



Educational Suitability Summary Report

Performing Arts Center

Date: 10/17/2016

The Performing Arts Center is a facility that provides specialized performing arts spaces to the students and faculty of Austin ISD and the greater Austin community. The building features an auditorium with 1200 seats, a Black Box theater that can seat approximately 170, a dance studio, a multi-purpose room, and a recording studio. The scheduling process for the PAC gives priority to district performing arts programs to schedule events between the months of March-August 1st, then other Austin ISD groups between August-October 1st, then the general public from October onward. This facility is heavily used by the district, and the building manager reports that it is increasing in popularity as word spreads about this facility.

Interview Overview

This campus was recently designed and built as a resource for the Austin Independent School District. The in-person interview was attended by Jana Robertson, the Center Manager, and by the Director of Fine Arts, Greg Goodman. The feedback expressed in this interview identified some small improvements desired that would increase the flexibility of the building. While the facility was designed with performing arts as the first priority, in reality the facility is also hosting many professional development events for the district. Consequently, there are some improvements that could be implemented to improve this secondary function. One of these improvements would be to increase the storage for the multi-purpose seating and collapsible tables used for events. It was expressed that CLI (Creative Learning Initiative) staff are also located at this building, and they have converted a storage area to support their growing department. The staff expressed that the scene shop space is not used as a typical scene shop, but rather, functions as a storage area for orchestra and other miscellaneous items. If there was to be a new PAC, the staff believe a scene shop would be desirable. They believe a separate, dedicated space for instrument storage would be ideal as well.

In addition to increasing storage space, additional dedicated custodial closets and a custodian office are desired for improved configuration and proximity to served spaces. The staff also expressed the desire for a dedicated laundry room rather than this being located in the women's dressing area.

The dance studio is reported as working well overall, but they desire the ability to control audio from the front of the instructional area on the east wall. The use of the space for professional development as well also raises concerns for the integrity of the hardwood floors withstanding the moving event chairs and tables. They also desire an additional projection location for this use. It was also reported that reconfiguring the curtain track to wrap to the south west wall of the space would improve flexibility for recitals and performances in the space by creating a pseudo-back stage area.

The main performance hall has LEDs, but the dimmable functionality is needed for proper functionality. The stage control for the battens, clouds, and lights is located on the pin rail, which creates access

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difficulties due to the stair being outside of the theater space. The staff would much prefer having a control on the main stage level.

The parking garage was identified as having a few problems, mainly due to water drainage, vehicle circulation, and unauthorized use. There are reported issues with water creating a “water fall” into the elevator shaft during storms, thus destroying the elevator controls. When large events occur, the parking garage has some circulation issues due to the existing traffic patterns. The staff advised that if a new facility is built, they would suggest a parking garage that has one way traffic flow to keep traffic flowing continuously and a gate to secure the top level from unauthorized users. The staff also desire adding eye-level signage for reserved spaces, inspecting the electrical output of malfunctioning charging stations, and improving fire extinguisher locations to avoid vehicles inadvertently damaging them.

The multipurpose room was reported as functioning extremely well. The only reported issue relates to the overly wide window shades that are no longer functioning appropriately. The dressing rooms in the facility need to have full-length mirrors, and the lighting in the makeup and hair area needs to be relocated to be at face level for proper functionality. The hand dryers in these spaces are reported as extremely loud and causing cleaning difficulties.

The administration area is reported as needing a few small improvements including adding storage under office windows, darkening window shades to reduce glare on computer screens, and improving the door clearance for the refrigerator in the breakroom. The concessions area also needs additional electrical capacity to support multiple appliances, and the offices need additional outlets as well.

The wish list items expressed for this building include a dedicated gallery space or a deeper gallery space to accommodate the long term art exhibits occurring at this facility. The director of performing arts also expressed interest in 10-15 practice rooms including small group and ensemble spaces. The black box theater would have increased functionality if a Clear-Com connection is added in the floor below the currently located risers. The staff also expressed a desire for there to be more connection between the sound booth and light booth so that one could control them simultaneously, and a restroom in the light booth. Another desirable item would be to have public restrooms located close to the dance studio for visitors to the facility. In the performance area, a wish list item is adding the ability to lower the stage clouds and have a longer valence to better support performance by younger students.

For the exterior of the building, the staff expressed the need for an additional hose bib on the northeast courtyard area for watering the landscaping. If possible, the campus also desires a two-way call box that would allow them to communicate with visitors outside in need of assistance.

There are some safety concerns at this facility mainly in the parking garage. The main security concern for the interior of the main building is that the double doors to the south of the performance space are reversed, so that they cannot appropriately secure that hallway from visitors. The staff also report issues with the main entry exterior door latching properly due to stray rocks and dysfunctional door closers.

Additional security concerns include adding security cameras in the garage. Additional security cameras

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are also desired in the administration visitor parking area and at the secondary north entry between the black box theater and the lobby. The staff expressed interest in being included when determining camera locations. Bus parking is also desired for large events to accommodate the large number of buses that travel to this facility.

If any changes were to occur at this facility, the staff expressed that the outdoor courtyards, the multipurpose room, and the art gallery space should be preserved. The staff also expressed interest in there being more professional development space built in the district, which could enable their performing arts spaces to function more often for their originally intended uses.

The hottest issues facing this campus, as expressed by the staff, include the lack of storage space, and the scheduling of events that reduce the amount of time the spaces are used as they were designed.



Photo 1. Front Lobby
And Gallery Space



Photo 2. Exterior



Photo 3. Black Box



Photo 4. Dance



Photo 5. Hallway Doors
Need Reversing for Security



Photo 6. Scene Shop
Currently Acts as Storage



Photo 7. Offices In
Previous Storage Space



Photo 8. Hanging Rails
Are Too High to Use



Photo 9. Lighting in Hair and Makeup Needs To Be At Face Level