

South Hunterdon Regional School District



“Planning for THEIR Future”

Mission Statement

*The South Hunterdon Regional School District, a small, close-knit school district working in partnership with our community, provides **dynamic** and **innovative** educational experiences that challenge and empower each student to strive for personal excellence and positive global citizenship.*

District Goal #5

Goal 5: Create an actionable plan to develop a bond referendum to address building infrastructure, security, and health & safety needs.

- **Engage the community in discussions focused on facility needs.**
- **Examine and assess current options that have been presented in reference to facility improvements.**
- **Design and plan for a referendum in November 2021 to address major facility issues that are impacting student learning.**
- **Examine the financial implications on the taxpayer.**
- **Develop a communication plan to educate the community on the need of the referendum.**

In order to address our facility issues the Board is proposing a Bond Referendum

- **A Bond Referendum seeks public approval by vote for the financing of major school construction projects.**
- **The referendum specifies projects and amount of money to be raised.**
- **A referendum can be held five times each year (January, March, September, November and December).**
- **Once approved, bonds are issued and are paid back over a number of years (typically 20-30).**

Why now?

Fiscally, there are several reasons why now is the right time:

First, the State will pay 40% of allowable costs associated with our project.

Second, interest rates remain historically low. We also have existing debt that will be expiring making it a good time to borrow additional funds for these critical needs of the district.

Third, LPS repairs have been delayed and are long overdue while WAS has structural issues and site challenges. We can't wait any longer to address these issues.

Fourth, we have land that we can use for our projects that is not going to cost the taxpayer any money to purchase.

Fifth, our students and staff deserve 21st century learning spaces!!

What criteria did the board use to make its decision?

1. A plan that addresses the current facility issues while making educational sense for our students.
2. A plan that includes community input and support.
3. A plan that is fiscally responsible to the taxpayer.

Lambertville Elementary School



Constructed in 1968

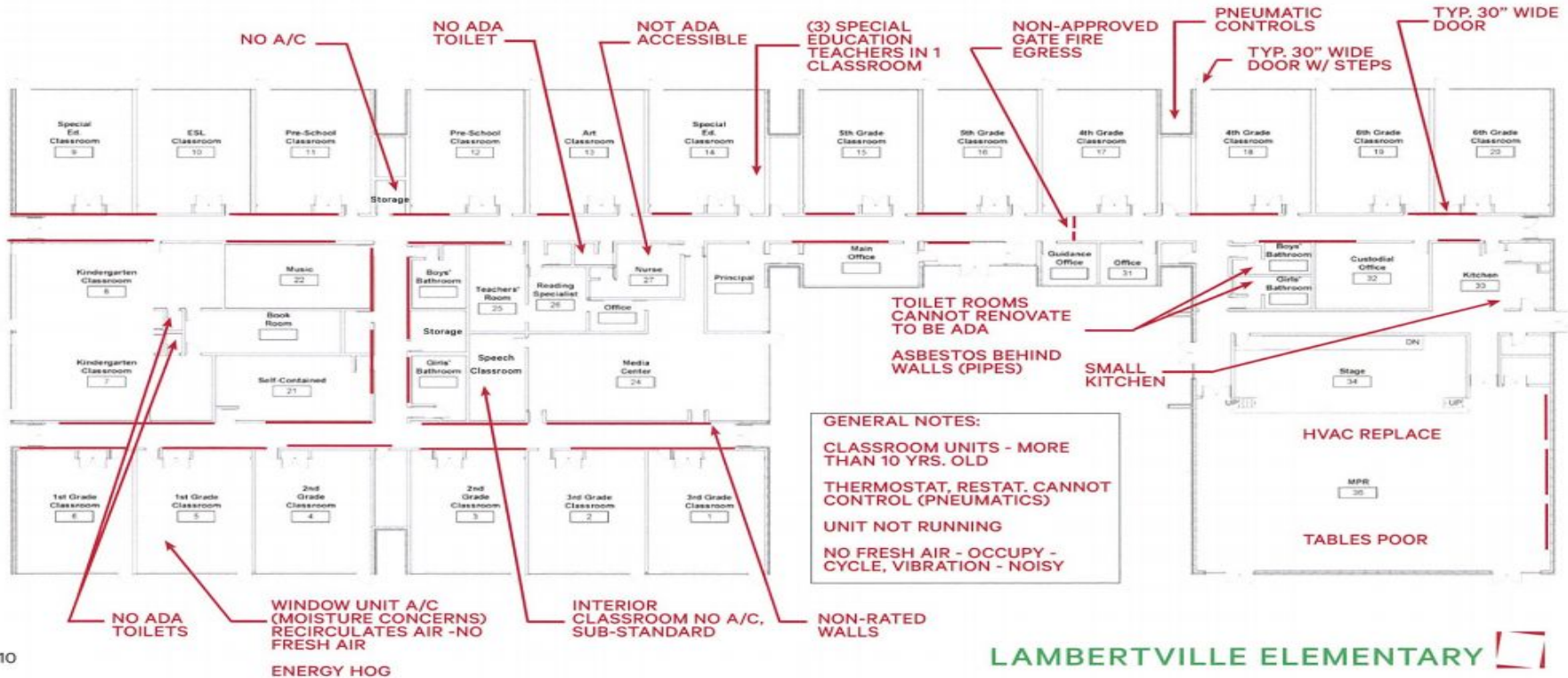
34,061 square feet

Lambertville Public School

Challenges with this Facility

- **ADA accessibility**
- **Inadequate Music room**
- **Inadequate kitchen**
- **Undersized and outdated library**
- **Aging HVAC systems**
- **Bathrooms are not ADA accessible**
- **Paving/Parking**
- **Security**
- **Camera and door access**
- **Storage issues**
- **All electric building (inefficient)**
- **Inadequate for 21st century learning**

DEFICIENCIES



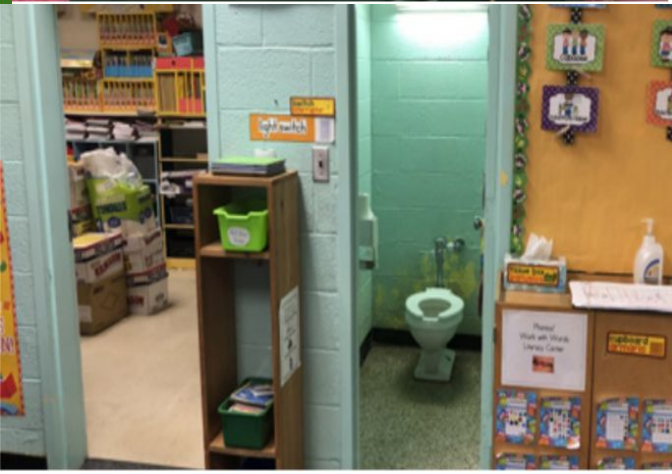
Bathrooms

ADA accessibility is 36"



