

Corey Tafoya: Hello, everyone. Welcome back to Education Buzz, the Harvard District 50 podcast series. Today, we have a special treat. This is our first attempt at a podcast off site. We have equipment that allows us to do podcast from whatever, but we're with John Maurer who is from Wold Architects and John invited us to come to his offices. We're here in Palatine and it is really... John, I have to say this is impressive space. First of all, welcome.

John Maurer: Thank you. Good morning.

Corey Tafoya: We understand in our off comments before we got on that this is your first podcast either participating in or listening to.

John Maurer: Yes.

Corey Tafoya: So it's going to be a brand new experience.

John Maurer: Right.

Corey Tafoya: Good. Thanks for hosting us. This is an impressive space and you just recently moved in here, correct?

John Maurer: We have been in this space now I think right about five weeks. And I can honestly say it has transformed our business. The most amazing thing about our new collaborative environment here is that it practices what we preach and it has engaged and invigorated our whole staff to be finally working in the kinds of environments we designed for our clients.

Corey Tafoya: And because I pulled up the wrong address for this, I know what your old space looked like because I walked in and no one was there and I thought, "Uh oh, I'm in the wrong spot." But yeah, that's remarkably different. That was maybe what you imagine is an architect firm look like. Rooms, cut up spaces and things like this. This is very modern looking. Very open.

John Maurer: Right.

Corey Tafoya: Just out of curiosity, when architects design a space to work in themselves, that's an interesting process to figure out who actually designs the space where architects themselves work. How did that work in redesigning this space?

John Maurer: We did it just the same way we do with our clients. We put together kind of a steering committee. We developed our own guiding principles, all of the things that were important to us. We have basically created spaces that are agile, flexible furnishings that can all be moved around including hard seating, soft seating, tables, group areas, each one with its own tech center that anyone can log into with their phone or a laptop. We even have a room for nursing mothers

and where people can get as a little retreat when they need quiet or to make a phone call.

Corey Tafoya: This is very, very impressive and inspiring. I'm sure as time goes on you'll still figure out more of the benefits of this. I guess that's a good segue to what we're talking about because we're in Harvard. I've been working with you for a long time and maybe that's a good place for us to start. Tell us a little bit about Wold. Some people might know that, they might hear us talk about it and the partnership that Wold has had with Harvard and how long has Wold... I know that there are satellites of Wold in both Minneapolis and Denver. This is not just a-

John Maurer: And beyond.

Corey Tafoya: And beyond. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about Wold and then maybe that relationship with Harvard.

John Maurer: Actually, I've been working with Harvard since I guess about 2007. My firm was Ruck Pate Architecture. Many people who've known us a long time in Harvard would remember that. We were a Chicago area firm with a 40-year history in designing educational environments and planning. In 2017, we merged with Wold and Wold is a top 10 K-12 national architect. We do have offices, Chicago, Denver, St. Paul, Minnesota and Nashville. Really kind of nationwide thought leaders in K-12.

Corey Tafoya: That's an interesting thing I think for maybe our public to understand is that we're not with an architect that doesn't specialize in school spaces. Because I think when you think about different architecture and designs, there are specialties learned over a period of time. Being that you've been involved with Harvard for over a decade, that's really fascinating to know that you've learned and really specialized, spend a lot of time thinking about what are trends in education, what is educational need look like versus corporate need. Talk to us about how you kind of became a specialist in the educational field of architecture.

John Maurer: Architecture kind of by nature generalists, but also specialists. I often tell people that you become what you do. Your successes lead to people seeking out your expertise and doing those things. For example, over the years I've also developed a subspecialty in working with special needs students and special needs clients. But my real background has been in educational planning. So really on the design and understanding needs and what enables both the educators and the students to be successful.

Corey Tafoya: In all of our professional capacities, we all have this certain moments where you realize you've done something that has great meaning for the people you're serving. And I keep telling my kids when they think about majors, find

something where you're serving others and you're helping someone. There has to be an incredible sense of satisfaction because this process is lengthy. It takes time to do that, but to listen to someone understand what they need and to design something that meets their needs when that finishes, that must be incredibly satisfying.

