

Marion derives great pride from its schools. Now, more than ever, it is apparent what a critical role our schools play in our communities. Our mission at MISD is to ‘Foster a community of learners in developing the knowledge and skills to be Future Ready’. While quality learning can and has taken place at home and online over the past few months, schools are about community, relationships, routines, and traditions. Schools thrive in brick and mortar buildings. Striving for our mission involves face to face interactions as a community of learners.

In late March of 2020, the Board of Directors of the Marion Independent School District made the decision to enlist the help of architects who could help us build on the facility assessment done by Estes Construction, and work with the Marion community to gain a deeper understanding of our priorities and needs. After researching architecture firms who specialize in K-12 assessment, planning, referendum support, and design, the district solicited proposals, interviewed three firms, and ultimately selected OPN Architects to partner with the district on our Facilities Master Plan.

As a component of our work with OPN Architects and Estes Construction, the district established a Facilities Advisory Committee of about 40 individuals including parents, staff, community members, business owners, students, and school board members. This group has been tasked with setting priorities that will shape a long range timeline that balances needs and wants with available funding. Ultimately, the goal is to identify a plan to present to the school board that the committee can unanimously agree best meets the needs of our students, staff, and community.

In an effort to be transparent in this process and to include as many voices as possible, OPN Architects conducted listening sessions and surveys with staff in May and June 2020 to hear their perspectives regarding facilities needs. Additionally, in lieu of face to face tours during COVID, OPN developed a virtual tour of the facilities and a community survey regarding needs and priorities. The Facilities Advisory Committee has engaged in a review of all of this information as well as data such as enrollment trends and school finances in an effort to determine the short term (2-5 year) and long range (7-10 year) facility priorities.

The committee is making tremendous progress and plans to make recommendations to the Board of Education during the December 14, 2020 Board meeting at 6pm. This is an exciting time for MISD and a tremendous opportunity to ensure our students, staff, parents, and community members have facilities that support our district mission. Public participation in the meeting will be available through Google Meet using the following url or phone number: Meeting ID meet.google.com/cdu-jxjk-dxk , Phone Number (316)-778-8402 PIN: 229 044 879#

We welcome your involvement at the upcoming Board meeting to learn more! If you have questions or comments feel free to reach out to Superintendent, Janelle Brouwer by email at jbrouwer@marion-isd.org or (319)377-4691 Ext 1103.