

Facilities Advisory Committee

Rye Neck School Facilities Recommendations

November 15, 2017

Who is FAC?

- An advisory group created by the Rye Neck Board of Education to evaluate the district's school facilities and advise on future capital improvement priorities.
- Comprised of 14 volunteer members representing a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the school district.
- Collectively, members have a wide range of experience in business, finance, construction, real estate and education.
- FAC is co-chaired by Michael Geary and Matthew Tauber. The Board representatives on the committee are Pietro Fasolino and Deborah Aulfinger.

What is the purpose of FAC?

- Develop recommendations to the Board and administration on setting priorities for potential capital improvement projects to address the district's school facilities needs.
- Encourage greater community participation in the district's decision-making process on school facilities investments.
- Solicit a broad range of ideas and opinions among voters, taxpayers, parents and other key stakeholders.

FAC's Scope of Work

- Conducted a series of full committee meetings featuring interactive discussion and deliberations with the superintendent, school principals and a wide range of other administrators.
- Participated in presentations and examined various development plans by the district's architectural and engineering consultants.
- Attended detailed tours of all the district's facilities while schools were in session to get a first-hand look at the challenges faced by students, teachers and administrators.

2016 Proposal as the Baseline

- Rye Neck's 2016 bond proposal was FAC's natural starting point for discussions with administrators and architectural consultants.
- Extensive time and resources had already been invested in the 2016 proposal.
- The 2016 proposal was comprehensive in scope – encompassing all school facilities – and had already undergone a lengthy environmental approval process.
- By using the 2016 proposal as its baseline case, FAC was able to work with a sense of urgency that members believe is necessary to address the district's capital improvement needs.

District Challenges

- The district's school facilities are generally outdated, overcrowded and struggling to meet contemporary standards of high-quality educational programs.
- The Middle School / High School campus lacks modern classroom and laboratory space for science, technology, engineering, arts, math (STEAM), while suffering from space shortages and scheduling bottlenecks that limit student access to educational opportunities.
- The aging elementary schools are operating at maximum capacity, often with undersized, inflexible classrooms and instruction areas.

Urgent Action is Necessary

- To accommodate growing enrollment and provide higher quality educational programs, capital investments are needed urgently to expand and upgrade school facilities.
- The MS / HS campus has the largest and most pressing needs – especially in modernizing its STEAM programs and expanding athletic facilities to comply with state-mandated physical education requirements.
- The elementary schools also need capital investments to upgrade classrooms, libraries and other instructional areas, with a focus on easing overcrowding and improving program quality.

Middle School / High School Campus

MS / HS is Lagging Behind the Times

- There have been no significant capital improvements to academic spaces since 1997, when six science classrooms were renovated.
- Over those 20 years, MS / HS enrollment has increased 29 percent to 874 students.
- To handle the overflow, classrooms have been divided into ever smaller units and makeshift classrooms have been carved out of closets, storage areas and any other available space.
- Over the past decade, the popularity of STEAM programs has exploded, but campus facilities are too small and too outdated to accommodate overwhelming student demand.

Meeting the Demand for STEAM

- The MS / HS campus does not have the large, flexible and collaborative classrooms and lab spaces that modern STEAM education requires.
- The current building footprint is maxed out so a new addition will be necessary – one purposely built to house flexible learning spaces and advanced technology, equipment and resources.
- Creating a new Collaborative Science Center will enable current makeshift science classrooms to be returned to general use, easing space shortages throughout the campus.
- In order to unlock the full value of the new Collaborative Science Center, the key is an expansion of the MS / HS athletic facility.

The PE Scheduling Bottleneck

- Nearly 900 MS and HS students now share a single gym to meet their state-mandated requirement of 2-3 PE classes per week.
- Since it is inappropriate to mix younger and older students, the MS uses the gym exclusively during some periods and the HS uses it exclusively during the remaining periods of the day.
- Students thus have limited timeslots available to fulfill their PE requirements – creating scheduling bottlenecks across the campus.
- STEAM courses, including AP science electives, are particularly difficult to schedule because they are typically conducted in back-to-back periods – one for classroom instruction and one for hands-on lab work.