John Maurer: It is of course, and that's I think what architects really live on. Dr. Tafoya, you mentioned listening what has made us successful is that our process incorporates all of the stakeholders. Both the educators, the students, administrators and community members. Really understanding their needs and their value is really what makes a successful project and a successful building. We really enjoy hearing feedback back that, "While this works, you really listened to us." That's really what makes it all work for people.

Corey Tafoya: Many who are listening to this would understand, we have been listened to by you and your associates. We should mention that one of your colleagues, Alison Andrews, is not with us today but she's been a part of this process, the board. I believe we started to consider this most recent steering committee and examination of district facilities probably about five months ago or I'm not sure when we officially signed on.

John Maurer: We almost started nearly a year ago when you got your demographic study and it was the first piece. And then understanding what that really meant to the district in terms of their building capacities and I think at that point the board realized a broader need to understand their facilities. They began making tours of the buildings themselves and then realizing they should bring the community into that and kind of put together a task force to look at district facilities and then some other facilities in neighboring districts. Maybe really understand where the district was at in terms of their buildings overall.

Corey Tafoya: Maybe we should do that for the listeners, just piece that timeline together. Because in my first year, there became some questions to me like, "What are we doing with space?" "This is tight, that is tight." We found some immediate limitations. So my first inclination was, "What do we know about our projected enrollments moving?"

Corey Tafoya: One of the first steps was our demographic study that Dr. Kasarda did for us that gave us three predictions. Whether you go with A, which is kind of the conservative; B, the middle approach; or C, like how the highly aggressive growth. We took kind of an idea as most people do that we're going to have moderate growth and that was a little different because people may be were surprised because many school districts in McHenry County aren't growing or in fact declining. That was a different thing and we had assessed that but we wanted to actually get some professional, I guess, vantage point in view and opinion on what to expect because it's silly to build much without kind of knowing what's coming your way. Is that pretty typical?

John Maurer: Actually, that was one of the, I think, really astute moves that District 50 did. As you know, with a downturn in 2008 that affected McHenry County school districts very, very, very much. None of them have thought to go back and reexamine their demographic trends. In fact, they've just said, "Oh, we're shrinking, we're shrinking, we're shrinking." And been under this working assumption that that's the case. We work with many other McHenry County school districts as you know. So I have kind of firsthand knowledge of that in their planning efforts.

John Maurer: It's really a good idea to take that look ahead and really understand and as you learned through Dr. Kasarda's study, you are going to see some growth at least in their B and C projections, and in my 30 years' experience, I have found Dr. Kasarda's B projections are pretty much spot on. How he does that, I'm not quite sure, but he was very accurate.

Corey Tafoya: Yeah, I think we were one or two student off on his prediction for this fall. That's kind of spooky almost that he's that good. But that was really something I think that the board really wanted for their confidence that, "We're not barking up the wrong tree here." But even without the growth and we'll get into this minute, we have facility issues and things that we need to address even if we were probably not growing. But it certainly compounded the complexity of what we're trying to address is, facilities that need some invigoration and renovation as well as the idea of growth.

Corey Tafoya: But one thing you bring up that I think is the specialty of Wold that we really appreciate is, "Are your facilities matching the needs of your curriculum?" I think that's a critical point that we have to keep in mind is, "Do the facilities you currently have, is that what you want for the education you're trying to provide?" We had a community coffee the other day and one of the residents that came, he said, "Right now, it kind of seems like your facilities are driving your curriculum rather than your curriculum is suited by your facilities."

John Maurer: And that's a pretty accurate description. Very thoughtful and insightful comment. Educators are amazingly resilient. They will teach anywhere and they will adapt. That's one of the reasons why I have probably often heard me make comments that every school building is at capacity.

Corey Tafoya: Because they're going to max out every closet, every-

John Maurer: They will max out every space in every building and needs change constantly. But let's talk about your buildings, I mean the district has hundreds of thousands of square feet. People will say, "Oh, well these buildings have worked fine for years. I went to that, my, daughter went to that, my granddaughter went to that building." Right?

