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Plan for new Shaler Area Rogers Primary will be explored at hearing

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BY RACHEL FARKAS | Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2016, 8:12 p.m.

Shaler Area School District will hold a public hearing on Feb. 3 to review plans for the new Rogers Primary School and receive public comment.

The state's Act 34 requires school officials to hold a public hearing before constructing a school or an addition that increases the floor space of an existing building more than 20 percent.

The new Rogers Primary will house grades kindergarten through 3 and include six classrooms per grade, a dedicated space for the district's new primary level STEAM program, Project ENGIN, and a separate gym and cafeteria space.

One of the biggest changes from the existing Rogers Primary is the separate gym and cafeteria.

"Right now, all of our primary schools have a shared use space," said district communications specialist Bethany Baker.

The school board voted in August to demolish and replace Rogers Primary School on Scott Avenue with a new two-story building at the same site. The school closed after an electrical fire in April.

The project is to cost no more than \$25.8 million with a maximum building construction cost of \$18 million, according to Act 34 documents.

The new 75,000-square-foot building will be set back from Scott Avenue to allow for more than 200 parking spaces and better security, but it will eliminate one of two baseball fields from behind the existing Rogers, said project architect Greer Hayden, president of HHSDR Architects/Engineers.

The existing Rogers Primary, able to hold 250 students, is a one-story building with about 34,000 square feet of space and 75 parking spaces, Hayden said. It was built in 1960 and renovated in 1967 and 1987, Baker said.

The district and architects held focus group meetings in the fall to solicit feedback from parents, teachers and other community stakeholders.

“Parents are more concerned about the outside space, to make sure that the playground and green outdoor classroom area were available,” Baker said.

“Architects were trying to incorporate some of that feedback as well as expanding the outdoor playground areas.”

The new school is designed to house each grade level in its own neighborhood of classrooms and special education rooms with two grade levels on each floor, Hayden said. It will be able to house between 460 and 600 students. Core areas such as the gym, cafeteria and library are located on the upper level.

Although the lower level of the building will be partially underground, each classroom will have windows in it, Baker said.

The existing Rogers building tentatively will be demolished in late spring or early summer with construction on the new building planned to begin in June, Baker said. The building is expected to be complete in December 2017 or January 2018.

Rogers students, who have been at Burchfield Primary since the April fire, will move into the new building immediately after it is completed, Baker said. Eventually, students from Jeffery Primary school also will be moved to the new Rogers building.

To review the Act 34 public hearing information or review Rogers Primary construction information, visit sasd.k12.pa.us/FeasibilityStudy.aspx (<http://sasd.k12.pa.us/FeasibilityStudy.aspx>).

If you go

Event: Public hearing on Rogers Primary School project

When: 7 p.m. Feb. 3

Where: Shaler Area Middle School auditorium, 1810 Mt. Royal Blvd.

Details: All residents of Shaler Area School District are invited to review the Rogers Primary School construction project and speak on the project. To be placed on the agenda, contact Superintendent Sean Aiken at 412-492-1200 by 3 p.m. Feb. 3. Speakers will be limited to three minutes. Testimony also will be received from the floor, and written testimony is accepted at the meeting. Written comments or testimony will be accepted until 1 p.m. March 9 at the superintendent's office.