Clearing the Bottleneck

- If a new STEAM center is built but athletic facilities are not expanded, many students will still be effectively locked out of STEAM courses.
- However, expanding the athletic center will create a second PE “classroom” that will enable the MS and HS to each schedule PE classes concurrently during every period of every day.
- Scheduling flexibility will increase dramatically, while currently overcrowded PE classes – often numbering more than 60 students – will shrink back to a safe and manageable size.
- Working in tandem, the new Collaborative Science Center and expanded athletic center will eliminate the PE scheduling bottleneck, providing MS and HS students access to a wider selection of programs.

F.E. Bellows Elementary School

Bellows is Stretched to the Limit

- The main building dates back to 1935, and no significant capital improvements have been made to classrooms and other academic spaces.
- Over the past 10 years, enrollment has increased 15 percent to 389 students.
- Current classrooms and instructional areas are undersized and inadequately equipped for modern educational programs.
- The main building is boxed in between Carroll and North Barry Avenues, so the only feasible space for growth is around the Annex.

Expanding and Connecting the Annex

- Expanding the annex will create an opportunity to consolidate specialty resources – art, music, the relocated library and an enlarged Makerspace studio / lab – all in one place.
- The expansion will free up space in the crowded main building, which could then accommodate all students in general academic classrooms that meet state standards for physical size.
- Expanding the annex will also create room for an enlarged cafeteria with an on-site kitchen serving fresh, hot food.
- Building an enclosed corridor between the main building and annex will enhance the safety, security and comfort of students.

F.E. Bellows Walkway

- The FAC extensively studied and thoughtfully discussed the past community concerns about the enclosed Bellows walkway.
- The additional programming in the enlarged annex will greatly increase student traffic between the main building and the annex.
- The current open walkway configuration is a major challenge for staff to control unauthorized access and to manage the safety of students passing between the main building and the annex.
- FAC strongly recommends that the walkway be enclosed because the safety and security of students outweighs the possible inconvenience to pedestrians seeking to cut through school property on evenings and weekends.
- In addition, FAC recommends that the walkway doors remain open before and after school to allow students to easily enter and exit the building from both sides. A kiosk can be provided to accommodate any student who is late.

Daniel Warren Elementary School

Optimizing Space and Flexibility at Daniel Warren

- Building a rear addition will reclaim the space that was “lost” in the scaled-down bond referendum that was approved in 2005.
- The building footprint can only be feasibly expanded adjacent to a rear two-story addition.
- An addition will provide flexible space that could house the school’s first Makerspace and accommodate two additional classrooms as enrollment grows.

District-wide Roof Replacements

- At each school, urgent replacements are needed for flat roof sections, which are all past the end of their useful lives and could pose potential safety issues.
- The entire MS / HS roof, covering more than 100,000 square feet, is a 23-year-old flat structure that needs to be replaced completely.
- The elementary schools each have smaller flat roof sections that are also more than 20 years old and are due for replacement.
- The district has incurred significant costs in recent years to patch failing roofs, and continuing to do so is simply throwing good money after bad.
- Roof replacement will help prevent collateral building damage due to sudden roof failure, as previously experienced in the MS / HS.

