

On August 3, 2016, the Board of Education established the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). It did so to engage in a strategic study of the educational facilities and infrastructure needs of the Briarcliff Manor School District. As per the Board of Education resolution, this Committee represented multiple constituency group including parents, residents without school-aged children, retirees, teachers, administrators, PTA and Board of Education representation. In fulfillment of its charge, the Committee conducted multiple meetings, tours of our facilities, conferenced with multiple focus groups, scrutinized the \$13MM list of facility concerns developed by the District's Facilities Committee and examined the District's financial picture. Soon into this process, the Committee decided that it would not be prudent to attack individual facilities concerns in isolation. In fact, members of the Committee expressed grave concerns about the form, functionality, limitations and safety related to multiple facilities, particularly at Todd Elementary and Briarcliff High School. Thus, it began the arduous process of developing a broader Capital Plan.

On April 12, 2018, after 18 months of exploration, the Long-Range Planning Committee, along with the Superintendent of Schools and KG+D Architects, presented a report of its findings and recommendations to the Board of Education. I would like to thank all the school community members who gave their time and energy throughout this process. I would also like to thank Russ Davidson and Walter Hauser for their efforts thus far. Their working knowledge of District facilities and their inclusive planning process have been helpful. Also, their reputation as a responsible and forward-thinking design firm is well-deserved. The Committee recommended that a large capital investment - in the form of a bonded capital project - was both necessary and prudent. With a focus on the Briarcliff High School and Todd Elementary School, students in each of the District's three schools would benefit from the creation, renovation and revitalization of the educational facilities and infrastructure. What followed was an extended period of input, feedback and reiteration. This presentation and recommendation is the culmination of a thorough, deliberative two-year process. Throughout this endeavor, the LRPC and now the District Administration have been focused on three essential goals:

1. To provide students with ***safe, secure learning environments for the next generation of Briarcliff students.***
2. To address critical infrastructure and learning ***spaces not significantly altered since their original date of construction*** (Todd - 1955 & 1963; High School - 1970).
3. To attend to capital needs, including facility upgrades, without increasing annual budgets and, hence, ***no increase to the school budgets/taxes beyond current levels.***

The Proposal

After the LRPC completed its work and delivered its final report, the District provided the Board of Education with several scaled capital plan proposals. Each proposal was based upon the essential goals of the Committee, a survey of recent capital projects from other districts*, as well as feedback from focus groups, school community members and Board membership. After careful consideration of the the District's facility needs as well as the needs of Briarcliff students, and the timing and financing of a large capital project, I am recommending that the Board of Education adopt a \$33.95 MM referendum which would allow the District to conduct the renovations and improvements found in what came to be

known as the “A+” proposal. This proposal best addresses the educational, health, safety and security needs of both students and staff in all three of the District’s schools. It will better enable the School District to sustain its competitive advantage among other high-performing school districts in our region and across the country. And, this proposal best embodies the cooperative spirit and resource-sharing necessary for District and Village officials to produce healthy, engaged and active children and adults. To be clear, proposal A+ will have a positive impact on the lives of each and every Briarcliff student and will ensure that our educational facilities continue as an invaluable resource for the entire community as well as a source of pride for all who enter our schools each and every day.

*Other comparable school districts in our immediate area have recently engaged in similar or larger revitalization, repurposing and expansion projects including: Irvington, Bronxville, Pleasantville, Chappaqua and Sleepy Hollow.

Safety & Security

1. Improved safety and security of students and staff would be enhanced in all three schools

The proposed Capital Plan includes enhanced security features including scalable network infrastructure to support state-of-the-art communications, cameras, alerts, proximity locks, security doors and the ability to lock down and/or cordon off areas of the building during normal operations in the event of an emergency or during specialized activities. It also addresses security through **environmental design**** - the location of resources and facilities most frequented by visitors and guests within the building. To the degree possible, these resources and facilities have been placed in close proximity to the building’s main entrance and to security and administrative personnel.

**CPTED There is an evolving body of knowledge regarding school security. Today, school district leaders and Board of Education members must now consider how the design of their schools’ facilities - such as location and access to resources, adequate sightlines, room for movement, and ease of orientation - can promote positive social interactions in and around their school facilities. Doing so has two essential benefits. It provides for safer school environments and can increase student and staff perceptions of safety by mitigating the impact of “high-tech, personnel heavy, target hardening”, that can make our schools feel like fortresses rather than schools.

Learning Environments:

1. Creation of two new state-of-the-art High School Science classrooms

Several years ago, the District successfully converted interior instructional space into a state-of-the-art science classroom. This new classroom advantages both Briarcliff students and staff as it better supports today’s instructional practices, is a more flexible environment and increases student safety by providing distinct lab and classroom spaces. “I use every inch of space in this classroom every day” – Dr. Robert Saar, BHS

Science Coordinator and Chemistry teacher. This plan converts four substandard and windowless classrooms into state-of-the-art science classrooms. Creation of two new science classrooms would bring the number to three state-of-the-art resources allowing nearly all high school students to benefit from these facilities.

2. Transforming the Library into a tech friendly collaboration space for students & staff

What do you think of when you hear the term library? Today, these areas have become dynamic places that hum with activity and collaboration. Teachers bring entire classes to the Library Media Center and direct them to work individually and in small groups so that they may take advantage of the space and resources available to them. In addition, Briarcliff High School has a long-established culture of technology-supported student productivity and a collegiate atmosphere. Students do not need passes and are free to work together or individually during their free time. The design is viewed almost universally as a college preparatory institution. This plan would multiply the capacity of the library space and capitalize on the high school culture and transform the LMC into a collaboration space or “commons” focusing on individual, small group and whole class activities.

