

South Williamsport Area School District

**Comment Cards Relating to Proposed Building Project
December 2019**

<p>Q. I'm okay with the two school plans. I'm against the new football field. Keep the current field. Tear off the back end of Rommelt and expand the field toward Central Ave.</p>
<p>A. The committee considered this option but chose not to move it forward. The district does not own the properties to the east of Rommelt Elementary. If the rear of Rommelt was demolished, it would still require the purchase of a least three residential properties in order to expand the width of the field.</p>
<p>Q. Entry ways at Central—the 2 new entrances are so distant. The new entrance doesn't seem like the best choice.</p>
<p>A. The bus loop road behind the high school and to the west of Central Elementary was added to increase safety for students during arrival and dismissal. From the bus to the entry door, there will be a longer walk than currently. However, the loop road adds greater safety by separating the parent traffic from the bus traffic.</p>
<p>Q. Build complete stadium at park to have soccer, football, and track! No football field without track. More kids on track than football.</p>
<p>A. The committees explored ten (10) different stadium and field combinations and locations. After much discussion, the committee decided on a new stadium on the site of the current practice field and a track at the park complex as an option. The committee based their decision on maximizing existing field house facilities at the high school, proximity to the existing schools, and maintaining the athletic stadium presence in the center of the community.</p>
<p>Q. Enclose entrance by high school gym to create an actual lobby that is functional.</p>
<p>A. The feasibility plans do include money to reconfigure the interior of the high school main gym including a dedicated room for all sport concessions.</p>
<p>Q. Why no lavatory in the high school science wing?</p>
<p>A. Building restrooms in the high school science wing is possible and this will be discussed during the design phase of the project.</p>
<p>Q. Make parent drop off in back via single lane rather than build a massive retaining wall for bus drop offs. Instead widen front parking lot for a drop-off lane and eliminate center grass so you don't have parking spots near press box.</p>
<p>A. Before and after school, the loop road is for bus traffic. During sporting events, the road can be utilized for spectator traffic and also parking. Whether the road is used for bus or regular vehicle traffic, does not change the width of the road nor the size of a retaining wall. The planned width of the road is twenty feet.</p> <p>Incorporating the center grass area into a parking area was discussed. It is likely to be considered again during the design phased as additional parking.</p>
<p>Q. Our family doesn't understand the shop program is gone with a new building project and careers in construction a possibility. Why don't we take this opportunity and take</p>

<p>advantage of building a solid program? What is a 21st century learning space? How about a middle school/high school-type space like Loyalsock has?</p>
<p>A. The feasibility plan approved by the board does include a space for a modernized “shop” space. This is referred to as a prototype lab adjacent to the high school library on the plans.</p>
<p>Q. Regarding the 21st century learning spaces: Can you please itemize these spaces and explain how these spaces will better prepare our kids to score higher on SAT’s; to help raise their AP Test scores and to better enable them to be accepted into better colleges?</p>
<p>A. The specific uses of these spaces will be refined in the design phase of the project. 21st Century Learning is a broad concept of ideas that refers to critical/analytical thinking, creative, problem solving, working effectively in teams, ethical decision making, and effective communication skills. The mission of the school is to provide an appropriate education to all students whether they are entering the work-force or pursuing additional education. 21st Century Skills are intended to support students on both trajectories.</p>
<p>Q. High School Guidance should be near the office on the 1st floor.</p>
<p>A. The relocation of the counseling suite to the Learning Commons is intended to place this student resource in the center of students. During the final steps in the feasibility study, there were concerns raised about this change in location. Those concerns will be discussed as part of the design phase.</p>
<p>Q. Wrestling Room is at exact opposite end of building as other athletics.</p>
<p>A. The committee reviewed the current location and challenges with that space. The new location (behind the auditorium) was selected by the committees as the most suitable option with the space available. There was a discussion about the distance from the main gym area, but the coaches felt comfortable since this space was a practice location only.</p>
<p>Q. Love the gym addition in the elementary school! Love the upgrades to the auditorium! What dimension will the soccer field be? What if there was a capital campaign for the track/soccer field? Would gladly donate! I would prefer 6th in the elementary school How about corporations getting involved with the sports areas like at Loyalsock?</p>
<p>A. Thank you. The committees spent a significant amount of time working on these preliminary plans. The school board is discussing plans and strategies for a capital campaign. Whatever direction they decide to proceed, the community will be informed and how they can become involved through donations.</p> <p>The dimensions of the proposed soccer field in the new stadium is 360 feet long by 220 feet wide. For comparison, this is the same size field as the one recently completed at Loyalsock Township High School.</p>
<p>Q. Pick a new architect firm instead of one with such a poor reputation.</p>
<p>A. The board engaged in a deliberate and careful selection process over six months. The process began with a request for proposals which were reviewed by board committee. The full board conducted two rounds of public interview sessions with each firm which eventually led to the selection of McKissick. The selection was a through and transparent process that looked carefully at prior projects, costs, and references.</p>
<p>Q. We can’t afford this.</p>

