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State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

ROCHELLE R. HENDRICKS
Acting Commissioner

December 17, 2010

Dr. Mary Lou Malyska, Superintendent
Watchung Boro School District
One Parenty
Watchung Boro, NJ 07069-0000

Re: Long-Range Facilities Plan Final Determination

Dear Dr. Malyska:

The Department of Education (Department) has completed its preliminary review of the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) submitted by the Watchung Boro School District (District) pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, P.L. 2000, c. 72 (N.J.S.A. 18A: 7G-1 *et seq.*) (Act), N.J.A.C. 6A:26 -1 *et seq.* (Educational Facilities Code), and the Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES). The Department has found the District's LRFP submittal to be complete and is now presenting the LRFP Final Determination (Final Determination).

The Final Determination of the District's LRFP includes a Summary with the following sections:

1. Inventory Overview
2. District Enrollments and School Grade Alignments
3. FES and District Practices Capacity
4. Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students Prior to Proposed Work
5. Proposed Work
6. Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students After Completion of Proposed Work
7. Proposed Room Inventories and the Facilities Efficiency Standards

Major LRFP approval issues include the adequacy of the LRFP's proposed enrollments, school capacities, and educational spaces. Approval of the LRFP, and any projects and costs listed therein, does not imply approval of an individual school facilities project or its corresponding costs and eligibility for State support under the Act. Similarly, approval of the LRFP does not imply approval of portions of the LRFP that are inconsistent with the Department's FES and proposed building demolition or replacement. Determination of preliminary eligible costs and final eligible costs will be made at the time of the approval of a particular school facilities project pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-5. The District must submit a feasibility study as part of the school facilities project approval process, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b, to support proposed building demolition or replacement. The feasibility

study should demonstrate that a building might pose a risk to the safety of the occupants after rehabilitation or that rehabilitation is not cost-effective.

Following the approval of the LRFP, the District may submit an amendment to the approved LRFP for Department review. Unless and until an amendment to the LRFP is submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Department pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-4(c), the approved LRFP shall remain in effect. The District may proceed with the implementation of school facilities projects that are consistent with the approved LRFP whether or not the school facilities project contains square footage that may be ineligible for State support.

We trust that this document will adequately explain the Final Determination and allow the District to move forward with the initiation of projects within its LRFP. Please contact Frank LoDolce, Regional Director at the Office of School Facilities at (609) 292-7078 with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Rochelle R. Hendricks
Acting Commissioner

RRH:BEP:FL:hlj
Enclosure

c: Division of Education Efficiency
Trudy Doyle, Somerset County, Executive County Superintendent
Bernard E. Piaia, Director, Office School Facilities
Frank LoDolce, Regional Director, Office of School Facilities
H. Lyle Jones, Manager, Office of School Facilities
Dianne Faucher, School Business Administrator

LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLAN

Final Determination Summary

Watchung Boro School District

The Department of Education (Department) has completed its review of the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP or Plan) submitted by the Watchung Boro School District (District) pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, P.L. 2000, c.72 (N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-1 *et seq.*) (Act), N.J.A.C. 6A:26-1 et seq. (Educational Facilities Code), and the Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES).

This is the Department's Final Determination Summary (Summary) of the LRFP. The Summary is based on the standards set forth in the Act, the Educational Facilities Code, the FES, District entered data in the LRFP and Project Application and Tracking System (LRFP website), and District supplied supporting documentation. The Summary consists of seven sections. The referenced reports in *italic* text are standard LRFP reports available on the Department's LRFP website.

1. Inventory Overview

The District provides services for students in grades K-8. The predominant existing school grade configuration is K-4. The predominant proposed school grade configuration is K-4. The District is classified as "under 55" district for funding purposes.

The District identified existing and proposed schools, sites, buildings, playgrounds, playfields, and parking lots in its LRFP. The total number of existing and proposed district-owned or leased schools, sites, and buildings are listed in Table 1. A detailed description of each asset can be found in the LRFP website report titled *"Site Asset Inventory Report."*

Table 1: Inventory Summary

	Existing	Proposed
Sites:		
Total Number of Sites	3	3
Number of Sites with no Buildings	1	1
Number of Sites with no Instructional Buildings	1	1
Schools and Buildings:		
Total Number of Schools	2	2
Total Number of Instructional Buildings	2	2
Total Number of Administrative and Utility Buildings	1	1
Total Number of Athletic Facilities	0	0
Total Number of Parking Facilities	0	0
Total Number of Temporary Facilities	0	0

As directed by the Department, incomplete school facilities projects that have project approval from the Department are represented as "existing" in the Plan. District schools with incomplete approved projects that include new construction or the reconfiguration of existing program space are as follows: n/a.