Corey Tafoya: It'll be fine.

John Maurer: Despite the fact that District 50 has been tremendous stewards of their buildings and buildings have been well cared for, building still age. I'm not necessarily talking about the bricks and mortar, the mechanical systems, District 50 has been very good at attending to those kinds of needs.

John Maurer: But you just look for example and we just had your five community open houses. For example, when people saw the difference between Crosby Elementary built in 2009 and going back to the buildings built in the fifties and sixties and portions of the high school built in the 1920s. And they can clearly see the difference in a contemporary and 21st century learning environment. It's not just that things are newer. The types of spaces are different. And the ability to be flexible and to work in larger groups and smaller groups, those spaces and all of the various different supporting staff beyond the classroom teacher that have needs to work with students individually as we work and move towards personalized learning for every student. Those things are there in Crosby. They're completely absent in the other buildings.

Corey Tafoya: We talked about that just what an effect that is on a student to go from third grade at Crosby to fourth grade at Jefferson where things... We mentioned last night that they have some of the tank bathroom's systems where there's a running tank elevated above the bathrooms. [inaudible 00:14:58] which is frankly an archaic, old way to do it. But it's been maintained and it still functions. But those are some of the things that we are talking about in the renovation.

Corey Tafoya: As we did this, we relied on your expertise and John, we should mention is a McHenry County resident himself. He knows these spaces. We actually about a year ago did some tours of some of the spaces because specifically one of the things that came right away to mind, and I have brought up to the board is saying, "We really have to talk about the equity in our locker rooms and our spaces related to P.E." We visited some McHenry County schools. We went to Jacob's High School, Huntley High School, Johnsborg and Richmond-Burton and just gave us a sense and... Our kids go there and they get to see the locker rooms because they're competing and putting on our Harvard black and gold and competing and they see locker rooms but parents and community members, we don't maybe see that. So it was really eye-opening for us to take those tours.

John Maurer: I imagine it was.

Corey Tafoya: You see these spaces all the time. But for us it was like, "Wow." Because we started with a tour of our own facilities. And so people, I think, if they haven't necessarily been in our locker room facilities, they don't maybe appreciate because it's not a public space that you go to for graduation or parent-teacher conferences, you're not wandering through the locker rooms. But they really do are in desperate need, aren't they?

- John Maurer: They are. People might be interested in why they're that way. You have to go back and realize that like so much else in education, both Physical Education and athletics and its programming, is far more robust than it was in the day those facilities were envisioned. Even the physical amount of space that was allotted to each student in those are very different.
- John Maurer: The types of spaces even that were designed for showering and hygiene, those aren't even acceptable in our modern code environment. Dealing with accessibility was not there. But we use these spaces intensively now on a daily basis, whereas they might have suited up for P.E. People who know Harvard history, if they've ever been in the attic of the district office spaces, that was the P.E. space in the central school going up this 28-inch wide steep staircase and hanging from ropes from the rafters or boxing in the tower. P.E. is a whole kind of different world now from them.
- Corey Tafoya: It is fascinating to appreciate that in one of the things that people that see it for the first time are shocked by this, but these aren't easy solutions and they aren't things that find... So there's a number of obstacles. There's the prioritization of, "Do we do this?" And the obvious question of the financial thing.
- Corey Tafoya: So one of the things that is important for I think our community to understand and for families understand is that we're at a really interesting time in the history of the school district because I think some of the financial obstacles that have existed, we have some potential things that might be able to help us in the upcoming months and years as we plan this. And one of them would be... There's a reimbursement for some things that we talked about in our board, in our facilities committee meeting last night, some \$50,000 grant and \$50,000 sounds like a lot of money, but when you're talking about major renovations of bathrooms and things, 50,000 can be spent pretty quickly.
- Corey Tafoya: So there's some matching ground, but there's also a new state construction grant that was approved by the governor, which is significantly more money. And so one of the things that we've been talking about with legislators and people in the realm that are making these decisions is, "Would Harvard as a Tier 1 school be one of the first ones considered for what they call, when the applications come March 1st, to shovel ready project?" And that's something I know you and I both listen to podcast of that committee how are they going to decide that?
- Corey Tafoya: One of the things we've planned is to how to have some shovel ready projects in mind so that we can be one of the first ones to speak up for that funding and that funding is in the millions, not in the 50,000 range. So we are kind of thinking about that and is that realistic for our district to have projects ready and kind of be planning that in the period of time we have?