Bathrooms

ADA accessibility is 36"

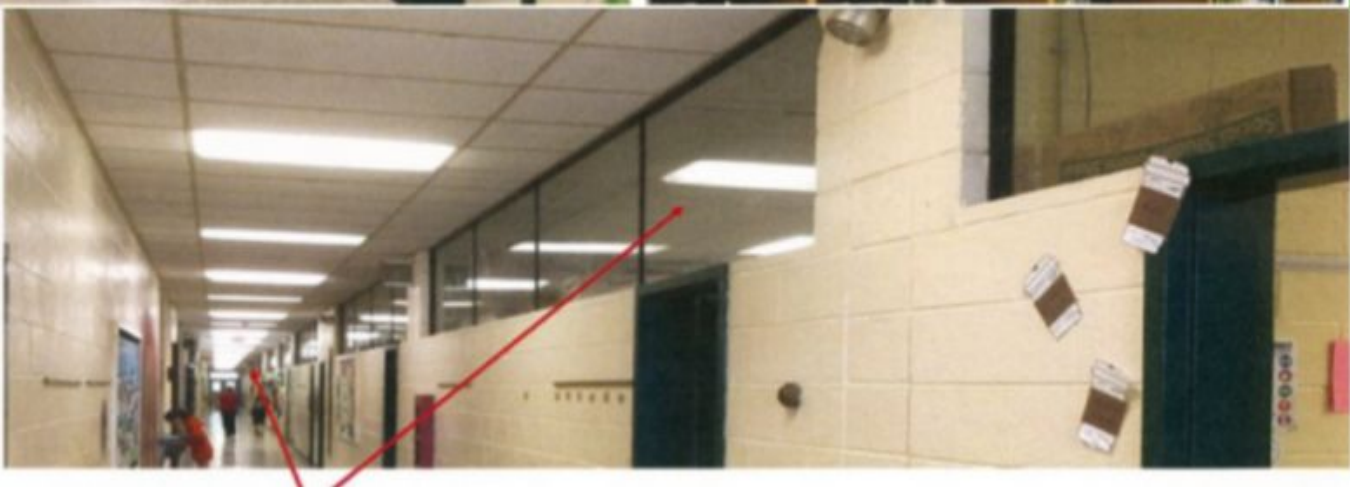


Typical Doors

ADA accessibility is 36"



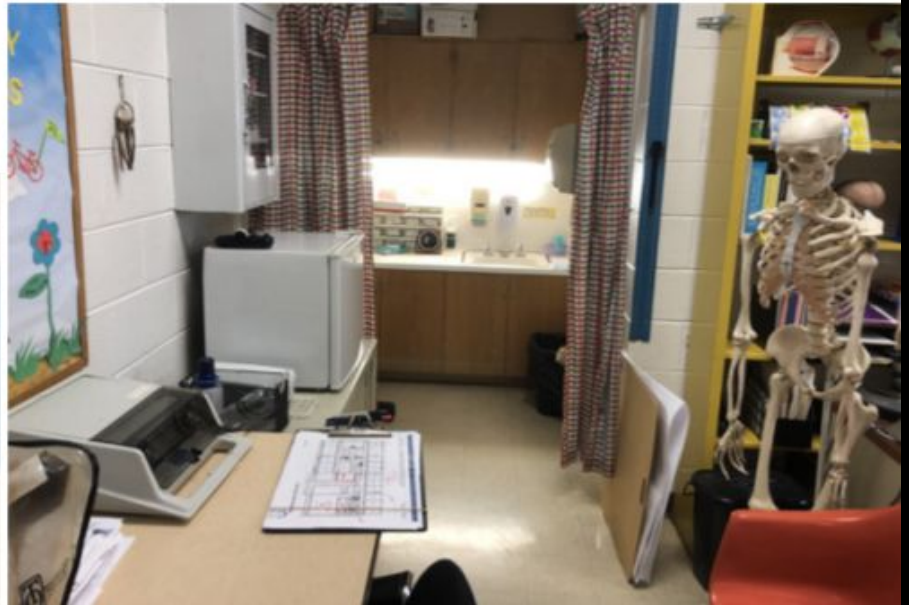
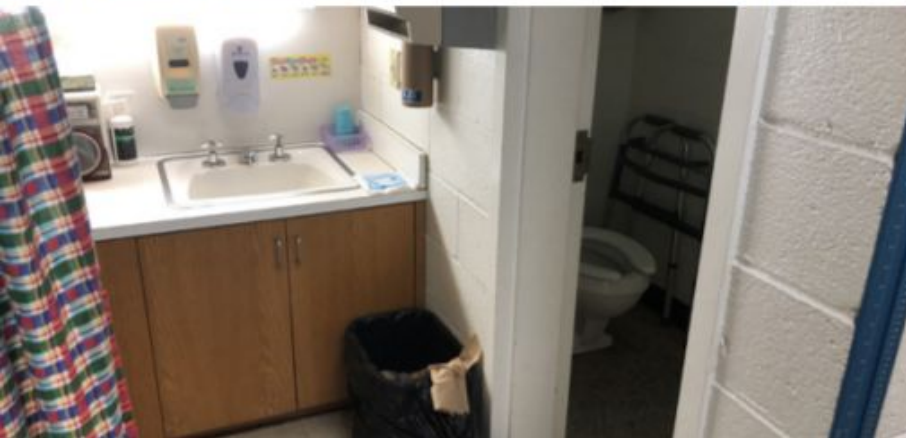
Non-Rated Fire Walls



NO Fire Separation, NO Sprinklers

Nurse's Office

ADA accessibility is 36"



Library

This space is only 1447 square feet. State standards are 4000 square feet for a library



Music Room

This space is only 596 square feet. State standards are 1250 square feet for a music room



Lambertville Public School

Building Space	Current Square Footage	NJ Facility Standard Square Footage
Special Education	3,233	3,283
Library	1,447	4,000
Physical Education/Cafeteria	3,640	10,500
Art	871	1,250
Music	596	1,250
Faculty/Administrative Support	1,965	2,885

West Amwell School



Constructed in 1952

25,782 square feet

West Amwell School

Challenges with this Facility

- **ADA accessibility**
- **Building envelope**
- **Facade**
- **HVAC window units**
- **Trailers**
- **No gym**
- **Undersized and outdated library**
- **Small classroom spaces**
- **Bathrooms are not ADA accessible**
- **Music class takes place in a trailer**
- **Accessibility to the library**
- **Aging HVAC systems**
- **No heat in hallways**
- **Safety and Security (vestibule)**
- **Paving needs**
- **Storage issues**
- **Cameras and door access**
- **Inadequate for 21st century learning**
- **No art room**

