

Bond Referendum Community Meetings

Frequently Asked Questions

How many new seats are in the building?

We are building the school for 800 with having a plan in place to expand later on should we need to do that.

If this school has 600, will the new school have 800?

Yes, at CCHS, 450 students and at CECHS, 168 students; around 600 now and will build for 800

Will 200 more seats be enough? We are looking at a 30-year note. We can't go back in 15 years and add on. Should we go bigger?

Rick Ott – one of the things the BOE asked him to do was to make sure we had additional capacity or what he refers to as core facilities. Core facilities are things like gymnasium, cafeteria and media center. The gymnasium will be able to seat 1,200 people; the cafeteria will be able to accommodate about 1,000 people up front assuming that the cafeteria will actually be used for multiple purposes; there is also space for a future auditorium or auxiliary gymnasium. The auxiliary gym is primarily for the emergency shelter standards. When the school opens, we will have about 700 available seats for students but the ability to add another 300-400 seats is an option for expanding the school.

Rather than adding on, I would like to see 100 more seats. Considering what is happening in the northern end of the county, we'll have to add on in another five or six years. If we are spending \$33mm, I would like to see a gymnasium.

Rick Ott – In the facility study that we did, we asked developers and contractors what types of homes they were building to look at how many kids would come out of the potential developments. The real issue is that under this study, both the county and school board chose was the one that was most economical that would be able to accommodate all the foreseeable growth out for at least at least 15 years. We can't project out beyond 15 years. The school plan that we have here will accommodate growth from the potential developments.

Is there a possibility to build up on the school?

Rick Ott – There is the possibility to have a two-story structure, but this plan is more cost efficient at this point in time.

Again, we have plenty of room to expand as needed.

The core facilities are sized to take this high school well into the future but if more seats were needed, that could easily be accommodated by adding on in particular areas. There would be no need to add onto the gym, cafeteria or media center. It would just be building classroom which is cost efficient.

Going back to the question about the auditorium, after meeting with lots of people in the county, there were other spaces in the plan but the school board felt strongly that they needed to bring a project that was affordable to the citizens of Camden County. We ended up reducing the overall cost of building the school by reducing the cost about \$10mm to get it down to where the project would be under a 10¢ tax impact. Prior to COVID, there was the possibility of additional funding from the State but all of that got put on hold.

He understands this is just a drawing, but is there a greenhouse? Northeastern sales plants.

Rick Ott – we don't specifically have a greenhouse. We spent a lot of time talking about the future of education and the future jobs that will be in our community. As far as an outdoor greenhouse, we don't have that but we do have very large learning pads where a lot of activities will take place (horticulture spaces, technology, etc.). It will be a very sophisticated design.

Will the building be used for multi-purposes such as for prom/graduation?

Rick Ott – We are building a competition gym. We have not decided on that floor yet. The auxiliary gym will have a much more resilient floor. It will be smaller but will be a place for multi-events.

Mr. Ott said the gym will seat 1,200 people. Have we ever had 1,200 people attend a football game?

Yes

Could we downsize the gym and have an auditorium?

Rick Ott – NC DPI has minimum standard guidelines to be used. Because of the state grant money that will be used on this project, they get to approve the design. We are trying to meet their standards as well as what the county's needs are. This facility is designed right now and is roughly 119,000 sq. ft. which is exactly what NCDPI says should be sized approximately for a school this size. We are serving more than one master and we don't think reducing the size of the gym will be cost efficient. Expanding those types of facilities in the future are very expensive.

In addition to the emergency shelter, what else would be available for community use?

The plan has designed several areas for multiple uses. For example, the dining commons was designed to have a stage and will be available for functions.

There were questions about the field house location.

The field house was located between the location of the gym and the athletic fields. Rick Ott said they were trying to have an athletic complex that is handicap accessible and community accessible.

It was asked if safety and security measures had been taken with the new building.

Yes. Security in schools is something that has been an ongoing design solution. There will be multiple ways of securing facilities within the school. This is a state of the art design.

There were questions about the concession stand. Will there be more than one concession stand?

Rick Ott said we have not gotten to full development on that yet. The Board has asked for a lot of input and the Board wants us to get engagement from students and teachers. There will be a lot of meetings to take place over the next six months before deciding on the final design.

If it does get approved, what are the next steps?

Rick Ott – We will get to work on November 4th. Our plan is to get a schematic design to NCDPI in January. We will get an early site package started. We will start grading and clearing and plan to have ground breaking in March. We will try to get the school open in 2022.

If the bond referendum passes, will you come back to the board with a plan? Will the public have any input?

Rick Ott – what you see right now is a conceptual design. This is one potential combination. The first step is actually creating a schematic design which is a more refined plan. Once we get to that point, we will come back and present it to the board. And the board could tell us to take it out to the public if they chose to do so. The next step is Design Development which is deciding on the roofing, flooring, and interior, all of the internal parts of the building. And then we come back to the Board again and so they have a more refined design to approve. Then he will work on the completed design for the board's approval. There will be plenty of time for input during the process.