Next Steps

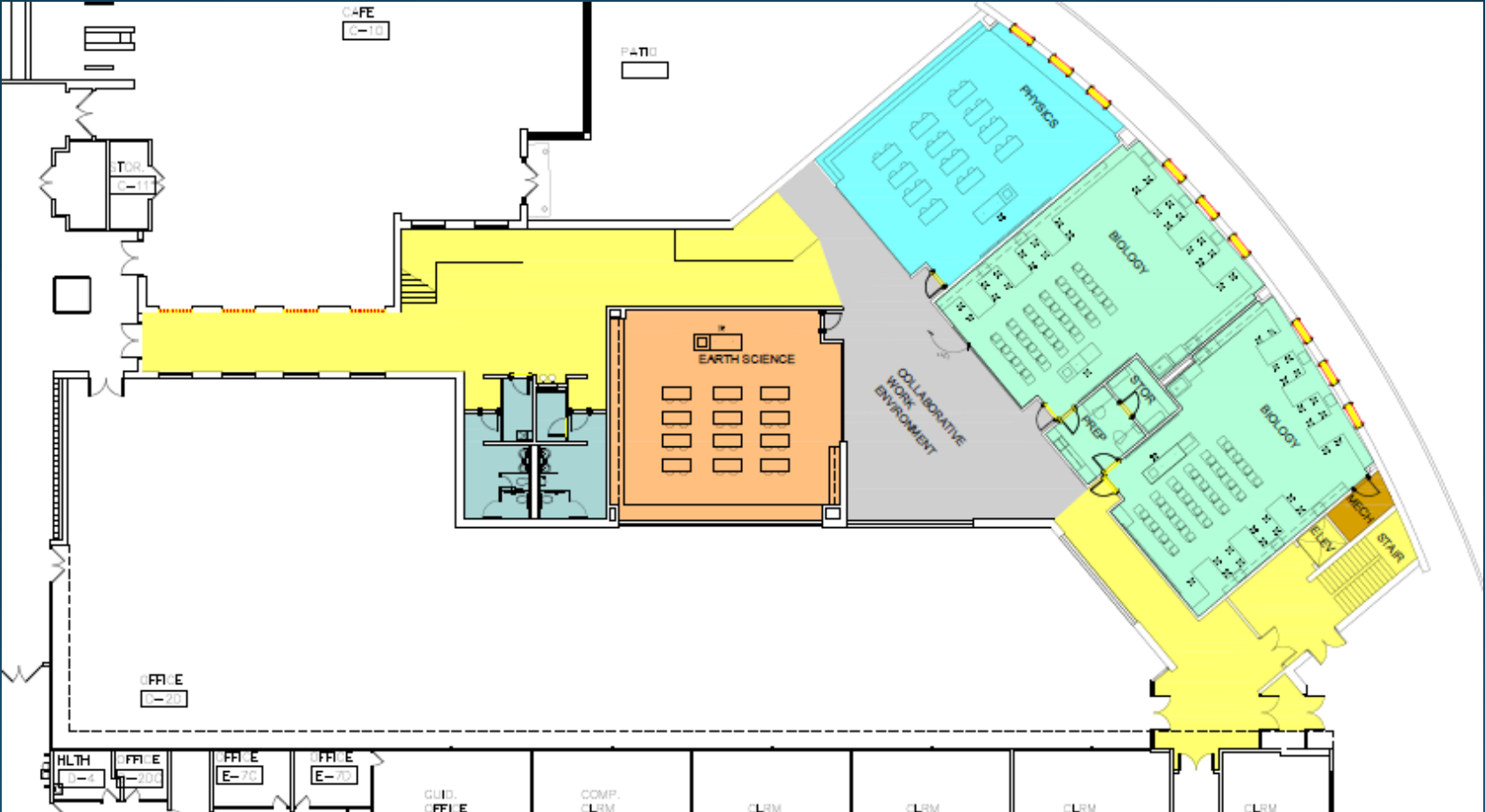
General Conclusions and Priorities

- FAC believes that capital improvements are warranted at each school – similar in size and scope to the projects proposed in the 2016 bond referendum.
- The MS / HS campus and Bellows are the most urgent priorities, followed by Daniel Warren.
- Since the Daniel Warren expansion is a lower immediate priority, FAC believes that it should be included as a “hook” bond allowing the community to decide whether it should be funded in addition to the primary bond.
- Pursuing multiple projects at once is likely to create better economies of scale in construction and greater leverage in contract negotiations, leading to overall cost savings for the district.

FAC Recommendations for MS / HS

- Build a new Collaborative Science Center with eight flexible science classrooms / laboratory spaces.
- Expand the athletic center by adding a MS gym and revise the 2016 plan to include new locker rooms, enabling the MS and HS to have their own self-contained facilities.
- Replace all seating in the Performing Arts Center as seats are beyond their useful life while parts and upgrades are no longer available.
- Expand and upgrade the library / media center for large-group instruction.