Site Plan



**INADEQUATE
BUILDING
ENVELOPE/ WALL
INSULATION**

Septic Field



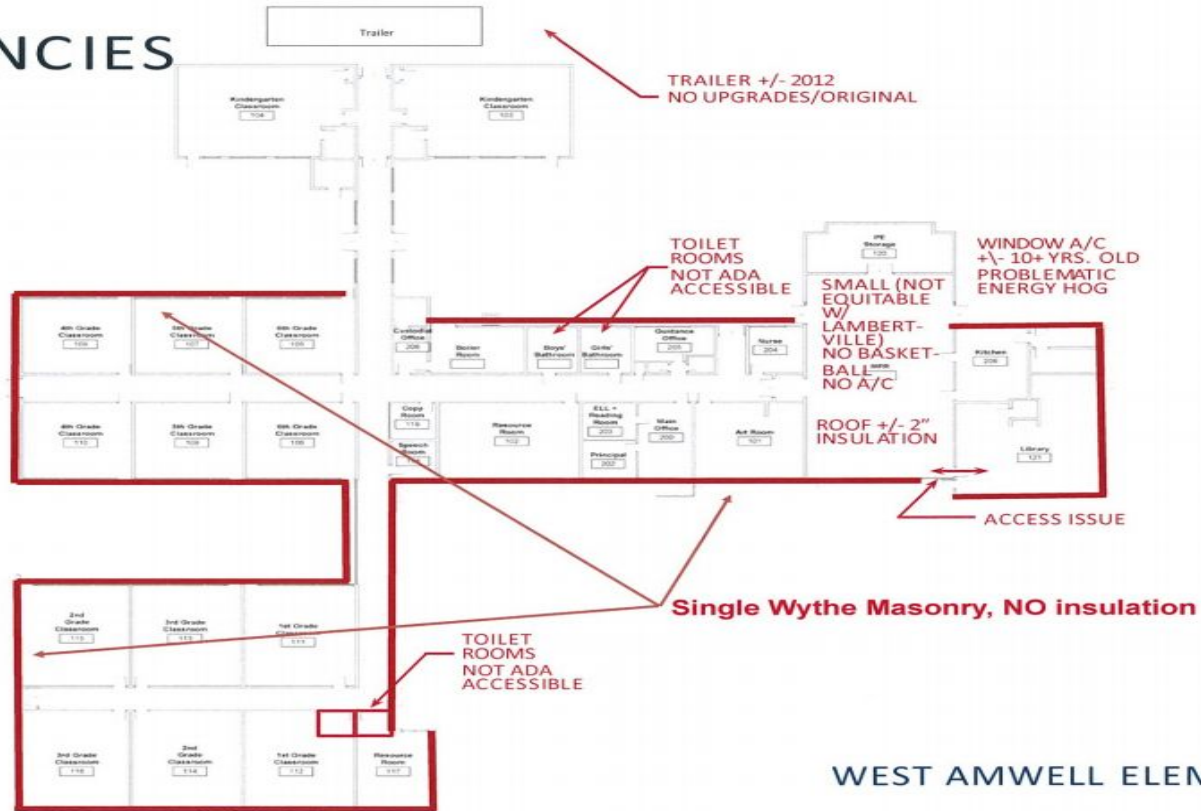
Facade Conditions, Trailers and HVAC Issues



Planning for THEIR Future

DEFICIENCIES

BUILDING - WIDE ISSUES:
 UNIT VENTILATORS +/- 20 YRS. OLD
 PROBLEMATIC ACTUATORS
 EXISTING 600 AMP 3 PHASE SERVICE
 PROBLEMATIC/UNDERSIZED



Multipurpose Room



The square footage of the multipurpose room is 2529. State standards are 10,500 square feet for gym/cafeteria combination. No community recreation use for this space.

Bathrooms

ADA accessibility is 36"



Special Education Classroom



We have 4 special education classes taking place in the same classroom at the same time due to lack of special education classroom space.



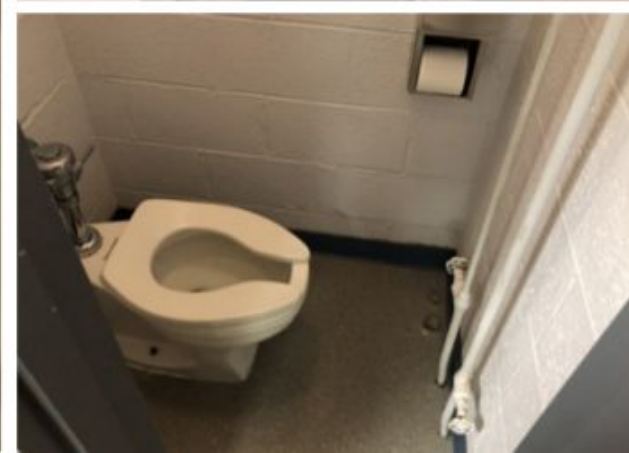
Library

This space is only 1239 square feet. State standards are 4000 square feet for a library



Nurse's Office

ADA accessibility is 36"



Planning for THEIR Future

West Amwell School

Building Space	Current Square Footage	NJ Facility Standard Square Footage
Special Education	320	3,283
Library	1,239	4,000
Physical Education/Cafeteria	2,529	10,500
Art	0 (no room for art)	1,250
Music	691	1,250
Faculty/Administrative Support	2,566	2,885

Options Considered by Past Board and Superintendent

- The discussion about facilities started with the regionalization process that took place in 2014.
- McKissick Associates began a district wide master planning study in October 2015 that included a community advisory committee.
- McKissick Associates provided their findings in February 2016 with a follow-up report in December 2017.
- The Board continued discussing the options for several years. The Board formed an Ad Hoc committee to further consider the options and meet with leaders in all municipalities over the course of a year for input.
- USA Architects completed a facilities study report in October 2019.

