

Ringwood Public Schools Facilities Committee Questions & Answers

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GENERAL ISSUES

1. Why are we doing this...and why are we doing this NOW?

Our school buildings are in dire need of extensive necessary repairs. If the facilities problems are not addressed now, they will continue to deteriorate and will cost much more to maintain and repair in the long run. Educating children in substandard buildings is undesirable, unsafe and not conducive to maximum learning.

In the state of New Jersey, every community has the responsibility of providing a first-rate education to the children of their district. Part of this responsibility is to provide adequate facilities for education to take place. It is the local board of education's responsibility to ensure that the best facilities are provided at the best possible price to the taxpayers of the district. That is exactly what this project does.

2. What's wrong with the buildings the way they are right now?

E.G. Hewitt School has the most extensive issues of the four district schools. It contains a "portable" section that includes the school's media center, computer lab, and two special education classrooms. This portable section was delivered to the school as a temporary accommodation in the 1970's . . . it has exceeded its prescribed life by more than 20 years. The floors in the temporary section sag and "give" when one lightly jumps up and down because the portable section was never set on a full foundation and its integrity is compromised. Floor tiles in the portable section of the school are continually replaced due to cracking. The heating system in the portable section has completely shut down and has been abandoned. In 2004 temporary electric heaters were hung from the ceilings to provide emergency heat. These heaters remain today.

The Hewitt School cafeteria is set in a subterranean, confined environment. There are low ceilings and no windows. The space is not a comfortable, airy space for children to gather . . . it was never designed to accommodate large groups of children.

The Hewitt School has three different heating systems for the three different sections of the building. As was already mentioned, one of these systems has completely failed.

Because of the age of the Hewitt School, repairs are extremely expensive. \$92,000 was spent for maintenance of failing heating, plumbing, lighting, and structural systems during the 2005-06 school

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year. Over the past five years \$450,842 has been spent for the repair of these systems. Due to the age of the E. G. Hewitt School and the extraordinary cost of maintaining and operating it, the school will be taken out of service.

Robert Erskine School and the **Peter Cooper School** both have boilers and univent systems that are in disrepair. Heat is unregulated . . . if one turns off the heat in one classroom because the temperature is too warm, another classroom might freeze. The result is that during the winter months it is not unusual to see children sitting in classrooms wearing their outside coats . . . while in other nearby classrooms windows are opened wide because the heat in those rooms is stifling. Windows present another difficulty . . . many do not open and some have in recent years fallen out of their casing due to age. Present single-paned, aluminum windows are not energy-efficient and expensive heat and uncomfortable winter chill seep right through them.

It is not uncommon for teachers who work in these buildings to report that classroom temperature problems have adversely affected their ability to deliver classroom instruction.

It is important to note that even when new boilers are placed in the Erskine School and Cooper School, new heating systems will need to be installed as well . . . also, additional electrical power will be required to run the system. We plan to install new boilers, temperature controls, and univents at Erskine School at a cost of \$1,900,500. Similar work will be performed at Cooper School for \$2,234,900. New windows will be installed at Erskine School at a cost of \$814,000. New windows at Cooper School: \$605,000. Necessary electrical upgrades at Erskine: \$330,000. Electrical upgrades at Cooper: \$352,000.

At the **M.J. Ryerson Middle School** the roof is failing. There is consistent water intrusion into multiple classrooms. This water intrusion that runs down the classroom walls throughout the building has weakened the mortar in the brick walls and re-pointing is now called for. The cost of a new roof for the Ryerson School is \$1,474,000.

The single-paned windows in the Ryerson building have been damaged because of roof and weathering problems. As at the Erskine and Cooper schools, the current windows in the Ryerson School are not energy-efficient. The steel lintels at the top of the majority of the building's windows are rusted and need replacement. The price of replacing windows and lintels at the Ryerson School is \$660,000.

Again, as in the Erskine and Cooper schools, the heat regulation given by the 35-year-old univent system at Ryerson is inadequate. During the winter months, some classrooms are freezing cold while other nearby classrooms have their windows thrown wide open because they are stiflingly hot.

During 2004 the heating system in the Ryerson mini-auditorium completely shut down. That space, where students gather for large-group instruction and chorus rehearsal, offers no heat whatsoever. In this space as well, students often wear outside winter jackets during class to remain comfortable. The price of a temperature-regulating system and a new boiler at the school is \$992,000. Electrical Upgrades at Ryerson: \$554,500

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3. What remedies for building problems did the Facilities Committee consider?

