 1999 study conducted by the Heschong Mahone Consulting Group in Fair Oaks, California, involved 21,000 students from three districts in three states. After reviewing school facilities, architectural plans, aerial photographs, and maintenance plans, the researchers assigned each classroom a code indicating the amount of sunlight it received during particular times of the day and year. Controlling for variables, the study found that students with the most sunlight in their classrooms progressed 20% faster on math tests and 26% faster on reading tests compared with students exposed to the least lighting.

In a follow-up study (2003), the Heschong Mahone Group found that sources of glare have a negative effect on learning. Students exposed to morning sun that is unfiltered by blinds or tinted windows will not perform as well as students in classrooms where the windows face north. In subjects that require more visual acuity such as math, students did better when whiteboards were used (versus overhead projector) because the lighting was better.

Many studies have also explored the effects of varying amounts of artificial light. Students in brightly lit classrooms perform better in school compared with students in dimly lit

classrooms (London, 1988). Sustained exposure to bright light reduces eye fatigue during activities involving close work, making it easier to read and to solve complex problems. Some research suggests that students exposed to long periods of dim light – the kind that is typical in a darkened lecture hall – are more likely to be lethargic, sleepy, and less motivated in class (Aoki, Yamada, Ozeki, Yamane, & Koto, 1998). Another study, involving two simulated eight-hour shifts (Campbell & Dawson, 1990), found that young adults maintained significantly higher levels of alertness and wakefulness when exposed to brighter ambient lighting rather than dim ambient lighting.

Not all bright lighting is created equal, however. Ordinary fluorescent lights have a flickering quality and emit a barely audible hum. The low humming noise emitted by fluorescent lights also has a detrimental effect on student performance, especially in reading. Statistically, its negative impact on reading scores exceeded that of construction noise, socioeconomic status, and musty or moldy classroom air (Heschong Mahone Group, 2003).

Students enrolled in schools with above-average lighting displayed higher attendance and higher physical growth rates, increased concentration and better academic performance (Lemasters, 1997). Given schools' large electricity requirements, installing skylights and even solar panels could realize real cost savings.

Noise

In poorly designed classrooms that fail to address and reduce ambient noise, echo effects, reverberation, and other acoustical problems, student attention decreases and off-task behaviors and discipline problems increase (Berg, Blair & Benson, 1996). These issues take a serious toll on learning.

Getting students to hear what we want them to hear in the classroom is a teacher's challenge. "Situations that compromise student focus on the lessons at hand, such as reverberant spaces, annoying equipment sounds or excessive noise from outside the classroom have discernable negative effects on learning rates" (Heschong Mahone Group, 2003, p. 17).

Lawrence Feth, professor of speech and hearing science at Ohio State University, conducted an extensive acoustical study of classrooms. He found that many classrooms are acoustically unsound, which makes listening and learning difficult (Feth, 1999). In fact, the study found

that of the 32 primary school classrooms studied, only two met the acoustical standards recommended by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The majority of classrooms in the study had enough background noise and echoes present to hamper the learning of children with even mild hearing problems.

Feth reported that the most prominent sources of background noise in classrooms (both new and old) are the heating and cooling systems. Many schools still opt for individual units instead of quieter central air systems. In addition, a typical classroom's uncarpeted floors and hard-surfaced walls make it highly conducive to noise reverberation that can interfere with speech recognition and understanding. The echo effect can be mitigated by a building design that angles walls at least five degrees out of their original parallel plane or by positioning hard surfaces (window glass, blackboards or whiteboards) opposite textured, uneven surfaces like doors, hanging fabrics or counters.

Researchers have reported dramatic improvement in students' speech discrimination after classrooms were refitted with sound-absorbing material that reduced ambient noise (Pekkarinen & Wiljanen, 1990). Children are especially sensitive to overly noisy classrooms because they are still learning language and need to clearly hear speech sounds for effective acquisition.

Lafayette School System has the opportunity to enhance academic outcomes by creating better learning environments as it builds new facilities and refurbishes old ones. Fewer students per teacher will result in each student receiving more attention in the classroom and in teachers being able to better assess student learning. Carefully planned lighting systems and attention to noise level reduction can not only remove impediments but can also contribute positively to student performance.

Recommendations:

- 1) Consult research on the effects of class size on student achievement when designing new schools or refurbishing existing ones.

- 2) Implement HealthySEAT standards in designing classroom and building lighting, acoustics, and air conditioning, heating and ventilation systems.
- 3) Consult research on lighting and student performance when considering new or renovated building designs and operations.

II. History and Results of Under-funding

A. Capital improvements and maintenance budgets have been inadequate.

“A long-range plan for public buildings of the new government should be prepared within the next five years which will outline and program for needed facilities over the next fifty years.”

– Recommendation No. 19, Public Service, LINC Comprehensive Plan, December 1, 2005

This summer the Fire Inspector declared either a fire watch would be necessary or Lafayette High School would be closed, as its intercom system was not working. The Lafayette Parish School Board noted that since an “emergency exists at Lafayette High School that could potentially affect the health and safety of students and employees,” there was not enough time to properly advertise and receive bids. At a Special School Board Meeting on July 9, 2007, the Board approved a budget revision to allow the transfer of \$100,000 from Capital Improvement Budget funds for the Broussard Middle fire alarm and the Judice Middle fire alarm upgrade, to the Lafayette High intercom replacement project. The Board voted to award the project to the vendor with the lowest quote. (*School Board minutes, July 9, 2007; interview with Fire Prevention Inspector*).

This is but one example of the School Board’s constraints in meeting the safety needs of the schools within its limited General Fund budget. The School Board operates the Maintenance Department without a contingency fund to address unforeseen events or a planned budget for continuing upkeep. When maintenance emergencies occur, they are expensive to address, and the School Board moves funds from one source in the General Fund budget to another.

The line item in the budget for Capital Improvements has not been just for buildings. Until very recently Capital Improvements has had to pay the refurbish/replacement costs of band instruments for the elementary, middle, and high schools on a rotating basis, as well as replacement of band uniforms on a scheduled basis per school. In the 2006-07 budget, however, these costs, whether funded or not funded as low priority, fell under the

Instructional Services portion of the budget. The Maintenance budget does include maintenance of the 113 School Board-owned buses. Another 80 buses are leased this year. The budget for diesel fuel is \$801,000; the budget for contracted repairs is \$79,000 (such as engine replacements or transmission replacements) and the budget for repair supplies is \$146,000 (for repairs that school system mechanics perform in the system's shop).

The Maintenance budget also includes utility costs for all 44 campuses 12 months a year – electricity, gas, water, and sewage. A few of the schools were built with their own sewage systems, and the maintenance of these systems also falls under Capital Improvements.

The Maintenance Department cuts the grass, repairs the electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling systems, and handles painting, carpentry, and locksmith work for 44 schools. It also maintains six portable buildings at the Louisiana Technical College for Lafayette School Board, as well as the Tax Office/Nurses Office at 411 E. Vermillion Street, a School Board-owned building. The area to be maintained in the schools has grown to four million square feet.