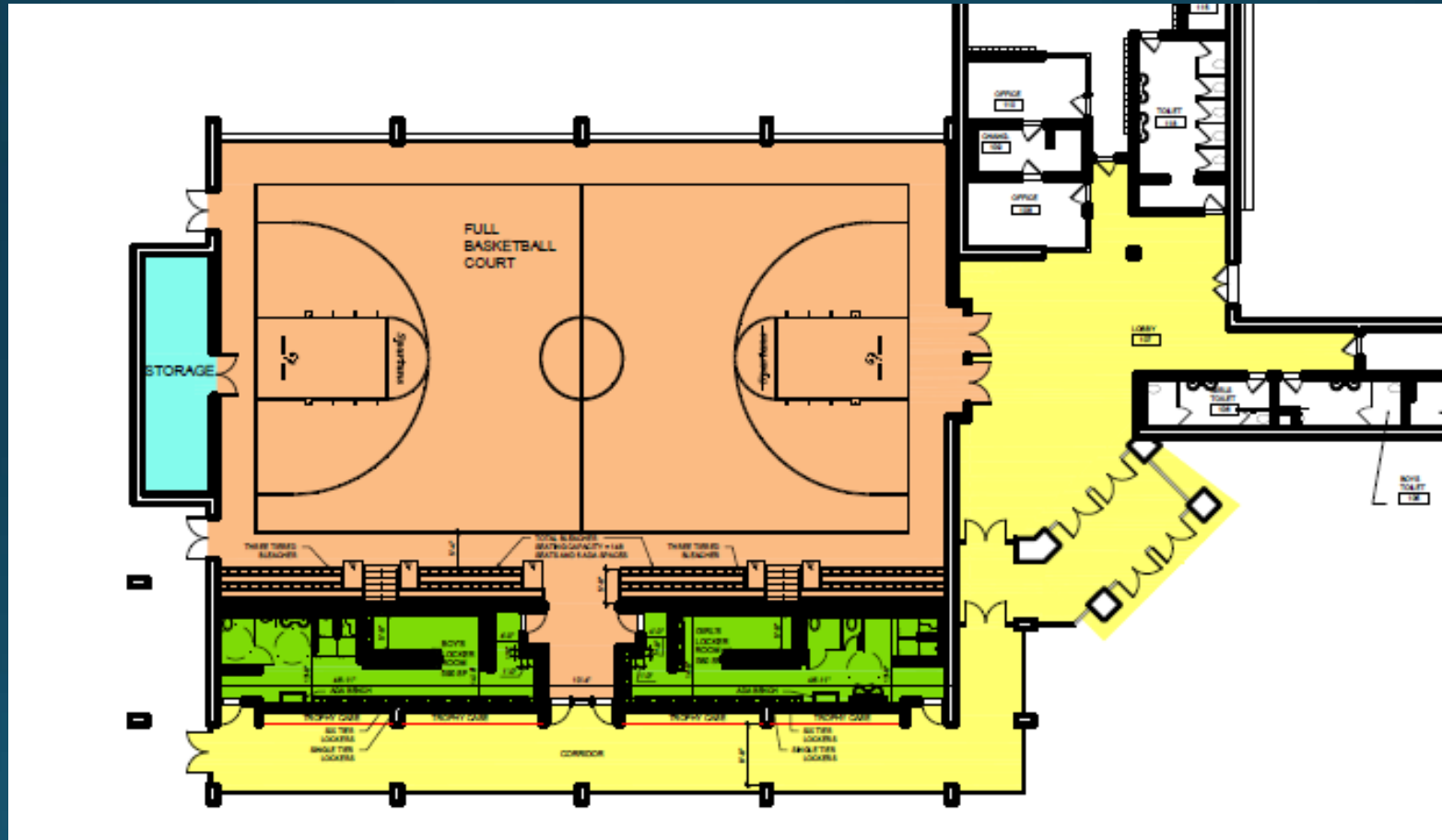
Collaborative Science Center, Ground Floor