The School Facilities Committee looked at numerous plans and variations of plans during more than 20 months of meetings. The total number of plans and options is too numerous to communicate in this document. We have compiled information on four of the most popular plans among committee members for your perusal.

The first remedy that was considered was to combine Erskine School, Cooper School, Hewitt School, and the administration building into one campus . . . and repair Ryerson. A new, 1,000 student school building would be constructed on the Hewitt School property. The campus would be divided into two clearly defined “wings” . . . an early childhood wing for children in grades kindergarten through grade 2, and an elementary school wing for children in grades 3 through 5. The campus would contain athletic facilities and a community center open to all Ringwood citizens. This plan would allow the school district to lease or sell the Cooper, Erskine, and administration buildings and use the revenue to offset the cost of the new building. This plan would allow for the reduction in workforce of 1 principal, 1.5 nurses, 3 secretaries, 1 maintenance person, 2 media specialists, and 2 attendance paraprofessionals . . . again providing revenue to offset the cost of the new building. .

Ryerson would receive air conditioning in selected rooms, a new roof, replaced windows, technology upgrades, electric upgrades, HVAC upgrades, and asbestos removal (total \$10,000,000 plus interest).

The average cost for this project, after state funding and personnel and other savings is \$260.00 per household per year over the 30 year term.

The second remedy that was considered was to repair all 4 of the existing buildings and replace the Hewitt portable classrooms. Ryerson would be modernized and would receive such upgrades as air conditioning in some rooms, a new roof, replaced windows, technology upgrades, electric upgrades, HVAC upgrades, and asbestos removal. Hewitt would receive new univents, electric upgrades, technology upgrades, asbestos removal, replaced windows, and HVAC controls. Cooper would receive new univents, electric upgrades, technology upgrades, asbestos removal, replaced windows, and HVAC controls. Erskine would receive new univents, electric upgrades, technology upgrades, asbestos removal, replaced windows, replaced boilers, and HVAC controls. New portable classrooms for Hewitt. Cost per average home per year \$188.00 for 30 years.

The third remedy that was considered was to repair Ryerson . . . have all students in kindergarten through grade 3 attend a new school building constructed on the Hewitt property . . . repair Cooper and have all 4th and 5th grade students attend the Cooper School . . . have the administration building move into the new building . . . and have the k-3 school and Cooper receive enhanced recreation facilities (playgrounds, playing fields). This plan would reduce the size, and therefore cost, of the proposed new building . . . and it would offer some of the financial advantages of reduced staff. The disadvantage of this plan is that it uproots the entire Hewitt School community and maintains the number of transitions between schools at 2. There would be a transition between the new school and

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Hewitt and 2 years later a transition between Hewitt and Ryerson. A plan that reduces the number of transitions is a better plan with less disruptions to the educational process. The savings for combining two K-3 schools into a completely brand new school building was not significant enough to justify the new construction.

The fourth and final plan considered was to repair Ryerson, Erskine, and Cooper and take our oldest and most in-need-of-repair building, Hewitt, out of service. This plan would have significant savings due to reduced administrative costs as well as revenue generated via the rental of the Hewitt School. There would also be savings from improved heating systems and better insulation through window replacement in the 3 remaining schools. An addition of 5 classrooms would be required at Ryerson to accommodate the 5th grade. Fourth grade would be maintained in Cooper and Erskine by adding onto Erskine. Additions for Erskine would be 10 classrooms, 2 small group instruction rooms or office space, an elevator, and a new gymnasium. All current district fields would be maintained for sports and a new gymnasium would be beneficial to Ringwood's recreational programs as well as serving as a teen center. This plan would cost \$28.8 million at an annual cost to the average homeowner of **less than \$90.00** per year for 30 years.

The committee unanimously decided on the fourth and final plan. This plan was brought to the full board on numerous occasions over the fall and winter to answer questions and on two occasions, March 19th, 2007 and April 16th, 2007, the full board voted unanimously to move forward with **Plan Four** for a September 25th, 2007 referendum. The \$28.8 million project cost would have a cost of **less than \$8.00 per month** to the average Ringwood homeowner. Multiple presentations by the Ringwood Board of Education and the School Facilities Committee were provided to the public over the previous year.