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased sites.
- The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or operated schools.
- The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased instructional buildings. The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased non-instructional buildings.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed inventory is adequate for review of the District's LRFP. However, the LRFP determination does not imply approval of an individual school facilities project listed within the LRFP. The District must submit individual project applications for project approval. If building demolition or replacement is proposed, the District must submit a feasibility study, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b, as part of the application for the specific school facilities project.

2. District Enrollments and School Grade Alignments

The District determined the number of students, or "proposed enrollments," to be accommodated in the LRFP on a district-wide basis and in each school. The District's existing and proposed enrollments and the cohort-survival projection provided by the Department on the LRFP website are listed in Table 2. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website report titled *"Enrollment Projection Detail."* Existing and proposed school enrollments and grade alignments can be found in the report titled *"Enrollment and School Grade Alignment."*

Table 2: Enrollment Comparison

	Actual Enrollments 2010	District Proposed Enrollments	Department's LRFP Website Projection
Grades K-12:			
Grades K-5, including SCSE	437	481	481
Grades 6-8, including SCSE	251	230	230
Grades 9-12, including SCSE	0	0	0
Pre-Kindergarten:			
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 3	0	0	0
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 4	0	0	0
Pre-Kindergarten, SCSE	0	0	7
District Totals	**688**	**711**	**718**

"SCSE" = Self-Contained Special Education

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District elected to use the Department's LRFP website projection. Supporting documentation was submitted to the Department as required to justify the proposed enrollments.
- The District is planning for increasing enrollments.
- The District is not an ECPA (Early Childhood Program Aid) District.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the District's proposed enrollments are supportable for review of the District's LRFP. The Department will require a current enrollment projection at the time an application for a school facilities project is submitted incorporating the District's most recent Fall Enrollment Report in order to verify that the LRFP's planned capacity is appropriate for the updated enrollments.

3. FES and District Practices Capacity

The proposed room inventories for each school were analyzed to determine whether the LRFP provides adequate capacity for the proposed enrollments. Two capacity calculation methods, called *"FES Capacity"* and *"District Practices Capacity,"* were used to assess existing and proposed school capacity in accordance with the FES and District program delivery practices. A third capacity calculation, called *"Functional Capacity,"* determines Unhoused Students and potential State support for school facilities projects. Functional Capacity is analyzed in Section 5 of this Summary.

- *FES Capacity* only assigns capacity to pre-kindergarten *(if district-owned or operated),* kindergarten, general, and self-contained special education classrooms. No other room types are considered to be capacity-generating. Class size is based on the FES and is prorated for classrooms that are sized smaller than FES classrooms. FES Capacity is most accurate for elementary schools, or schools with non-departmentalized programs, in which instruction is "homeroom" based. This capacity calculation may also be accurate for middle schools depending upon the program structure. However, this method usually significantly understates available high school capacity since specialized spaces that are typically provided in lieu of general classrooms are not included in the capacity calculations.
- *District Practices Capacity* allows the District to include specialized room types in the capacity calculations and adjust class size to reflect actual practices. This calculation is used to review capacity and enrollment coordination in middle and high schools.

A capacity utilization factor in accordance with the FES is included in both capacity calculations. A 90% capacity utilization rate is applied to classrooms serving grades K-8. An 85% capacity utilization rate is applied to classrooms serving grades 9-12. No capacity utilization factor is applied to preschool classrooms.

Table 3 provides a summary of existing and proposed district-wide capacities. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website report titled *"FES and District Practices Capacity."*

Table 3: FES and District Practices Capacity Summary

	Total FES Capacity	Total District Practices Capacity
(A) Proposed Enrollments	711	711
(B) Existing Capacity	792	848
**Existing Capacity Status (B)-(A)*	*81*	*137*
(C) Proposed Capacity	792	848
**Proposed Capacity Status (C)-(A)*	*81*	*137*

** Positive numbers signify surplus capacity; negative numbers signify inadequate capacity. Negative values for District Practices capacity are acceptable if proposed enrollments do not exceed 100% capacity utilization.*

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District has appropriately coordinated proposed school capacities and enrollments in the LRFP.