Community Input - Current Board and Superintendent

Group	Date	Group	Date
Mayor Fahl (Lambertville)	December 15	LPS PTA Officers	January 7
Mayor Cally (West Amwell)	December 21	Friends of Ely Park	January 8
Mayor Nemeth (Stockton)	January 21	District Parent Council	January 11
SHREA Leadership	December 21	WAS PTO Meeting	January 11
SHRSD Staff	January 5	Recreation Stakeholders	January 12
WAS PTO Officers	January 6	LAEF	January 13

Community Input - Current Board and Superintendent

Group	Date	Group	Date
LPS PTA Meeting	January 13	Open Zoom	February 16
Lambertville Recreation Department	January 22	Board Meeting	February 22
Board Meeting	January 25	Open Zoom	February 25
Open Zoom	February 1	Open Zoom	March 2
Open Zoom	February 3	Board Meeting	March 22

Options Considered by Current Board and Superintendent

1. **Combined PreK-5 building on Ely Field in Lambertville. Move 6th grade to the middle/high school campus. (estimated \$24.5 million)**
 - **Concern with the site, traffic and moving the 6th grade to the high school**
2. **Build a new PreK-6 Lambertville Public School and new PreK-6 West Amwell School.**
 - **Too expensive (estimated \$36 million)**
3. **Build a new PreK-8 school**
 - **Too expensive (estimated \$38-\$40 million)**
4. **Purchase land for a new school - limited options, additional cost to to the taxpayer**
 - **Church on route 518 (sale price \$2.47 million)**
 - **ESC school on route 179 (sale price \$3.5 million)**
 - **WAS township property (not available)**

Options the Board considered

4. Renovate both LPS and WAS

- LPS has a solid infrastructure.
- Only way LPS can be renovated is with a new grade configuration with a small addition added to the front of the building.
- WAS has a poor infrastructure, septic challenges, additional square footage would not qualify for 40% state aid, no place to put students during the renovation, not cost effective.
- A complete teardown and rebuild of WAS would not qualify for any state aid.

5. Renovate LPS into a district PreK-4 school, build a new 5-8 school on the middle/high school campus, expand programming at the high school.

What does the research say in reference to “best practices” in school configurations?

“Current research does not identify or support one grade configuration as the most effective. Research into the potential impact of grade configurations is generally inconclusive, with results that are difficult to generalize to other districts. However, some studies suggest that students perform better at schools with a larger number of grade levels. Another frequent finding is that the most effective grade configuration will vary by district, based on internal factors such as projected enrollment, transportation costs, school facilities, and community support”. - Hanover Research 2018

“The clear result of both of these studies is that students who move to a middle or junior high school in Grades 6 or 7 experience a sharp decrease in their learning trajectories and continue to struggle, relative to their peers who attended K–8 schools, through Grade 8 and into high school”. - Hamilton Project 2011

What does the research say in reference to “best practices” in school configurations?

“The research on grade configuration is inconclusive at best and there is no research that shows one configuration is better at improving student learning. There is some evidence that each of the three approaches can positively, or negatively impact students. But reorganizing grades is merely a shifting of students, teachers and programs from one site to another. Research shows that there is greater impact on student learning when the emphasis is not on location of the students but on the educational experience students receive. Grade configuration is merely a tool that can create the potential to improve student learning. Here’s a brief summary of what the research says. Grade configuration is not a predictor of student academic success” (McKenzie et al., 2006). - EPI Research into Practice 2012

“Despite an extended debate over ideal K-12 grade configurations, there is little consensus among researchers on the extent to which grade configuration influences student achievement” - Hanover Research 2018

Renovation of LPS into a district PreK-4 School

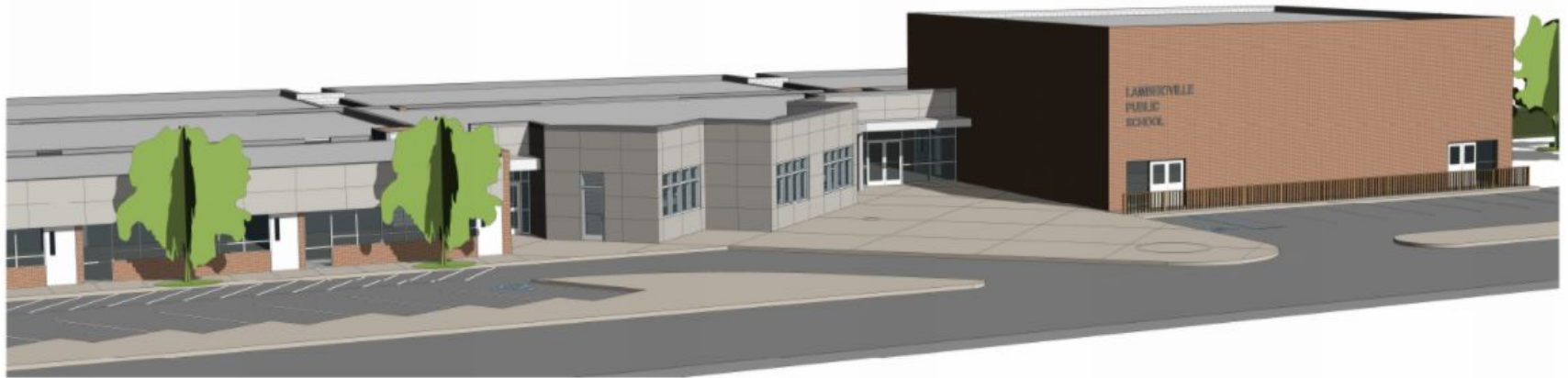
New 5-8 Middle School

Program expansion at the High School

Renovation of LPS into a district PreK-4 school



Renovation of LPS into a district PreK-4 school



Floor Plan for LPS (PreK-4)

LEGEND

- ADMINISTRATION
- CLASSROOM
- CORE EDUCATION
- SUPPORT



Renovation would include:

- **All new HVAC**
- **New floors in classrooms**
- **New ceiling tiles**
- **LED lighting**
- **Temperature controls**
- **Entire building ADA accessible**
- **Repave both parking lots**
- **Security Cameras/Door Access Controls**
- **Fire rated walls/sprinkler system**
- **Casework for classrooms (storage)**

LPS Redesign of Parent/Bus Drop-Off



Demographic Study - Enrollment 2024-2025

5 Years of Historical Data

2024-2025			
Grade	Projection	Sections	Avg Class Size
PreK	28	2	14.0
K	48	3	16.0
1	58	3	19.0
2	46	3	15.0
3	53	3	18.0
4	57	3	19.0
Total	290		

5-8 Building			
2024-2025			
	Projection	Sections	Avg Class Size
5	66	3	22.0
6	50	3	17.0
7	55	3	18.0
8	54	3	18.0
Total	225		

9-12: 267 students

6 Years of Historical Data

2024-2025			
Grade	Projection	Sections	Avg Class Size
PreK	28	2	14.0
K	51	3	17.0
1	60	3	20.0
2	48	3	16.0
3	53	3	18.0
4	54	3	18.0
Total	294		

