

CG-B Board backs \$6 million plan, construction timetable to minimize disruption for students

Construction is expected to begin in July or August on the \$6 million building project approved in April by voters in the Cedar Grove-Belgium School District.

On Monday, the School Board, after considering several other options, approved the same concept plan presented in January by Abacus Architects and Joseph Schmitt Construction, both of Sheboygan. The projects are designed to relieve crowding at the elementary and middle schools and expand the high school technical education program.

The first phase of the work will be new construction that can be done during the school year without disrupting students too much, board members decided.

Interior renovation at the middle school — moving the office to the main entrance, creating larger classrooms, upgrading heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems, meeting handicapped accessibility standards and wiring the school for new technology — will be done next summer.

“We don’t want education to stop because we’re having a building project. We want education to continue positively,” Board President Jim Lautenschlaeger said.

The plan calls for adding two classrooms north of the current fourth-grade classrooms in the elementary school and two classrooms at the northwest and northeast corners of the middle school, squaring off the existing building. Vestibules will be added at the middle school’s north entrances.

An addition to the new office area will house the principal’s office, conference room and guidance and other offices. The office is currently in the center of the middle school, making it difficult to monitor who is entering and leaving the school.

The old middle school office will be converted to science rooms and all classrooms will be enlarged.

A technical education building, that will be constructed near the current tech-ed

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wing in the high school, has been designed with three bays, but will be bid for two bays with a separate bid for a third bay if there is enough money to build it.

A peninsula where buses can drop off and pick up students is also being considered.

The board will approve a final design with more details before the project is bid.

“We may come up with things we’re forced to change because of codes or mechanicals,” Kurt Davis of Abacus said.

“It all comes down to we cannot exceed \$6 million.”

Supt. Steve Shaw said if the bids come in at \$6,050,000, the board could fund the additional \$50,000 from its operating budget.

The district has applied for a federal stimulus no-interest loan to cover a portion of the project. The funds are administered through the state Department of Public Instruction.

“We should hear in June if we got it,” Shaw said Tuesday. “We’ve been told it looks very good, but we can’t promise anything.”

Because the elementary school loan has been repaid, the cost of borrowing money for the new project is expected to be the same as the retired debt. If the district gets a stimulus loan, taxes will go down.

The \$6 million project is expected to meet the current needs of the district and projected growth for the next five to six years, Shaw said.

A recently completed nine-year enrollment projection by the University of Wisconsin Applied Population Laboratory in Madison predicts the district’s population will grow from the current 1,139 students to between 1,192 and 1,231 in five years and between 1,256 and 1,272 by 2020.

The enrollment projections will be reviewed by the School Board in May.

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