Educational Suitability Summary Report

Pleasant Hill Annex – Science Health Resource Center

Date: 09/01/2016

Pleasant Hill Annex/Science Health Resource Center is located in South Austin. The facility serves the district as a storage and distribution center for science material, field trip destination, and professional development center for AISD. The original building was constructed in 1936 and an addition occurred in 1957. The age of the facility is apparent and needs significant improvements. Ideally a replacement facility would be desired. If a new facility is an option, its current functions would be able to occur, and it could incorporate a museum component that is innovative and available to the public.

Survey Overview

The survey results from staff and administrators were not completed. The educational suitability for most major spaces, including administrative offices, and outdoor spaces was determined by an onsite interview and field assessment.

Interview and Assessment Overview

The condition of the facility needs major updates if it is to function and serve the district well. Science materials and equipment are stored along with the packaging kit materials. The former cafeteria serves as a warehouse for storing and distribution of the science kits. The center has a living library with various animals for distribution to the schools. There is a classroom wing built in 1957 that has been converted to house the animals such as birds, guinea pigs, snakes, lizards, fish and insects.

Currently there is only one dedicated air conditioning system for the cafeteria. This A/C system is continually needing service, as heating and cooling are a constant issue. Film has been placed on the single pane windows in an attempt to reduce heat and is not in good condition. The air conditioning in the library must be turned off (when occupied) because the noise is so loud that people cannot hear discussions.

The facility is aged and has a cracked slab and is at the point where ants are entering the space.

Part of the building functions as meeting rooms for professional development. The former library room is the largest meeting room with a capacity of approximately fifty, and often more space is needed. The rooms for professional development have new furniture, however, there are still old cabinets in place. There is a need to have a larger meeting room to support the professional development meetings that happen at the facility. There is a need to create a fully functioning science classroom for demonstrations and professional development. The current designated room needs increased electrical capacity as well as hood vent equipment and gas. The staff lounge lacks a good functioning kitchen. There are no hoods over the stoves and does not have proper air conditioning with a window unit. The rooms need updating by replacing the chalkboards with white boards. The facility needs interactive boards to distribute out to
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It is difficult to place equipment within the facility, due to the condition of the roof and number of leaks occurring.

Currently the facility serves as a field trip destination. There is insufficient amount of parking and no parking for buses. There is only a round concrete pad for buses to turn around which makes cars park on the grass to keep clear of the large turning radius of the buses. The facility can only support approximately 40 students at one time to split classroom time with learning garden time. The classroom space needs updating and has no finished floor. The restrooms in the classroom are too small and are not ADA compliant. When there are larger groups for any event, portable restrooms are brought on site to accommodate visitors. Most restrooms are sized for elementary children.

Safety concerns include the condition of the roof, as there are leaks throughout the building. Awnings on the building are in poor condition and deteriorating. The shelving of equipment and supplies are stacked in high places and occasionally staff are climbing on to access the stored equipment. The facility needs warehouse shelving that can automatically rotate to avoid having to climb to access materials. There a number of pest issues on campus with fleas, rats, bees, termites, roaches, skunk, fox, raccoons, feral cats, and ants. In particular there are ants within the living library and a bee hive within an exterior wall. There have been bees inside the building and on occasion raccoons. Also, rodents and moths are an issue with flour needed for science projects. The facility also lacks potable water and a filtered water machine has been placed in the hallway. The location of the parking for the facility is directly off of the street and is not considered safe. There are doors that do not close or are left open leaving ability for vandalism and loss of valuable computer property or animals. The facility needs better security lighting and cameras. The serious health issues with staff is believed to be attributed to the building.

The main issues of concern for Pleasant Hill Annex as immediate needs are to have an improved parking for buses and visitors. It is not convenient for visitors with very few parking spaces available and no place for buses to park. Often people are left to park across the street in the neighborhood without any crosswalks. The roof is in such poor condition there are leaks that migrate from one patch to another area. The situation is such that it is very difficult to place equipment in a permanent location due to the leaking roof and contributing to mold within the building. There are bees just outside the staff lounge and the other pest issues that need to be addressed. Adult sized restrooms are needed. The age of the building is apparent and is functioning as best as possible, but there is a severe amount of renovation needed for an ideal center.

The only things thought to preserve on the current campus would be the garden and some of the painted murals. The staff is very receptive to an entire new center and relocating if necessary. There is a strong desire to have a new multipurpose facility to support its current function, but can also be an interactive and innovative nature and science destination that has such attractions as a planetarium and large learning garden spaces to accommodate overnight camping. Science needs to be a priority for the district and placing focus on a facility that is a shining and innovative example as a sustainable science center.
Photo 1. Bee Infestation
Photo 3. Bees Observed In Facility
Photo 5. Computer Room Furniture
Photo 6. Roof
Deteriorating
Photo 8. Learning Garden Seating
Perkins+Will

Educational Suitability Assessment

Photo 10. Science Demonstration Furniture
Photo 12. Storage

Height Safety Issue