In addition, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had problems with plan 1, the construction of a new school. The Storm Water Management regulations of the DEP would prohibit Ringwood from building a new school as described in the first plan because of nearby streams and wetlands. Plan four actually comes out at one third of the cost of the new school option (**Plan One**) and less than half of the repair all schools options (**Plan Two**). The cost to the average homeowner was not calculated for **Plan Three** due to the fact that the overall concept did not warrant pursuing to that level. Repairing and Refurbishing Hewitt did not seem to be in our best interests due to the cost and scope of the project as well as the overall age of the building.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

4. What are the educational benefits expected from a new school configuration?

There is no question that school facilities affect learning. The attributes that most affect academic outcome are indoor air quality, ventilation and thermal comfort, lighting, acoustics, building age and quality, spatial configuration, and school and class sizes. Renovations and new additions to our buildings and taking Hewitt School out of service would eliminate many of the elements from the existing Ringwood Elementary facilities which detract from learning (air quality, thermal comfort, acoustics, building age, spatial configuration), maintain the positive elements currently in place (smaller class sizes) and would create a comfortable learning environment which is conducive to optimal learning.

Our plans have been designed to foster the education of students, support quality teaching, increase community involvement in our schools, and offer students equal opportunities, resources and backgrounds before attending the middle school.

While teachers will continue to do an excellent job of working with our children and continue to get the fine results to which you have become accustomed, the improved facilities will allow them to use all of the new programs and technologies to help our students excel in the 21st century. It will allow them to be competitive with the very best schools and districts at the same time as keeping them healthy and safe in a loving environment.

5. What is the philosophy behind having kindergarten through 4th grade housed in one building? What are the social and/or educational impacts?

The current configuration of Ringwood schools is unique. Two K-3 schools feed into one 4-5 school, and those students all then attend a single middle school. As a result, there are some key considerations for Ringwood families when proposing a new building configuration to house our K-4 students in our elementary schools and 5-8 students in our middle school:

Transitions: Ringwood students encounter a transition year in 4th grade and again two years later in 6th. It is generally accepted that there is significant achievement loss during each transition year. Certainly some students regain what is lost, but students who make fewer transitions naturally need

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less time to make up for achievement loss created by transitions. The new facility proposal would eliminate one transition and its associated loss of achievement.

Start and Dismissal Times: To facilitate the transportation of students to four different elementary schools, Ringwood currently employs staggered start and dismissal times, causing issues for some families who would prefer older children to be available to meet younger siblings at bus stops or to baby-sit until a parent arrives home. The proposal would intrinsically eliminate this issue because K-4 students would have a single start and dismissal time, and middle school students would be dismissed before younger students.

Social: This benefit can be a passive one, something as simple as a child recognizing a familiar friendly face in the hallway, or one educators could use to foster positive relationships between all of our learners. Older students could positively influence younger ones through programs designed for that express purpose.

School Pride: When students attend the same school for four years, they naturally become more attached to it, exhibit more pride and ownership of it, and feel more secure of their own place within that school. This translates to a more positive developmental experience for all students.

Parent Involvement: With children in fewer schools, it naturally follows that more parents would be inclined to dedicate time to the schools. At the same time, the PTO/ECHO burden would be alleviated by eliminating the need for duplication of certain positions and efforts. The anticipated result would be more parents contributing towards the enhancement of our children's education, providing an increased community spirit and a measurable benefit for all our students.

6. Why is full day Kindergarten not included in this project?

The committee gave very serious consideration to the popular concerns among many Ringwood residents for full day kindergarten. We looked into studies to determine whether full day kindergarten students had an educational advantage over students with half day kindergarten and the studies showed that by the fourth grade all students were on a level playing field and that there was no advantage either way. If there was an apparent educational advantage for full day kindergarten, the committee and the board would certainly have taken that into consideration.

The committee researched two prominent studies evaluating the educational benefits of full day kindergarten. The first was based on the best performing students/schools in the state. This study showed that of the 25 best performing schools, half had full day kindergarten and half had half day kindergarten. The second finding indicated that in districts where there was a noticeable difference, such as inner city schools, the educational advantage of full day kindergarten was no longer observable by fourth grade.