John Maurer: I think part of the board's focusing on developing a long-range facility master plan will help with that because it gives you some sense of what are the needs, what are the priorities, and how various different things may be broken up into other pieces. It will be interesting to see how the grant program is going to work because it will be both similar and different I believe from prior things. It certainly will be based on need, but it will also be dependent on the community being able to fund its local share and how that is accomplished I think becomes the bigger question. So what will happen is, you may get an entitlement based on the need, but undoubtedly you won't be able to receive funding of that entitlement unless you can provide your shares.

John Maurer: So a maintenance grant, for example, is up to \$50,000, but the district has to match that dollar for dollar. In all likelihood, as a Tier 1 district, I think that you probably won't have to match dollar for dollar on your local share but nonetheless it will be an expectation of substantial funding from the school district.

Corey Tafoya: One of the things that is also just part of all of these different layers of understanding of our situation is that now that the state has committed to a new model of school funding, the evidence-based funding, we are and I keep repeating this so you've heard me say this probably 10 times, we are the lowest unit school district in the state of Illinois in terms of our adequacy percentage. Meaning the amount of money based on our student and our population, our community, that the state should give us, we're still the farthest away from adequacy, what we should receive from the state.

Corey Tafoya: And even though for the past three years we've received substantial funding supplements from the state, we're still a long ways to go. But what we've been able to do with that money in effect the things in the classroom. We started an afterschool program for kids. We've started a lot of programs that really have directly affected kids, but we feel like now we were at a point where we've done enough to stabilize that and provide some really meaningful things that we can maybe shift our focus a little bit to this idea of, "Can that new money that comes through evidence-based funding go for our facilities?"

Corey Tafoya: So not only is this new state grant available, but we also might have some more local opportunity to support ourselves. And I think that's maybe been one of the biggest obstacles in Harvard over time is not the will or the idea or the content with our facilities and sitting on our thumbs, there just wasn't the money to do that nor was there the will to go out for a referendum or anything like that. The last time that was done in Harvard was to build Crosby.

John Maurer: Right. So Crosby for example, and I don't remember the exact dollars, but I believe the community supported a referendum for the first new school built since I think it was maybe 1963 in Harvard. I believe the community got behind that because of seeing the need. In that case, particularly to be able to move

and support the full day kindergarten programs and to move out of the central school and get into logical grade level configurations. It was before you were at the district so you probably don't remember but they had first, third, and fourth together, but second was in a different building. It was a little bit strange.

John Maurer: But that was a 22 million plus I believe referendum. Subsequent to that actually being funded and built, the state then finally funded the grant for that need and the district received, I think about 13 million. So you know more than half of that cost. That money then was used to add classrooms needed at the high school and-

Corey Tafoya: Central office renovation.

John Maurer: Central office renovations and add new culinary labs and kitchen and cafeteria for the high school.

Corey Tafoya: I like the phrase you just turned there. Maybe you didn't even think about it. John was saying as an Irishman, "I can spin time." But I like the phrase you use, "See the need." And I think that has been the focus of this steering committee is to involve community members, parents, coaches, principal. And we really tried to do that, see the need.

Corey Tafoya: So we've had monthly steering committee meetings over the course of the fall. We had our last one a couple of weeks ago and we also had some invitations out to our community to come see our facilities because that whole idea of seeing the need is really critical. We don't want our community to think that we're just kind of blowing smoke.