Graph 1: MAINTENANCE BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

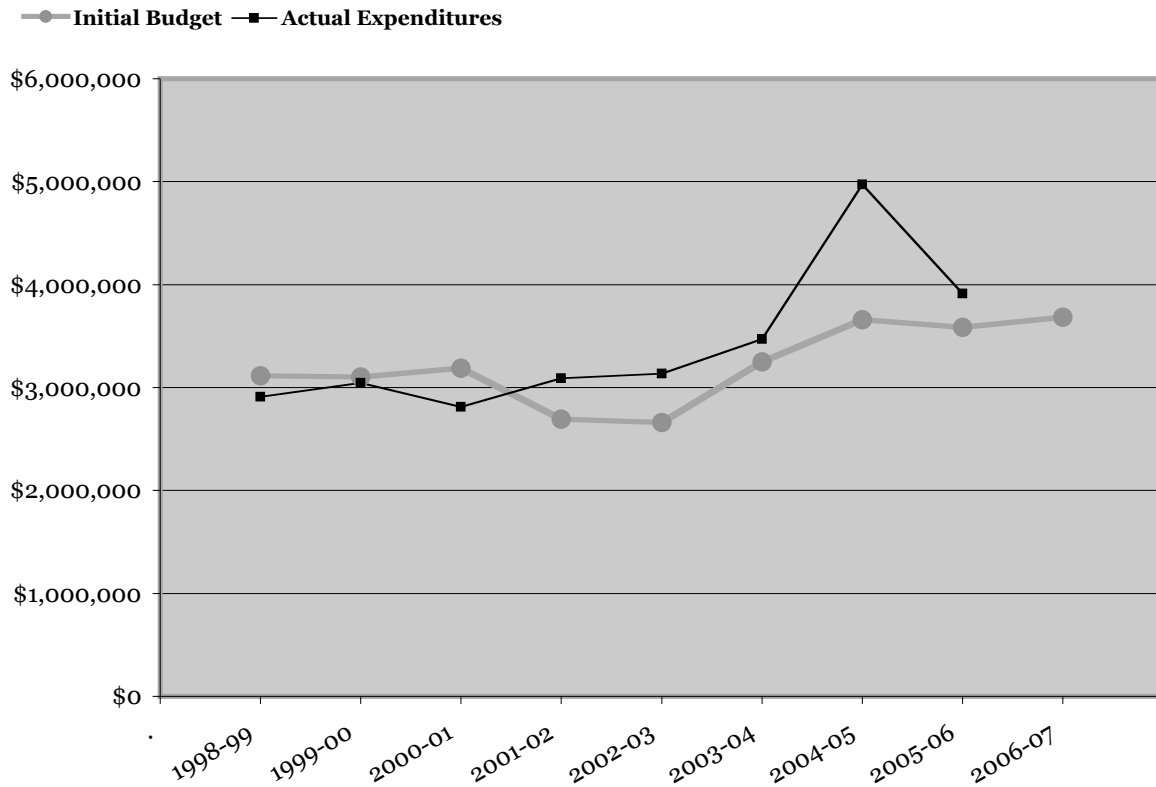
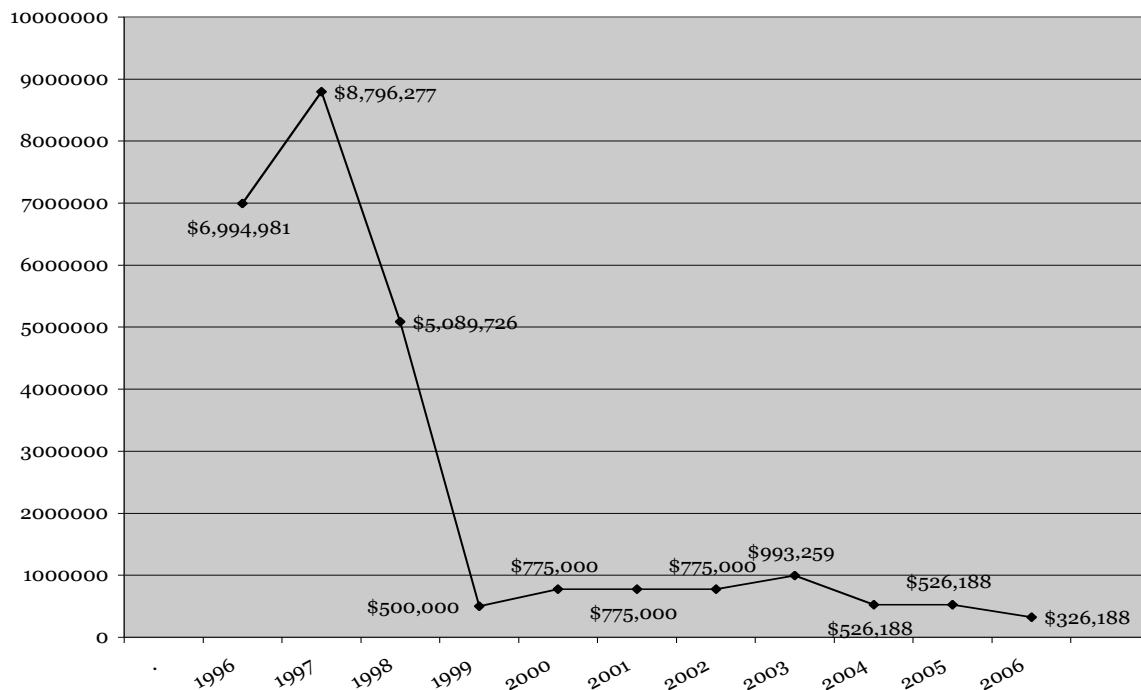


Table 3: MAINTENANCE ANNUAL BUDGETS SHORTFALL

Year	Initial Budget	Actual Expenditures	Percent Shortfall	Amount Shortfall
1998-99	\$3,116,590	\$2,911,053		
1999-00	\$3,100,816	\$3,044,761		
2000-01	\$3,187,978	\$2,811,319		
2001-02	\$2,692,947	\$3,089,913	13%	\$396,966
2002-03	\$2,658,614	\$3,134,594	15%	\$475,980
2003-04	\$3,248,126	\$3,471,231	6%	\$223,105
2004-05	\$3,659,212	\$4,973,551	27%	\$1,314,339
2005-06	\$3,584,388	\$3,911,646	9%	\$327,258
2006-07*	\$3,683,353	\$4,199,022	14%	\$515,669
			Average Shortfall	\$547,529

*2006-07 Actual Expenditures were estimated.

The maintenance annual budget for 2006-7 was \$566,763 more than the 1998 budget, or a 15% increase. In three of the years between 1998 and 2006, however, budgets were set lower than the 1998 level. Budgets have been inadequate to sustain the schools almost every year, as the graph above shows, with an average of 14% more needed than was budgeted. The Maintenance Department went particularly over budget the year of Hurricane Katrina in preparation for the additional students, as well as cleaning up fallen trees and other debris and school damage in the wake of Hurricane Rita. While utilities, square footage, gas (for the Maintenance crews), and construction materials (for repairs) have all gone up in cost, the Maintenance Department budget, along with other departmental budgets, have been “scrubbed” by as much as 10% in some years.



Graph 2: HISTORY OF 1965 SALES TAX COLLECTIONS SENT TO CAPITAL FUNDS

The amount of 1965 sales tax revenue sent to Capital Funds dropped in 1998 and plummeted in 1999 due to being committed to teacher raises and other operational. These monies had been used on a “pay as you go” basis for a self-funded construction fund for the schools, with the plan being to allocate \$2 million per year for school facilities. These funds have not been available since 1998—a difference of almost \$7 - \$8 million accumulating annually for major school repairs, such as an entire roof, and construction.

Beginning with the 2006-2007 budget, 75 cents of every dollar earned from the 1965 sales tax that exceeds current budget requirements has been placed into the Capital Project Fund, where it accrues for expenditure in the following year's budget. The 2007-2008 Capital Project Funds budget, funds which accrued last year, is \$10,427,235, or 3.36% of the budget.

At present, Capital Project Funds are being collected for next year's budget. The Capital Projects Funds are divided equally between Capital Improvements and the Minor Repairs Fund in each month's revenue report to the School Board.

Reduction in Staff

The Director of Planning was hired as a new position in 1996. In that year the School Board approved the standards for elementary and middle schools that were used for the construction of the four schools completed in 1999. The Director of Planning was later given the responsibility of serving as the Director of Maintenance as well, which had previously been a separate position. He also was put in charge of training for the new custodians, supervising the custodians at the School Board complex, and handling the custodial supplies warehouse, duties that in previous years were held by a series of contracted firms, who had also directly supervised the head custodians. Thus, two supervisory positions that directly affect school facilities were lost. A position of Environmental Compliance and Safety Officer has been added, however, to handle new and also essential duties.

An investigation by School System administrators following a parent meeting about "dirty schools" led to the fact that while custodial positions were opened and filled for the four new schools built in 1999, the vacancies created at the other schools were not filled. Also, in 1999, four schools increased in square footage by additions of buildings, but the School Board did not increase the number of custodians. A total of 18 previous custodial positions were unfilled. Completion of reinstatement of funding for the 18 positions was completed in the 2007-2008 budget and these positions are almost filled.

Itinerant custodial positions were created by School Board policy in 1991. A school qualifies for an extra "half" custodian, due to the formula established in the policy.

A supervisor for custodians on the 44 campuses is also needed, as one administrator noted, to ensure adequate salaries to fill the positions, track the substitutes (also a shortage due to

low pay), and monitor the time sheets for after-hours work. This supervisor would also train new staff, check cleanliness of the schools, problem-solve the issue of shared workloads concerning summer use of the schools, and select and maintain supplies in the custodians' warehouse.

Stanton Leggett & Associates, in its 1990 "Long Range Facilities Study," recommended "added help at the supervisory level in the maintenance department." They stated further, "The program now underway taxes the department's resources. Any attempt to institute a major building and upgrading program will overwhelm it." At that date, there was a Director of Maintenance, no Planning Director, and a contracted agency in charge of the custodians.

There are currently 53 employees in the Maintenance/Planning and Facilities Department., with 11 open positions. These positions have not been filled for a long time due to non-competitive salaries offered by the Lafayette Parish School System compared with the private sector. Half of the custodial positions at one school are unfilled, presumably because of low entry salaries. Whereas there were previously eight heating and air conditioning repair staff, there are presently only two available to repair and service all the units of the 44 schools and the 267 portable buildings. There are two plumbers and two helpers, and two electricians and two helpers to service all the schools' needs.

At the October 3, 2007, School Board meeting, salaries of some categories of Maintenance workers were adjusted within the existing School Board pay schedule to very near market standards. However, the salaries of air conditioning repair persons and electricians remain much below market standards and therefore non-competitive. Several School Board members acknowledged that the salaries that were increased "had been neglected a long time," and that "to keep these jobs [filled] is hard."

Unfunded Needs

The Director of Maintenance, Planning and Facilities has a growing inventory of repairs and other deferred maintenance for which the School Board has no money. Roofs are leaking at some of the schools, causing further damage to the buildings. As construction and materials costs have gone up, this list becomes increasingly expensive to defer.

As this study has identified many other needs related to facilities, leadership and a firm

commitment to setting a course for change is essential. The Lafayette Parish School Board and staff of the Lafayette Parish School System will need to coordinate their efforts and resources toward this course. A first step would require division of responsibilities for planning and maintenance from one into at least two departments, so that the Planning Director can assist with coordinating with all agencies and the general public in planning, as well as prepare the long-term facilities plan and carry it out with the Lafayette Parish School Board and the Lafayette Consolidated Government.