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With there being no apparent educational advantage either way, we looked at other pertinent factors such as benefit to working parents, the cost of additional classrooms and the cost of adding additional teachers to teach the extra full day students. Kindergarten teachers now teach two classes per day. We would need one teacher per kindergarten session for full time kindergarten in addition to twice as many kindergarten classrooms.

Building additional kindergarten classrooms would cost between 2 to 3 million dollars at each of the Erskine and Cooper schools for a total construction cost around 4 to 6 million dollars. Most likely, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection would prevent us from building new classrooms at Cooper due to environmental constraints. In addition, the cost of the additional teachers would be over \$250,000 per year which would add another 50 to 60 dollars in annual taxes for each taxpaying resident.

After extensive research and deliberation, the committee ultimately recommended against tying full day kindergarten into this referendum proposal. It is highly likely the subject will be revisited in the future, and at that time the circumstances may be more favorable for this type of endeavor.

Throughout the process, the Facilities Committee continually weighed benefits to students against costs to taxpayers, and streamlined their Board-approved proposal to include only those facility improvements that were necessary to keep our children safe and in an optimal learning environment.

7. What about our seniors? Is it possible to incorporate a Senior Center into the plan?

The committee thoroughly explored the notion of providing a meeting and social center for our senior residents in the Hewitt school. There was much excitement and enthusiasm in support of providing a benefit to this very important, although frequently overlooked, segment of our community. Again, we were brought back to the task to which we had been assigned: the provision of a safe environment conducive to maximum educational benefits. It was not the duty of the committee to provide additional community benefits, however nice and welcomed they may be. The plan provided by the committee includes, by necessity – and with respect to the taxpayer footing the bill, only those facilities improvements that would keep our students safe and comfortable in an effort to maximize their ability to learn.

Like the all-day Kindergarten proposal, the committee felt this issue could very well be revisited by the Board of Education in the future, once the referendum has passed, construction is complete, and there is a clearer understanding of our facilities options.

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FISCAL ISSUES

8. How much is this really going to cost the taxpayer? How many years will we be paying for this?

The plan is to pay through a bond over a period of 30 years.

There are two major projects we are looking at. The first, the renovation of Erskine, Cooper and Ryerson, is estimated to cost \$15,780,700 and it includes new roofing for Ryerson and Erskine, new windows at all schools, technology and electrical upgrades, fire safety upgrades, heating and air handling upgrades, new boilers, new doors, ADA upgrades, and numerous other improvements. The second, new additions to Erskine and Ryerson, is estimated to cost \$13,005,840 and it includes adding 5 classrooms to Ryerson and adding 10 classrooms, 2 small group instruction rooms, an elevator, and a new gymnasium to Erskine.

With the current configuration the bond issue would be for \$28,786,540.

When factoring in the cost of saving of personnel cuts the average taxpayer would see an increase of **\$83.24** per year.

9. What kind of funding will be available?

State aid for construction will come through debt service. The state will reimburse the school district for principal and interest spent for projects that have received prior approval by the state. For a district like Ringwood, reimbursement has typically been 40% for repairs on existing buildings and 18% for new construction. An estimate of the state's contribution of principle and interest would be in the area of \$16,000,000.

10. Will the referendum include the cost of repairs to Ryerson?

Yes. See answer to question #3 and #6 of this document.

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11. Isn't it more reasonable and less expensive to fix Hewitt School rather than take it out of service?

No it would not. The costs of maintaining four small community schools is much greater in the long run, and we would lose out on the administrative/personnel savings of closing one school as well as the revenue generated by leasing the Hewitt School. While it may appear to be less expensive on the surface, it is not necessarily more reasonable or cost effective. Fixing up the Hewitt building will still leave us with an aging facility and the ever-increasing number of problems and system failures that come with that. We will need a major continuing infusion of funds on a regular basis to keep up with the maintenance issues. In the long run, that would be the far more expensive solution. Also, a major source of savings from our new construction at Ryerson and Erskine comes from an anticipated reduction in administrative cost by taking our oldest elementary school out of service. The savings on personnel is significant.

The project cost for cost for keeping Hewitt would an estimated \$24,877,290 and the cost to the average homeowner over 30 years would be estimated at **\$188.16**, over \$100 more per year for each Ringwood family than our current proposal.

12. If we go through with the referendum, won't we have to do it all over again in 30 years?

While no one can foresee 30 years into the future, the new configuration would be designed to last beyond thirty years, just as all of our present facilities have been.

