



Frequently Asked Questions

Former Middle School Building Ideas

Question: To renovate the former middle school to be an elementary school is not a new idea. Why is it coming up again?

Answer: True, this idea has been discussed previously. Since then, there has been a verbal commitment from CDOT to build and fund a pedestrian bridge across the highway once development occurs on the south side of the highway. Additionally, out of our three properties for sale, the former middle school has proven the most challenging for potential developers. There is speculation that the best use of the building is still a school.

Question: Is the district in “cahoots” with the City of Idaho Springs, and is this just an effort to distract from the mayoral recall?

Answer: Yes to being in cahoots. In fact, the CCSD is in cahoots with the City, the County Commissioners, Clear Creek Economic Development Council, and our community. We are all one community and we have a responsibility to work together in the best interest of our families. No to an effort to distract from the mayoral recall. The idea originated from CCSD. It would be irresponsible to continue to explore the idea without consulting with the City. CCSD is solely focused on pursuing ideas that are in support of what is best for our students and families. The City of Idaho Springs is an essential partner in this work.

Question: Isn't the former middle school filled with asbestos? Is it safe to hold a meeting in the building?

Answer: The former middle school, which currently houses the district office and is being rented to Graham Construction, is safe for its current use. There is asbestos in the ceiling, and it has been assessed previously. Some of it has already been abated, some has been encapsulated. Any renovation work to the building would need to take this into consideration: which portions to keep encapsulated, and which portions should be abated. This is heavily regulated, especially under the regulations that apply to schools.

Question: How will you keep kids safe walking from town?

Answer: CDOT has indicated they will build a pedestrian bridge from the town to the south side of the highway, which could provide safe passage to the former middle school building. We also have the option to bus students from the Rec Center to the former middle school building. Currently we have bus stops throughout the town of Idaho Springs (as well as throughout Clear Creek), so dropping students at the current Carlson building vs. the former middle school adds very little to the time or cost.

Question: The building seems big for an elementary school; how will you utilize the space?

Answer: We estimate that it will take a little more than half of the former middle school building to house a state of the art elementary school. That opens up many possibilities for the remainder of the space. We are especially interested in the idea of providing infant and toddler care in the same site as an elementary school. Other ideas for this space include more space for the library, a satellite college campus, a partnership with the School of Mines, elder care, community meeting space, a community theater, and more. Further, there is space at the former middle school to build a transportation center that would be in compliance with safety codes and provide garage space for bus parking & repairs, something we cannot do in our current transportation center.

Question: What will happen with the playground project currently in the works for Carlson?

Answer: As we began talking about this idea, we identified which parts of Carlson's playground project would happen regardless of the location of the school. The current plan is to demolish the existing play structure this summer. If the decision is to renovate the former middle school building to be an elementary school, we will put in the play equipment at Carlson this summer but likely not the new surfacing, and use wood chips instead. This will allow us to move the equipment when ready.

Question: How will funds from CCSD property sales be used?

Answer: Funds from property sales must be used for capital costs, such as buildings, furniture, systems replacements, and so on. The funds can be used immediately, or be put into capital reserves for future repairs, renovations, etc.

Question: Is Carlson at capacity? What about plans to expand Carlson with anticipated development?

Answer: Carlson is currently at approximately 60% of capacity. Future enrollment is tricky to predict, as it is impacted by development throughout the county as well as economic factors. Our best hope is to increase enrollment throughout the district, as we have been a declining enrollment district for several years. There is not room at Carlson to expand our building footprint.

Question: What are the current physical conditions of Carlson? What about upkeep and maintenance now and in the future?

Answer: While Carlson is well-maintained, thanks to our rock star custodians and maintenance crew, the facility itself is in need of numerous repairs. A recent facility assessment completed by the Colorado Department of Education Facility Insight Team gave Carlson a 59% FCI, Facility Conditions Index and a 63% on School Conditions Index, with required repair costs totalling \$9.1 million and a replacement cost of \$14.6 million. Anything above 10% for an FCI is considered in need of replacement or repair.

Question: What risks do the gas stations and bus stops pose located across from Carlson?

Answer: We are fortunate to receive excellent support from the Idaho Springs police department at Carlson. With that said, there is a concern regarding the proximity to frequent traffic through the gas stations and bus stops, as well as I70.

Question: There is a struggle with drop off and pick up at Carlson. What is the plan to make this successful in the future?

Answer: We will continue to have staff from Carlson assist with drop off and pick up, as well as Idaho Springs police.

Question: How many custodians are currently at Carlson? What would this look like if they transfer to a larger facility?

Answer: There is currently one lead custodian during the day at Carlson, and an evening custodial position. A larger facility could require additional custodial hours, but that would be determined based on what percentage of a building is used for a school.

Question: What is the current condition of the former middle school building? What renovations would be required to put it into use and what are the associated costs? Who has provided quotes?

Answer: The building has been “mothballed” for eight years. There has been minimal maintenance, as the district office is located in the building. No recent quotes have been solicited. Should we move forward with this idea, a facility assessment is the next step, which identifies costs and potential renovations. A facility assessment could be partially funded/supported by multiple organizations, including the Clear Creek Economic Development Council, the City of Idaho Springs, and county grants. There is no commitment to do so yet.

