

In Session with the “Oriole” Superintendent

Guest Column By, Andy Czaika, Building and Grounds Supervisor, Charlotte Public Schools

Strategic Investment and Maintenance in School Facilities

As the building and grounds supervisor for the district, I see first-hand each day the impact that basic maintenance on our buildings and equipment has on the overall learning environment for the students. Most people have heard that there is a bond proposal on the November 2018 ballot. At the heart of the bond is learning environments, needed facility and equipment upgrades, safety and the need to update and maintain district assets.

The school maintenance team exists to support the primary purpose of K-12 education - quality learning. The core responsibility is to ensure that through quality custodial and maintenance services-administrators, teachers, and students have an environment that is safe, healthy, and responsive to educational programming. The maintenance program is a school district’s foremost tool for protecting its investment in school facilities. Moreover, preventive maintenance is the cornerstone of any effective maintenance initiative.



School facility operations services include the day-to-day running of the school facilities. This involves a wide array of services and skills that include energy management, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, cleaning, inspections, boiler operation, mowing grass, and responding to daily emergency repairs.

Much effort is made for the repair, replacement and renewal of failed infrastructure elements. There is no one way to maintain schools – they run a variety of size, age, structural systems, etc. At CPS, we have a well-designed facility management system that encompasses three categories of maintenance: emergency (or response) maintenance, routine maintenance, and preventive maintenance. The one everyone dreads is emergency maintenance (the boiler fails on the coldest day of the year or a heating coil freezes and floods a classroom). When a light in Room 102 finally needs to be replaced, it is routine maintenance. Preventive maintenance is the scheduled maintenance of a piece of equipment, such as the replacement of air handler filters every 10 weeks or the semiannual inspection of the water fountains.

In order to protect the community’s assets, we have a strong focus on preventive maintenance. It begins with an audit of the buildings, grounds, and equipment. When planning preventive maintenance, decision-makers consider how to most efficiently schedule the work— i.e., concurrently with academic breaks or other planned work. Because a rigorous preventive maintenance system results in fewer emergency events, it tends to reduce disruptions to the school schedule.

With good maintenance practices and ongoing strategic investments in our facilities, the schools at CPS will continue to provide a safe learning environment for our students and be an asset that the community can be proud of for years to come. The November 2018 bond proposal addresses the ongoing strategic investments that are needed in our facilities in order for good maintenance practices to be effective in protecting district assets.

Go Orioles!! Oriole Pride!