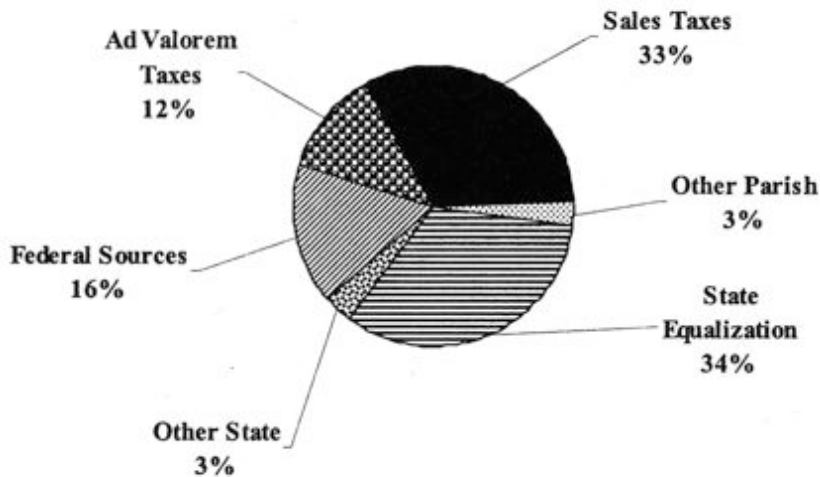
B. History of tax support for capital improvements is poor.

“Everyone wants really good schools. No one ever votes against good schools or teachers. But sometimes voters choose No to tax propositions for the schools for other reasons. They feel funds aren’t going directly to the teachers or the individual students, or there’s more and more bureaucracy. The system has perpetuated itself in Louisiana of mistrust of government. People have to see the budget, understand it, know where the money is going, have sunshine and transparency.”

**– A member,
League of Women Voters of Louisiana**

The following charts will reveal the sources for all incoming revenues and how those were spent for the 2005-2006 school year.

Graph 3: 2005-2006 GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS REVENUES, by Category



Graph 4: 2005-2006 GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS EXPENDITURES, by Category

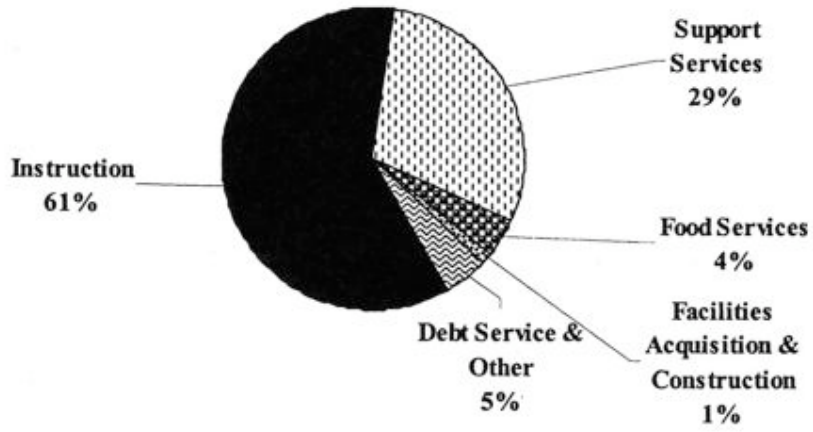


Table 4: GOVERNMENTAL REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Lafayette Parish School Board
Lafayette, Louisiana

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

June 30, 2006

Governmental Funds Revenue Sources	2006 Amount	Percent of Total	Increase (Decrease) From 2005	Percent of Increase (Decrease)
Parish Sources:				
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$ 34,220,620	12.28%	\$ 2,666,868	8.45%
Sales Taxes	90,783,781	32.57%	15,357,264	20.36%
Other	<u>7,132,989</u>	<u>2.56%</u>	<u>1,339,420</u>	<u>23.12%</u>
Total Parish Sources	132,137,390	47.40%	19,363,552	17.17%
State Sources:				
Equalization	92,726,264	33.26%	9,719,199	11.71%
Other	<u>9,161,570</u>	<u>3.29%</u>	<u>(139,778)</u>	<u>-1.50%</u>
Total State Sources	101,887,834	36.55%	9,579,421	10.38%
Federal Sources	44,728,541	16.05%	14,562,713	48.28%
Total Revenues	\$ 278,753,765	100.00%	\$ 43,505,686	18.49%

Governmental Funds Expenditures	2006 Amount	Percent of Total	Increase (Decrease) From 2005	Percent of Increase (Decrease)
Instruction:				
Regular Programs	\$ 94,655,409	36.33%	\$ 7,035,347	8.03%
Special Education Programs	35,271,643	13.54%	2,671,870	8.20%
Special Programs	12,964,247	4.98%	(456,369)	-3.40%
Other	<u>14,749,831</u>	<u>5.66%</u>	<u>3,259,274</u>	<u>28.36%</u>
Total Instruction	157,641,130	60.50%	12,510,122	8.62%
Support Services:				
Pupil Support	11,015,536	4.23%	2,092,321	23.45%
Instructional Staff Support	11,328,327	4.35%	648,018	6.07%
General Administration	3,199,742	1.23%	(131,857)	-3.96%
School Administration	11,442,832	4.39%	1,143,942	11.11%
Business Services	2,005,370	0.77%	210,960	11.76%
Operations & Maintenance	17,065,709	6.55%	2,004,020	13.31%
Student Transportation	18,790,330	7.21%	2,115,254	12.69%
Central Services	<u>2,241,942</u>	<u>0.86%</u>	<u>394,267</u>	<u>21.34%</u>
Total Support Services	77,089,788	29.59%	8,476,925	12.35%
Food Services	10,953,269	4.20%	450,347	4.29%
Community Services	354,638	0.14%	175,813	98.32%
Facilities Acquisition & Const.	2,378,810	0.91%	(886,363)	-27.15%
Debt Service	12,130,538	4.66%	548,153	4.73%
Total Expenditures	\$ 260,548,173	100.00%	\$ 21,274,997	8.89%

Lafayette Parish currently has the third highest per capita income in the state (Stokes and Forsyth). In the 2000 Census before Hurricane Katrina, Lafayette was fourth with St. Tammany first, Jefferson second, and East Baton Rouge third.

	Per Capita Money Income	Mill Rate for Schools Including Debt
St. Tammany Parish:	\$22,514	73.08
Jefferson Parish:	\$19,953	21.63
East Baton Rouge Parish	\$19,790	42.84
Lafayette Parish	\$19,371	33.61

Lafayette Parish also ranks lower in mill rate support for its public schools than three of its poorer neighboring parishes in the 2000 Census:

	Per Capita Money Income	Mill Rate for Schools Including Debt
Vermilion Parish:	\$14,201	39.24
Iberia Parish	\$14,145	35.98
St. Martin Parish	\$13,619	34.75
Lafayette Parish	\$19,371	33.61
Acadia Parish	\$13,424	32.15
St. Landry Parish	\$12,042	26.97

Lafayette Parish's household incomes are distributed across levels as follows:

***Lafayette Parish Per Household Personal Income:**

Income Level	Number of Households
<\$15,000.....	5,475
\$15,000-24,999	5,996
\$25,000-34,999	5,309
\$35,000-49,999	7,787
\$50,000-74,999	10,948
\$75,000-99,999	7,032
\$100,000-149,999	6,496
\$150,000-249,999	2,289
\$250,000-499,999	669
+\$500,000.....	402

22% of Lafayette Parish residents have incomes below the poverty line (Stokes & Forsyth).

Comparison of revenues raised from local sales and property taxes by each parish for its schools*** reveals that

- **26 of 64 parishes have a higher millage rate for their schools than does Lafayette Parish.**
- **St. Charles and Calcasieu Parishes raise more revenue for their schools from property taxes than Lafayette Parish.**
- **St. Tammany Parish almost doubles what Lafayette Parish raises for its schools in total ad valorem revenue (\$64,306,886 vs. \$33,376,537 per year).**
- **13 parishes have a higher sales tax rate than does Lafayette.**
- **15 parishes spend more per pupil than Lafayette does.**

Lafayette’s Millage Rates for 2007-08 are 33.75, as follows:

Constitutional Tax****	4.59
Special Maintenance & Operational Tax.....	7.27
Special Maintenance Improvement & Operational Tax	5.00
Operational Tax*****	16.70
Consolidated School District No. 119
TOTAL.....	33.75

*Table 7: FY2007-08 Budget Letter (FY 2005-06 Local Property and Sales Tax Revenue)

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****Set by the Assessor, according to formula.*

*****For general operations of the School System, not maintenance.*

From 1965 to 2002 voters passed three sales tax propositions from Lafayette Parish School Board, for a total of 2% sales tax support.

Lafayette voters, and Louisiana voters in general, have preferred dedicated taxes to be sure

they know where their money is going. Sales tax money is collected by the Sales Tax Director and his staff of accountants employed by Lafayette Parish School System, in a building it owns and maintains. The Sales Tax Director allocates the proceeds according to the proposition of each tax to the Director of Finance for monthly budget accounting and projecting of the School Board's current financial status in regard to the year's budget.