A. Through the careful planning of current and former boards, the district will pay-off its existing debt in 2022. The plan is to roll the existing debt service of \$1.3 million into a new series of bond issues to fund the project. If additional money is needed, it will be between 0.5 and 1.5 mils.
Q. Is there a library?
A. Yes. Both Central and the High School library spaces will be reconfigured into the multi- use spaces and include sections for traditional library books and activities.
Q. Football has 25 kids. This is a lot for 25 kids. If anything build at the cul-de-sac so all can benefit. People are gravitating toward soccer more and more as well as track.
A. The committees evaluated sport participation as well as community expectations. Football remains a popular sport for students and for the broader community. However, the committees also recognized the increasing popularity of soccer, track, cross country, volleyball, baseball, softball, and even new sports on the horizon like field hockey and lacrosse. Through the location and design of a new gym and new stadium, the committees sought to balance all of these activities.
Q. Weight room needs a new floor if it staying where it is. Team rooms need screens or way to watch film. Football coaches office? For the video equipment, etc.
A. These types of details are part of the design phase and will certainly be discussed at that time. Please continue your active participation throughout this process to ensure details, such as this, are not overlooked.
Q. Make the road wide enough to the back of the high school to accommodate parking, etc.
A. The loop road will be 20 feet wide which will accommodate two lanes of traffic or a parking lane and a driving lane.
Q. There are concerns in the community that property taxes will increase significantly. Can you explain to the public how financing the project will alleviate the burden of taxpayers?
A. Between 1999 and 2002, the board raised property taxes 4.75 mils to finance bond issues for a construction project. Those bonds are paid in full in 2022. The board is proposing to use that same 4.75 mils levied in 1999, to finance the new construction project. The final design will likely include the need for an additional tax increase, but it will be between 0.5 and 1.5 mils.
Q. We should get a track before we build a new football field. We already have a football field that can be used while we build the track. Also, the drama department has not had upgrades to the stage in so long.
A. The committees discussed the need to address all aspects of the schools educational and co-curricular programs in addition to its athletic resources. The Rodney K. Morgan’s stadium holds fond memories for athletes, alumni, and families. Unfortunately, site upgrades are problematic given the proximity of surrounding properties and borough streets. The proposal for new athletic resources seeks to address the limitations of the new stadium and create multiple sports opportunities for the student body. Yes the drama program, and all of our arts programs will see additional spaces and remodeling. The art room is relocated to the learning commons where gallery space is readily available. The music and chorus rooms will both be remodeled. The

auditorium will receive the most attention with new seats, new lights, and a new sound system. The stage itself was not discussed, but can be as part of the design phase.
Q. Why do we do all this and not get a natatorium for swimmers?
A. There was no discussion at either committee to add a pool. For South students who do wish to swim competitively, the district co-ops with the Williamsport Area School District for this sport. It is open to both boys and girls in grades 9-12.
Q. Okay so building a bunch of stuff for sports, but still fix our auditorium (HS) when the stage is torn up, curtains ripped. (Students sewed them back together) and half of the seating is gone, plus lights are from the 70's. I feel everything that has to do with sports is in perfect condition.
A. The community and board is clearly interested in seeing investment in all aspects of the schools. As such, the feasibility study committees were tasked with three areas: reconditioning of the physical building exteriors and for HVAC, upgrades to education and co-curricular spaces, and enhancements to athletic resources. The approved plans equally addressed all of these areas such as new roofs, new heating and cooling systems, new educational spaces, and a new gymnasium to name a few. Special attention was given to the auditorium. The space itself is sound, but the seating, lighting, and sound systems will be replaced.
Q. If the new stadium is an all-weather field, why do we need a practice field? Will the facility upgrades consist of fire suppression additions/upgrades? Adding these STEM Labs will have what kind of impact on the yearly budget?
A. Yes, the new stadium is proposed to be an all-weather field. The practice field is still needed for practices and other events when the main stadium field is in use. Multiple sports will use the all-weather stadium so a second field is still needed just as there are multiple gymnasiums. The construction of the STEM labs will be part of the construction budget. Annual cost of operating supplies for the STEM labs will be included in the annual budget as any other science or technology lab.
Q. We should offer the students a track before a football field. We already have a field that can be played on perfectly fine. South students have been unprivileged to have a home track meet since the 70's.
A. The committees discussed all the athletic resources at length. There was agreement that South should offer a suitable track program to the student body. However, since the track does not fit around a new stadium at the high school, the committees felt the best location for that facility is the park complex adjacent to the existing baseball and softball fields. This approach is similar to other districts locally that separated their football / soccer stadiums from a track complex due to space limitations.
Q. Concerns over condensed/lack thereof library in Central Technology is great but can take away the experiences that happen in an actual library. Kids need to get away from screen time—not increase it! Also, lack of librarian for each school. Library time is no longer schedule—now only when busy teachers fit it in.
A. Libraries uses in schools and in the communities are changing. Libraries have always represented the primary location where individuals access information and literature. Modern libraries, like the ones envisioned at the high school and the elementary

<p>school, will continue to fulfill that vital role. It will look different, but its core purpose remains the same.</p>
<p>Q. All of these renovations are going to put a real burden on the taxpayers of this district. People are going to want to sell their property and won't be able to due to taxes increasing every year. I agree something needs to be done but use some frugal tactics in your decision making. We're not millionaires.</p>
<p>A. The board and administration are in agreement with your concerns. The money for this project comes from an existing \$1.3 million debt payment that is currently made. This debt is paid-in-full in 2022. The board plans to reallocate that same money to the new construction project. The community may see 0.5 to 1.5 mils of new taxes to support this project.</p>
<p>Q. I know STEM labs are important, but are there plans to have a library in either the K-6 or Jr./Sr. High Building? Having a library is vital to promoting literacy and reading! It is most important at the elementary level in my opinion.</p>
<p>A. Yes, libraries are important in all levels of education. Both buildings will have multi-use spaces that included dedicated sections for traditional lending libraries. The STEM / Maker Spaces will be active learning environments where hands-on activities are included with reading.</p>
<p>Q. Is a concession stand accessible from new central gym?</p>
<p>A. Yes. The concession stand will be accessible from the stadium side and from inside the gymnasium.</p>