

Grades 4 through 8 School Building Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

To all Citizens of East Haddam:

In anticipation of a June referendum on a new school building project, the Board of Education created the following list of frequently asked questions from the many comments and questions which it received over the past two months. We hope you find the information helpful.

The Members of the EHBOE

1. How did the Board decide on a 4-8 school?

The decision was based on several factors: four referendums on a new elementary school failed to produce a positive result, a new middle school is needed due to the poor physical condition of the existing 1923 building, a 4-8 school will keep the school district to three schools, which seems to be to the liking of many Townspeople, and a 4-8 school will immediately relieve the overcrowded conditions at both EHES and the middle school.

2. Will the fourth and fifth graders be separated from the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders?

Yes, the new school will be designed with two separate wings in order to keep the 4th and 5th grade classrooms in a different part of the building from the 6, 7 and 8th grade classrooms.

3. How will the bussing work?

4th & 5th graders will be bussed to school with the K-3 students. The 6,7, & 8th graders will ride to school on busses with the high school students.

4. Will this plan require more busses?

This plan should not require more busses as long as the student population does not grow faster than student enrollment projections indicate.

5. Will the fourth and fifth graders be organized like the students at the middle school?

No, the plan is to keep the 4th and 5th graders in a self-contained elementary school model. The 6, 7, and 8th graders will be organized by teams as they are now at our middle school.

6. How does the 4 & 5 graders schedule differ from the 6-8 schedule?

The 4th and 5th graders will have a single teacher for most of their academic subjects but different teachers for special subjects like art, music, health and PE. The 6-8 schedule will require a different teacher for every subject.

7. Are there other communities that have a 4-8 school?

There are two schools in Connecticut that are organized by grades 4-8: Old Saybrook Middle School in Old Saybrook and Hall Memorial School in Willington. From all accounts, the Old Saybrook Middle School, in particular, has been very successful.

8. What impact will this school have on the budget?

The cost to build a new school will be bonded over a period of twenty years that will lessen the impact on individual taxpayers. The actual cost of the school has not been determined. The cost to run and operate the school should not have a significant impact on the education budget since no new programs are being proposed.

9. What is the timeline for the new school?

If a referendum is held before June 30, 2004, the Board of Education anticipates that the school could open as early as January of 2008.

10. Will the school be built to allow for growth in student population?

Yes, the school will be designed to allow for an addition, if necessary.

11. What are the benefits to the children?

The benefits are numerous: state-of-the-art technology, a comprehensive and contemporary media center to access information, fully equipped science labs, appropriate instructional space for all subject areas, modern and up-to-date health room, a clean and safe school environment, energy efficient lighting, modern kitchen facilities for food preparation, developmentally appropriate physical education facilities, quality playground and athletic facilities, but most importantly an exciting school environment in which to learn.

12. Will the new school have a full-sized gym?

Yes, while a full sized gymnasium is not required or necessary for the elementary grades it is needed to conduct middle school physical education classes, intramural activities, interscholastic athletics and for community use for both youth and adult activities.

13. Who will be the administrator in charge of the fourth and fifth grades?

The middle school principal and assistant will be responsible for all programs within the new facility.

14. What programs will be offered to students in the new school?

The Board is not expecting to offer any new programs therefore, the programs that are currently being offered to our students will continue.

15. What happens to the present middle school building once the 4-8 school is built?

The Board of Education will return the building to the Town and will become the responsibility of the Board of Selectman to determine its future use. It will most likely be used as a municipal town office building.

16. Where will the new school be located?

The Board of Education has expressed an interest in locating the new school as close to the existing elementary school and high school as possible. The Building Committee is looking into all parcels of land that are 20 acres or more and are within close proximity to our present schools.

17. Will the art room, media center, and music room be large enough to handle the program needs for both groups of students?

Yes, the preferred student/teacher ration is 20 to 1 for all grades. The rooms should have ample space for their respective programs.

18. What will be the reimbursement rate to the Town for this project?

If the project passes a referendum vote before June 30, 2004 the reimbursement rate for the project will be 48.93%.

19. Can the East Haddam Elementary School be expanded?

Additional rooms can be added on to EHES, however, due to the septic system limitations, the total population at the school should not exceed more than 600 students, which is the current population at the school.

20. Will the media center at East Haddam Elementary School be renovated?

The Board of Education's Long Range School Facilities Plan calls for a study to be done at the elementary school in 2008 to determine if and when improvements are needed.