Corey Tafoya: Let's talk about that for a minute and as we've done that you have what we'd sometimes don't have is you have some comparisons. You are in different school districts, different places. You're here designing new things. Let's talk about that need. Is this something that is real? Is this something that we've engaged enough people on? What might be our next step? Let's talk about the need. Because I think that's something that's going to take some time in our community for people to really believe that. Because you mentioned earlier, "Why? I was fine. I went there, it's fine. It's probably no different. And I turned out great." How long can a district keep doing that? And just kind of saying that we're going to be okay right through. Because we believe in our teachers and we believe in our kids and we believe those things. But the facilities they're in has a huge impact on their learning, doesn't it?

John Maurer: It absolutely does in my opinion. Of course, it isn't the building. It isn't the paint. It's really creating an environment that allows the instructional staff and the students themselves to adapt. Anybody that has I think teenage students or teenage grandkids-

Corey Tafoya: I got two,

John Maurer: The interesting thing is you'll find that they have a basic need to rearrange things. I came home one day to find that my teen daughter had dragged the recliner completely across the room to sit at the computer because we had a wired keyboard. She's got this wired keyboard in her lap, kicked back in the recliner and I'm like, "Huh? What the heck?"

John Maurer: They adapt to their needs, which are very different based on using technology instead of sitting at a desk with books and straight ahead lecturing. They learn collaboratively and they learn independently. In fact, a lot of the learning takes place outside the classroom. The classroom is more of a place for kind of proving that they know what they know or proving that they don't know what they don't know and the instructor becoming much more of a facilitator. And even now add the addition of instructional coaches into the equation and really a deeper understanding of what each student needs to be successful and what is their personal learning style and being able to adapt your classroom in effect to become six classrooms in one space and to be able to take down the walls and extend that classroom outside.

John Maurer: Many of the newer environments we're doing, there really aren't even any hallways. Space just kind of flows together and learning takes place everywhere. So the space directly outside classrooms becomes what we call kind of a learning commons.

Corey Tafoya: So these are some of the spaces you're seeing in schools that are being designed right now is that flexibility to provide that. Because one of the things that is comforting to some but alarming for many of us in education is if you asked our parents and grandparents to see some of our classrooms, they're still rows of desks sitting in a line with a chalkboard in front and someone talking in front. That's a stereotype based in some reality yet. But I think over time that's really slipping away and what we are seeing more is what you're describing, kids working more independently in small groups and pursuing their own learning rather than someone standing in front of the room telling them what they know. And the old expression is, "School is the place kids go to watch teachers work." We're trying to get away from that.

Corey Tafoya: In part of what we mentioned in Harvard rising is this emphasis on learning and right now I would have to say that our facilities are impeding learning in the way we want to teach kids and the learning that could happen. Is that accurate?

John Maurer: It's at least missing opportunities.

Corey Tafoya: That's a good way to put it.

John Maurer: I love to hear people say, "Oh, that person's so lucky." People aren't lucky. People recognize opportunities. Today's students are so sharp, they see opportunity everywhere. But if those opportunities aren't there, yes, it impedes them.

John Maurer: I'll give you an example. Picture what people think in their mind of a beautiful science laboratory, right? And what it is oak, furniture and cabinetry with glass doors that are shiny and I can see all these microscopes or balances lined up behind them. Today's environment, instead of those doors being glass, what they need to be is they need to be surfaces the students can write on. Right there, they wheel their table right up against the countertop by the side there right by the sink and they're busy working with their Chromebooks and they need to take their data results. And instead of them scratching them on paper very quickly, they're just using an LCS to write it right there on the cabinet door, which will then get input into their Chromebooks. They're doing things live as it's happening.

John Maurer: Many people will tell you through the brain research, writing something imprints it in your brain in a different way than typing it into a Chromebook. So it becomes very important to be able to do that and do it with immediacy. Today's students, they like to have everything they need right at their fingertips. Most of them have it in their backpack on or around with them.

Corey Tafoya: There is an urgency to they're wanting to know.

