

Teacher Talk

Freeman teachers are working hard to educate our students. Learn more about their daily challenges to keep students focused on learning in aging facilities which are not aligned with current educational standards.

Mary Hoyt Sims, Elementary School Paraeducator

Student learning would be improved with a quiet place to run reading and math groups and to test students without constant noise and interruptions. Right now, we do this work in the hallways and supply closets. Students would be able to focus on their tasks at hand instead of being interrupted by noise and other students.



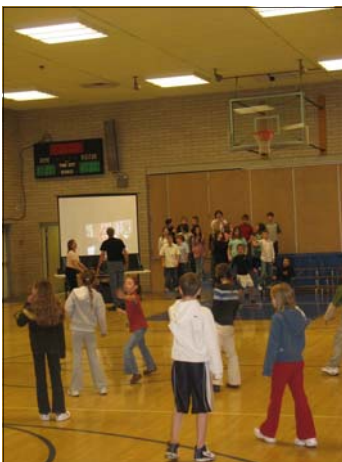
Judy Bickler, 5th Grade Teacher

As a person who always tends to see things in a positive manner and has learned to make do and appreciate what I have, it's hard to focus on negatives. That being said, updated wiring and electrical outlets would definitely help in the classroom. I have additional plug-ins thanks to a grant I received for technology. However, most classrooms do not. It's hard to cook and do art projects with limited electrical access. Our students work very hard and have been blessed to have excellent technology and programs to help them succeed. Additional counter space would also be helpful. Our classrooms now are fairly good-sized, but more room for desks and tables would be important to support student learning. Students are affected by the space they learn in. Any ascetic improvements would benefit them by making an environment conducive to learning. Having access to an uncrowded space, better lighting, room to work, and space to do experiments would benefit the classroom as a whole.



Kathy Zingraf, Elementary and Middle School Physical Education Teacher

As the physical education teacher for all elementary students, the school improvements would help a great deal. Right now, the elementary gym is used for the cafeteria so it is not available



to use as a gym for the full school day. This means I am in two buildings and must share the middle school gym two days a week. During that time, we have almost 60 kids in the gym. I also don't have any space for about 15 minutes every day for my second graders, so I have them in the lobby by the district office (lower level of middle school) jumping rope, following the leader, or other type of activity until the middle school gym becomes available. This is because the elementary gym is being used as a cafeteria at that time. I also have students in grades 5 through 8 walk through the elementary gym on their way to music class on the stage. When we have any kind of assembly, we lose the gym space and have to cancel PE class or double-up classes in the remaining gym. Student learning would be improved by having a gym for use as a gym all throughout the school day.

John Hays, High School Science Teacher

In the science area, space and safety are the two biggest concerns. We need to have up to date plumbing, electrical and facilities along with not one, but two science labs that will allow us to better teach our children. The need for a new science room is paramount to having a successful science program. One of our science rooms is not a science lab at all but a converted shop. The other lab has leaks due to metal piping (should have put in acid-resistant plastic drains) and counters which are not heat resistant and have been melted. The fume hood is from the original science room in 1957, but it was moved during the last renovation and is now located where it is difficult for students to use. The ventilation in the room was added after the room was built and I don't think that it meets state safety standards for air movement during a lab. Lab chemicals must be ventilated to the outside of the building. The vents were, once again put in after the room was built. I know many other issues surround the infrastructure of the building, heating systems, electrical and plumbing. Up-to-date science lab facilities will help the students be able to do more laboratories. That is what science class should be all about.



Erin Honeycutt, High School Paraeducator

A renovated school would provide a much improved learning environment for the students -- heat in the hallways, wider hallways, bigger classrooms, better storage and shelving for books and supplies for each classroom, etc. Students would be able to have classes all in the same



building (not go across the street or outside the east end of the building to a portable). They would also be able to have lockers to put their books in, classrooms located in the same department area and be able to eat lunch in the cafeteria, instead of hallways.

Anne Marie Ophus, High School Special Education Teacher

If the high school is renovated and the space for special education is carefully designed, I could have both an instructional space and a testing space which would better meet the needs of my students. A better classroom design would take into consideration my students' need for grouping - special education is based on individualized instruction but frequently I have a mix of students (such as those needing reading, writing or math) all in the room together. While I have an aid who assists with the various groups, our difficulty is finding ways to adequately separate the groups to avoid distractions. Add to that students who need to come to the Resource Room to test for another class, and we find there is no good way to provide the quiet environment many of these students must have in order to learn. A well-designed classroom with a separate area for testing would improve student learning by offering a better environment in which to concentrate. For my students, the most important issue is having a large enough space to be effective and to be located within the school building, not across the road in a portable.