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School board faces \$13.8M price tag for possible renovations

By Patti Slaughter 3 hrs ago



BROOKVILLE — A \$13.8 million price tag is attached to the plans for renovations which would move Brookville’s kindergarten, first and second grade classes to Hickory Grove Elementary School.

Bob Englebaugh, of HHSDR Architects/Engineers of Pittsburgh, presented the findings of the feasibility study approved by the Brookville Area School Board last November. The purpose of the study was to determine the feasibility of consolidating the elementary schools. The findings were presented to the school board Monday night.

Englebaugh said “the format of the study is criteria set down by PDE.”



Part of the study included a look at each of the schools, noting construction and renovation dates. Based on those findings, Englebaugh said HHSDR had rated the schools as: Northside and Pinecreek, fair; Hickory Grove, excellent; and Brookville High School, good.

He also reviewed the student capacity and current enrollment of each of the schools, pointing out that none of the schools are at capacity enrollment: Northside, 175 capacity, 121 enrolled; Pinecreek, 400 and 229; Hickory Grove, 750 and 452; and the high school, 1055 and 684. Englebaugh said the study showed that “the extra capacity is usually taken up by special ed programs.”

Englebaugh said that initial discussions indicated that Northside and Pinecreek “eventually would close and be relocated to the Hickory Grove site.” He said the kindergarten classes could be moved to Pinecreek School “now, without any changes to the building except adding an outdoor freezer.”

To have all elementary students at Hickory Grove, a new addition would be added to the front of the school. Preliminary plans include a new two-story academic wing, which would house kindergarten, first and second grades; a larger cafeteria area, with one section for fifth and sixth grades, to acquaint them with the food court set-up used at the high school; a relocated

play area, a new access road to the parking lot at the front of the school and “the possibility of a new district maintenance building. It’s up to you folks how far you want this to go,” he said. “This is a fluid document until we reach the requirements you need.”

Englebaugh briefly reviewed anticipated costs of the renovation/construction project. Costs would include \$885,000 for partial renovations to Hickory Grove, \$9.9 million for construction of the new wing and \$510,000 for the maintenance building. Soft costs, for items such as permits, advertising and furniture, would cost roughly an additional \$2.5 million, bring the total project cost to \$13,813,000.



If the board chooses to proceed with this proposal, all students could attend classes at Hickory Grove beginning in the 2020 school year.

Attending the meeting were the kindergarten teachers from Northside, who asked the board to consider such things as storage and classroom size when reviewing the plans. Speaking for the group Connie Ananea asked the board not to move kindergarten to Pinecreek next year if there will be a move to Hickory Grove in two years. “Packing up your classroom and moving occurs on our time, unpaid; we are not given time to do that during the day,” she said.

No action was taken on the proposal at the board meeting. “We will go over this study and give a hard look at it” before deciding “which direction we may wish to go,” said school board president Don Gill. “This is by no means set in stone. It’s about the education our students receive.”