13. What will happen to Hewitt School?

While construction is going on all students would continue attending their classes under the current four school configuration. When the new additions are completed we would like to see the Hewitt building rented out for the 30-year period. We anticipate this rent would be used to offset the cost of the new building. Second, if we cannot rent Hewitt out we would sell it for educational or commercial purposes and use the money from the sale to reduce the amount of the bond.

14. Are you going to sell Hewitt School?

At the present time, the board would be looking to lease Hewitt School. If we cannot rent Hewitt to a stable tenant then we will look to sell the building.

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15. If Hewitt is in bad shape, who would be interested in renting it?

The Board has already had inquiries from other educational organizations. The properties would be leased on “triple net terms” which means the tenant picks up all costs associated with maintaining the facilities. All future repairs and refurbishments to the building would be the responsibility of the lease holder.

16. Have the effects of increased student population on the wastewater plant at Erskine and the holding tank at Cooper been assessed?

The board has taken current sewage conditions at both schools into account while developing the current plan. The smaller student population will be at Peter Cooper School where the holding tank is located. Special education classes are being moved from Cooper to Erskine to maintain the smallest possible student enrollment at Cooper. Increased population at the Cooper School is being held to a minimum. The special education classes will reside at Erskine in addition to the new 4th graders where the sewage treatment plant is located.

17. What will happen to the Board Office?

The possibility of relocating the board offices to Ryerson was evaluated and it was deemed to be too expensive to make the move. No changes will be made to the board office.

18. Will the cost of the project include all furniture and equipment for the new additions?

Yes. All technology requirements desk, chairs, cabinetry, plumbing, carpentry, etc. are included. Some materials may also be removed from the Hewitt School.

19. What happens if we do nothing?

Doing nothing is not an option. There are definite maintenance issues dealing with the health and

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safety of the students, which must be addressed as soon as possible. The roof at Ryerson and the portable classrooms at Hewitt, in particular, need to be replaced as soon as possible. This will cost the taxpayers about eight million dollars with no offset in personnel costs, and these two repairs do not address many of the concerns outlined in the answer to question #2 of this document.

Under current state law, the community has a financial and moral responsibility to the students of the district to fund an effective educational plan. Many variations to the current plan have been studied over the last 2½ years and the current plan was deemed to be the least expensive and most productive solution for the Ringwood school district. Closing Hewitt School is a very important part of the financing of the current project.

PERSONNEL ISSUES

20. How are we going to save on administrative costs?

Savings from administrative costs will be substantial. By moving from four buildings to three, we anticipate reducing administrative and support staff positions by approximately 25%. Some of these positions are duplicate positions that would no longer be required in the move to fewer buildings. Among those we are considering eliminating and/or reducing are one principal, one secretary and other office personnel, school nurse, maintenance and custodial workers, and cafeteria personnel. We also anticipate sharing other academic resources such as computer and science labs, media center resources, etc. and will enjoy savings in these areas as well.

21. Will the Superintendent be expected to take on a more supervisory role in the buildings?

Although early in the research process the Facilities Committee had considered moving our Superintendent and Board Office to Ryerson School, for now our Superintendent and Board office will remain at its current Carletondale Road location which would preclude the superintendent from taking on any additional supervisory responsibilities.

22. How can 1 nurse be responsible for the 675 students now expected at Ryerson?

We've investigated other school districts, and one nurse appears to be the norm for a school of this size. If it becomes an issue, we would also consider hiring a part-time nurse who would be scheduled to work during those hours when the full-time nurse is busiest.

23. How many Media Specialists will be there?

One Media Specialist for each building.

ISSUES OF SIZE

- 24.** Will we be able to move children out of the K-4 schools quickly in case of an emergency? Where would you relocate them?

All schools, new or old, must be an emergency plan in place in order to be open. Relocation could be to a number of different locations that have already been chosen.

- 25.** Do you have an emergency plan in place?

All of our schools currently have emergency plans in place, and a new one will be developed in cooperation with the Office of Emergency Management to accommodate our new school configuration including student enrollment levels.

- 26.** How will younger children be integrated with 4th Graders – and how will 5th Graders be integrated with the older students?

Fourth Graders will simply stay an additional year in the school they have attended since Kindergarten. These older children would be expected to take on the responsibility of modeling good behavior for the younger children.

In Ryerson, we plan to give the Fifth Graders a wing of their own.

