Neshaminy's Long-range Facilities Planning

Neshaminy School District administrators and School Board members have started discussions in Board committee meetings surrounding concepts to upgrade and/or possibly replace aging facilities. A big part of that discussion is the long-term physical plant needs at Pearl S. Buck Elementary School in Levittown.

District Superintendent Dr. Robert McGee and Business Administrator Don Irwin have asked both the Business Committee and the Facilities Operations Committee members to investigate the administration's recommendations, that plans for overdue facilities projects be accelerated, and to further consider bundling other needed future projects. The purpose is to not only meet the current and future needs of our students and staff, but to do so while taking advantage of a historic low borrowing rate and advantageous bond markets. This is a unique opportunity to carry out needed facility improvements while retaining fiscally responsible budgeting.

The Board Facilities Committee, chaired by Mr. Marty Sullivan, recently completed preliminary meetings during which the following were discussed:

- 1. Building a new elementary school on the Maple Point Middle School property as compared to extensive renovations at Pearl S. Buck Elementary School.
- 2. Bundling other District-wide building physical plant needs HVAC, Roofs, Parking lots, etc. to accelerate completion.
- 3. Athletic field and outdoor facility renovations at Neshaminy High School.

The Facilities Committee heard presentations from both Spiezle Architectural Group and SitelogIQ (formerly Reynolds Construction) on conceptual sites and building concepts for a possible new elementary school. On the recommendation of the District Administration, the Facilities Committee approved moving into the first phase of investigation of District-wide elementary needs by requesting a proposal from Spiezle on conducting a feasibility and demographic study. The committee also asked for an updated evaluation from SitelogIQ of Pearl Buck Elementary School building needs, including program-related enhancements, site capacity and facilities renovation.

At the January 28, 2021, Business Operations Committee meeting chaired by Mrs. Tina Hollenbach, the finance options recommended by the administration for accelerating outlined long-term facilities plans as well as the 2021 / 2022 preliminary District budget were discussed.

The last District-wide feasibility study was conducted in 2013 by Spiezle in support of the *Neshaminy School District Road Map for the Future*. At that time, proposed projects included Guaranteed Energy Savings Act (GESA) upgrades to six Neshaminy school buildings, along with the construction of the first new elementary school in the district since 1968 (Tawanka Elementary School). Work started in 2014, and was carried out in three phases. The construction and upgrades were completed in 2017 -- on time and on budget. Students and staff now benefit from improved heating and air conditioning systems in every building, as well as the addition of energy-efficient electrical systems, lighting, plumbing and building insulation.

Tawanka construction and GESA projects were financed by anticipated future energy savings and restructuring of prior high interest bonds issues resulting in no additional cost to District taxpayers forgoing any related tax increases. The first three phases of Road Map projects represented a \$65-million-dollar investment in Neshaminy facilities.

The District administration and School Board remain committed to providing the best and safest possible learning environment for our students while maintaining a high level of fiscal responsibility for the taxpayers of Neshaminy. The need is great and the time is right to continue these efforts. As the Board committees progress through these discussions we will continue to make announcements as well as list all committee meetings on our Neshaminy web site to permit the Neshaminy Community to participate in these very important deliberations.

Images on the following:

- 1. A visual of the possible improvements to the NHS Campus
- 2. Two possible scenarios for the location of a new elementary school building on the campus of Maple Point Middle School in Middletown Township.