Collaborative Science Center, Second Floor



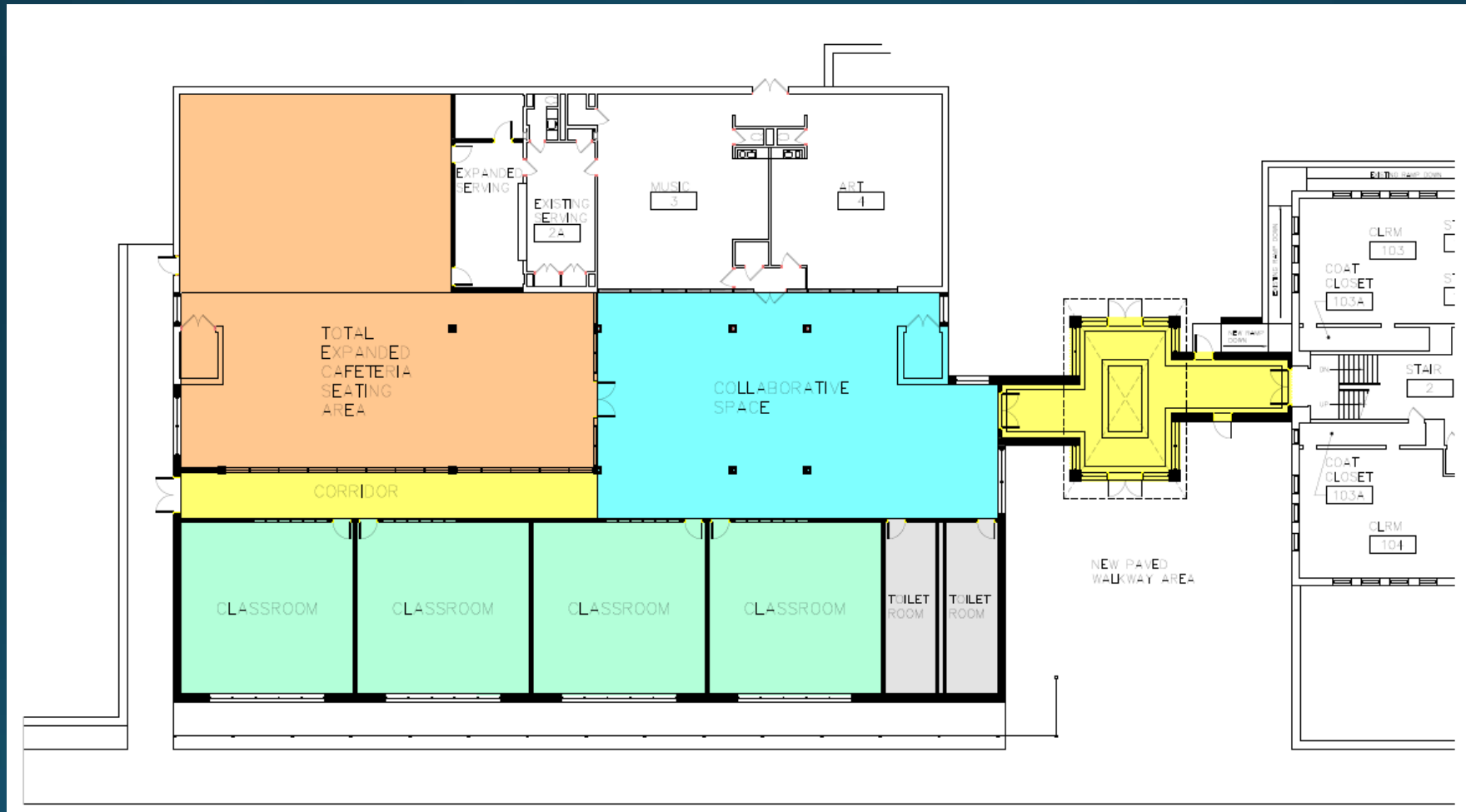
Athletic Center Expansion



FAC Recommendations for F.E. Bellows

- Expand the annex to accommodate an on-site kitchen and an enlarged cafeteria.
- Move the library out of the main building and consolidate all specialty resource areas – art, music, library and Makerspace – in the enlarged annex building.
- Consolidate all general academic activities in the main building and reconfigure currently undersized classrooms and resource rooms.
- Consider structural upgrades to allow for future second story addition to the annex.