The **1965 School Board Sales Tax Ordinance, which has a 1% sales tax rate**, was passed by Lafayette Parish voters "upon the sale at retail, the use, the lease or rental, the consumption and storage for use or consumption of tangible personal property, and on sales of services in the Parish of Lafayette" and was "dedicated for the purposes of (1) payment of salaries of teachers in the elementary and secondary schools of Lafayette Parish and/or for the expenses of operating said schools; and (2) capital improvements, including the acquisition of lands for building sites and playgrounds, purchasing, erecting, and improving school buildings, and related facilities, and acquiring the necessary equipment and furnishings therefor [sic], title to which shall be in the public; and further, shall said School Board be authorized to incur debt and issue negotiable bonds for capital improvements as above described, payable from a pledge and dedication of the avails or proceeds of said tax, all in the maner [sic] and within the limitations set forth in R.S. 33:22737.2; provided, however, such bonds shall not be issued in amounts requiring more than one-half (1/2) of the avails or proceeds of the tax estimated to be collected in the current calendar year, as more fully set forth in R.S. 33:2737.2; and further, in the event bonds are so issued, the avails or proceeds of such tax, after making all payments required for the payment of such bonds in principal and interest and the establishment of a reserve therefore, shall be allocated monthly as follows: First, an amount equal to at least one-half (1/2) of the total avails or proceeds of said tax for such month (after payment of costs and expenses of collecting and administering the tax) shall be used for the purpose of payment of salaries of teachers in the elementary and secondary schools of Lafayette Parish and/or for the expenses of operating said schools, and next, the remainder of the avails or proceeds of the tax for such month, if any, may be used for capital improvement purposes"

The 1988 Sales Tax addressed the effects of Lafayette Parish's economic recession on the public schools. In the area of capital improvements, it targeted only the environmental compliance issue of asbestos removal.

The **School Board 1988 Sales Tax Ordinance which has a 1/2% sales tax rate** was

passed by Lafayette Parish voters on November 21, 1987, to authorize the Lafayette Parish School Board to “levy and collect, and adopt an ordinance providing for such levy and collection, an additional tax of one-half of one percent (1/2%) (the “Tax”) upon the sale at retail, the use, the lease or rental, the consumption, and the storage for use or consumption of tangible personal property and on sales of services in the Parish of Lafayette, all as defined in LA.R.S.47:301 to 47:317, inclusive, except that as provided by Act 1 of the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature of 1982. The Tax shall not be collected on food and prescription drug items presently exempted from state sales and use taxes under La.R.S.47:305(4), with the proceeds of the Tax (after paying the reasonable and necessary expenses of collecting and administering the Tax) to be used entirely and exclusively to supplement other General Fund revenues within each fiscal year for the payment of:

“First, the restoration of the five percent (5%) salary reduction for school employees and for the restoration of the mileage reimbursements for bus drivers as set forth in the School Board minutes of July 1, 1987;

“second, the restoration of the reduction in funding by the School Board on July 1, 1987, for materials of instruction (approximately \$192,520 annually) and for educational programs relative to high school student/teacher ratio, early childhood, drop-out prevention and elementary counselors;

“third, to provide \$250,000 per year funding for the removal of all asbestos and asbestos-related funding for the removal of all asbestos and asbestos-related products from school buildings and facilities until such removal is completed;

“fourth, funding to pay on behalf of active and retired employees one-half of the total premium for employee only coverage of a board-approved health plan;

“fifth, to provide funding for the establishment and implementation of certain enhancement programs; and

“sixth, in the event the proceeds of the tax exceed the amount necessary to fully fund the above items, the remaining funds are to be used entirely and exclusively for pay increases for school employees and/or for the establishment and implementation of instructional programs.”

The **School Board 2002 Sales Tax Ordinance which has a 1/2% sales tax rate** gave “authority for the Lafayette Parish School Board to levy an additional 1/2% sales and use tax dedicated to paying the costs of salaries and related benefits of classroom teachers , and the establishment of a teacher salary reserve fund.” It was an additional sales tax of 1/2% to the 1965 tax with new language to meet subsequent tax codes, strengthen the power of the Collector to collect, allow him to hire staff, and provide for the collection of the tax on motor vehicles with the Department of Motor Vehicles. It requires “prompt deposit of all funds, assessments, moneys, penalties, fees of other income . . . into the special fund heretofore established and maintained for the deposit of such proceeds, which fund shall be a separate bank account established and maintained with the regularly designated fiscal agent of the Governing Authority”

Lafayette Parish School Board borrowed money against its revenue from sales tax to build the five new schools, and is currently paying debt service, accounted for in the budget.

Lafayette Parish School Board has issued no general obligation bonds for school construction against assessed property valuation (ad valorem millage on property) since 1988. On October 1, 1988, the voters approved \$6 million. The School Board is currently completing 19/100's of a mill (.19) remaining from that original obligation of 15 mills and will reduce to 0 in 2009.

Table 5: HISTORY OF MILLAGE RATES

HISTORY OF MILLAGE RATES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD OF THE PARISH OF LAFAYETTE, STATE OF LOUISIANA
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YEAR	Schools	School District No. 1	Special Schools	Special Schools Improvements	School 1985 Operation
1972	5.00	15.50	7.00	5.00	
1973	5.00	15.50	7.00	5.00	
1974	5.00	15.50	7.00	5.00	
1975	5.00	15.50	7.00	5.00	
1976	5.00	12.50	7.00	5.00	
1977	4.25	8.50	5.95	4.25	
1978	2.68	5.35	3.75	2.68	
1979	2.73	5.35	3.83	2.73	
1980	2.75	5.35	3.85	2.75	
1981	2.75	4.00	3.85	2.75	
1982	2.48	1.82	3.53	2.48	
1983	2.48	1.82	3.53	2.48	
1984	2.75	1.00	3.81	2.75	
1985	2.75	1.00	3.81	2.75	10.00
1986	3.25	3.20	5.81	3.52	12.82
1987	3.67	3.20	5.81	3.67	13.35
1988	4.59	4.00	7.27	4.59	16.70
1989	4.59	4.00	7.27	4.59	16.70
1990	4.59	4.00	7.27	4.59	16.70
1991	4.59	4.00	7.27	4.59	16.70
1992	4.31	3.25	6.83	4.31	15.70
1993	4.31	2.93	6.83	4.31	15.70
1994	4.59	2.89	7.27	5.00	16.70
1995	4.59	2.60	7.27	5.00	16.70
1996	4.59	2.22	7.27	5.00	16.70
1997	4.59	2.22	7.27	5.00	16.70
1998	4.59	1.60	7.27	5.00	16.70
1999	4.59	0.90	7.27	5.00	16.70
2000	4.59	0.80	7.27	5.00	16.70
2001	4.59	0.80	7.27	5.00	16.70
2002	4.59	0.80	7.27	5.00	16.70
2003	4.59	0.76	7.27	5.00	16.70
2004	4.59	0.72	7.27	5.00	16.70
2005	4.59	0.69	7.27	5.00	16.70
2006	4.59	0.52	7.27	5.00	16.70
2007	4.59	0.19	7.27	5.00	16.70

Recommendations:

- Community leadership should be organized by School Board and Council districts for public information and discussion purposes, for seeking support for funding or capital improvement projects. For example, a District 1 leadership team would include the District 1 School Board member and Council member, LPAE, APEL, and Parent-Teacher Club (PTC) representatives, administrators of the schools in that district, as well as athletic coaches and booster organizations of the high school. Such a team would also include resident members of other civic or political organizations.

C. Growth of non-public schools further segregates our schools.

“People are especially eager to pursue goals that benefit their children—their contributions to society and the future. In a mobility-oriented society such as the United States, this means that families relentlessly seek opportunities to secure advantageous futures for their own children.”

– Carl Bankston III and Stephen Caldas,
A Troubled Dream, The Promise and Failure of School Desegregation in Louisiana, 2002

Stephen J. Caldas is a former professor of education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and is from Louisiana. Carl L. Bankston III is a sociologist with an interest in public education, who also considers himself a “Louisianian.” “By failing to deal with the problems connected to race that exist outside of the schools, we have undermined efforts to deal with racial disparities inside the schools,” they say. Bankston and Caldas maintain that the recent increased racial imbalance of some of the Lafayette Parish schools is not “opposition to bussing or to judicial usurpation of the power of local school districts. It is essentially a problem created by white parents to act in the best interests of their own children.”

The joint authors state Lafayette residents have experienced two of the three major types of reactions to racial disparities within the schools. “First, there is the classic form of white flight, movement from one school district to another,” that has occurred in East Baton Rouge and New Orleans, but is not applicable for Lafayette Parish, as neighboring parishes lack the economic and cultural resources offered at home. “Second, movement from public to private schools” . . . Third, the desegregation of schools can actually lead to shifts in student populations within school districts.”

Movement from Public to Private Schools

Approximately 20% of Lafayette school children are not enrolled in the public schools, and indications are that this number is growing. Of the 17 non-public schools contacted for this study, nine have added permanent new buildings within the last five years, totaling 20

new buildings. At least two of these schools have all new buildings. In addition, a new non-public high school is set to open in 2008 and one school plans a new junior high school facility to be built in 2010. Total enrollment for the 17 schools is 9,535 students, 101 of whom enrolled in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and have remained.

Comparable enrollment data for the 12 Catholic Diocese schools only in 2000 and in 2006 was available. It showed an increase of 7% in students from 6,200 to 6,687.

Although Lafayette Parish has grown by 106,000 people in population since the 2000 Census to 296,503 people in 2006, representing almost 36% growth, the Lafayette Parish School System's student population has grown only 3%, from approximately 29,000 in the 2000-01 school year (Bankston and Caldas) to 30,075 on October 8, 2007.

The non-public schools surveyed cited several reasons given by parents for choosing their school. These included the following: parents had been alumni; diversity of students; strong curriculum; small class size; Catholic education; excellent reputation; Christian environment; family atmosphere; single gender; outstanding faculty; individual attention; fewer discipline problems; and welcoming atmosphere.

The information gathered on the number of students per teacher in each class revealed a range of 20 to 23 students, although eight of the 17 schools surveyed declined to provide this information. Many students who attend non-public schools rely on bus transportation provided by the Lafayette Parish School System: of the 14 schools that provided data on transportation, 1,319 students ride Lafayette Parish buses.