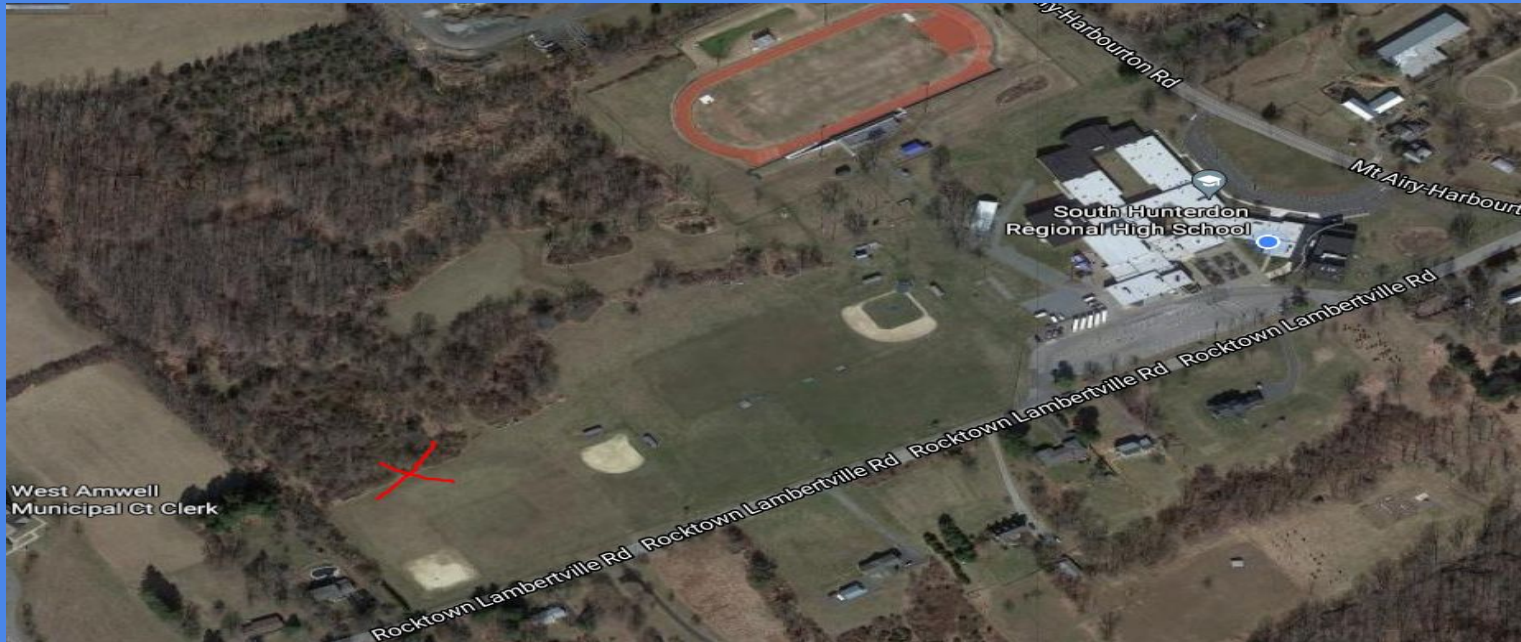
2024-2025			
	Projection	Sections	Avg Class Size
5	64	3	22.0
6	50	3	17.0
7	56	3	19.0
8	55	3	18.0
Total	225		

9-12: 278 students

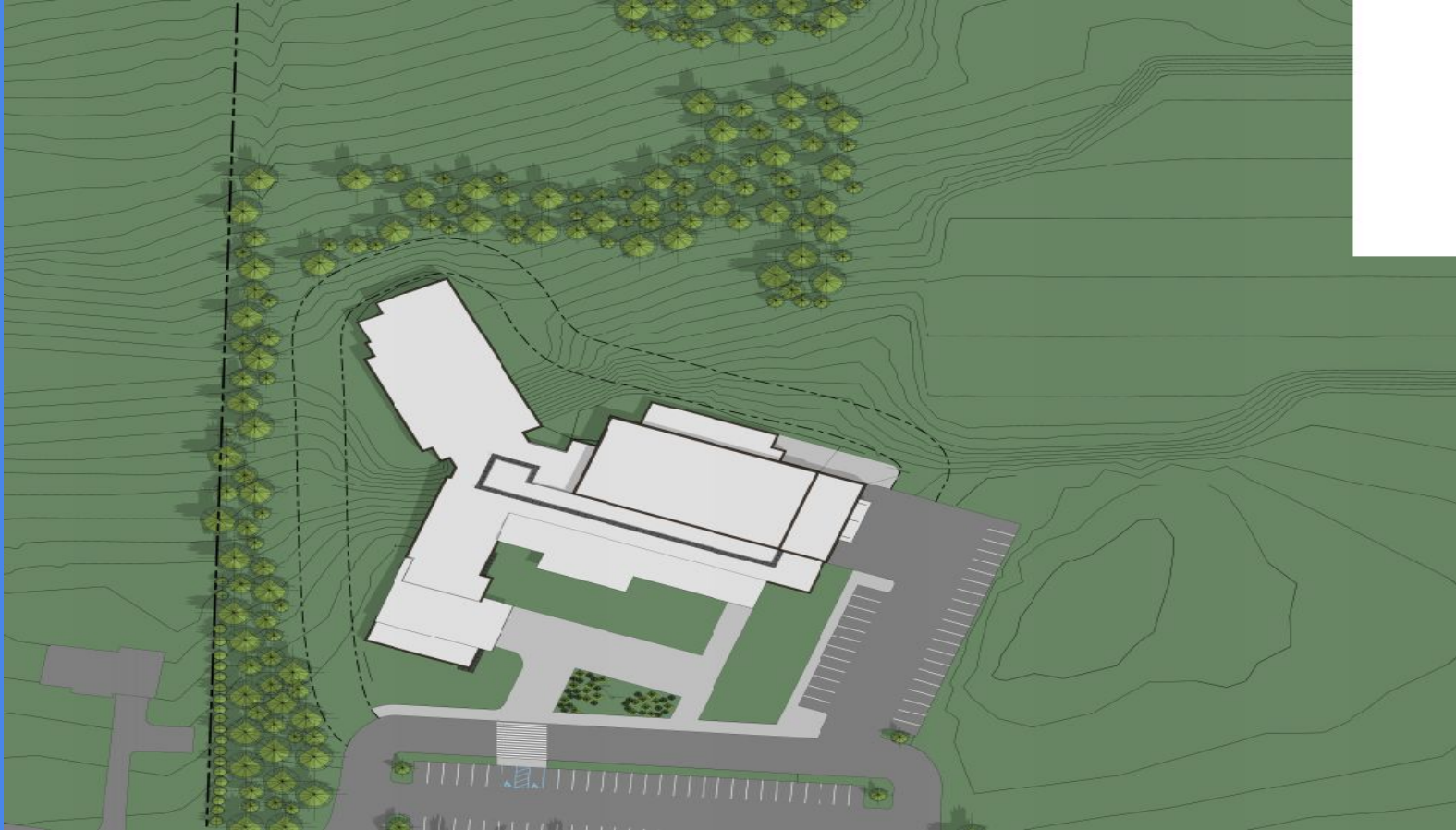
What would we do with the LPS students during the renovation?

