

**Lewisburg Area School District
Master Facilities Planning
Frequently Asked Questions**

Has any individual or group outside the district evaluated the need to upgrade or expand facilities?

*Lewisburg Area High School was evaluated in October 2008 by the **Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools** to determine if the school should receive continued accreditation from the **Commission on Secondary Schools**. The Middle States Visitation Team evaluated the high school on twelve standards including, school climate and organization, health and safety, educational programs, assessment of student learning, information resources and technology, and facilities.*

STANDARD 5- FACILITIES: School facilities, building, and grounds are safe, clean, and well maintained. The physical environment supports delivery of the educational program/services as well as optimal student development and achievement. Facilities are appropriate and adequate to implement the philosophy/mission of the school. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable laws including health and safety code requirements.

The team of professional educators from this accreditation organization presented the following report regarding the high school facility: "It has been observed that the school is fully occupied at the present time. This limits the ability of administration to expand quality programs. The infusion of technology, while valuable and needed, has further pressed the ability of the regular classroom teacher to utilize flexibility of instruction. Currently, all athletic programs are conducted at various sites away from the high school. This places additional demands on transportation and supervision. Reliance on Bucknell for a football stadium, although a desirable site, often leaves Lewisburg seeking additional sites. Serious consideration and plans must be made to provide an appropriate facility to meet the needs of expanding programs and meet the needs of students within the next decade."

Didn't the district hire a consulting firm last year to review facility needs and create a master plan? Was that process completed and what were the recommendations?

The district hired DeJong Consulting of Dublin, Ohio to conduct an analysis of the district facilities and recommend a master facilities plan. This group toured all the buildings, analyzed data on each building and all land owned by the district, reviewed enrollment and educational program data, held two sessions with the public, and developed a set of recommendations that was presented to the school board in December, 2009. Their recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Construct an addition to Linntown Intermediate School or to both Linntown Intermediate School and Kelly Elementary School to accommodate increasing student enrollments.*
- 2. Construct an addition to Eichhorn Middle School to accommodate increasing student enrollment.*
- 3. Construct a new High School to accommodate increasing student enrollment and to provide adequate space and site to meet the needs of a comprehensive high school.*
- 4. Relocate the central administrative offices to provide additional room for elementary students at Linntown Intermediate School.*
- 5. Create a redevelopment plan for the existing high school that could include the building being used as residential, retail, office, government services, university classrooms, community uses, green spaces, or some combination of uses.*

(Note: this complete plan is available on the district website under the Master Facilities Planning Link.)

Where does the planning process stand now?

The planning process was extended to include two additional community input sessions in January and March in an effort to elicit additional ideas from the public for consideration. A total of twelve additional master facility plan ideas were generated from the District Facilities Committee and those present at the January 19 Community Input Session. All these scenarios were put on public display at the Union County Library and the Middle School Gym Lobby from February 5 through 26 for additional public comment. Additional comments were received from the district blog site.

The District Facilities Committee will seek input from the public on March 16 to help decide which scenarios will be recommended to the School Board for further study and consideration. It is anticipated that the Facilities Committee will make their recommendations at the April 8 School Board Meeting. The final analysis, deliberation, and approval of the district master plan will be conducted by the School Board during the months of April, May, and June. A full description of the planning timeline is available on the Master Facilities Planning link of the district website.

Where do you get your enrollment projections from and are they accurate?

Enrollment projections are provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and posted on their web site on a periodic basis. The district also conducts its own enrollment projections based on actual enrollment history in the district. Enrollment projections tend to be more accurate within one to three years of the projection. As the projections go out over the years, they tend to be less reliable as many variables can affect actual enrollment numbers. The district’s enrollment projections have never been more than 50 students above or below the projection for the next year and have been within 2 students some years.

What is the current enrollment in the district?

The district’s current enrollment is 1910 students for Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 as of March 1, 2010.

What is the projected enrollment?

Projected enrollments can be found on the district web site under the “About” tab. The district projection formula shows an increase from 1910 students in 2009-2010 to 1928 students in 2010-2011, 1955 in 2011-2012, and 1982 in 2012-2013. The state projection formula is showing a larger increase of 1973, 2016, and 2061 students over the same time period. Both the district and the state enrollment projections are showing a steady trend of increasing enrollment over the next five to ten years.

What is the current distribution of students in the district broken out by municipality?

East Buffalo Township	965	51%
Kelly Township	448	23%
Lewisburg Borough	291	15%
Union Township	198	10%
<u>Other</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1%</u>
Total	1910	100%

Other than the well-publicized enrollment projections as a driver, what are the other important factors that drive the need to build or renovate the high school and also to do renovations/additions at the other schools?

There are several reasons to renovate and update our current classrooms and buildings based on instructional needs. Some of our classrooms, especially at the high school are at or well below the minimum square footage recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Department recommends a minimum of 680 square feet per classroom and several rooms at the high school are less than this.