Six non-public schools currently receive Title I funds because they have 40% or more students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Another increasing parental option chosen is home schooling. In June 2000 there were 390 home-schooled students from Lafayette Parish School System registered with the Louisiana Department of Education. The April 2007 quarterly report from the Louisiana Department of Education showed 380 approved parents' requests, and 140 private schools not seeking state approval, representing 316 students, together accounting for a total of 696 students. This represents an increase of 43% in the past 6 years of students being home-schooled.

Shifts in Student Population

Comparing the number of portable buildings on campuses, grade structure, and enrollment in Section I B above, it is apparent that enrollment has dropped substantially in central and north Lafayette, and has increased in south Lafayette and the Youngsville area.

In 2005-06 the majority-minority student transfers, which allow a child who is in the racial majority in his home zone school to transfer to any school in which he would be in the racial minority, totaled 176 (39 white, 137 African-American). In the 2006-07 school year these transfers totaled 279 (58 white, 221 African-American), an increase of 37%. (Stokes and Forsyth)

Approximately 120 African-Americans in the moves of 2005-06 are accounted for by School Choice when a middle school was placed in School Improvement II in its first year. During the second year of its School Improvement, 69 individuals moved. (Stokes and Forsyth)

Bankston and Caldas noted that when the East Baton Rouge schools reached the 40% mark of African-American representation, “the rate of white flight increased almost ten-fold, causing the proportion of African-American students in the system to increase by more than 1% per year.” The authors also predicted that “Given current rates of white flight, Lafayette will be another majority-African-American school district by 2012.” Lafayette Parish currently has 15 public schools with 40% or more African-American representation.

Although the Carencro 2000 Census showed 50% white population and 42% African-American population, all three Carencro public schools’ African-American population is above 42%.

<u>2006 White Representation</u>		<u>2006 African-American Representation</u>	
In Lafayette Parish	In Public Schools	In Lafayette Parish	In Public Schools
73%	53%	24%	43%

Academic Performance & Climate In Schools with Majority of Students Having Low Socio-Economic Status

Bankston and Caldas noted a comparison of 1999 LEAP test scores, academic rankings, and high percentage of African-American student pointed to a direct correlation between schools having a high percentage of low income students at that school, and the depression in the LEAP test scores.

Bankston and Caldas then used 1990 Louisiana Graduate Equivalency Examination scores of 43,000 10th graders who had attended integrated schools throughout their school years to control and examine a number of variables. In comparing the performance of African-American students from differing levels of socio-economic background who attended majority white schools with that of African-American students who attended majority African-American schools, they found that the latter performed significantly lower in achievement. They concluded:

“ . . . segregated African-American schools concentrate poor students, students from families with less education, and students from single-parent families. Since students from both low-SES [socio-economic status] backgrounds and students from single-parents families are at an academic disadvantage, these students together in schools magnifies these disadvantages and consequently tends to impact the entire learning environment negatively for all students. White students, on the other hand, are much more likely to attend schools where the disadvantages associated with low SES and single-parent family structure are minimized and distract less from the school’s academic agenda. School district support does not seem to mitigate these negative environmental factors, at least in Louisiana.”

In many cases, the authors note, in middle and high schools that have a high percentage of African-American students who fall in the low-socio-economic range, the school climate becomes such that striving for academic success becomes “acting white.”

Bankston and Caldas noted that another negative factor, in Lafayette’s schools where the majority of students by far are African-American, is an unequal distribution of physical resources. Although per pupil spending is equal from the School System, and more for Title I schools, there is less money available from fund raising by the Parent-Teacher Clubs. There is also less parent volunteer time available to those schools, compared to schools “with

relatively more affluent parents participating to a greater extent.”

Currently the one Lafayette Parish school determined as Academically Unacceptable Level I (defined by a School Performance Score of below 60; this school’s score was 58.7) has an ethnic student population that is 93.5% African-American. Another Lafayette Parish School this year is determined to be School Improvement Level I because its students with disabilities did not meet their growth target in last spring’s testing. If they meet the target this spring, the school will return to a satisfactory rating. This school has an ethnic student population that is 89% African-American. Last year the school which had been School Improvement Level II turned its performance around and returned to a satisfactory level. That school has a student enrollment that is ethnically 94% African-American.

Lafayette Parish has reduced the achievement gap for white and African-American students by 8.4 points, compared with .8 points statewide reduction. However, the district poverty level over the same period increased 4.3% over the statewide average of 3% increase, and the number of students in poverty increased. A performance gap continues to exist between students in poverty and students not in poverty. (Stokes and Forsyth)

Bankston and Caldas conclude, “A permanent division of American society into quasi castes would be a serious threat to the health of the nation, and educational institutions must be part of the effort to meet this threat.” They suggest attractive, well built neighborhood schools with excellent academic programming, in combination with magnet schools with entry qualification standards in the arts and in the sciences. In addition to the academic requirement, a low income requirement could also be added for a certain number of entries to these magnet schools. Additionally, the majority-to-minority option should still be available for African-American and white parents. They conclude by saying, “The dream of educational desegregation can only become a reality to the extent that we overcome our troubled heritage of racial stratification in American society at large.”

At Risk Factors for Achievement on the Increase in Lafayette Parish

Billy Stokes and Ouida Forsyth of the Center for Childhood Education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are just completing their data for the “Lafayette Parish Early Childhood Initiative,” a community plan prepared for the Lafayette Parish School System geared towards improving the lives of children.

Their results indicate that the factors negatively impacting low socio-economic African-American students in Bankston and Caldas' 2000 statistical analysis are on the increase in Lafayette:

“The Lafayette community has not embraced the reality of its family units.” The number of single parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and foster parents is increasing, as are families in crisis—homeless, abused, drug-affected, transient, and foster care. Frequent mobility of the family affects performance in school. The severe shortage of safe, affordable housing for families, as well as limited resources for parenting education, are other factors challenging everyone.”

The rate of live births born to mothers ages 15-19 in Lafayette Parish, although decreased from 1999 at 48.7% for every 1,000 live births, was still 43.3% in 2003. The percentage of live births to unmarried women in Lafayette Parish in 2002 was 24.5% for white women and 68.5% for African-American women. The percentage of mothers in Louisiana without a high school degree in 2000 was 23%. The number of grandparents responsible for grandchildren on the Lafayette Parish Census in 2000 was 7,588, and of those 46% were in poverty, while the state average was 42%. (Stokes and Forsyth)

The poverty rate is 22.1% in the Lafayette Public School System, which is above the national average of 17.6%. Lafayette's rate for free and reduced lunch is increasing at a higher rate than Louisiana's overall rate. The percentage of children on free and reduced lunch in the non-public schools has also grown, according to the Lafayette Parish Child Nutrition Supervisor.

Currently 55.89% of the students in the Lafayette Public Schools are on free or reduced lunch.

Total Current Enrollment	29,970	100.00%
Students Who Pay Full Price	13,219	44.11%
Students Who Receive Free Lunch	14,250	47.55%
Students Who Pay Reduced Lunch	2,511	8.35%

Moreover, 31 of the 38 elementary, middle, and high schools receive Title I funds, based on 40% or more of their students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. These statistics

suggest that families below the poverty or low-income line are spread widely across the parish, in public schools.

Stokes and Forsyth state, “The community has not fully embraced the concept that we are responsible for all children of our community in order to advance economically.”

Businesses looking to locate in Lafayette do not look at the private schools—they look at the public schools. Those looking to buy homes ask the realtors about the neighborhood schools. Property values and marketability are affected by the school for that zone.

Local employers are complaining of the lack of trained and educated workers available for hire.

Lafayette Parish has the third highest per capita income in the state, but it spends less than the state average on its students. We have the responsibility to offer one of the top educations in the state in the best school facilities.

Communication with the public is essential to reach this goal. At present on a low attendance School Board meeting night, there are only 86 empty seats left available to the public in the meeting room of the Lafayette Parish School Board room (about 27 Lafayette Parish School System staff required to be present, LPAE, APEL, bus drivers, and League of Women Voters observers and space for AOC, the public television station, totaling a minimum of approximately 37 people routinely attending). When parents come to watch a large group of children receive awards, or there is an issue of concern to teachers or other school employee groups, they often cannot enter the room, and must remain standing up in the lobby watching on the television monitor. The parking lot and street are not lighted for those returning to their cars in the dark at the end of the meeting. Moving the School Board’s meeting location to a larger school facility with improved parking for nighttime is needed to encourage public attendance at School Board meetings.

Members of Lafayette Parish Association of Educators and of Associated Professional Educators of Lafayette, and some PTC Presidents responded to a questionnaire by the League of Women Voters of Lafayette on several facility issues. The results showed the recommended high school size as 1,200-1,500, with no more than a 2% growth rate, and recommended elementary school size at 450-500 students.

When asked to compare older and new portable classrooms, both groups noted that the acoustics are bad in both, and that classes have to be removed from both during the threat of tornadoes into the main buildings. Permanent classrooms were rated as very much preferable for instruction to portable buildings.

Overwhelmingly, teachers and the PTC Presidents were concerned with decreasing the number of points of entry onto school campuses to increase safety. They also advocated moving students who have displayed “violent” behavior to alternative school sites.

When given a number of issues to prioritize for facility renovation/construction, both groups rated Life Safety Code Issues as number one – “deficiencies that, if not corrected, could result in building closures, risk to loss of the lives or health of children (fire alarm, intercom alarm, portables without alarm, lack of toilet facilities or so jammed with traffic, rotted tree limbs at risk to fall).” Both groups rated Regulatory Compliance Health as number two: “site drainage, covered walkways, renewal of individual school treatment plants, drinking fountains, leaking roofs, air conditioning.”