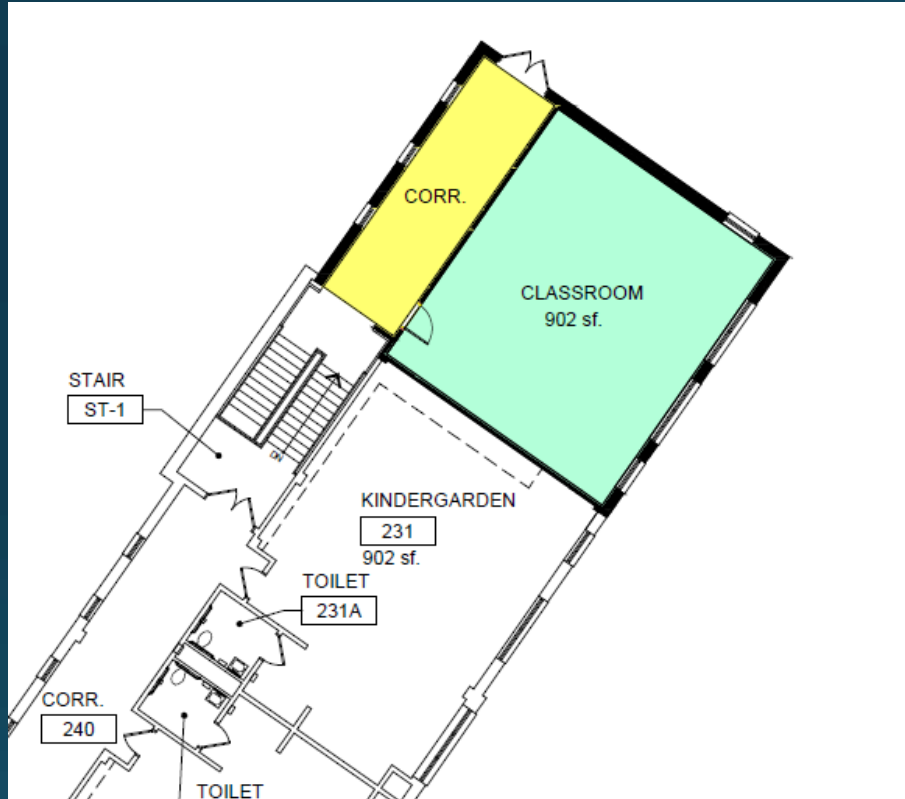
FE Bellows Annex Expansion



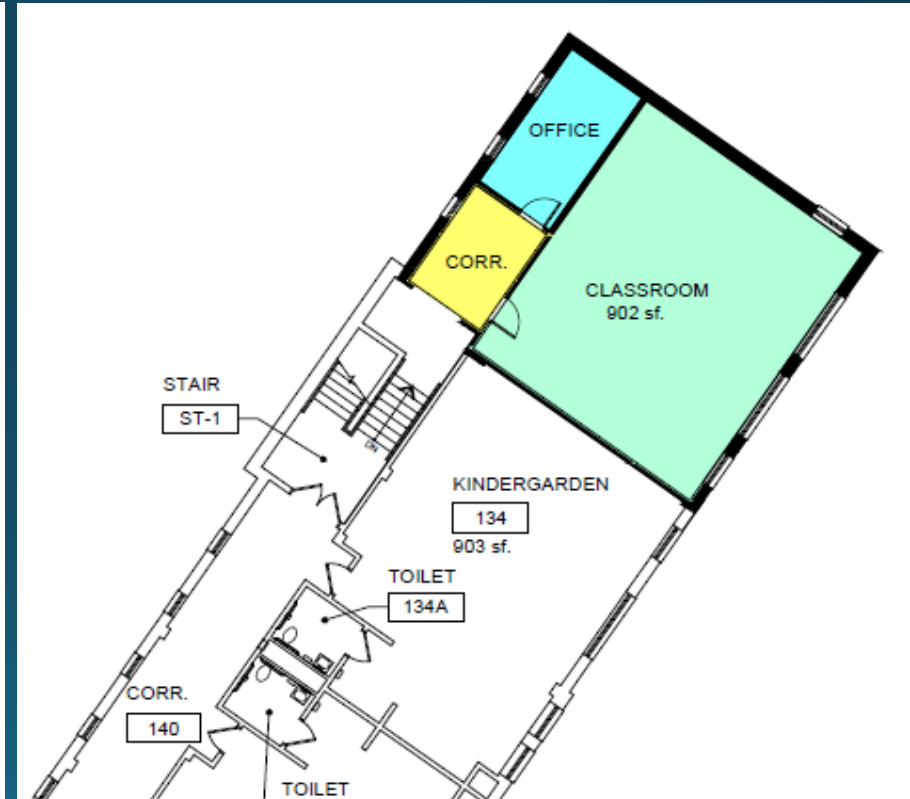
FAC Recommendations for Daniel Warren

- If Daniel Warren is included in primary or “hook” bond, build an addition at the rear of the building, adjacent to the kindergarten wing that was added in 2005.
- Use this new addition for classroom space, which is currently filled to maximum capacity, and for the school’s first Makerspace.

