

Newton Public Schools

Strategic School Facilities Plan

June 28, 2016

Board of Education Consensus

- Halsted Street School is not part of our future plans as a school facility. Concerns were expressed about the cost to maintain the facility for non-school use – offices, community center, special programs, etc.
- A new middle school should be constructed on the West End Avenue property. District and CST offices should be planned for the new school or as part of a small addition at Merriam.
- A community schools model, which includes space for health and social service providers inside the schools, will be studied in order to inform facility design.

Proposed Action Steps

1. Gather information to sharpen the plan by August 2016

- a. Halsted - get appraisal of the property's value; clarify its zoning status; begin to identify potential buyers; estimate ongoing maintenance costs
- b. West End - confirm site capacity to determine how many grades can/should be housed; conduct feasibility study; research green school construction
- c. Merriam - determine whether there is need for a small addition to accommodate pK-8 students; research possibility of driveway from Trenton Place to Gardner Avenue and other traffic/parking options
- d. High School - get survey of adjacent properties on one document
- e. Board Office - get appraisal of the property's value
- f. Enrollment - update enrollment projections based on live counts
- g. Financing - determine debt service capacity; identify referendum options; determine actual total cost, cost to Newton taxpayers, and costs to sending districts for high school portion

2. Develop a Newton community schools model by January 2017

- a. Community Schools ...
 - i. Are both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources.
 - ii. Have an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth development, and community engagement

- iii. Lead to increased school attendance, decreased disciplinary incidents, stronger families, healthier and safer communities, and improved academic outcomes.
 - iv. Offer a curriculum that emphasizes student-centeredness, real-world learning, and community problem-solving.
 - v. Have transformed traditional American schools for over a century; currently serving over 5 million students in approximately 5,000 schools nationwide -- more than charter schools by enrollment and number of locations.
- b. Essential Strategies for Community Schools
- i. Engaging, culturally relevant, challenging curricula in a robust selection of classes and afterschool opportunities
 - ii. Emphasis on high quality teaching, not on high stakes testing, with professional development led by teachers and support staff
 - iii. Wrap-around supports and opportunities such as health and social services that sustain academics
 - iv. Positive discipline practices and social/emotional learning reinforcements
 - v. Authentic parent and community engagement
 - vi. Inclusive school leadership committed to making the Community School model central to the school's operation
- c. Recent Literature and Research on Community Schools
- i. [What is a Community School?](#)
 - ii. [Coalition for Community Schools February 2016 report](#)
 - iii. [New Jersey Health Initiatives December 2015 report](#)
 - iv. [Leadership in Community Schools February 2016 article](#)

d. Current Initiatives that Connect to a NPS Community Schools Model *(in no particular order)*

TRS	Schools of Character	Healthy Schools / Fitness-Based PE
Project Launch	Altitude	Responsive Classroom
Food Pantry	Parent Academy	Community Based Instruction
Girls on the Run	Rachel's Challenge	#Tags Mentors
Watch DOGS	Best Buds	Student/Faculty of the Month
Week of Respect	Anti-Bullying Summit	Food Backpacks
STARS Recognition	Walk/Bike to School	Child Assault Prevention (CAP)
Honor Rolls	Peer Leaders	Wonder (schoolwide reading)
Attendance Works	Connections Class	Extended Homeroom
Faculty Mentors	School Climate Teams	Student-Centered Learning PD
Caring Award	Second Step	Understanding Poverty Workshop
Action Alliance	Community Kids Club	Great Kindness Challenge

Community Service Activities - *Stuff The Stocking/Bus, Trex Recycling Challenge, Choose Kind Walkathon, MLK Day of Service, Dash for Trash, Hunters Helping the Hungry, Mitten Tree, First Responders Dinner, Bring Your Parent to School Day, Thanksgiving Food Drives, Pedestrian Safety Campaign, Veterans Day Assembly, Pennies for Penguins, Hidden in Plain Sight, 11th Hour Rescue, Challenge Day, Make A Wish (partial list)*

e. Community Assets / Potential Partner Organizations

Merriam PTO	Project Self-Sufficiency	Newton Pride Foundation
HPO	Newton Medical Center	United Way of Northern New Jersey
Pass It Along	Newton Police Department	Center for Prevention & Counseling
Sussex Cty YMCA	Town of Newton Recreation	Sussex County Community College

3. Confirm actual costs for identified facilities projects by March 2017

- a. Merriam Avenue School (*rough cost estimate = \$1,760,000*)
 - i. Construct access drive from Gardner Avenue (Trenton Place?) to improve traffic flow
 - ii. Construct parking lot accessible from Gardner Avenue
 - iii. Replace windows in original section of building
 - iv. Add new classrooms to house one or two additional grade levels depending on the West End Avenue site capacity (*cost is not included in the rough estimate above*)
- b. Newton High School (*rough cost estimate = \$8,201,000*)
 - i. Reconfigure cafeteria serving and food prep areas
 - ii. Convert existing tennis/basketball courts to parking area
 - iii. Expand nurse's office
 - iv. Upgrade old restrooms
 - v. Replace pneumatic heating controls with modern digital system
 - vi. Expand choral room
 - vii. Replace folding partition in gymnasium
 - viii. Relocate tennis and basketball courts
 - ix. Expand cafeteria
 - x. Upgrade athletic practice fields using existing space and new property
 - xi. Upgrade remaining science labs
 - xii. Replace windows in all rooms, except in upper E and G levels
 - xiii. Upgrade auditorium HVAC, interiors, and sound/lighting systems
- c. New middle school at West End Avenue (*rough cost estimate = \$30,000,000*)

Rough total cost estimate for all identified projects = \$39,961,000

Debt service on funding-eligible interior renovation is projected at .85 of 40% (or 34.0%)

Debt service on funding-eligible new construction is projected at .85 of 18% (or 15.3%)

4. Select projects that fit within an approved budget by June 2017.

5. Propose referendum for selected facilities projects by August 2017.

6. Begin facilities construction within one year following a successful referendum.