Technology is a major consideration for classrooms of the future. Students and teachers need access to high speed Internet, mobile computing, and reliable networks to learn in a modern instructional environment. Classrooms need to be arranged with the greatest amount of flexibility possible to allow for large group instruction, small group work, separate learning centers, and individualized instruction. We can no longer effectively teach children in classrooms filled with desks in straight rows with the teacher lecturing in front of the room.

Some of our buildings have become dated and are in need of basic infrastructure repair. For example, the high school basement floods every time it rains creating potential problems with moisture, mold and structural issues. The heating and ventilation system at the middle school is now more than forty years old and needs updated.

When the consultants estimated the cost of a major renovation and addition to the high school, did they factor in the cost of replacing/revamping the basic decaying infrastructure (mechanics, etc.)?

It is our understanding that all estimates provided by DeJong Consulting included the complete cost of the project including infrastructure repair on existing facilities or developing new infrastructure such as roads and utilities for new construction. However, the estimates are very rough numbers that could increase or decrease based on the scope of the project.

How much does a “mill” bring in?

One mill of property tax results in approximately \$974,740.00 in revenue for the district.

How is the millage rate calculated for a property?

Our current millage rate is 14.31. This number is multiplied by the assessed value of a property to determine how much is paid in real estate taxes to the district. For example, a home assessed at \$150,000 x .01431 would pay \$2,147 in real estate taxes.

How would a millage increase affect my property taxes?

If one additional mill of tax would be needed to fund a facilities project, the above example would change as follows: A home assessed at \$150,000 x .01531 would pay \$2,297 or \$150 more than shown in the previous example.

How much will a future renovation or construction project cost?

Cost estimate range from approximately \$28,000,000 to \$57,000,000. However, these are very rough estimates and could be reduced or increased when the details of the project are finalized and bids are received. Depending on how much debt is incurred, and how the debt is structured, an additional .5 to 2.5 mills of real estate taxes would be needed to complete a renovation or construction project.

What is the size of the Newman Property?

The Newman Property is 201 acres and is bordered by Kelly Elementary School to the north, the Federal Penitentiary to the west, the Christmas Tree Farm to the south, and Newman Road to the east.

What is the ideal acreage for a new high school with ancillary amenities?

The ideal amount of acreage needed will depend on the project design and how many athletic venues will be constructed. A high school the size of Lewisburg with land needed for parking and athletic fields should be a minimum of 20 acres. This could extend to a larger area depending on the number of fields, buildings, and amenities desired.

Out of the total acreage of the Newman Property, is there a sufficient amount for development that is free of the flood zone and meets other requirements that would be necessary to construct on that land?

The 201 acres of the Newman Property have some designated wetlands on the site. However, the greater majority of the acreage is free of any restrictions and suitable for building.

What are the specific, available, large masses of land (meaning open land with sufficient acreage, that would be considered for sale, lies within the district, would be an appreciably better location than Newman, and is in a flood free zone) that the district could conceivably consider?

The district has not explored the purchase of other property, as it already owns a significant amount of acreage that was purchased for potential expansion.

Does the prison pose a hazard?

Kelly Elementary School has been in very close proximity to the federal prison for many years. Currently, this school houses our youngest and most vulnerable population of students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 3. We have not had any security issues with the prison and maintain a good working relationship with prison authorities to ensure the safety of our children.

Why are we debating this when we already own the property?

There have been some suggestions to find another property to build a school and sell the Newman Property in an attempt to keep any new school closer to the Borough of Lewisburg and East Buffalo Township. This would add an extra set of steps to the facility planning process to ensure that land is available to construct a new school if such a project is included in the plan.

What percentage of the students walk to school in the district?

A survey was taken during homeroom periods and we found that approximately 160 students walk to school on a regular basis. This is 8% of the school population. Approximately 80 students walk to the high school daily, 45 to the middle school, and 35 at Linntown. There are no students that walk to Kelly Elementary School.

What percent of students are bussed, drive themselves, or are driven by their parents?

Our school busses transport approximately 1460 or 76% of students to and from school each day. About 300 or 16% students drive to school or are driven to school.

What are the recommended grade configurations for each level?

The district’s current grade level configurations are effective in meeting the academic, developmental, social, and emotional needs for children. They are as follows:

<i>Kelly Elementary:</i>	<i>Grades Pre-K through 3</i>
<i>Linntown Elementary:</i>	<i>Grades 4-5</i>
<i>Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School:</i>	<i>Grades 6-8</i>
<i>Lewisburg Area High School</i>	<i>Grades 9-12</i>

Another configuration that would potentially be effective is:

<i>Kelly Elementary:</i>	<i>Grades Pre-K through 2</i>
<i>Linntown Elementary:</i>	<i>Grades 3-5</i>
<i>Donald H. Eichhorn Middle School:</i>	<i>Grades 6-8</i>
<i>Lewisburg Area High School</i>	<i>Grades 9-12</i>

Some have suggested a high school for grades 10-12 and return to a junior high configuration for grades 7-9. The junior high configuration runs counter to the middle school movement and most of the literature on effective grouping to meet the social, emotional, and developmental needs of pre-adolescent children.