Daniel Warren Rear Additon



• Ground Floor



Second Floor

FAC Recommended Timing

- The Board should immediately begin preparing a bond referendum for a vote as early as possible in 2018.
- The new proposal should generally follow the outline of the 2016 plan to take advantage of the extensive planning work that has already been done and approvals that have already been granted.
- The Board and administration should re-examine all elements of the 2016 proposal to seek any potential cost savings that may now be available across each capital project.
- This expedited schedule will maximize the amount of construction that can be done while school is not in session.

Financial Outlook is Positive

- Since the previous bond referendum in October 2016, interest rates have remained near historic lows, offering opportunities for attractive financing of capital projects.
- The district has maintained its strong financial position, while also keeping annual budgets under the state's tax levy cap over the past six years.
- The district's outstanding debt of \$12.6 million appears manageable – and is at the lower end, in terms of debt service per pupil, among school districts in the region.

Structuring the Bond Referendum

- While FAC believes that projects at each school are warranted, the Board should consider placing multiple proposals in the referendum.
- The Board should place the highest priority projects – MS / HS, Bellows, and roof replacements – on one proposal, and the Daniel Warren project on a second proposal.

Proposing a New Bond Referendum

- The community was evenly divided (380-363) in the 2016 referendum.
- Voter turnout was very low at only 12%.
- The Board and administration needs a more clear mandate on what the community is willing to invest in the future education of their children.
- Before any new referendum is held, the Board and administration should improve community outreach – including school tours for community members – to ensure that voters are made fully aware of the benefits and costs of any new proposal.
- The Board should also work more closely with school, community and political groups to maximize voter turnout and ensure that the voices of the greatest possible number of citizens are heard.

Budget Estimates of FAC Recommendations

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	Proposition I	Proposition II
MS /HS EXPANSION & RENOVATION	BUDGET ESTIMATE	Total Project Cost
NEW 8 CLASSROOM EXPANSION to existing - INCLUDING RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS		
Renovation Work to Existing facility to convert science rooms into classrooms, including lighting, hvac and plumbing systems upgrades.. Reconstruction in Auditorium including replace of seating		
Total Project Cost	\$14,675,000	
MS /HS GYM EXPANSION & RENOVATIONS	BUDGET ESTIMATE	Total Project Cost
NEW GYMNASIUM STATION EXPANSION to existing- BLEACHERS AND RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS		
Renovation work to existing facility including lighting, hvac systems upgrades.	\$6,150,000	
<u>INCLUDING NEW LOCKER RMS(IN THE NEW GYM/</u>	\$500,000	
Total Project Cost	\$6,650,000	

Budget Estimates of FAC Recommendations

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FE Bellows - MAIN FACILITY AND ANNEX EXPANSION /RENOVATION	BUDGET ESTIMATE	Total Project Cost
4 CLASSROOM EXPANSION - EXPANDED CAFETERIA - NEW LIBRARY. INCLUDING A ENCLOSED CONNECTING CORRIDOR TO THE MAIN FEB FACILITY. INCLUDING RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS.	\$6,530,000	
ANNEX - Renovation of Cafeteria-expand serving-including Kitchen area and equipment. Includes lighting, hvac and plumbing systems upgrades MAIN BUILDING - renovations including lighting, hvac and plumbing systems upgrades-		
<u>PROVIDE STRUCTURE FOR FUTURE 2ND STORY OF 4 ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS</u>	\$500,000	
Total Project Cost	\$7,030,000	
D. Warren - Expansion - Hook Bond	BUDGET ESTIMATE	Total Project Cost
2 CLASSROOM ADDITION TO EXISTING FACILITY- INCLUDES RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS.		
<u>NO INTERIOR WORK</u>		
Total Project Cost		\$2,895,000
DISTRICT WIDE ROOFS	BUDGET ESTIMATE	Total Project Cost
Replacement of MS/HS, FEB, Gymnasium, D Warren and District office roof systems with new	\$6,280,000	
TOTAL PROJECT COST per PROPOSITION	\$34,635,000	\$2,895,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST BOTH PROPOSITION	\$37,530,000	