- 27.** How will the additional students impact lunch times and cafeteria capacity in our existing facilities?

We plan to avail ourselves of many techniques to maximize seating and serving capacity in our existing cafeterias. These include, but are not limited to: utilizing tables with chairs in lieu of our

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current tables-with-attached-bench seating arrangement to maximize seating capacity per table; utilizing two lunch lines to provide more efficient service; and adding/staggering lunch periods to maximize overall room capacity. In addition, in our Erskine facility, the addition of a gymnasium will eliminate some of the current scheduling issues that arise from using one room for lunch as well as physical education classes.

28. Is there adequate gym space for all the classes?

We will be adding a new gymnasium at Robert Erskine School to accommodate the additional students at that facility. The new large group space will alleviate lunch/physical education scheduling issues in the current cafeteria while providing a bright, state-of-the-art facility for the Robert Erskine Physical Education classes, as well as Ringwood Recreation usage.

Peter Cooper School and M J Ryerson School present no requirement for additional gymnasium space.

29. How do you plan to handle the traffic at drop off/pick up points?

The same way we currently do for all the schools. We may also stagger pick-up and drop-off times to ease traffic congestion at the three schools.

30. How will parking at Robert Erskine School be handled?

We are actually tripling the number of spaces at Erskine. This will greatly ease the parking problems at Erskine, not only for daily operations but also for special events. See the attached diagram for more information. We still maintain a field and playground area.

Current parking spots: 48

Current staff: 47

Future parking: 145

Future staff: 85

The bus pick-up and drop-off area is being moved to the front of the building. The parking in the center of the lot is being removed to allow for buses to turn around.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

31. How will the superfund site located in Ringwood impact the referendum?

The current Superfund Site is being investigated by Ford, USEPA and NJDEP and is not associated with Ringwood Schools or projects. The state funding for school construction and repair is administered by the State of New Jersey Department of Education and the School Construction Corporation or its successor.

32. Our town is environmentally sensitive. What will be done to protect the surrounding natural habitat?

The Facilities Committee has documented the environmental attributes of the school properties and has met with the NJDEP to chart the path forward for identifying those attributes that must be protected. The committee has every intention of working closely with the DEP to protect the environmental qualities of the sites.

33. How much of a buffer is required between the stream and wetlands on the properties?

Informal discussions with NJ DEP indicate that wetland buffers will range between 75 and 150 ft. depending upon the permitting process applied. Buffers on the streams are up to 300 ft. depending upon the type of land use next to the stream and the permitting process that is applied.

34. What kind of septic system will be utilized?

A preliminary design for septic systems that can handle the anticipated enrollment for the new school configuration is currently being developed so we may better understand our requirements in this area. It is possible that no adjustments to our existing systems will be needed. Chances are good that no modifications, and thus no additional cost, will be required in this area.

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35. Will closing Hewitt or the new school additions impact current playing fields?

We will retain the use of the Hewitt School playing fields and skate parks. We will be adding a brand new gymnasium facility at the Erskine School. The Hewitt School gymnasium may or may not be available for Ringwood Recreation use, contingent upon the terms of the lease agreement with the future lessee of the property. The small ball field at Erskine will be relocated, but no changes to current dimensions will be made.

36. How will the Highlands Act impact our plans for building new additions on two of our school buildings?

The Highlands Act does identify schools as an exemption from the regulations enforced under the Act. A Highland Resource Assessment Determination will still be required to qualify for any construction activity on the properties and to qualify for the exemption.

37. How will the Department of Environmental Protection rules and regulations concerning Storm Water regulations impact our plans for building new additions on two of our school buildings?

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection rules and regulations for Storm Water Management produce a minor problem for the project at Erskine. All new construction at Erskine meets DEP requirements except for the new driveway. Storm Water regulations require a 300 foot buffer from most streams such as Erskine Brook, the stream across the street from Erskine School. The Facilities committee has worked closely with the DEP and is in the process of working out details for our driveway into the Erskine parking lot. This will be completed during May of 2007.

CONSTRUCTION ISSUES

- 38.** How long before construction begins after the referendum is approved?

Approximately 12 months after the referendum is successfully passed by the Ringwood voters.

- 39.** What would happen if the project turns out costing more than we anticipated once the bids come in? What happens to the money if we spend less than allocated?