How does state teacher certification affect grade configurations?

Pennsylvania has recently re-organized its teacher preparation programs into the following classifications for core academic subjects:

- *Grades Pre-K-4* *Early Childhood Education*
- *Grades 4-8* *Elementary/Middle Education by Subject Area*
- *Grades 7-12* *Secondary Education by Subject Area*

Our current grade configurations work well with the new certification classifications. Any master facility plan that groups students outside of these new certification areas should be given careful consideration.

What are the recommended classroom sizes for each grade level?

The district has set a preferred class size of 20 or less at the primary level of learning in grades K-3, and 24 or less at the intermediate level of learning in grades 4-5. There is no preferred class size established for the middle school and high school.

What would happen to the high school if it were no longer a school?

There are many possible uses for the high school if it were no longer to serve as a functioning school including a regional magnet school, a community college, central office and professional development center for the district, a Pre-Kindergarten Center, educational space for the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, a facility for LARA and community events, a senior citizen center, as well as other possibilities. These are only potential use of the facility. The district would work closely with Lewisburg Borough Officials to ensure that the building would continue to be an asset to the community.

How many sports are offered?

The district currently offers 24 varsity as follows:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Football	Girls Basketball	Girls Track and Field
Girls Soccer	Boys Basketball	Boys Track and Field
Boys Soccer	Wrestling	Boys Tennis
Girls Tennis	Girls Swimming and Diving	Baseball
Girls Cross Country	Boys Swimming and Diving	Softball
Boys Cross Country	Bowling	Girls Lacrosse
Girls Field Hockey	Wrestling Cheerleading	Boys Lacrosse
Football Cheerleading	Basketball Cheerleading	
Golf		

We offer 11 Middle School Sports as Follows:

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Football	Girls Basketball	Girls Soccer
Boys Cross Country	Boys Basketball	Boys Soccer
Girls Cross Country	Wrestling	Girls Field Hockey
Cheerleading	Cheerleading	

Where are the district’s athletic fields?

High School: One Field, One Gym

- *Field used for Football in the fall and Girls Lacrosse in the spring.*
- *Gym used for basketball practices. The gym is not capable of hosting varsity events.*

Middle School: Two Fields, One Gym

- *Field 1 - Used for boys and girls soccer in the fall, baseball in the spring*
- *Field 2 – Used for girls varsity practice in the fall and middle school field hockey in the spring*
- *1 Full Size Gym – Used for all middle school and varsity basketball and wrestling events in the fall and the winter. This is the only event gymnasium in the district*

Pawling Complex Behind the Middle School - 3 Fields, 1 Practice Field, and Track

- *Field 1 – Game field for field hockey and track meets*
- *Field 2 – Game field for middle school football in the fall and softball in the spring*
- *Field 3 – Practice field for soccer and softball*
- *Field 4 – Practice field for middle school football and throwing field for track meets*

Linntown Elementary - 1 Practice Field

- *Field used for middle school soccer practice*

Newman Property behind Kelly Elementary - Cross Country Track

Non-School Fields Rented by the District

- *Bucknell Stadium – Used for football games*
- *Bucknell Natatorium – Used for swimming team practice*
- *Winfield Fireman’s Field – Used for boys lacrosse*
- *Borough Tennis Courts – Used for girls and boys tennis*

Is there the potential for private funding for athletics?

Some individuals have approached the district over the past few years wanting to donate private funds toward the construction of a soccer stadium and football stadium. The Lewisburg Alumni Association and Green Dragon Foundation have both expressed interest in raising funds to support the academic, athletic, and arts programs of the school district. However, it would not be responsible to move forward with any fund raising efforts without a Master Facilities Plan in place so all donors have an idea of what they are helping to accomplish.

How do we address parking spaces at each building?

Parking spaces are established by municipality zoning and regulations based on the time of construction or renovation. Typically, we must design ample parking for all personnel working in the buildings with some space available for visitor and delivery vehicles.

Does having administrative offices in a school building affect education in that building?

We are not aware of any advantages or disadvantages to student learning by having the central office located in a school building.

How long is the planning and construction process? What is the timeline? When did it start?

A timeline will be established for the projects within the Master Facilities Plan when the School Board approves it. It should be noted that timelines will be subject to change based on unforeseen circumstances and other variables. Renovation and/or construction of buildings could begin as early as the summer of 2011. However, we anticipate a multi-phase program taking several years to complete.

Who makes the final decision?

Ultimately, the School Board will make the final decision regarding the approval of the Master Facilities Plan and the construction/renovation process.

You can learn more about the Lewisburg Area School District by logging on to www.lasd.us.