- Adequate justification has been provided by the District if capacity for a school deviates from the proposed enrollments by more than 5%.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed District capacity, in accordance with the proposed enrollments, is adequate for review of the District's LRFP. The Department will require a current enrollment projection at the time an application for a school facilities project is submitted, incorporating the District's most recent Fall Enrollment Report, in order to verify that the LRFP's planned capacity meets the District's updated enrollments.

4. Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students Prior to Proposed Work

Functional Capacity was calculated and compared to the proposed enrollments to provide a preliminary estimate of Unhoused Students and new construction funding eligibility. Functional Capacity is the adjusted gross square footage of a school building *(total gross square feet minus excluded space)* divided by the minimum area allowance per Full-time Equivalent student for the grade level contained therein. Unhoused Students is the number of students projected to be enrolled in the District that exceeds the Functional Capacity of the District's schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2.2(c).

"Excluded Square Feet" in the LRFP Functional Capacity calculation includes (1) square footage exceeding the FES for any pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, general education, or self-contained special education classroom; (2) grossing factor square footage *(corridors, stairs, mechanical rooms, etc.)* that exceeds the FES allowance, and (3) square feet proposed to be demolished or discontinued from use. Excluded square feet may be revised during the review process for individual school facilities projects.

Table 4 provides a preliminary assessment of Functional Capacity, Unhoused Students, and Estimated Maximum Approved Area for the various grade groups in accordance with the FES. Detailed information concerning the calculation and preliminary excluded square feet can be found in the LRFP website reports titled *"Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students"* and *"Functional Capacity Excluded Square Feet."*

Table 4: Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students Prior to Proposed Work

	A Proposed Enrollment	B Estimated Existing Functional Capacity	C = A-B Unhoused Students	D Area Allowance (gsf/students)	E = C x D Estimated Maximum Approved Area for Unhoused Students
*Elementary (PK-5)	481	730	0	125.00	0
Middle (6-8)	230	379	0	134.00	0
High (9-12)	0	0	0	151.00	0
District Totals	**711**	**1,109**			

**Since the District is not an ECPA district, general education preschool students are not included in the calculations Special education preschool students, if applicable, are included in the calculations for grades PK-5.*

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The calculations for "Estimated Existing Functional Capacity" n/a school facilities projects that have been approved by the Department but were not under construction or complete at the time of Plan submission.
- The District, based on the preliminary LRFP assessment, does not have Unhoused Students for the following FES grade groups: n/a.
- The District, based on the preliminary LRFP assessment, has Unhoused Students for the following FES grade groups: n/a.
- The District is not an ECPA District. Therefore, pre-kindergarten students are not included in the calculations.
- The District is not proposing to demolish or discontinue the use of existing District-owned instructional space. The Functional Capacity calculation excludes square feet proposed to be demolished or discontinued for the following FES grade groups: n/a.

FINDINGS Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students calculated in the LRFP are preliminary estimates. Justification for square footage in excess of the FES and the determination of additional excluded square feet, Preliminary Eligible Costs (PEC), and Final Eligible Costs (FEC) will be included in the review process for specific school facilities projects. A feasibility study undertaken by the District is required if building demolition or replacement is proposed per N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2.3(b)(10).

5. Proposed Work

The District was instructed to review the condition of its facilities and sites and to propose corrective *"system"* and *"inventory"* actions in its LRFP. *"System"* actions upgrade existing conditions without changing spatial configuration or size. Examples of system actions include new windows, finishes, and mechanical systems. *"Inventory"* actions address space problems by removing, adding, or altering sites, schools, buildings and rooms. Examples of inventory actions include building additions, the reconfiguration of existing walls, or changing room use.

Table 5 summarizes the type of work proposed in the District's LRFP for instructional buildings. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website reports titled *"Site Asset Inventory," "LRFP Systems Actions Summary," and "LRFP Inventory Actions Summary."*

Table 5: Proposed Work for Instructional Buildings

Type of Work	Work Included in LRFP
System Upgrades	Yes
Inventory Changes	
Room Reassignment or Reconfiguration	Yes
Building Addition	No
New Building	No
Partial or Whole Building Demolition or Discontinuation of Use	No
New Site	No

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District has proposed system upgrades in one or more instructional buildings.
- The District has not proposed inventory changes, n/a, in one or more instructional buildings.
- The District has not proposed new construction in lieu of rehabilitation in one or more instructional buildings.