Both groups stated a need for decreased enrollment on the school campuses, more permanent classrooms, and many, many more student restrooms.

Almost all respondents answered “Yes, I would support a tax proposal by the School Board dedicated to improving school facilities, based on a long-term plan (assessment of all school sites’ needs with ranked priorities).” They commented, “but ONLY if these funds are dedicated to improving school facilities.”

“This is home—there’s no such thing as northside, southside, eastside, westside. This is one district. It is our district. It has changed—the times we live in—it’s a younger generation. Let’s talk about the future—let’s talk about our children.”

– A parent of three children who graduated from Lafayette Parish

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue to offer the majority to minority option.
- 2) The planning team should evaluate early childhood infrastructure as part of any renovation, expansion, or new construction of an elementary school—enough space for pre-kindergarten, and any other early childhood programs the School System plans to serve.
- 3) Discuss fully year-round schools, for long-term planning purposes. With 55% of Lafayette Parish School students receiving free or reduced lunch, and 31 of 38 schools having 40% or more of their students receiving free or reduced lunch, extended learning opportunities throughout the school year would seem a need. Students would have more exposure to reading and math programs in a full-day program. The largest number of juvenile crimes occur during the summer months when students are out of school and not involved in a formal program, according to Mark Francis, Lafayette Police Department.
- 4) The four elementary or middle schools no longer used are all central Lafayette sites: W. A. LeRosen, Vermilion, J. Wallace James, and N. P. Moss. The two schools with the lowest enrollment at present for Lafayette schools, as opposed to the smaller municipalities, are also central Lafayette sites: Myrtle Place Elementary and Lafayette Middle School. Smart growth principles would indicate a need to maintain a viable elementary and middle school somewhere in the central area to support housing infill and multiple use of the downtown area, as well as continued renovation and preservation of the historic areas of Lafayette (Sterling Grove, Freetown, the area from Myrtle Place Boulevard to St. John Cathedral, the Saints Street, etc.
- 5) Offer another elementary magnet school with possibly the same program as J. Wallace James somewhere in the more central area of Lafayette—such as between University of Louisiana at Lafayette and J. W. Faulk.
- 6) Geographically the city of Lafayette is a crescent backing against a swamp. Should redistricting be necessary, the Lafayette Parish School Board may wish to consider a

- sliced-pie concept that more equitably distributes students of various socio-economic backgrounds, as shown by research to better affect academic outcomes and school climate. The redrawn districts would be narrow in the center, widening outwards towards the suburbs.
- 7) Meet and discuss any redistricting, should that become necessary, before the end of the school year in which the change is to be made. The issues should be discussed fully, including transportation, dates of an advanced open house at the receiving school, and student orientation at the receiving or new school.
 - 8) Continue to explore a School Board-initiated world language institute in the North Lafayette area to provide a destination school for those students already in immersion feeder programs currently offering immersion programs and to offer other “critical need languages” increasingly important on a global scale.
 - 9) Develop the standards for the elementary, middle, and high schools through a representative parent advisory committee, along with the school administration and faculty.*
 - 10) Lafayette Parish School System should cooperate with parents to use school sites most efficiently, and link schools with neighborhoods by beginning the planning for each new school and major school addition with a public school planning workshop, involving the appropriate municipal officials, staff and interested residents.*
 - 11) Move the School Board meetings now and permanently to a school with ample seating for 150 people, and an ample, well-lit parking lot. Consider using the existing Board Room for additional office space for School System staff or a larger in-service room.
 - 12) Add more after care programs in the elementary schools.

*Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team: Education Subcommittee

D. Composition of the Lafayette School System divisions shows few administrators at the top.

“Budget scrubbing, beginning about 1997, in all departments has left us almost anorexic in administrative areas.”

– Multitasking staff member

Many people, in talking about the Lafayette Parish School System, believe it is “top heavy,” and want to be sure that all money goes directly to teachers and student instruction. However, as one staff person noted, “Teachers need their air conditioners fixed, their insurance claims paid, the leaks in the roof repaired, the copy machine repaired, their order purchased, paid for, and delivered to the right school. They also need the school nurse to determine whether a child has pink eye, a counselor to enroll a student in a group for children coping with parental divorce, and the Homeless Coordinator to help get the student and his family out of their car they’ve been sleeping in because he has been falling asleep at school.”

No longer can a school be a building with a principal and teachers as the only adults, nor can the School Board be merely the place from where the Superintendent and the checks come. Because of the many social and socio-economic issues outlined in the previous chapter and because communities have not voluntarily met the needs of children and their families, federal and state mandates have placed responsibilities and often costs on the school systems to assist children: Title I, Title IV, Accountability for High Stakes Testing for No Child Left Behind, and LA4.

The following chart divides these indirect student support roles by percentage of cost in salaries from the General Fund and 2002 Teacher Tax, and indicates that the great majority of school system funds are spent on instruction, direct student-related services, and other support services staff.

Table 6: SALARIES AND BENEFITS

General Fund & 2002 Teacher Tax					
Salary & Benefits - \$186 Million or 89% of Total					
Fiscal Year 2006-2007					
	General Fund	2002 Teacher Tax			
	Salary & Benefits	Salary & Benefits	%	Total	%
Instruction & Student-Related Services *					
Regular Ed Teachers	\$ 80,476,377	\$ 14,721,807	48%	\$ 95,198,184	51%
Special Ed Teachers	28,502,050	2,595,753	17%	31,097,804	17%
Vocational Ed Teachers	5,029,774	622,846	3%	5,652,619	3%
Other Instructional Program teachers	5,029,774	94,511	3%	5,124,285	3%
Total:	\$ 119,037,974	\$ 17,930,406	71%	\$ 137,962,892	73%
Direct Student-Related Services **	\$ 45,267,962	\$ 849,335	27%	\$ 46,117,297	25%
Other Support Services ***	\$ 3,353,182	N/A	2%	3,353,182	2%
Total Salary & Benefits	\$ 167,659,118	\$ 18,779,741	100%	\$ 186,533,371	100%
* Instructional Staff	** Direct Student-Related Services Staff				
Kindergarten Teachers	Principals				--- Other Support Services Staff
Elementary Teachers	Assistant Principals				School Board Members
Secondary Teachers	Instructional Supervisors				General & Administrative Staff
Teachers' Aides	Guidance Counselors				Business Services Staff
Substitute Teachers	Library Staff				Human Resources Staff
Special Ed Teachers	Health Services Staff				Legal Services Staff
Speech Therapists	Student Assessment & Appraisal Staff				Management Information Systems Staff
Special Ed Aides	Plant Services Staff (Maintenance & Operations)				Public Relations Staff
Special Ed Substitutes	Student Transportation Staff				
Vocational Ed Teachers	Child Nutrition Staff				
Adult & Continuing Ed Teachers	Office Support Staff				
Teachers for Music, Athletics, Summer School, Options, ROTC	Technology Staff				

Note: The above financial data was calculated by using actual percentages (05-06 audited) for each category and applying them to actual budgets for 06-07.

The State Department of Education has required an increasing number of reports to be prepared by departments operating with reduced staff. Part of the reduction in staff is due to budget scrubbing and part is due to the below-market salaries offered in the more skilled positions at the School Board Office, such as accountants and instructional technology staff. The Lafayette Parish School System is not currently competitive in hiring in these areas.

It is also estimated that the time teachers spend preparing reports could be reduced with the addition of technology support.

An examination of the divisions of the Lafayette Parish School System shows the increased number of responsibilities and programs of the system in comparison with the past. Three things are unfortunately evident: (1) There are very few people at the top to exercise leadership and planning, and they are assigned to multiple tasks. (2) There are too many “holes” where positions have been open for some time, which will be addressed soon in Superintendent Lemoine’s proposed reorganization plan; (3) The Lafayette Parish School Board has not yet hired anyone to replace Burnell Lemoine as Division Chief of Instructional Services, and he has been carrying both jobs.

Table 7: AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY, Lafayette Parish School System

Taken from segments of LPSSonline.com, October 2007, and the 2003 LPSS organization data.

