

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education held a special work session on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Board members present: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Roy

Board members absent: Dr. Darcy and Mr. Stone

Administration present: Dr. Schuch, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mrs. Keane, Director of Student Services and Special Education, Mr. Brough, Human Resources Specialist, Mrs. Quarato, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Development, Mrs. Siegel, Associate Director of Learning, Innovation and Accountability, and Mr. Pietrasko, Director of Infrastructure and Security Technology

Mrs. Dahlheimer called the special work session to order at 5:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Petrella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mennone, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Roy. Motion carried.

Joint Work Session with Building Committee

A. QA+M Presentation on Long Range Facility Planning and Potential Grade Configurations - Rusty Malik and Carson Collier

Mr. Malik began by noting that everyone had received the presentation ahead of time. Beginning with the slide labeled Options Analysis and Prioritization, he reviewed the four major categories: health and safety, educational program components, construction impacts and financial impacts. Options 4, 10A, 10B, 10C, 11 and 12 were all looked at in these categories. Mr. Malik described the individual options.

Beginning with option 4, repurposing Lyman, preK-2 at Brewster, 3-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at the high school, Mr. Malik explained that they did an analysis of student enrollment and used that to determine where the students would need to go during construction. Looking at Brewster, there would be an addition towards the back of the building and a new parking area. The design would be for the maximum enrollment. At Memorial, there would be a much smaller addition in place of the portable classrooms. Mr. Malik noted that each case would be a full renovation as there are code and hazmat issues in each location. There will really be no changes at Strong or Coginchaug, but they will address code issues.

Looking at how they will accomplish option 4, Mr. Malik explained that Lyman would be used for the students while renovation is done at Brewster. One complication would be that not all classrooms have bathrooms, but this is designed primarily as a cost-saving measure. It would be important to ensure there is adequate space in the schools for the students while one is being renovated. At the end of the renovations of Brewster and Memorial, Lyman would be repurposed.

Mr. Malik reviewed the proposed schedule for option 4 and explained that this schedule is based on not having any kids in the schools during renovation. Assuming that the grant application would be filed by June of 2024, they would propose starting the design process for Memorial immediately so that construction begins in 2025. Mr. Malik added that the longer the district waits, the higher the escalation costs will be.

The overall evaluation of option 4 revealed a moderate to high disruption of education due to moving kids to other schools. Mr. Malik noted that that can certainly be minimized, if desired. There are an extended number of phases to this option, but it does include all five schools. The overall time frame is 42 to 48 months. The hazmat impact is minimal and portable classrooms will be demolished. They do feel that this option would achieve all of the educational program goals, but there are limitations on what can be done to the buildings. Future expansion would be possible. This option meets all health and safety standards. The total budget for all five schools would be \$68,373,000, with \$33,464,000 expected reimbursement, leaving a net cost of \$34,909,000. There will be, however, a 10-year operating cost savings of \$14,426,000, leaving a total project cost of about \$20,483,000.

Mr. Moore stated that the debt service on the \$34 million is not included in the projections. Mrs. Neubig felt that that would be for the district to add in later, but Mr. Moore felt that it would be important to show what the actual budget would look like. He also asked how much of the \$68 million is for Brewster and Memorial and Mr. Malik stated that he can provide that information. Mr. Moore felt that some of the ADA code compliance could be done in another bond package. Mr. Malik felt that option 4 would go down to about \$58 million without the other two schools. Mr. Cross agreed and felt that ADA code upgrades can be done at another time. Mr. Overton would like to see a breakdown of the swing costs. Mr. Malik explained that those things are a level of detail that would not be evaluated at this point. He added that it is always encouraged to use existing space. Mr. Malik also explained that to qualify for state reimbursement, a renovated school has to meet high-performance building standards for energy efficiency.

Moving on to option 10, repurposing Lyman and Brewster, preK-5 at Memorial, 6-8 at Strong and 9-12 at the high school, Mr. Malik explained that there would be no students at Memorial during construction. Students would be housed at either Brewster or Lyman. In this option, most of the existing building would be utilized. They did move several functions around in the building, but there are other ways to do that as well. A new kitchen is also being added. One downside to this is that the gym is far from the fields. Mr. Malik felt it might make sense to add property to the site to offer more flexibility. This option also includes ADA and code upgrades at Strong and Coginchaug. At the end of this option, Brewster and Lyman would be repurposed.

Looking at how they will accomplish option 10, Mr. Malik explained that Lyman would be used for the students while renovation is done at Memorial and the students who are currently at Brewster would remain there.

Mr. Malik reviewed the proposed schedule for option 10 and reiterated that this schedule is based on not having any kids at Memorial during renovation. Assuming that the grant application would be filed by June of 2024, they would propose starting the design process for Memorial immediately so that construction begins in 2025. Mr. Malik explained that the state would technically approve the application in the following July which sometimes causes concern in the community. He noted that he has never had a project not get funded in the last 30 years.

Mr. Moore noted that the slide shows occupancy in September of 2027, but the swing space is closed in September of 2026. Mr. Malik explained that that was an error and occupancy of Memorial would be September of 2026, but the two would coincide. From a phasing point of view, this option would be a much simpler process.