John Maurer: Yeah, there's an urgency to it. Like I said suddenly they decide, "Oh, hey, how about Jack and Jill and Sue, we need to go do this." And they need to be able to get off in a corner and take a table with them or drag their chairs and do that. And that may need to be a soft seating. Because they learn in a more informal style than we're accustomed to.

Corey Tafoya: That's very true. We should also maybe backtrack a little bit. Our school board meetings are recorded so you can listen to those. You had some ideas for our school board last night and we plan to, in January, meet with the school board and you and Alison and some of our partners to talk about this building a plan. But you did give some specific ideas like what we could look at for the future last night. So maybe share us with us some of the thinkings that you've put together through this listening tour in this see the need tour that you've put together with us. What are some things that may be big ideas that we should give consideration to?

John Maurer: I think one of the biggest ideas that we introduced last night was rather than trying to improve and/or expand every building in its current location, many of which are on sites that are too small, we want to be looking at the possibility of consolidating some facilities.

John Maurer: An example of that was the Washington school being outdated, spaces too small, inadequate, the site being very small with some serious concerns about student safety, of buses that are unloading on multiple streets simultaneously. With today's focus on student safety and security needing a lot of attention there, but rather than taking a position of, "Well we need to own property and we need to build a campus for this." We threw out the idea of basically adding that Pre-K to the Crosby school where we can start to begin to share facilities that are already existing, parking and sites, and already safe bus lanes and things like that.

Corey Tafoya: Capitalizing on a modern design of the building.

John Maurer: Correct. Right. We need to look at things that even if it's still costly represent good stewardship to the community. Just a back track a little of the steering committee. We challenged them to develop guiding principle statements much as we did to design our office. Interestingly enough, virtually every one of those statements not only included something about values to students and education, but also the word community. It left us with the clear understanding that this is a community that values its education and that believes that their students are really important to the fabric of the community. That's probably Harvard's a community where not all the students grow up and go away. Many of them stay and choose to make their homes in Harvard. There's a true cultural value that exists between the community and the schools.

Corey Tafoya: I guess that is an interesting thing because then a listener might say, "Okay, that's a lot of kids at Crosby. Can Crosby handle that?" You had some other ideas that spun off of that idea of enhancing Crosby. The Pre-K was there, the Washington school programming was that Crosby... What does that mean for other facilities?

John Maurer: One of the ideas we floated out there, and this is based on a lot of discussion with the educators and much concern about students moving too quickly from building to building. There has been the idea of actually taking the third grade out of Crosby and combining that with the fourth and fifth grade that are currently at Jefferson. Again, we'd be looking at a student ascending to the next level only every three years rather than having those smaller gaps.

Corey Tafoya: Because that has been mentioned just the two years at Jefferson, there's some benefit to the stability of being in a place for a while and those teachers and having three grades together.

John Maurer: Right. The longer that the students have to work with the same group of teachers, they're much better able to plan I think the learning experience for them and to get to know each student.

Corey Tafoya: People following along on this, if they're still listening, God bless you. Pre-K1 and 2 together. Three, four, five together. What does that mean for junior high?

John Maurer: I think there is such a strength in the six, eight program and I think you've also heard me express this that it is such a critical time in a student's social development that maintaining that six, eight configuration is really important. I've kind of somewhat of an expert in middle schools. I've designed about a dozen of them new schools. So I've learned a lot from the educators-

Corey Tafoya: And I think a lot of people that-

John Maurer: About that learning process.

Corey Tafoya: Yeah, when you share that idea there was a lot of head nodding like, "Yes, we think those. Great." Because having fifth graders who seemingly maybe aren't ready for some of that, that six, eight seems like a good break down. You're right, they have more needs. One of the things we know at our current junior high location that we're limited for space as we are in all of our places and you mentioned last night, our robotics program, which we're proud of and they compete and do all these fascinating things, but they're really doing this out of an office, an office that's just been kind of used as a classroom and then they just have to spill out into a little bit of the library. But that's happening all throughout the district. I mean it's not just the library, but the junior high certainly has issues.

John Maurer: Right.