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

Burnell Lemoine, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer

Adult Education:

- Class Locations
- GED Programs
- Special Programs
- Learning Centers
- FRAN the Van

Health Services: (school nurses)

- Advocate
- Instruct re: chronic health problems
- Modify environment
- Liaison between doctor & student
- Vision & hearing screenings
- Audit Immunization records

Information Technology :

- (Chief Academic Officer)
- Management information
- Instructional Technology Services
- Instructional Technology Support & Repair

Accountability :

- (Director)
- Test scores
LEAP
Graduate
Equivalency Exam (GEE)
LEAP
ACT

Homeless, Neglected, & Delinquent :

- (Consortium of 10 parishes)
- Awareness
- Enrollment assistance
- After-school tutorial programs in shelters
- Preschool/parent education
- Provision of school supplies/educational materials
- Coordination of school & community resources & services
- Summer programs

Curriculum:

- English, Language Arts, Speech & World Languages
- Health, P.E., Athletics, & Driver's Ed
- Math & Science
- Reading
- Social Studies & the Arts
- Section 504/Dyslexia

Safe Schools/Healthy Schools:

- Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol
- Drug Prevention & Safety Assessments
- Early Childhood Health Services
- Extended Learning Program
- Leadership & Resiliency Program
- Mental Health Support Services
- Parent Resource Center

Student Assistance Programs:

- Tutorial Services
- Safe & Drug Free Schools
- Choices
- Guidance in substance abuse & alcohol
- SASSI (Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory)
- D.A.R.E.
- K-9 Officer
- Crimestoppers (student version)
- Resource Officers
- Classroom Presentations
- Support Groups
- Training from National Coalition Building Institute
- Parent training

Career and Technical Education:

- Agriscience
- Business
- Cooperative Programs
- Family & Consumer Science
- Industrial Technology
- W.D. Smith Career Center
- Lafayette Parish Association of Career & Technology Education
- Smaller Learning Communities
- Tech Prep
- Student Organizations
- Career Academics
- Academy of Design (Cormeaux H.S.)
- Academy of Business & Finance (Acadiana H.S.)
- Academy of Information Technology (Carenco H.S.)
- Academy of Health Careers (Lafayette H.S.)
- Academy of Hospitality & Tourism (W.D. Smith)
- Computers for Louisiana's Kids
- Sheriff's Career Academy

Quality Educators:

- Teacher Induction Program for Success (TIPS)
- Blackboard teacher course
- Support Teachers

Professional Development:

- Vermilion Conference Center
- Calendar of Professional Training Goals for State & Parish
- Annual Optional Inservice

LATAAP:

- LA Department of Education mandate (LA)
- Teacher Assistance & Assessment Program

Media Center/ Libraries:

- Production & Instructional Materials Center
- School Libraries
- Web collection for Media Center & LPSS school libraries

Area Directors :

- (assist with instructional planning & training, hiring of personnel, handling disciplinary issues, & other needs of schools)

TOM BROWN

- Paul Breaux Middle
- Broussard Middle
- CAPSLAPS
- Charter High
- Cormeaux High
- Drexel Elementary
- J.W. Faulk Elementary
- Ernest Gallet Elementary
- Lindon Elementary
- Milton Elementary
- Milton Middle
- Moss Middle
- Northside High
- Plantation Elementary
- Youngsville Middle

NANCY CECH

- Acadiana High
- Burke Elementary
- Carenco Heights
- Carenco High
- Carenco Middle
- Duson Elementary
- Judice Middle
- L. Leo Judice Elementary
- Lie Oak Elementary
- Ossun Elementary
- Prairie Elementary
- Ridge Elementary
- Scott Middle
- Westside Elementary

KATHERINE LANDRY

- Acadian Middle
- Aleman Middle
- Alice Boucher Elementary
- Broadmoor Elementary
- Career Center
- Edgar Martin Middle
- Evangeline Elementary
- J.W. James Elementary
- Lafayette High
- Lafayette Middle
- S.J. Montgomery Elementary
- Moss Annex
- Myrtle Place Elementary
- Truman Montessori
- Woodville Elementary

Special Education:

- Instructional services for students with disabilities
- Related services (speech, occupational & physical therapy, adaptive P.E., assistive technology, audiological & counseling services, and medical needs supervision by nurses)
- Gifted & Talented services
- Pupil Appraisal services
- Parent Child Center
- Homebound Program
- Genesis Program
- Special Education Alternative Site (SEAS)

*Child Welfare & Attendance:

- Compulsory School Attendance & Truancy
- School Enrollment & School Zone Verification
- Majority to Minority School Transfers
- Appeals of Suspensions & Expulsions
- District Code of Conduct
- Behavior Clinics & Discipline Centers
- Continuing Academic Program for Students
- Employment of Minorities & Work Permits

*Counselors:

- Guidance curriculum
- Individual student planning
- Responsive Services
- System Support
- Cumulative Folder Transfer Form
- Counselors' Connections

*Transcripts/Records

*Testing Coordinator

- Student Services, supervised by Harriet Taylor

Table 8: AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY, Lafayette Parish School System

Taken from segments of LPSSonline.com, October 2007, and the 2003 LPSS organization data.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

Billie Guidry, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer

Human Resources:

- Employment
- Job Advertising
- Retirement

Insurance and Risk Management:

- Insurance, wellness benefits
- Safety & liability issues
- Student insurance

Operations:

- Transportation
- Maintenance, Planning, & Facilities Custodian's Warehouse
- Safety & Environmental Compliance

Business Services:

- CFO Office
- Finance
- Budget & Accounting
- Child Nutrition
- Payroll
- Purchasing
- Sales Tax
- School Accounting
- Warehouse

Public Relations:

- Promoting outstanding students, staff, & programs in LPSS
- Web page
- School system publications
- Print shop
- Partners in Education

III. Growth Projections for Lafayette Parish

“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

– Peter Drucker

Lafayette Parish is growing so rapidly that by 2030, the population is projected to increase by about 23% over its 2000 Census figure of 190,503 – up to 249,145.

Other communities across the United States undergoing a similar magnitude of increase are concerned that the growth should primarily take place where its current infrastructure (sewerage, water, electricity, roads, etc.) is in place, rather than in more rural areas that lack the infrastructure to accommodate a swelling population. Lafayette Parish had already grown to 206,000 as of July, 2007. Former residents of the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina who have chosen to live in this area have contributed to this growth.

A breakdown of the estimated population change by region from 2000 to 2030 reveals the following growth percentages:

Central Lafayette.....	5.53%
North Region.....	34.39%
East Region	34.13%
South Region	52.9%
West Region	42.12%
Total Area.....	23%

The current land use area of developments indicates suburban sprawl with subdivisions sprinkled across Lafayette Parish. The sprawl creates difficulties. Many of these developments do not border each other and exist in areas where there is inadequate infrastructure support such as roads and drainage, and where fire protection and law enforcement are difficult to provide. Because most of the residents of these subdivisions work in more developed areas, they must travel farther to reach their jobs, putting stress on roads not originally designed for heavy traffic. The rural nature of the countryside is being destroyed. Effects on the environment may prove catastrophic if this kind of development continues. For example, there are already about 40,000 uninspected sewage disposal units in Lafayette Parish. Smart growth principles suggest that, rather than taking services

farther out where the developments are growing, at higher cost to the city, preference should be given to growth closer in that connects to existing development and city services, at lower cost.

The effects of new development should be analyzed according to population, dwelling units, employment, peak hour trips, school children, classrooms, open space, park land, water, sewer, solid waste, and police and fire staff. With the recent passage of the LINC Comprehensive Plan by the Lafayette Planning and Zoning Commission, more emphasis on parish-wide policies and codes is anticipated to move the process forward toward future planning (Kendig Keast Collaborative).

Lafayette North is one of the LINC Comprehensive Plan Designated Neighborhoods, and the one furthest along in planning, through its Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team. In its Educational Plan managed growth for North Lafayette would be controlled jointly by Lafayette Consolidated Government's Planning Division through initial maximum enrollment of 20% above the system's maximum permanent building capacity for each type of school facility. Within four years, Lafayette Consolidated Government would change the maximum level to 10% above the system's maximum permanent building capacity. Furthermore, Lafayette Consolidated Government Planning Division would recommend denial of all zoning amendments that would result in an increase in projected student generation that would exceed the level of service. In application, consideration would be given to any commitments made by the developer for mitigation.

In addition, Lafayette North's Education Plan calls for the Lafayette Parish School System to provide current data to the Planning Division to use in evaluating the adequacy of school facilities for rezoning purposes. That data would include the following:

- Total building capacity of all schools by elementary, middle, & high school;
- The 20th day actual daily enrollment for all schools;
- An updated copy of the Capital Improvements Plan;
- Additional information describing the capacity that will be added as a result of any projects for which funding is committed;
- Revised attendance zone boundaries and projections of the attendance impact on all schools of revised attendance zone boundaries.

Lafayette Consolidated Government Planning Division would also maintain records

illustrating the impact of all zoning changes over a three-year period, that capacity to have been committed as a result of prior development decisions.*

This Lafayette North plan has not yet gone through the approval process, but was presented to the Lafayette Parish School Board earlier this year for consideration.

*Section II, *School Infrastructure*, Objective A. “Ensure that Lafayette Parish has an adequate supply of educational facilities to meet the needs of the residents.” Strategies, by the Education Subcommittee of the Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team.

Recommendations:

- 1) In conjunction with development of the long-term facilities plan, the Lafayette Parish School Board should develop a mechanism or formula written as Board policy for insuring its own compliance with the maximum limit it establishes for an elementary, middle, and high school’s student enrollment capacity. One suggested mechanism is to count only permanent classrooms and current actual class size policy in continuing to determine capacity.
- 2) Lafayette Parish School System and Lafayette Consolidated Government should cooperate to
 - Ensure effective communication by strengthening joint planning and advisory groups.*
 - Utilize common data sources in developing the schools’ long-term facilities plan(s) and Lafayette Consolidated Government’s Comprehensive Plan.*
 - Expand the Joint Use Agreement to include community and school sharing and funding of school grounds for public park use.*
 - Plan with the other five municipalities, taking into account capital school projects.*
 - Identify children by zip codes in need of a coordinated health program, such as currently in place at N. P. Moss, where absenteeism and inadequate access to healthcare is an issue, so that the Lafayette Parish School Board can design for expansion, implement and solidify the program.*

- 3) Lafayette Parish School System should
 - Borrow growth projections, municipal data and mapping data bases from the Lafayette Consolidated Government in planning.*
 - Reference the land use pattern in the LINC Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plans as to the distribution of growth projections developed in their planning process to enhance coordination between plans.*
 - Encourage the public and private schools, Lafayette Consolidated Government and its neighborhood groups to work on the architectural features and off-site impacts of new schools constructed in Lafayette Parish.*

- 4) Lafayette Consolidated Government should
 - Identify and consider any opportunities to assist or coordinate with local schools when making capital improvements in a neighborhood.
 - Co-locate small playground areas with safe wandering space and specially sized climbing equipment for toddlers in an adjacent area at elementary school playgrounds.