- **Principal Quinones and the Superintendent visited the Jesus School in Lambertville on March 1.**
- **We toured the building with their Facility Manager.**
- **At the conclusion of the visit we determined that this facility could house the LPS students during a renovation.**
- **They are interested in us using this facility for the 2022-2023 school year.**
- **Next steps: Waiting to hear back from the Diocese as to how much the rent would be.**

New 5-8 middle school on the high school campus



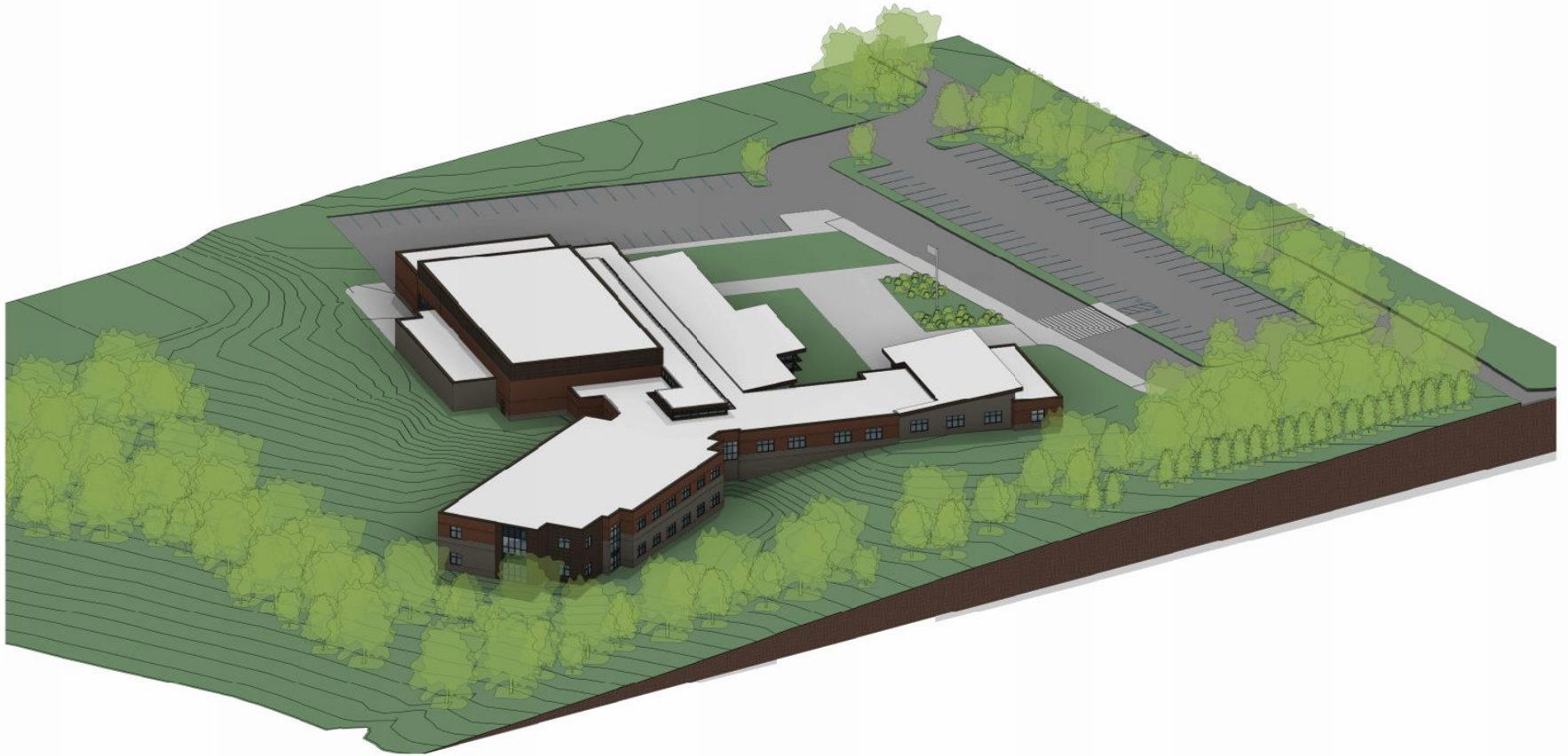
5-8 Middle School Site



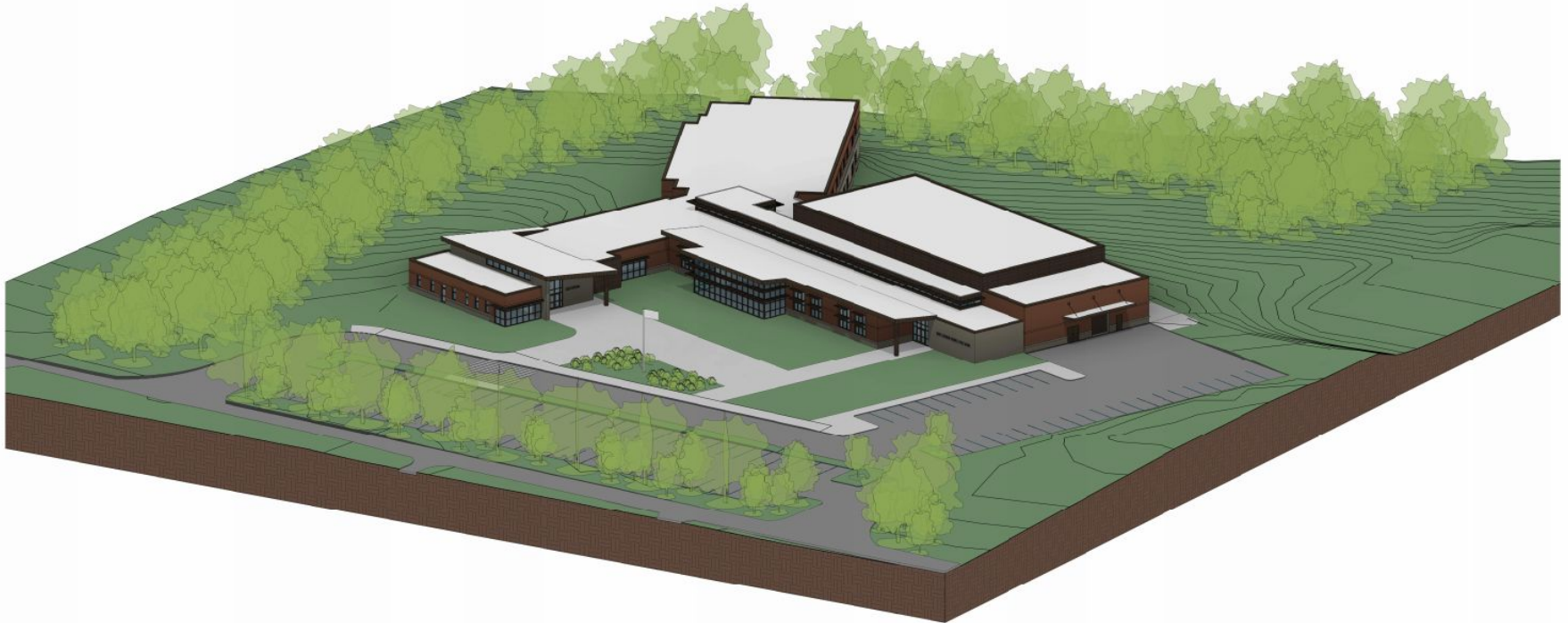
5-8 Middle School



5-8 Middle School



5-8 Middle School

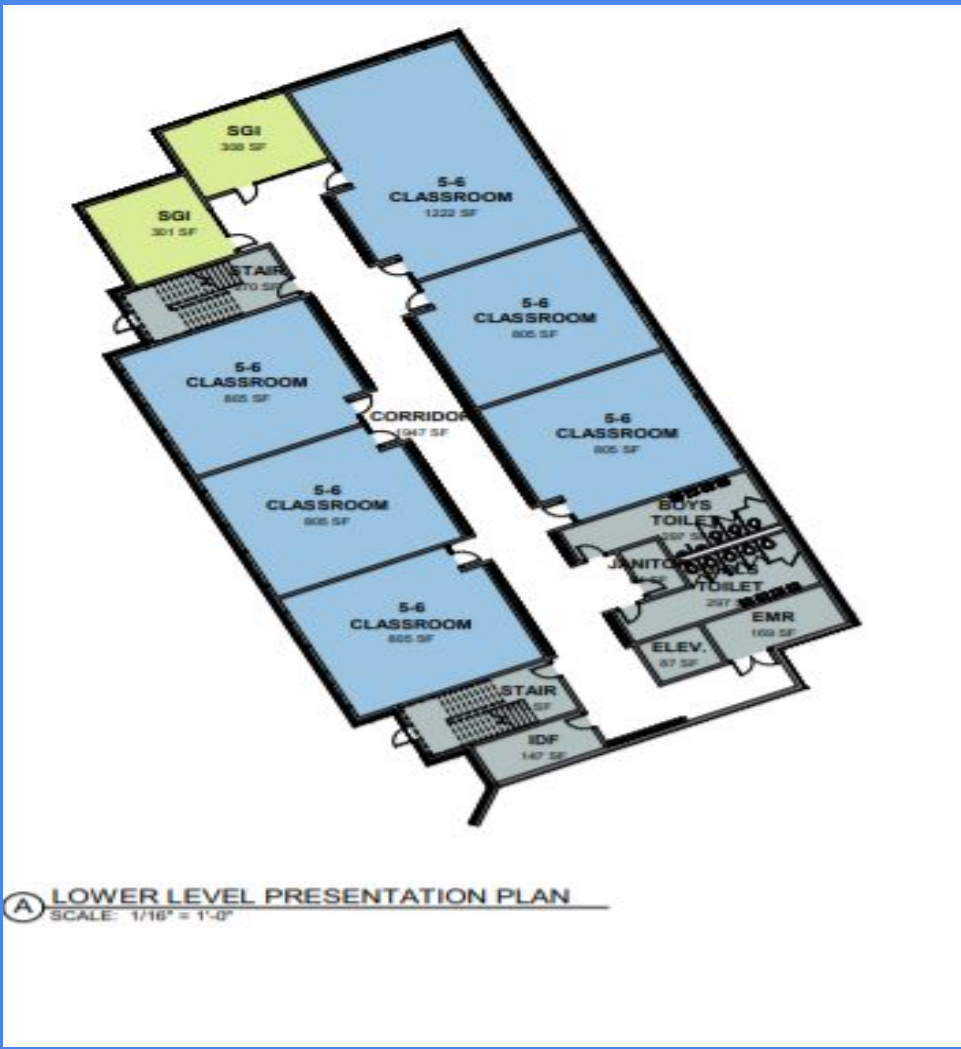


- LEGEND
- ADMINISTRATION
 - CLASSROOM
 - CORE EDUCATION
 - SUPPORT



5-8 Middle
School
Floor Plan

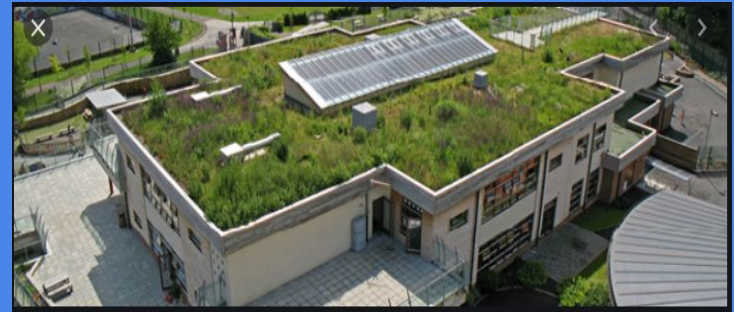
5-8 Middle School Floor Plan



Building a “Green” School(s)

Sustainability and Educational Benefits

- Solar energy
- Possibly a “green” roof
- LED lighting
- Motion sensors for lighting
- Filtered water stations
- Room temperature controls



Future Program Expansion at the High School

- **Computer Science Program (2021-2022)**
- **Podcasting elective (2021-2022)**
- **PLTW (Project Lead the Way) Pre-engineering Program and Cybersecurity**
- **Academy Transitions Program (2022-2023)**
- **Redesign of the media center**
- **Expansion of AP offerings (ongoing)**
- **FFA (Future Farmers of America)- Sustainability and Technology**
- **TV, Film and Video Production**

**** Any renovations needed for the high school will be accomplished over the next 3- 5 years using capital reserve funding (separate from the referendum)**