Corey Tafoya: The other thing that I think is a very public thing in some of the most, I guess, emotional reactions we saw in our tours were about, as what we talked about earlier, the design in the locker rooms. One of the things that is really a challenge for that is, as you mentioned, when the school was built, ADA was not a thing. Title IX was certainly not a thing. Now, we certainly live and value all of our students regardless of what gender or what their display. We want to welcome everyone and give them an incredible experience. That's something we have to design. But it makes it a little bit challenging.

Corey Tafoya: So we have to think of what can we do short term to solve some of these inequities. How do we create solutions that don't, the old expression, "throw good money for bad" and something that you don't build a bathroom that you are going to tear down in just two more years because you're doing something different? So the board has some real challenging decisions in front of them. Don't they though?

John Maurer: Yes, they do. The board I could see last evening feels a strong obligation to act, but they also have the recognition that they need to act prudently and that the whole reasons they wanted to develop the long-range plan are to just do just

that, to not spend money that is going to be undone by some future initiative. While they want to act, they recognize the need to act carefully. Of course as elected officials, they want to make sure that what they're doing is what the community would like to see done.

Corey Tafoya: We mentioned some of the other events coming up in our timeline in the future. We will have that meeting in January. It's a closed session just because we may be talking about a number of things that are related to things that can let you have private discussions in closed session. But I would imagine being that we would be going out hopefully having some ideas ready for that March 1st application. We'd probably be out sometime in the spring asking the public for more feedback on ideas and these ideas kind of funnel down. I know that you met with all of the principals last night even for a little bit, just kind of asking them to refine the idea.

Corey Tafoya: So we certainly will be in constant contact here with you, John, but thanks for willing to jump on a podcast with us and talk about this. This has meant truly not only for our community but others to stay in touch with that process and how at least one school district is attempting to address these questions of space and educational vitality of the facilities that their kids are learning and how to match those things. You and Allison had been great partners as well as Tim and it's fun to come down here to see all the people that I recognize and worked with.

John Maurer: That you recognize and that you don't.

Corey Tafoya: Yeah, I don't. And you realize how big the team really is here. Thanks for all your partnership and dedication to the district. It's really been a great partnership.

John Maurer: Well, Dr. Tafoya, thank you for this opportunity. Thanks for everything you do for the kids in Harvard and thanks for coming to our office-

Corey Tafoya: And hopefully-

John Maurer: It's a pleasure to have you here. This has been fun. Like you said, "I hadn't done this before". It's really great to just have a kind of open, honest conversation. I'll throw just something out there for you because as you know I just went to my daughter's graduation.

Corey Tafoya: Congratulations.

John Maurer: Their speaker was a former astronaut and his name was Captain Pierre Thuot. As part of what he did, he showed us his Wikipedia page in which it showed that he was dead. He was cautioning students about their research in the future, which is a good caution to all your students as well. But he put together a little theme and every time he mentioned one, he said, "I'm going to do this every

time that I have something important for you to remember." Basically he told those students I care. What that was integrity, commitment, accountability, respect and excellence. I saw so many people putting that into their phone and writing it down. So simple and yet so profound. It's clear to me that you and your board and all the people in Harvard all care.

Corey Tafoya: Well we really do and we're blessed to have a board that is so committed to putting the time. This concept of Harvard rising will include this and I think that's the legacy they were hoping to leave for generations because, as you mentioned before, Harvard cares deeply about its kids and their education and they grow very attached to our facilities. So we want to make sure they're things that are lasting and serve us well and hopefully at least we can get one more subscriber, your wife, out of this experience. I know she's a podcast listener, so hopefully we can get here.

Corey Tafoya: Thanks everyone for listening to another episode of Education Buzz from Harvard District 50. Today, we are with John Maurer from Wold and we hope to hear you in... Or be back for our January episode where we'll talk to a couple of our staff members from District 50 who have just earned their dissertation and talk about the idea of ongoing education and how you pursue that. So thanks, John. It was a pleasure.

John Maurer: Thank you.