

Over the next two years, this project will begin to fund needed small, contemporary renovations and refurbishments of existing school classrooms, libraries, and other elective and support areas consistent with School Board goals and priorities. As needed refurbishments are targeted, it is critical that learning environments change to provide flexible settings that accommodate students to collaborate in both small and large groups, participate in whole group instruction, and pursue individual learning. As refurbishments and small renovation projects occur, schools must integrate critical elements of modern learning work, where students will acquire knowledge and develop competencies associated with college and workforce readiness. Refurbished and renovated spaces must support teachers to use a blend of instructional approaches along with tools of contemporary learning as they plan together and work with students.

The work students are expected to accomplish, and must accomplish in order to maximize their opportunity for adult success, has moved far beyond the 20th century industrial model, a change that must be accommodated by altering teaching strategies and learning areas. The redesign of class areas for contemporary learners will allow them to research and collaborate as they work and share final products and performance assessments of learning through a variety of presentation formats. As an initial focus, funds will be used to primarily support redesign, renovation, and refurbishment of learning areas that are accessible to more than one class of students. This funding will support renovation up to 10 class areas per year. Modifications will include furniture and structural improvements/minor renovation work (i.e. wall demo and/or wall construction, storefront/glass installation, operable partitions, paint, etc.).

Project Justification:

The School Board has identified “support for developing Contemporary Learning Spaces” as one of its top three areas of high priority focus within the Albemarle County Public Schools 2011-2013 Strategic Plan. The development of contemporary learning spaces represents a key performance indicator for Goal 1: Prepare all students to succeed as members of a global community and in a global economy and Board Priority 1.1: Develop Lifelong-Learner (LLL) competencies in all students. Student learning is supported by the use and design of the learning space. This goal recognizes for students to meet the challenges of the 21st century, they must be lifelong learners who are able to acquire new skills and understandings in an ever changing and increasingly complex world. This is consistent with the focus both past and current educational platforms of Virginia’s governors to prepare Virginia’s current students for post-secondary degrees and “top jobs” in a tech-driven economy.

Currently, Building Services provides basic “maintenance of effort” for our schools and little support for upgrading furniture or modifying learning areas to advance contemporary learning work, especially in secondary class areas. In the late 1980s, available small project CIP funds were significantly reduced for Building Services to replace furniture or modernize classroom areas. As we provide updates to existing spaces, we need to do so in a manner that integrates current educational and workforce needs in a systemic, not random manner. Albemarle County Public Schools plays a vital role in the creation of a competitive

workforce, and its facilities must be able to support the development of college and workforce ready graduates who are creative, collaborative, and productive citizens. The K-12 educational program must anticipate the future needs of the community and the workforce and be agile enough to respond quickly to changes in workforce needs and tools.

Contemporary learning areas must be flexible spaces that can shift to accommodate a range of instructional activities and student needs and to create areas that can evolve to accommodate future learners and uses. To do so, funding is necessary to refurbish and renovate to meet and support contemporary learning expectations. As part of the strategic plan developed and approved by the School Board, prioritization of the renovation of 20th century class areas into modern learning spaces begins with a systemic plan for first developing those in all schools and then using the Plan Do Study Act assessment and evaluation model to address long-term needed innovations consistent with contemporary teaching, technology use, and student expectations.

Alternative Impact:

Facilities will not be refreshed to support contemporary learning beyond what can be accomplished through “maintenance of effort” resources.

Special Considerations:

A renovation and refurbishment needs assessment will be implemented collaboratively through a cross functional team comprised of staff from Building Services, Human Resources, and the Office of Instruction along with school-based staff. The team will determine priorities and readiness by school for development of contemporary class areas and spaces in collaboration with school-based teams. This model is similarly used by Building Services in its renovation and addition facilities planning processes that involve building level staff in development of renovated and refurbished class areas.