Question: Does the sale of Carlson fund a renovation of the former middle school?

Answer: It could, but the timing makes it challenging. We would need to renovate the former middle school first, while students attend school at Carlson. Carlson could be sold once vacated. One possible source of funds to renovate the former middle school is the sale of Golddigger Field.

Question: What about security at the former middle school?

Answer: Should we move forward with this idea, we would do a full safety assessment to determine any needed upgrades. The current state of the building has some benefits in that it was built for quick evacuation. An example is windows that can be opened for exit. Additionally, there are ramps or pathways from most floors exiting to the outside. Cameras could be moved from the current Carlson site to the former middle school, with new cameras added as needed.

Question: Why would you consider using a portion of the building for other needs besides an elementary school?

Answer: The former middle school contains approximately 86,000 square feet, which is bigger than we need for an elementary school, even with potential growth. Any additional use of the building would need to provide a benefit to the community in some capacity. There is also the

potential to retain ownership of the entire building by the school district, and rent space to partners, providing options in the future should we need additional space.

Question: How many acres does the district own at the site of the former middle school?

Answer: The site including the building is just over 15 acres. This includes the track as well as property to the west and north.

Question: At the former middle school, if we renovated it to be an elementary school, can kids come inside instead of waiting outside? Kids need to be safe. Will we ensure no child is allowed outside without an adult, correct?

Answer: Should we renovate the former middle school into an elementary school, safety protocols would be developed including before and after school procedures. Given the large amount of common space (non classroom) in the building, we could use this space for students to gather before or after school, preventing outside waiting without adult supervision. Another option would be to ensure adult supervision at specific times before and after school, coordinated with parent drop off and pick up.

Question: How do you propose animal control around kids playing?

Answer: Active adult supervision, wildlife education for adults and kids. King Murphy Elementary is located in a remote mountain setting and we follow tight safety protocols already at this site.

Question: If funding falls through for proposed upgrades to this building, will the football field be sold to cover costs?

Answer: The football field is already for sale. Our last season of use for the field was Fall 2019, with a celebration at Homecoming. We don't anticipate using the field moving into Fall 2020. Proceeds from the sale of Golddigger Field could be used for renovations at the former middle school, as well as for other capital needs. Funds generated from the sale of property must be used on capital expenses or put into capital reserves for future needs.

Question: Where will the GTIS Half Marathon finish?

Answer: The race directors are currently researching an alternate route. Approval is required prior to re-routing the race. Logistical questions are being researched as well. The plan currently is to not use Golddigger Field for the race end, and instead utilize a new end of the route. One idea has been to end the race at the park near the Visitor's Center.

Question: How do we preserve and honor memories of Digger Field?

Answer: As promised as part of the 4B bond approval, CCSD will make improvements to the athletic facilities at CCHS/MS on Floyd Hill. There is a design team currently meeting, working on decisions regarding additional bleachers/seating space, concessions, announcer's booth, walkway/accessibility, lights vs turf. The plan is to have improvements completed prior to Fall 2020, however timing will be dependent on design and contractor availability. One of the

priorities in this work is to consider how to honor traditions of Golddigger Field, for example where might the bell be placed?

Question: How many students walk to Carlson?

Answer: 77 students either are dropped off by parents or walk to Carlson. We would need to observe for actual walkers to provide more accurate numbers.

Question: How does the square footage compare to Carlson?

Answer: Carlson is approximately 55,000 sq ft, the former middle school is approximately 86,000 sq ft.

Question: What lead assessments or remediation measures are required?

Answer: Schools are required to follow strict building codes & requirements to ensure safety and environmental health. Should we proceed with researching this idea, a full facility assessment would be completed on the building. This assessment would provide data on what remediations would be required, including anything related to lead and asbestos. We would not and could not put kids in a building that is non-compliant.

Question: What other building upgrades are required?

Answer: Same as answer above, a full facility assessment would indicate what needs to be completed. Anecdotally, we anticipate needing to replace bathroom fixtures with smaller ones to accommodate for elementary children, changing out the railings, adding a playground, changing out lights to be LED's in the gym, as well as other upgrades yet to be identified.

Question: Where are funds to be pulled to provide building index assessment?

Answer: We anticipate a facility assessment could cost up to \$30,000. We are hopeful that Clear Creek Economic Development Council could support a portion of this fee, we will also pursue funding support from the County, as well as the City of Idaho Springs. The remainder would need to come from our district budget, likely from a capital account.

Question: We will be investing in either Carlson or this building. Where do we have the most potential? Which gives the greatest ROI, return on investment?

Answer: Once we know facility renovation costs, we can more accurately answer this question. We do know now that Carlson has a greater value and would likely sell for significantly more than the former middle school. Since the former middle school has been for sale, there has not yet been a viable offer. Carlson has better redevelopment potential that includes mixed use, retail, office space, residential, and more. In visiting other repurposed schools in Colorado, they more typically look like Carlson than the former middle school. See <https://www.lincolncenter-cosprings.com/> and <http://ivywildschool.com/> for two that we visited earlier this year when we were seeking ideas for the former middle school building.