The current estimated costs are based on standard estimates determined by the NJ Dept. of Education. Included in the estimate is a 10% buffer in the event unanticipated costs arise. However, in the event that there is a cost overrun the voters of Ringwood would have to vote on any additional expenditures.

If we spend less than the allocated amount of money, the overage would be used to pay down the loan.

- 40.** What safety measures are going to be put in place once construction begins?

The Ringwood Board of Education, in cooperation with the architect and construction manager, will develop a safety plan prior to any construction taking place in the district. Every consideration will be given to removing children from potential work sites, thus minimizing the risk of both disruption to education as well as injury. Clear and strict guidelines will be implemented to ensure the safety of students, staff and parents.

Much work will be done over night when children are not present. The new wing might be done during the day, but renovations within the schools themselves will be performed at night to avoid disrupting the children's learning environment.

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41. Will children and staff be in the buildings when construction begins?

During construction, 4th and 5th Graders will still attend classes at the Hewitt School. Classes at Peter Cooper School will also continue undisturbed by the projected undertaking since there will be no new construction at that facility. At Ryerson and Erskine schools, children will remain on the site in their regular classrooms while construction takes place. As much of the work as possible will be done at night when children and staff are not present. If required, children can be housed in temporary classrooms. Every conceivable measure will be taken to ensure the safety of our children and staff during this phase. Plans are being developed to ensure adequate parking and areas for recess/play time during this time period to minimize the affects of the construction on our educational community.

42. Will children be housed in temporary classrooms? Where? Are they as safe as regular classrooms? How many will we need? Where will they be located? How much does this add to the total cost of the project?

Some children at the Ryerson and Erskine schools may certainly be housed in temporary classrooms during the construction phase. These structures are safe, heated, air conditioned, have private restrooms and all amenities associated with traditional classrooms. They will be located adjacent to the buildings. Parking will be relocated and there may be a need to relocate playgrounds. The cost of the temporary classrooms, if required, is included in our overall project estimates.

43. Does this new configuration address all-day kindergarten? Will the building be able to handle all-day kindergarten if we need it in the future?

The current configuration plans for ½ day kindergarten. The committee gave very serious consideration to the popular concerns among Ringwood residents for full day kindergarten. We researched whether full day kindergarten students had an educational advantage over students with half day kindergarten and the studies showed that by the fourth grade the students were on a level playing field and that there was no educational or social advantage either way. If there was an

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apparent educational advantage for full time kindergarten, the committee and the board would certainly have taken that into consideration.

We looked at other factors such as cost of additional classrooms and the cost of adding additional teachers to teach the extra full day students. Kindergarten teachers now teach two classes per day. We would need a teacher per kindergarten session for full time kindergarten in addition to twice as many kindergarten class rooms.

Building additional kindergarten classrooms would be around 2 to 3 million at each of Erskine and the DEP would prevent us from building new classrooms at Cooper. The cost of the additional teachers would be over \$250,000 annually which would add another 50 to 60 dollars in annual taxes for each resident.

With a lot of consideration the committee had to recommend against full day kindergarten. The DEP would not allow us to add classrooms to Peter Cooper School anymore than they allowed us to build a new school on the Hewitt property.

44. Would new construction or repairs take into consideration the use of energy saving measures?

New construction will definitely incorporate energy efficient windows as well as state-of-the-art boilers and heat and air handling exchanges as important additions to the buildings.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

45. How will transportation be affected?

We anticipate that transportation issues will become far simpler and more family-friendly. With children in fewer schools, siblings will be riding the buses together more often than before. In addition, the middle school will have an earlier start and dismissal time than the K-4 schools, enabling older students to be home to meet younger siblings at their afternoon bus stops, if necessary. .

46. Will we need to buy more school buses and hire more drivers?

A few new buses and drivers would be needed if we opt to keep the two K-4 schools on identical start and dismissal times. If we utilize this strategy there would be an associated reduction in fuel consumption and wear and tear on the bus fleet by having fewer runs and trips around town. We are also looking at the feasibility of staggering the start and dismissal times of all three schools. The most cost-efficient method that utilizes the most effective use of our resources will be chosen when our final analyses are complete.

47. Will we still be able to provide transportation for LRHS?

Yes, we will continue to provide transportation for Lakeland Regional High School. They are our children too and they deserve the continued safe and convenient transportation service to which they have become accustomed.