Please note that costs represented in the LRFP are for capital planning purposes only. Estimated costs are not intended to represent preliminary eligible costs or final eligible costs of approved school facilities projects.

The Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b) provides that all school facilities shall be deemed suitable for rehabilitation unless a pre-construction evaluation undertaken by the District demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the structure might pose a risk to the safety of the occupants even after rehabilitation or that rehabilitation is not cost-effective. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2.3(b)(10), the Commissioner may identify school facilities for which new construction is proposed in lieu of rehabilitation for which it appears from the information presented that new construction is justified, provided, however, that for such school facilities so identified, the District must submit a feasibility study as part of the application for the specific school facilities project. The cost of each proposed building replacement is compared to the cost of additions or rehabilitation required to eliminate health and safety deficiencies and to achieve the District's programmatic model.

Facilities used for non-instructional or non-educational purposes are ineligible for State support under the Act. However, projects for such facilities shall be reviewed by the Department to determine whether they are consistent with the District's LRFP and whether the facility, if it is to house students (full or part time) conforms to educational adequacy requirements. These projects shall conform to all applicable statutes and regulations.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed work is adequate for review of the District's LRFP. However, Department approval of proposed work in the LRFP does not imply that the District may proceed with a school facilities project. The District must submit individual project applications with cost estimates for Department project approval. Both school facilities project approval and other capital project review require consistency with the District's approved LRFP.

6. Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students After Completion of Proposed Work

The *Functional Capacity* of the District's schools ***after*** completion of the scope of work proposed in the LRFP was calculated to highlight any remaining Unhoused Students.

Table 6 provides a preliminary assessment of Unhoused Students and Estimated Remaining Maximum Area after completion of new construction proposed in the LRFP, if applicable. Detailed information concerning the calculation can be found in the website report titled *"Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students."*

Table 6: Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students After Completion of Proposed Work

	Estimated Maximum Approved Area for Unhoused Students	Total New GSF	Proposed Functional Capacity after Construction	Unhoused Students after Construction	Estimated Maximum Area for Unhoused Students Remaining
*Elementary (PK-5)		0	730	0	0
Middle (6-8)	0	0	379	0	0
High (9-12)	0	0	0	0	0
District Totals	**0**	**0**	**1,109**		

**Since the District is not an ECPA district, general education preschool students are not included in the calculations Special education preschool students, if applicable, are included in the calculations for grades PK-5.*

Major conclusions are as follows:

- New construction is proposed for the following grade groups: n/a.
- Proposed new construction exceeds the estimated maximum area allowance for Unhoused Students prior to the completion of the proposed work for the following grade groups: n/a.
- The District, based on the preliminary LRFP assessment, will n/a Unhoused Students after completion of the proposed LRFP work for the following grade groups: n/a.

FINDINGS The Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students calculated in the LRFP are preliminary estimates. Justification for square footage in excess of the FES and the determination of additional excluded square feet, Preliminary Eligible Costs (PEC), and Final Eligible Costs (FEC) will be included in the review process for specific school facilities projects.

7. Proposed Room Inventories and the Facilities Efficiency Standards

The District's proposed room inventories for instructional buildings, or programmatic models, were evaluated to assess general educational adequacy and compliance with the FES area allowance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2.2 and 2.3. Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District not proposing school(s) that will provide less square feet per student than the FES allowance. Schools proposed to provide less area than the FES are as follows: n/a.
- The District is not proposing school(s) that exceed the FES square foot per student allowance.

FINDINGS The Department has reviewed the District's proposed room inventories and has determined that each is educationally adequate. If schools are proposed to provide less square feet per student than the FES, the District has provided a written justification indicating that the educational adequacy of the facility will not be adversely affected and has been granted an FES waiver by the Department. This determination does not include an assessment of eligible square feet for State support. State support eligibility will be determined at the time an application for a specific school facilities project is submitted to the Department. The Department will also confirm that a proposed school facilities project conforms with the proposed room inventory represented in the LRFP when an application for a specific school facilities project is submitted to the Department for review and approval.