The overall evaluation of option 4 revealed a low to moderate disruption of education due to moving kids to other schools. This option also includes Mr. Malik noted that that can certainly be minimized, if desired. This option also includes all five schools. The overall time frame is 24 to 30 months. They do believe this will be a future-ready school because there is a significant addition being put on the school. Future expansion would be possible. This option meets all health and safety standards. The total budget for all five schools would be \$78,265,000, with \$35,554,000 expected reimbursement, leaving a net cost of \$42,711,000. The 10-year operating cost savings of \$28,992,000 would leave a total project cost of about \$13,719,000. It was noted that that number would drop if they do not do the code and ADA upgrades.

Mr. Malik then went to Option 10C, which includes a similar scenario, but continues to have students at the school. He explained that that becomes very complex and they also suggested moving one grade out to another school. He added that the infrastructure becomes very complicated, with a lot of temporary work which adds cost. Brewster and Lyman would also both need to stay open an extra year, decreasing the operating cost savings.

Mrs. Petrella asked if the construction costs include site costs as well. Mr. Malik explained that they tried to anticipate all of those costs, but the longer the duration of a project, the higher the cost.

Mr. Malik reviewed that this is a renovate-as-new project which means that every space in the building is impacted. Mr. Roraback asked Mr. Malik which option he would choose taking everything into consideration. A member of the Building Committee noted that this project takes longer, has more physical impact on kids, costs more and has lower reimbursement. Another member suggested that they decide which of the option 10s they prefer. Mr. Weissberg felt that any of the occupied options would be a challenge and they should look at the new options. Mr. Malik noted that the new-occupied options are easier than the renovate-occupied options. He added that they are staying within the reimbursement guidelines for space in all of the options, but extra space can be added at additional cost.

Going back to option 10A, the phasing plan would have no students at Memorial, but there would be an option to keep the students in the building that would extend the duration of the construction. Students would be in both Lyman and Brewster during construction.

The overall evaluation of option 10A revealed a low to moderate disruption of education. There are five phases to this option, again including all schools. The overall time frame is 24 to 36 months. The hazmat impact is minimal and portable classrooms will be demolished. The total budget for this option would be \$85,581,000, with \$33,842,000 expected reimbursement (10 percent lower than renovation), leaving a net cost of \$51,739,000. The 10-year operating cost savings would be \$28,992,000, leaving a total project cost of about \$22,747,000.

Mr. Malik stated that the numbers are similar in option 10B, but the impact on education would be major. The overall time frame is 36 to 40 months. The total budget for this option would be \$87,485,000, with

\$34,702,000 expected reimbursement, leaving a net cost of \$52,783,000. The 10-year operating cost savings would be \$28,992,000, leaving a total project cost of about \$23,791,000.

Moving to option 11, Mr. Malik explained that this option keeps all of the existing facilities. Brewster would house preK-1, Lyman 2-3, Memorial 4-5, Strong 6-8 and 9-12 at Coginchaug. The challenge with this option is where the kids would be moved while renovation is occurring as the infrastructure needs to be updated in Brewster, Lyman and Memorial. There would be no addition at Lyman. A small addition is proposed for Brewster, but may not be totally necessary if they keep the portables. No addition is proposed for Memorial.

Mr. Malik reviewed possible scenarios for swing space during these renovations. He felt that this would be physically possible, but the complication becomes what compromises the district is willing to make. Phase one would include renovations at Brewster, phase two would include renovations at Memorial and phase three would include renovations at Lyman, all of which would involve a lot of transitions which drive up costs and disrupt education. The schedule of the phases can obviously be changed.

The overall evaluation of option 10A revealed a moderate to high disruption of education. The overall time frame is 36 to 42 months. The total budget for this option would be \$67,566,000, with \$30,685,000 expected reimbursement, leaving a total project cost of \$36,881,000. Mr. Malik did not include a number for the 10-year operating cost savings, but he would anticipate anywhere from \$5 to \$10 million savings in maintenance costs.

Mr. Malik then went to option 12 and explained that the only difference is that preK would be at the high school. Mr. Overton noted that moving preK to the high school really doesn't produce any cost savings.

Mr. Weissberg felt that the Building committee could meet and come up with a recommendation. Mr. Malik added that they are being told that there is a labor shortage and a significant impact of that on construction of about 15 percent. Mr. Cross agreed and also noted that Mr. Malik's numbers were excellent. He felt that if they tried to renovate while the building is occupied, the numbers will be much higher. Another committee member was concerned that the state would not want to offer reimbursement when schools are empty.

Dr. Schuch asked what Mr. Malik was looking for as a next step and Mr. Malik noted that he would like to see this narrowed down to one option. Mrs. Neubig thought they could get it down to a couple, including capital-only numbers. Mr. Malik explained that their options include code compliance and infrastructure being updated as well. He felt that the district would gain efficiency by including those in the projects. Mrs. Neubig encouraged everyone to forward her any questions they may have.

Public Comment

A. In-person public comment

None.

B. Remote public comment

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Petrella, to adjourn the special work session.

In favor of adjourning the special work session: Ms. Betty, Mrs. Caramanello, Mrs. Dahlheimer, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Roraback and Mrs. Roy. Meeting was adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First