It was asked if seniors could be involved in the process.

Dr. Ferrell said he would take that request in consideration.

Is the 12.3mm on top of the \$33mm?

Dr. Ferrell – We need the bond referendum to be for \$33mm. The amount of the grant is \$12.3 mm. The actual cost of the facility will be \$45mm.

There were questions about the operational cost estimated at 2¢.

Dr. Ferrell – We are in the process of doing that now. We all feel that it will not go over 2¢.

Rick Ott – Some have asked what about all of the teachers that we'll have to hire. We will be relocating teachers and administrative positions from the current high school to the new high school. Growth in positions is paid for by the State of NC; not the local tax payer. Everyone needs to understand that the State pays for teachers because of growth. The operation costs that we will incur is utilities. If you have to buy more portables, you will have to heat and cool those. Also, you will have custodial services. Based on the structure of the warranty, while the warranty is in place, that will free up CCS maintenance staff. The old portables that are housing CECHS will have to be replaced if the new school does not pass.

What will happen with the old high school?

The old high school will be converted to a middle school. That school is appropriately sized to handle the middle school population. And you will have room for growth.

What will happen with the middle school?

The BOE is committed to keeping all of our schools. What we believe will happen at this point is we will construct a new high school, turn current high school into the middle school for grades 6-8, and then the BOE will determine how the other grades will be configured. All schools will remain schools.

There were questions about the property purchased for the school site.

Dr. Ferrell – In 2008, County Commissioners purchased the property for \$1mm.

Where did the numbers come from for the current sizing for projecting the costs? Was it for 15 years growth? How did that come up with the size of the school? In 10 years will we have to start talking about renovations to the high school? How much will it cost to prepare the current high school for middle school?

It takes 14 to 15 months to get the new facility built. Other than getting rid of the portables in the back, the building is in good shape with the exception of doing technology updates, we are not anticipating any additional expenses to convert it for CMS. Completely inadequate for a high school but perfect for the middle school.

Will the new high school be a brick and mortar building?

Yes.

How much of the \$45mm will stay here in Camden County?

The delivery method that the BOE has chosen is a design build. The \$45mm also includes some furnishings and technology in addition to hard construction costs. Those are fixed numbers. The project will not exceed that. If the building is brought in under budget, 100% of the savings stay with the school district. The project will not go over budget. We are anticipating that approximately 100 construction jobs would be created and run through the 14-15 months. A lot of those will be Camden County jobs.

You will hire local?

Absolutely

When will the resolution be adopted?

Dr. Ferrell anticipates that the BOE will approve the Resolution at the BOE meeting on Thursday night. The Board wanted to be clear with the public.

There were questions about the calculation of estimated tax impact.

The school district did not calculate those numbers. First Tryon calculated the numbers.

Vet numbers

Rick Ott – We have already gone back and vetted numbers. The county financial advisor was very conservative. The State of NC has a Local Government Commission, they are reviewing and will have to approve any issuance even after the taxpayers do so. Rick Ott said he deferred to the planning professionals which the County hired to do this. Their report is available on the county's website.

Have you figured in new families moving into the county?

Yes. For the most recent Facility Study, Rick Ott actually called the developers and talked with them about plans and who they are marketing to. He did this with the two large developments that are being planned. When people are moving in, you are also expanding the tax base. With a large tax base you can borrow more money with less impact. A growth factor is calculated into the tax base.

What is the purpose of the Emergency Shelter?

In rural communities, you need to have as many types of uses as possible figured into the school design. One of the things is what happens during emergency situations.

Are there extra funds being used to make it an Emergency Shelter?

No.

Rick Ott – He plans to go to the Red Cross and FEMA and try to get some additional funds through grants to beef the shelter up. Right now it has not added anything as far as additional costs.

Will the road be widened?

We do anticipate there will be some changes but those changes will be paid for out of other state funds. There is another road that will cut through to Sleepy Hollow. That will not be built in this phase of this project.

Will Army Corp of Engineers be involved?

They have done one survey. They will have to come back again.

There were questions about wetlands. How many acres?

Rick Ott – will have to go back and check.

Bid process?

Rick Ott is precluded from doing any of the permanent work. He said he is doing the management portion and holding the liability and risk on the property. He intends to bid work out. He tries to maximize local contractors.

Building to minimum NC standards?

We originally went through the programming with BOE. We started budgeting and grants that were anticipated did not come through. The BOE reduced the structure and reduced the costs by \$10mm. If other grants come in, increasing the structure is something the BOE could consider.

There were questions about senior graduation.

Amber Davis said graduation arrangements are left up to the seniors because it is their graduation. Usually seniors choose the football field.