Educational Benefits of a district PreK-4, 5-8, 9-12

- **Educational equity for all students. Allows for more enriching cohorts.**
- **Brings our students/communities together from the start of their school experience.**
- **21st century learning spaces for all students that provide the opportunity for collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication.**
- **Mental health age appropriate supports for our students (multi-sensory room)**
- **Utilizing teaching staff and other personnel more efficiently.**
- **Enhance the visual and performing arts programs for PreK-6.**
- **Provides our middle school students with a full middle school experience.**
 - **Extracurricular activities**
 - **Science Labs**
 - **Elective Choices**
 - **Co-curricular activities**

Educational Benefits of a district PreK-4, 5-8, 9-12

- **Allows for expansion of programming at the high school and 21st century learning spaces.**
- **Makes the high school more competitive and appealing compared to other high schools in the area.**
- **Creates learning environments (buildings) that are more age appropriate. New facilities are designed for learners at each grade-level.**
- **Allows for grade level teams to join and collaborate regularly (all in the same building)**
- **Meets the enrollment needs based on the recent demographic study done on the district.**
- **Fosters greater consistency in the educational experiences (i.e. field trips, assemblies, materials, resources, PTO/PTA/LAEF sponsored events and experiences, etc.) of our students.**
- **As a community this will strengthen the Lambertville, Stockton, and West Amwell**

Fiscal Benefits of a district PreK-4, 5-8, 9-12

- **Reduction in operational costs**
 - **Energy savings**
 - We are projecting that we would save \$100,000 in our annual budget in energy and maintenance savings.
 - Transportation costs would be minimal to bus the 5th and 6th graders in Lambertville to the new 5-8 building.
 - **Staff savings**
 - Estimated to be around \$500,000 annually in our budget.
 - Reducing the number of sections in K-6 from 4 to 3
 - We would do our best to accomplish this through attrition and retirements.

Community Benefits

- **Media center at LPS can be used for community events, meetings, adult education programs.**
- **Full size gym at the new 5-8 building that can be used for youth and adult recreation programs.**
- **Media center at the new 5-8 building can be used for community events, meetings, adult education programs.**

Total Cost

Renovation of LPS: \$11.350 million

New addition at LPS: \$1.362 million

New 5-8 building: \$20.70 million

State Aid: \$6,763,993.20 (\$4,540,000 for the LPS renovation and \$2,223,993.20 for the 5-8 building)

Total Cost to the taxpayer: \$26,648,006.80

Valuation of the West Amwell School

- We had a valuation done by a commercial real estate broker to determine the value of the current West Amwell property.
- The Broker's Price Opinion came in at \$1,505,710
- This money could eventually be used to help offset the tax impact for the referendum.

Broker's Opinion Report

Impact on the Taxpayer

Board of Education of the South Hunterdon Regional School District
 Proposed 2021 Referendum - \$26,648,000 (Local Share)
 30 years*

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Existing Debt[^]	\$ 1.365m	\$ 1.369m	\$ 1.340m	\$ 1.336m	\$ 1.230m	\$ 1.233m	\$ 1.189m									
Lambertville City	\$90	\$90	\$88	\$88	\$81	\$81	\$78									
Stockton Borough	\$84	\$84	\$82	\$82	\$76	\$76	\$73									
West Amwell Township	\$105	\$105	\$103	\$103	\$94	\$95	\$91									
Referendum Debt				\$ 0.799m	\$ 1.302m	\$ 1.284m	\$ 1.269m	\$ 1.654m	\$ 1.627m	\$ 1.600m	\$ 1.573m	\$ 1.546m	\$ 1.519m	\$ 1.512m	\$ 1.490m	\$ 1.487m
Lambertville City				\$53	\$86	\$85	\$84	\$109	\$107	\$106	\$104	\$102	\$100	\$100	\$98	\$98
Stockton Borough				\$49	\$80	\$79	\$78	\$102	\$100	\$98	\$97	\$95	\$93	\$93	\$92	\$91
West Amwell Township				\$61	\$100	\$99	\$98	\$127	\$125	\$123	\$121	\$119	\$117	\$116	\$114	\$114
Total Debt	\$ 1.365m	\$ 1.369m	\$ 1.340m	\$ 2.135m	\$ 2.532m	\$ 2.518m	\$ 2.458m	\$ 1.654m	\$ 1.627m	\$ 1.600m	\$ 1.573m	\$ 1.546m	\$ 1.519m	\$ 1.512m	\$ 1.490m	\$ 1.487m
Lambertville City	\$90	\$90	\$88	\$141	\$167	\$166	\$162	\$109	\$107	\$106	\$104	\$102	\$100	\$100	\$98	\$98
Stockton Borough	\$84	\$84	\$82	\$131	\$156	\$155	\$151	\$102	\$100	\$98	\$97	\$95	\$93	\$93	\$92	\$91
West Amwell Township	\$105	\$105	\$103	\$164	\$194	\$193	\$189	\$127	\$125	\$123	\$121	\$119	\$117	\$116	\$114	\$114

Tax Impact for each Municipality is per \$100k of Assessed Value

[^] Existing Debt is net of State Aid

* Referendum Debt goes out until 2052 but the above table only shows maturities through 2035

Average Assessments: Stockton \$363,343 Lambertville \$383,148 West Amwell \$435,306

How much will this referendum impact my taxes ?

[Tax Impact Calculator \(excel\)](#)

[Tax Impact Calculator \(sheets\)](#)

Average Assessments: Stockton \$363,343 Lambertville \$383,148 West Amwell \$435,306

How School Districts Impact A Home's Value

- According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, there is a definite correlation between school expenditures and home values in any given neighborhood. A report titled, "Using Market Valuation to Assess Public School Spending," found that for every dollar spent on public schools in a community, home values increased \$20. These findings indicate that additional school expenditures may benefit everyone in the community, whether or not those residents actually have children in the local public school system.
- The national average value for homes in a good school district is \$427,000 which is 77% higher than homes without good schools nearby which have an average value of \$241,000.
- Homeowners in good school districts gain an average of almost \$75,000 in value since their purchase compared to homes without good schools only gaining an average of \$23,000.
- What if you don't have children or school age children? The sale of your home will more than likely be to someone who does have children and cares about the schools - your home is an investment.

The reality is that schools and school facilities do matter for all community residents!

Does a referendum need to pass in each municipality?

An overall majority of all voters is required. N.J.S.A. 18A:24-30 provides: “Whenever bonds are authorized to be issued by a type II school district under this chapter, the secretary of the board of education of the district shall transmit to the commissioner a certified copy of the bond proposal adopted by resolution of the board of education **and approved by a majority of the legally qualified voters of the district voting on the proposal at an annual or special school election.**” Based on the statute “district” includes regional districts, which supports the conclusion that it is a majority of the overall votes cast in all three municipalities.

Remember to Vote on November 2, 2021

Questions???