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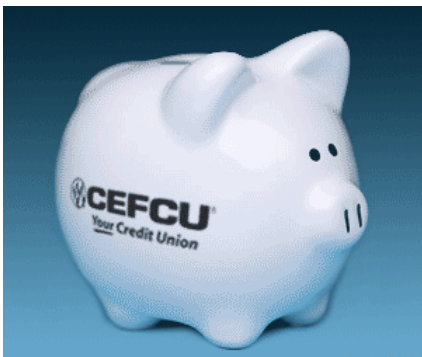
## Dunlap schools looking to expand

Master plan will look at alternatives for fast-growing district

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By **SCOTT HILYARD (shilyard@pjstar.com)**  
**Journal Star**

Posted Nov 11, 2009 @ 07:31 PM  
Last update Nov 11, 2009 @ 08:06 PM



**DUNLAP** — Even though the Dunlap School District has built three new schools and two major additions at two schools this decade, projected enrollment increases show there's a lot more construction needed in the next several years.

And those same projections show that all schools in the district - four elementary and two middle schools and one high school - would be at capacity by the start of the 2013-2014 school year, some sooner than that, if nothing is done.

"That's why it is important we get started implementing a long-term facility construction plan," said Jay Marino, superintendent of District 323.

Last month, the School Board hired the Farnsworth Group of Peoria to draw up a master plan for Dunlap High School, the site of the district's most pressing needs. With almost 1,100 students, the school is crowded this year and is projected to be well above its capacity in the next school year. A new addition that included an auditorium and a wing that houses the entire freshman class opened just five years ago.

The district hopes to have the Farnsworth report before the district's winter break next month.

"The high school is breaking right up against its capacity right now, so the need there is immediate," said Christine Finley, the president of the Dunlap School Board. "We're looking to add additional classrooms at the high school and are probably looking at renovating existing space."

A likely scenario, Finley said, is moving the district's administrative offices out of the high school to a currently unknown location.

"That could give us six to eight new classrooms and accommodate growth to about 1,400 students, which would be good until 2014-2015, according to the projections," Finley said. "That could be done next year and be ready for the start of the 2010 school year."

The next step is likely a referendum on the ballot in November 2010 to build a new elementary school, Finley said. The district has options to buy property on Allen Road and on Hickory Grove Road for a new elementary school.

### Crowded schools

*There are space needs throughout the Dunlap School District, some more imminent than others. Here's a look at each level of school, plus the district administration, and when it reaches capacity.*

**Elementary:** Need elementary space by 2013-14, or earlier if 1. District doesn't want art and music on a cart (no classroom); 2. District doesn't want students being transported to other schools; and/or 3. If subdivision growth occurs.

**Middle:** Need middle school space by 2013-14 or earlier if 1. District doesn't want students transported to other schools; and/or 2. If subdivision growth occurs.

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There's more. Dunlap Valley Middle School, open for just its third school year, will be at capacity in 2011, although with two middle schools there's more flexibility in moving students to different schools, Marino said. Students who live in Valley Middle school's jurisdiction could be bused to nearby Dunlap Middle School.

"Is it desirable to be transported past your school to go to another school because of space needs? No," Marino said. "But it is a less disruptive way to buy some time."

An addition probably will be needed soon at Valley Middle School, a possibility that has led critics to accuse the board of poor planning.

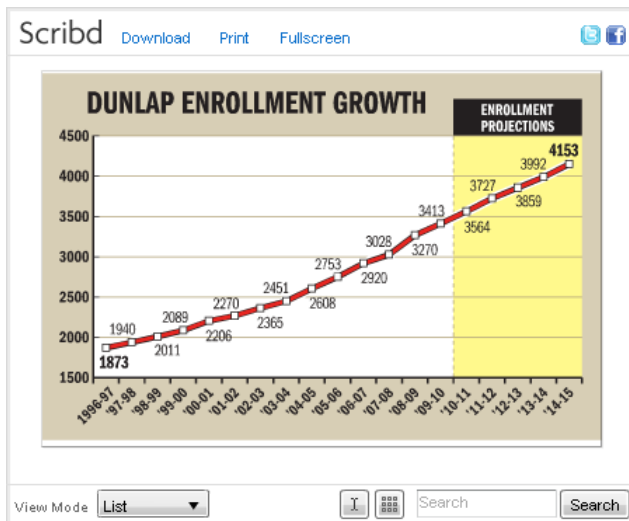
"That school was designed for future additions," Marino said. "It seemed proper to build the Valley as it is needed now and not have it sitting around with a lot of unused classrooms."

**High:** Need high school space by 2010-11. The high school will be over capacity next year.

**Central office:** Need an additional eight to nine offices to bring together all central office administrators and managers.

Source: *Dunlap School District* 323.

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Comments (5)

**Danno**

12 hours ago

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Just think about how District 150 would be enjoying almost all of the growth discussed in this article had racists in the General Assembly back in the 1960's not decoupled growth of District 150's boundaries from growth of the City of Peoria's boundaries.

**PEORIA**

10 hours ago

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'Them that's got shall get. Them that's not shall lose. So the bible says. And, it still is news!' - Billie Holliday

**outtapeoria**

9 hours ago

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But Danno, you would have had a Dist #150 School Board rough shodding over matters instead of a Dist #320 Board. That would have made all the difference in the world. Duh!

**oftenrunning52**

1 hour ago

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Danno, you have made this claim of racist General Assemblymen before. Could you provide some sourcing for this? I've tried to corroborate your claims and have been unable to.

**alphamtbr**

30 minutes ago

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The Peoria City Council can fix half of this issue by not expanding 'Peoria' in that direction.

I would wager that nearly half of the students in Dunlap have a Peoria address.

Whether Danno is right or not, its ludacris to me to haave Dunlap school district reach that far into Peoria. There are parts of north Peoria (south of Pinoer Parkway) that I would like to live in, but I don't want my kids bused to Dunlap when there are D150 school much closer.

If it was not for the fact that our state/national politicians get their money from that part of 'Peoria' they would look into changing the D150 boundries.

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