

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Reading Memorial High School

READING, MASSACHUSETTS

November 7-10, 1993

ALAN BOOKMAN, CHAIR

SUSAN TAYLOR, ASSISTANT CHAIR

RENA MIRKIN, PRINCIPAL

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Standard for Accreditation

The site, plant, and equipment shall support all aspects of the educational program of the school and shall be maintained to ensure the safety and the health of the occupants. There shall be evidence of on-going planning to address future facility needs.

Description

Reading Memorial High School is located in the middle of Reading, just off Main Street. It is part of the Birch Meadow educational/recreational area. The property contains the high school, a middle school, an elementary school, the YMCA, several playgrounds, multiple athletic fields and numerous other recreation resources. The Birch Meadow property was purchased by the school department in the 1940's. A new high school was built and occupied in 1954.

The original building included three floors of classrooms, a 1,100 seat auditorium, a gym and a cafeteria. Other wings and buildings which constitute the high school were part of the 1972 addition. They are: the media center seating 140, the lecture hall seating 200, the field house seating 2200, and three full floors of classrooms and science labs. Also included in the 1972 addition was a second student dining area and an industrial and fine arts facilities. The high school houses 970 students.

The building has 60 classrooms and seventeen specialty classrooms. The high school also houses the superintendent of schools and his staff.

In addition to the high school building, the school department owns and maintains the football field and track. The town of Reading owns and maintains all else. In addition to the football field and track, town fields are available to the high school. They include a practice football field, a baseball field, four softball fields, tennis courts, an outdoor municipal pool and the Castine field for soccer.

The high school maintenance department includes a department head, two

full-time maintenance employees, and a part-time secretary. The department head is also the supervisor of the custodial staffs.

Perceptions

Many problems exist in the maintenance and upkeep of the facility, partially due to reductions in custodial and maintenance staff. Many areas of the building are often superficially cleaned at night. Equipment and facilities in need of repair are often not corrected for long periods of time. Issues of safety are rightfully given top priority by the maintenance department. Therefore, even though many needs go unmet, the school remains a safe place for all students.

Several pressing maintenance needs continue to go unmet. The roof on the main school, now over 40 years old, must be replaced. New doors must be installed on the front of the building since it is not possible to lock them each night. Because of antiquated boilers, heating and ventilation is inadequate. Lighting must be improved in corridors and classrooms. In addition, other important maintenance can improve the appearance of the building. This includes but is not limited to repainting lockers, installation of new floor tiles and new ceilings, and acquisition of new classroom furniture.

Because the school and community use the building and athletic fields twelve months a year, the maintenance and custodial needs are extremely high. These needs must be met with an improved maintenance schedule and increased cleaning.

The grounds immediately around the school are maintained by the school custodians. The grounds are attractive and spacious. Concern has been expressed that attention given to them has decreased.

Commendations

1. The attractiveness of the classroom bulletin boards throughout the building
2. The increased storage and classroom space for the art department
3. The extensive mural work by art students in various areas of the building, enriching the learning and school environment of both

students and faculty

4. The availability of computers in department offices
5. The recent investment in computer labs in three areas of the school
6. The up-to-date equipment and software in the business education department
7. The proximity of the health classrooms to the field house
8. The movement of the SEEM class to a more mainstreamed setting
9. The educational and sports equipment available to students for student activities
10. The cleanliness of the food service area
11. The addition of the snack bar by the food service department
12. The replacement of the high school roof over the foreign language area
13. The availability of the athletic facilities for a large number of school and community athletic activities

Recommendations

1. Provide adequate staff to maintain the cleanliness and upkeep of facility
2. Provide adequate heating and ventilation throughout the building
3. Repair the sections of roofs which leak
4. Replace outdated furniture and equipment
5. Provide adequate storage for all areas
6. Replace doors which can not be locked to secure building
7. Replacement damaged floor tiles

8. Replace damaged or missing ceiling tiles
9. Repair or replace damaged lockers
10. Replace discolored plexiglass
11. Replace worn out blackboards
12. Implement a plan for the disposal of chemicals
13. Install immediately the kiln hood in the art room
14. Provide a setting that can be used by the art department for audio-visual presentations
15. Investigate the creation of an art gallery
16. Increase computer graphic software and computer design stations for the art department
17. Improve the upkeep and maintenance of equipment in the art rooms
18. Provide an adequate number of printers in the business department
19. Provide appropriate air temperature
20. Ensure student access to a word processing lab
21. Install a multi-media language laboratory in the foreign language area
22. Repair ungrounded electrical plugs in classrooms
23. Provide new locks for windows in foreign language
24. Repair the locked door in room A313
25. Provide the marketing education area with adequate secure storage for school store inventory
26. Complete the refurbishing of the school store

27. Provide computer software and projection equipment for each mathematics classroom
28. Examine the unmet space needs of the music department for both classroom and storage
29. Replace music equipment and instruments which cannot be repaired
30. Increase storage facilities at or near the field house
31. Provide shelving in the storage area at the field house
32. Provide for regular and thorough cleaning of the field house, showers and locker rooms
33. Develop a plan to better maintain or replace broken or worn facilities in physical education
34. Provide additional custodial and maintenance help after community groups use the field house
35. Provide gas and electrical hookups in all science lab classes
36. Redesign storage areas in the science department
37. Provide additional private space for learning center conferences in the special education department
38. Correct the heating and ventilation problems in the science area and the science storage area