



South Williamsport

{AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT}



April 30, 2019

Exploring the Future of the South Williamsport Area School District

The South Williamsport Area School District is conducting a district-wide feasibility study. The study is being conducted by the McKissick Architecture firm. The purpose of a feasibility study is to evaluate district facilities, work with community stakeholders and form future facility recommendations for the district. These recommendations will use current district data such as age of equipment, enrollment trends and educational goals to help guide committee recommendations.

The study will occur in three main phases. Phase 1, Data Collection and Analysis was presented to the public at the school board meeting on Monday, April 15 and is available on the district website for all to review.

During the presentation, representatives from McKissick Architecture and Larson Design Group provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of facilities, essential infrastructure and athletic resources. In addition, the district staff completed a survey regarding the challenges of the current facilities, what their current experience is like and what outcome they would like to see when the project is complete. The survey results provided valuable input from those who work every day inside the school on what they see at the strengths and needs of the facilities.



Phase One of a district-wide feasibility study was completed at the South Williamsport Area School District school board meeting on April 15. Representatives from McKissick Architecture and Larson Design Group presented their data and analysis. The full presentation is available at www.swasd.org.

Using the district's strategic plan as a guide, the end goal of the study is to determine how the district can move from its current educational and athletic spaces into more dynamic and flexible spaces for individualized learning with use of technology for 21st century learning.

Perhaps the most telling part of the data collected was a historical decline in enrollment since 1991 and projected stability in those numbers for at least the next decade. Between 1991 and 2005 the local birth rate was about 100 annual births in the district. Since 2010, the numbers range between 79 and 93 annual births.

The change in annual births directly effects school enrollment. During the 1999-2000 school year, there were 1,577 students enrolled in the district which has declined to 1,283 students enrolled today. Enrollment projections for the next decade are estimated to remain constant at about 1283 students.

Due to the reduction in enrollment, buildings now have excess capacity. The entire district's practical student capacity is 1,795 students but there are only 1,283 students enrolled during the 2018-19 school year. This translates to the three buildings collectively being used at nearly 72 percent. Currently Central Elementary is operating at capacity, but Rommelt and the South Williamsport Jr/Sr High School are under capacity.

To put that into perspective, the high school has a capacity of 947 students but there are 597 students enrolled there this year. Forty-four percent of classes have less than 10 students and 46 percent have between 10 and 19 students.

District Superintendent, Dr. Mark Stamm stated, “Renovating all of the existing buildings is one of the options always considered in a feasibility study, but in this case may not be the best option for the district when we look at current use and future enrollment. We simply have more instructional space than we need today.”

The cost to renovate each building would cost: \$4.38 million for Central, \$4.47 million for Rommelt and \$12 million for the high school. The total cost would be nearly \$21 million to bring each school up to modern standards. However, this approach would still leave the district with more space than is necessary for the current and future student enrollments.

Phase 2 of the planning process begins in mid-April which includes the stakeholders formulating options for how to best utilize each building and implement 21st century learning across the district and what changes need to occur across the district’s athletic facilities.

“The goal of this project is to transform the educational and athletic programs of the district so that our students have the best opportunities available,” Dr. Stamm said.

The next public meeting is at 7 p.m. on June 3 in the high school library where those options will be presented. The master plan will be decided on in early September.

The full presentation of the feasibility study can be found at www.swasd.org.