



Facility Project Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Over the last year, the topic of growing enrollment and planning for future facility needs has been discussed at regular board meetings and facility committee meetings. Recently, the conversation has deepened about these topics as the result of a facility study conducted last year and the annual bleacher inspection. The results of the facility study indicated there are many options to accommodate more students within our existing footprint by adopting some minor changes, but there are also spaces or structures that were deemed insufficient. WCHS administration is proposing a music addition, configuring vacated space into classrooms, and bleacher replacement. These projects were chosen based on the results of the facility study, student participation in certain programs, and the annual bleacher inspection.

How many students will benefit from the music addition?

The entire student body will benefit from the music addition either directly or indirectly. Students enrolled in music courses will directly benefit from the addition, but the entire student body will indirectly benefit from the area vacated by the music department once it is configured to meet other academic goals.

How will the school pay for these projects? Will my property taxes increase?

The proposed projects will not require a voter approved referendum. Over the past two years, the board of education has dedicated a portion of fund balances to be utilized for future facility improvements and general maintenance. This action, along with a restructuring of current bonds, will allow the district to finance these projects.

Are growing enrollment numbers creating a need for instructional space related to academic programs? How will the music addition help with this issue?

The addition to the school and configuring the space vacated by the music department will create the necessary capacity to accommodate up to 1,700 students. Currently there are approximately 1,370 students enrolled in District #308. The facility in its current state has a maximum utilization of 1,480 students, and enrollment is projected to reach over 1,500 students in the 2021-2022 school year. The facility study shows that the space vacated by the music department can be configured into five classrooms if necessary. There are many options for the vacated space, and decisions about how to use that space will be made based on the needs of the school, students, and faculty.

Why is it necessary to add space for the music program? Can space be found in the current building?

Class sizes for band and choir have exceeded the current dedicated space, thereby creating the need for new space. Around one-third of our student population is enrolled in a music course at WCHS. The subset of choir and band students makes up 110 and 190 musicians respectively (this number does not include the color guard). Both of these programs have added around 25-30 students since last year, and with growing enrollment numbers it can be assumed participation will continue to rise. There are no other spaces inside the school that can accommodate the music programs.

Can you tell me more about the music addition?

The music addition will be located on the northwest corner of the school. The new space will be used to accommodate the growing music program and will include larger band and choir rooms, practice areas, instrument storage and instructional space. The band room will also move from a second floor location to ground level, which will make moving instruments to the practice field and band trailers easier for students. Vacated spaces will be configured to accomplish goals related to academic programs.

Why are you replacing the bleacher system instead of repairing it?

The support structure of the current bleachers system is over 30 years old, which has exceeded the typical life expectancy. The annual bleacher inspection revealed that several repairs were necessary including reinforcement of welds and replacing sections of cracked aluminum seat boards. WCHS administration and members of the board of education began assessing the decision to repair or replace the bleachers, and replacement was considered the best option. The decision to replace the bleachers was influenced by the high number of students, programs and community members that utilize the stadium and by necessary improvements to bring the structure in compliance with safety and handicap accessibility codes. The replacement of bleachers will be a very positive long term investment in the facility and programs going forward.

Will all of the bleachers be replaced?

The proposal includes replacing the west side bleachers (current visitor side) with new bleachers and a press box that would become the home side for all future events. Repairs to the current home side bleachers (east side) would be completed using salvaged parts from the deconstructed bleacher system on the west side of the field. This course of action provides a lower cost alternative for extending the life of the remaining east side bleachers.

When will the projects start?

The projects and bids have been approved by the Board of Education, and the projects should start in the fall of the 2018-2019 school year. The bleacher project will begin in the spring/summer of 2019 and should be completed by the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

Who is the school working with on the projects?

A list of bids was recently approved by the Board of Education. Projects should begin in the fall of the 2018-2019 school year. The school will also continue to work with Farnsworth Group, the district architect.

How can I find out more about these projects going forward?

Once the projects are approved, we are tentatively planning a public meeting at the high school to share more information and answer questions. As additional decisions are made and the project gets closer, we will provide updates using social media, local newspapers and the school website at www.wacohi.net > Community Tab > Facility Projects.

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