



To: Dr. Charles Johns
Board of Education

From: Dr. Kim Ptak
Dr. R.J. Gravel

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Re: Performing Arts Facility Space Analysis

Background

In an effort to analyze the overall usage and needs of our performing arts spaces, the Board of Education entered into a service agreement with Schuler Shook, an internationally recognized theatre planning and consulting firm to perform a facility space analysis. This agreement was intended to facilitate interviews and collect preliminary information to the district at a cost of \$3,800 for two and half days of on-site support.

Mr. Todd Henley, partner with Schuler Shook toured the performing arts practice and performance spaces, conducted numerous interviews with staff members (e.g., teachers, theatre manager, administrators), and compiled a report consisting of observations and recommendations. To supplement, quantify, and validate Mr. Henley's findings, the district and school leadership teams compiled usage data for the various clubs, groups and events falling under the performing arts umbrella (e.g., theatre, dance and music). This information will be utilized as part of future recommendations, based on feedback from the Facilities Committee and the Board of Education.

Key Takeaways

There are four key takeaways from this analysis which include:

1. There is a large demand for dance rehearsal space, which has outgrown current space requiring the use of cafeterias and hallways;
2. The storage needs for both theatres have limited use of their scene shop for construction activities, requiring use of the stage for building sets;
3. The current theatre dressing rooms do not provide sufficient space to accommodate large casts;
4. While each school offers a variety of performance venues, their designs are not always ideal for current needs.

1. Dance Rehearsal Space

There is a large demand for dance rehearsal space, which has outgrown current space requiring the use of cafeterias and hallways. Glenbrook North has two main dance groups, Orchesis and Poms, while Glenbrook South has both Orchesis, Poms and three club groups with 10-20 student participants (De La Cru, Latino Heat and Bhangra Beatz).

Both Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South have a single dance studio with cushioned performance floors and observation mirrors. At Glenbrook North, Orchesis and Poms share the dance studio.

However, given the number of students participating, the groups are split with half the students using the cafeteria or open hallways. At Glenbrook South, Orchesis uses the cafeteria and Poms uses the dance studio. The club dance groups at Glenbrook South also use the cafeteria, or large spaces within our hallways. While the cafeterias and hallways provide the space needed this is not an ideal environment for our students (e.g., lacks mirrors, cushioned dance floor).

2. Impact of Theatre Storage Needs on Access to the Scene Shop

The storage needs for both theatres have limited use of their scene shop for construction activities, requiring use of the stage for building sets. Both Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South have a scene shop attached to the stage. The scene shop is intended to be the location where sets are constructed for productions (e.g., fall play, winter play, musical, and variety show). However, due to limited storage for the theatre, and an extensive amount of props and tools, the scene shop cannot presently be utilized for set construction. As a result, the set is often constructed directly on the stage, which prevents the stage from being used for other purposes (e.g., dance rehearsal, smaller music performances, all school meetings). When the stage is required during a set construction event for activities, there is often a tremendous amount of effort required to relocate the set.

3. Theater Dressing Rooms are not Adequate for Larger Performances

Currently each school has two gender-specific dressing rooms and a common makeup room. The space is adequate for the majority of productions except for the larger performances such as the musical and variety show.

4. Performance Venue Opportunities

While each school offers a variety of performance venues, their designs are not always ideal for current needs. Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South offers several spaces for performance and large gathering purposes:

- Large Performance Venue
 - Glenbrook North Center for Performing Arts - CPA (Seating for 1,485)
 - Glenbrook South Auditorium (Seating for 1,468)
- Medium Performance Venue
 - Glenbrook North Little Theatre (Seating for 252)
 - Glenbrook South Lyceum (Seating for 200)
- Small Performance Venue
 - Glenbrook North / South Drama Classroom (Seating for 75)
 - Glenbrook North / South Music Classrooms (Seating for 75)

Between these spaces, all desired events and performances are accommodated. However, the current space is not always considered ideal. At Glenbrook North events such as the winter play, children's play, group interpretation, and the end of the year drama performance are held in the CPA but would be a better fit in a medium-format performance space since they do not draw a large audience and lend themselves to a more intimate setting. Also at Glenbrook North, there are a few events that are held in the drama or band classroom that would be better served in a medium-format performance space with a larger footprint offering theatre lighting, sound, and tiered seating also using these rooms limit the use of a classroom during tech week or rehearsals.

Glenbrook South has been successful in holding smaller performances in the Auditorium by creating a "theater on the stage" where safety rails and platform seating is used to create seating on the stage and a more intimate setting. This approach has been implemented for both the fall and spring plays.

Additionally, at Glenbrook South the majority of music concerts are held in the Auditorium with smaller groups combining for a shared concert to make the best use of the large performance space.

In an ideal situation, enhancements or modifications to existing medium-format venues, or the addition of another medium-format venue would be completed. To provide a practical viewpoint, Table 1 illustrates performances that would be better suited in an enhanced or new medium format venue.

Table 1
Performances Suited in a Medium-Format Venue

	Glenbrook North	Glenbrook South
Theater	<p>The following performances are currently held in the CPA or Drama Room and have 10-20 students participating.</p> <p>Winter Play Children's Play Group Interpretation Drama Class Performance One Acts</p>	<p>None noted</p> <p>Currently needs are being met by the large performance space (auditorium) and small performance spaces (drama room, lyceum.) Additionally, smaller plays are held on the stage.</p>
Dance	None noted	None noted
Music	<p>The following performances are currently held in the CPA or Band Room and have 10-20 students participating.</p> <p>Ow! Fermata Nowhere Express Concert Chamber Ensemble Jazz Band</p>	<p>None noted</p> <p>The larger performances work well in the auditorium and the smaller ones work in the classroom or via a shared concert in the auditorium.</p>

Next Steps

1. Review opportunities in the existing footprint of each school to create a second dance area. The space should offer a cushioned performance floor, observation mirrors, and, if practicable, a high ceiling space. Ideas include:
 - Glenbrook North Little Theatre
 - Glenbrook South Lyceum
 - Glenbrook North / Glenbrook South Cafeteria Space with High Ceilings
2. Review options at each school to accommodate storage for the drama program, as well as increase efficiencies of the scene shops. Addressing storage needs would free up the stage area which could then be used for dance.
3. Review opportunities in the existing footprint of each school to create and/or enhance existing medium-format performance spaces for events such as the winter play, children's play and music performances, small dance ensembles. Ideas include:

- Purchase/Enhance the equipment necessary (e.g., platforms, safety bars, seating, curtains) to create a “theater on the stage” at Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South where the audience and performers are on the stage in a more intimate setting.
 - Renovating the existing Little Theatre at Glenbrook North.
 - Renovating the Lyceum to make more conducive to performances yet maintaining a multi-purpose room
4. Review options at each school to improve dressing room space for the limited times that additional space is necessary (e.g., Glenbrook Musical). Ideas include:
- Making creative use of unused classroom space with mobile dividers.
 - Look at options within athletics (GBN) and student activities (GBS)