- 5) Coordinate the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Bicycle Master Plan with the school facilities plan.*

- 6) Determine the most appropriate use of school sites or buildings that are no longer required.*

*Quoted with permission from the Strategies portions in School Programming, Infrastructures, Planning Process, Sharing Facilities School Accessibility, and Coordination Sections of **Lafayette North Coordinating Team Education Plan, June 19, 2007.**

IV. Merits of a Comprehensive Long-Term Facilities Plan

“Lafayette Parish can no longer settle for nor accept any position that places the parish in less than the top 10% in any Nationwide Educational Poll or Rating and expect to compete in a World Class Global Economy.”

– **LINC Economic Development Final report**, [Recommendation] Commentary 1.
EDUCATION REFORM, December 1, 2005

“We need to come up with a plan, with very specific items in the plan.”

– **Carl LaCombe**
Lafayette Parish School Board President

As the core structures of 14 of the schools are at least 50 years old and those of another 10 schools are at least 40 years old, a thorough facilities needs assessment and long-term plan for replacement and/or renovation for more than half the schools is needed. The remaining core structures of 13 additional schools are more than 25-35 years old. The longer the school buildings go without needed repairs, the more damage must be repaired at higher costs. The accumulating bill for unfunded maintenance and capital improvement needs cannot be funded with the level of income of the Lafayette Parish School Board.

The first part of an April 2007 series in [The Times of Acadiana](#) by Jan Risher dealt with the poor physical condition of the schools. Succeeding installments of the series raised two other central concerns of teachers and parents—discipline of some increasingly volatile students and student absenteeism. All three of these issues would be meaningfully addressed by a long-term facilities plan that includes

- the secondary career and technical options addressed in an integrated academic curriculum;
- smaller school size to personalize administrative and teacher relationships and relieve overcrowding of students that causes impersonality, lack of ownership, and stress; and
- schools redesigned for effective supervision, along with additional surveillance technology.

Lafayette Parish School Board discipline policies are currently under revision by the Superintendent in consultation with the court and teachers, and deployment of trained and regularly scheduled School Resource Officers on every high school campus for the 2008-09 school year is set.

Student and staff safety can be a top priority in planning campus, school and classroom facilities for renovation and construction with the cooperation and input of the Police, Sheriff, and Fire Departments of Lafayette Consolidated Government, and the other five municipalities and the State Fire Marshall.

Smart growth principles and the LINC Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Lafayette Consolidated Government Planning and Zoning Commission can be incorporated at the planning stage in locating any new schools, resulting in cost effectiveness in transportation, avoiding sprawl, and encouraging development along historical growth patterns where there is better natural drainage. By jointly locating sites for projected growth with the Lafayette Consolidated Government Department of Traffic, Transportation, and Planning, the Lafayette Parish School System would contribute significantly to Lafayette's efforts at guiding development. A melding of Lafayette's rich ethnic and cultural diversity can better be accomplished by continuing to develop a variety of exciting magnet schools with the choice of after-school care, along with continuing majority-to-minority transfers.

The fact that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Lafayette North Coordinating Team, the LINC Comprehensive Plan, and The Center for Child Development of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette have all requested planning by the Lafayette Parish School Board, lends the greatest witness to the merits of a long-term facilities plan.

Recommendations:

- 1) As this study has identified many other needs related to facilities, leadership and a firm commitment to setting a course for change are essential. The members of the Lafayette Parish School Board and staff of the Lafayette Parish School System will need to coordinate their efforts and resources toward this course. A first step would require division of responsibilities for planning and maintenance from one into at

least two departments, so that the Planning Director can assist, coordinate with all agencies and the general public in planning.

- 2) Guidelines for a long-term facilities plan, a capital improvement plan, and a comprehensive maintenance plan are included in the Appendix.

V. RESEARCH SOURCES

Interviews:

- Lafayette Parish School System Superintendent and Staff
- School Board Member Hunter Beasley
- Lafayette Fire and Police Department personnel
- Lafayette Consolidated Government Traffic, Transportation, and Planning Department staff
- Sheriff's Department personnel

Documents and Articles:

- Public records of the Lafayette Parish School System
- Review Team Report for the Quality Assurance Review of the Lafayette Parish School System, February, 2005, from the Southern Association of College and Schools, Council on Accreditation and School Improvement
- LINC Comprehensive Plan, Lafayette Consolidated Government, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Comprehensive Planning Division, December 1, 2005
- Lafayette North Plan Coordinating Team Education Plan (June 19, 2007: Ken Douet, Charles Larroque, and Pastor Debra Young)
- The Daily Advertiser, Sunday, October 28, 2007, Sports Section, pp. 1C, 6-7C.

Questionnaires:

- Presidents of the Parent-Teacher Club of the elementary, middle, and high schools
- Lafayette Parish Association of Educators and Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana
- Non-public Schools Facilities

Workshops and Presentations:

- School Board Funding Options for the Proposed Comprehensive Career and Technical Academy High School Workshop (September 19, 2007, presented by tax attorney Jerry Osborn, Foley Judell, New Orleans)
- Growth Management in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana Workshop (October 10, 2007, presented by Bret C. Keast, Kendig Keast Collaborative, through Lafayette Consolidated Government)

- Untitled Power Point presentation on Lafayette Parish school facilities (Dr. David Thibodaux)

Books and Manuscripts:

- "Lafayette Parish Early Childhood Initiative," Billy Stokes and Ouida Forsyth. (in draft), Center for Childhood Development, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, October, 2007
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www.nsba.org
www.asumag.com
www.sdcoe.net
www.21csf.org
www.state.ct.us
www.epa.gov/schools

VI. Appendix: “Recommended Policies for Public School Facilities”

A number of states mandate a Comprehensive or Educational Facilities Master Plan for every school district (California, West Virginia, Maryland, among others). The following guidelines are quoted from “Recommended Policies for Public School Facilities” in abridgement from BEST Collaborative (Building Educational Success Together), an initiative whose agenda is state policy reform to set state level standards and control. Pennsylvania, for example, already provides state support to districts for some facilities projects meeting certain needs.

“An Educational Facilities Master Plan is a long-range plan, often established as a plan for at least a ten-year period. It usually includes information on the following subjects:

- a) educational goals, standards, and guidelines;
- b) educational instructional programs and services;
- c) the capacity in the existing schools and their utilization;
- d) community analysis including current and projected demographics, land usage, transportation plan, residential and commercial development, private schools, plans for water and sewage service expansion and/or redevelopment, and institutions for higher education;
- e) an educational facility inventory and an assessment of the building conditions;
- f) historical and projected enrollment data;
- g) an analysis of the facility needs and requirements of the district (based upon the data and information);
- h) the consideration of options for addressing the needs and requirements;
- i) identified potential sources of funding for implementation; and
- j) a description of the process, procedure, and timeline for community participation in the development of the plan.

“An Educational Facilities Master Plan, once adopted or approved, can be the basis for the development of a capital improvement program for the school district. The Capital Improvement Plan could include projects for major renovations, additions, renovations combined with additions, new schools to accommodate or provide for consolidations and/or school closures, school replacements, replacement of building systems and/or components, acquisition of future school sites, and purchase or lease of moveable classrooms. The Capital

Improvement Plan sets priorities, establishes timelines and the sequence of the projects, cost estimates for each project, and the potential sources of funding.

“The Comprehensive Maintenance Plan recognizes the proper maintenance of public school buildings can

- a) help maintain a positive learning environment;
- b) maintain the asset value of the property;
- c) eliminate or reduce the number of fires, accidents, and other safety related hazards in or on the property;
- d) provide buildings that function efficiently;
- e) enable the continuous use of the school building without disruption to educational programs and services; and
- f) conserve energy.

“The Comprehensive Maintenance Plan should have annual revisions and/or updates and generally includes information pertaining to:

- a) staffing and their respective activities and responsibilities;
- b) services provided by school district staff and those that are performed under contract;
- c) an inventory of the facilities and their condition;
- d) a schedule for preventive maintenance for various building systems;
- e) the process and procedure for unscheduled maintenance and the handling of work orders;
- f) a description of scheduled and/or unscheduled maintenance work that has been deferred due to lack of funds or personnel and/or changes in priorities; and
- g) budget information for the overall operation of the maintenance department and the implementation of the plan.

“The Capital Improvement Plans Policy should be based upon accurate and reliable data and information presented in an approved Educational Facilities Master Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. Careful implementation of the plan must distribute resources equitably within the school district to the highest priority projects with consideration being given to the condition and needs of the existing facilities and the possible socio-economic differences

between and among the school attendance areas within the district.

“The Capital Improvement Plan once adopted and/or approved by the fiscal authorities, with community input and participation, should become the basis for moving forward with specific planning activities that will result in expenditures for the capital improvements. In the absence of this type of support, the plan is just a document that has little hope or likelihood of implementation. With the support of the fiscal authorities, however, educational facility plans and maintenance plans can be brought to completion. Capital Improvement Plans that are based upon sound and responsible plans and realistic budgets can garner wide support that will result in improved facilities to serve the community.

“The Capital Improvement Plan needs to recognize and include the hard and soft costs of each project. This could include (but is not limited to) design fees, construction costs, inspection fees, permits, site acquisition, legal services, bond counsel and bond sale expenses, demolition costs, fees for disposing of demolished and waste materials, reasonable inflation estimates, movable furniture and equipment and a contingency for unforeseen conditions.”