

## PORTABLES UPDATE, APRIL 2012

This update provides historical context, plus our current situation and recommendations for future usage, of the district's portables.

### Historical Context

From 1985-90 when enrollment grew by 4,300 students, we built six growth-related schools yet still added 307 portables. From 1996-98 we added 81, and from 2003-05 we added another 182. As recently as 2005 the district had 649 instructional portables providing 12,802 student stations. At one point, our analysis revealed that our district had the state's second highest percentage of relocatable student stations when compared to permanent student stations. Since then we have terminated all leases of portables [except for construction-related projects] and have demolished about 160 aging units. Unfortunately, those relocatables which we brought on line from 1985-90 have been turning 20 years old the past few , and we have struggled to afford to replace them with new units or permanent classrooms.

The good news about our past practice is that we have not over-built permanent spaces. Because we have maintained our relocatables extremely well and have provided them with the identical technology found in permanent spaces, we have been able to avoid getting rid of aging units that still functioned very well as instructional spaces. In addition, a couple years ago our Chief Building Official worked hard to obtain special insignias for scores of relocatables that were brought on line in that 1996-98 time period.

### Current Situation and Recommendations

Now, with a decreasing COFTE and supported by a recommendation from the MGT study, staff is recommending a four-phased approach with a goal of significantly reducing our reliance on portables:

- (1) Elimination of Aging Portables. Of our 487 remaining instructional relocatables, 178 are in excess of 20 years old. Of the 178, 78 are slated for demolition in the next couple years as part of rebuild and renovation projects at SCTI, Booker HS, Venice HS, Sarasota MS, and Laurel Nokomis School. Also, the 16 aging units at Gocio ES will be replaced this summer with newer units from schools with excess capacity.
- (2) Reallocation of Available Newer Units. The completion of the rebuilds of SCTI, Venice HS, and Booker HS will not only allow the demolition of scores of aging portables but will also allow 26 newer portables to be reallocated to schools with excess aging units. In addition, units from other schools with excess capacity can replace even more aging units throughout the district.
- (3) Elimination of Excess Newer Portables. As a way to further decrease operational costs, staff recommends that dozens of newer units – which are classified as instructional but which do not have an instructional use – be leased or sold. The attached table reveals that over 70 portables are being used for non-instructional purposes. Of the 70, many are not yet 20 years old and may be surplus. Prior to surplus newer units, staff will ensure that any upturn in enrollment does not catch us having eliminated student stations that we would need soon.
- (4) Remodeling of Spaces for Specialized Staff. Finally, there are numerous counselors, speech therapists, administrators, and other specialized staff assigned to permanent or relocatable classrooms that far exceed the size space they need. Operations staff will determine the opportunities to remodel one classroom or other large space into smaller spaces, thereby freeing up larger spaces for their intended instructional uses; thus, additional relocatables can be eliminated with better utilization of other spaces.

Staff believes that the above approaches, barring any increase in COFTE projections, will allow the district to reduce our reliance on portables from 487 instructional units to about 320, maybe even lower, by 2015. The district will save about \$1400 per year in electricity with each unit eliminated. Avoiding repairs and maintenance on relocatables scheduled for replacement will gradually save capital dollars. Custodial savings will come only after sufficient units can be eliminated from a single campus, though even a gradual reduction in square footage to be cleaned can release custodians to perform other needed tasks.