Facility Advisory Committee, Participant Information

FAC Members & Co-Chairs:

- Michael Geary is a Licensed NYS Professional Engineer, LEED Accredited Professional with 17-years of design and construction experience, 15-years with an MEP design firm and 2-years in construction management. Michael and his wife have lived in Mamaroneck since 2005, have a 5th grade daughter in the district and a son entering kindergarten in 2020.
- Matthew Tauber has lived with his family in the Rye Neck community for the past 8 years. Matthew has three children (5th grade, Kindergarten and 2 years old). Professionally Matthew owns a small business locally and has extensive experience consulting with school districts on facility design and program implementation.

FAC Members:

- Gina Brewer has lived in Rye for 5 years and has a 12-year old daughter attending RN Middle School. Gina owned a high-end stationery and invitation store for 21 years called The Rye Stationer and was involved in the Rye Chamber of Commerce for 20 years during which there were many improvements to the City of Rye and the Rye School District.
- Halli Gatenio, community member since 2013, has three children, two of which are currently enrolled in the Rye Neck district. Halli serves on the executive committee of the PTSA.
- Rocco Germani is married with two children in the district. His daughter attends Middle School, and his son is in High School. Rocco served on the Rye Neck Board of Education for 6 years. He is employed with the Town/Village of Harrison for 12 years, currently serving as Building Inspector.
- Gina Leone is mother of two children, 13-year Rye Neck resident and lifelong resident in lower Westchester. Professionally Gina has been in public education since 1993 and holds a BA in Psychology and Italian. She also holds a Masters of professional studies in teaching English to speakers of other languages as well as a Master in educational leadership. Gina is an active member of the Rye Neck Booster Club.
- Randi Robinowitz, Associate Real Estate Broker for 14 years, previously worked in technology 20 plus years. She served as VP of Bellows, Membership Chair and DW Advisory Committee, Member of Rye Town Assessment Task Force, is a Tax Reduction Specialist and past Village of Mamaroneck Trustee.

FAC Members, continued

- Mary Shiffer: While earning her Master of Science degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Mary worked for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers at the Construction Engineering Research Lab. Afterwards she was Director of Facilities Project Management for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and managed facilities at Harvard University where she also earned a Certificate in Management. She has two sons – one in middle school, and the other a 2017 Rye Neck graduate now at the University of Toronto. She currently works as a researcher & project management consultant.
- Steve Silva has worked for most of his career as a media and communications consultant, specializing in mergers, acquisitions and corporate financial transactions. He served a two-year term (2015-16) as a member of the Principals Advisory Committee for Rye Neck elementary schools and is currently a member of the district's Audit Committee. His two children attend F.E. Bellows.
- Gloria Spedafino-Golle is a life long Rye Neck resident. She currently lives with her husband (also a Rye Neck Alumni) and her 2 children, a fifth and second grader in the district. She has served on many school committees since her children have entered school and in addition to serving on the FAC, Gloria is the current President of the Rye Neck PTSA.
- Elizabeth Thurer has lived in the RN school district for 14 years and has 3 children in the Rye Neck School System. She has a Masters Degree in Elementary Education and formerly taught in NYC and Chicago. She currently works as an Interior Designer.
- April Tunno is a Rye Neck Graduate and mother of 4 daughters. She has a Bachelors in Elementary Education, a Master's in Education and a Post Master's in Special Education. She is NYS certified in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Students with Disabilities. She is also an early childhood developmental specialist and a clinical educational evaluator.
- Kristen Vetter has 2 sons in the district, one in Bellows and one in the Middle School. She been a resident of Rye Neck for 14 years and has held positions on the Executive Committee of the PTSA as the Vice President of Fundraising and current Treasurer. Her professional background is in finance and currently is an accountant working with not for profit organizations.

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