3. Creation of a new High School Guidance Office and College Conference Room

Preparing students for post-graduate success requires the guidance and support of students’ academic and emotional needs. Supporting students through high school and through the college process requires a suitable guidance area with room for parents, students and family to engage in critical conversations. The current Guidance Suite, originally designed as a single administrator’s office, now houses four counselors and an Administrative Assistant. In addition, Briarcliff has now become an important destination for college admissions officers. Those visits, which often include student interviews, are conducted in classrooms adjacent to the Guidance Suite. This proposal would create a more appropriate and inviting space within the Guidance Suite.

4. Renovation of the High School Maresca Center for Guided Instruction and Support

At the heart of Briarcliff High School is the Maresca Center. Named after a popular Science teacher in the 1970’s, the Maresca Center is where teachers’ offices are located and where students go when not in class and need help from their classroom teachers. It is a hub of activity before, during and after school. Although hastily constructed in the distant past, it is, perhaps, the most distinct and important cultural element of our nationally-acclaimed high school program. It has been made clear to the District in recent fire inspections and was made clear to the Board that this area, in particular, would not meet safety and fire code if constructed today.

5. Creation of new Writing and Math Labs

These are long-established resources available to students during the school day. Students may drop into the Writing or Math Labs during a free period, or they may be required to utilize the lab by a classroom teacher. Students receive support for a variety of reasons from homework to tests and quizzes to college essays and lab reports. The Writing Lab is now housed in a hastily converted computer lab space and the Math Lab is housed in a converted electrical closet.

6. Renovation of Music and Performing Arts Classroom

These are shared facilities with the Middle School and are utilized by several hundred students each day. Currently, the District Choir Program is conducted in the High School's Lecture Hall which is ill-suited for that purpose. In addition, both the Orchestra and Band Rooms are in need of renovation. The Dance Studio does not possess a proper dance floor and each space will benefit from increased storage capacity.

7. Elimination of windowless interior adapted to serve as classrooms

Four substandard interior classrooms will be eliminated, transit windows will be installed, and natural light will be introduced or increased throughout the common spaces on the first floor of the High School.

8. Eliminate the use of closet and former office spaces for educational support activities

Substandard Resource Rooms and Special Education spaces will be replaced and activities will be moved to renovated spaces.

9. Renovate the Kitchen serving area and facilities

Original kitchen serving area will be renovated

Middle School

1. Improve the safety and security of students and staff

Although distinctly different programs, the Middle and High Schools share a single facility. Alterations, renovations and improvements to network and security infrastructure benefits both middle and high school students and staff. As with the High School, the proposed Capital Plan includes enhanced security features including scalable network infrastructure to support state-of-the-art communications, cameras, alerts, proximity locks, security doors and the ability to lock down and/or cordon off areas of the building during normal operations, in the event of an emergency or during specialized activities. The location of resources and facilities most frequented by visitors

and guests within the building are already in close proximity to the building's main entrance and to security and administrative personnel. It is also important to note that after hours of operation and on weekends all activities are funneled through the High School main entrance.

2. Creation of a "Maker Space" for hands-on learning

Now that the School District has gone 1 to 1 with Mac Book Pros and I-pads, the unnecessary computer lab spaces provide the District with a wonderful opportunity to repurpose these places for students to gather and create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of tools and materials.

3. Renovate Music and Performing Arts classrooms

Once again, these are shared facilities with the High School and are utilized by nearly every middle school student each year. Currently, the District Choir Program is conducted in the High School's Lecture Hall which is ill-suited for that purpose. In addition, both the Orchestra and Band Rooms are in need of renovation. The Dance Studio does not possess a proper dance floor and each space will benefit from increased storage capacity.

Todd Elementary School

1. Improve the safety and security of students and staff

The proposed Capital Plan includes enhanced security features including scalable network infrastructure to support state-of-the-art communications, cameras, alerts, proximity locks, security doors and the ability to lock down and/or cordon off areas of the building during normal operations, in the event of an emergency or during specialized activities. One of the principle design flaws at the Todd School is the design, shape and location of the gymnasium. Once again, through environmental design, the gymnasium as well as the location of other key resources and facilities most frequented by visitors and guests, have been relocated to enhance control and building security. Key resources and facilities have been placed in close proximity to the building's main entrance and to security and administrative personnel or, in the case of the new Todd gymnasium, have been placed so that they may be completely isolated from the rest of the school building.

2. Creation of a new gymnasium

The "gymnasium", constructed more than 60 years ago, does not provide a full-size playing surface for athletic events. More importantly, it provides Todd with only one

suitable daytime teaching station and does not provide adequate space to meet NYS Physical Education requirements during winter months, in cases of inclement weather, and during special activities such as concerts and stage performances. It was for this reason and because the “gymnasium” serves as the school’s only large meeting and performance space that the LRPC deemed the space to be substandard. In addition, it is located in the interior of the building without egress to the exterior of the facility with the exception of a courtyard. This proposal calls for repurposing this space as a flexible performance, special event and indoor recreational (recess) space. A new gymnasium will be constructed with adequate space for two teaching stations and full-sized playing surfaces for athletic events. The new gymnasium will not only allow the school district to meet New York State standards for elementary students, it will be a community asset. The plan calls for a Village Park and Recreation Office so that the gymnasium may be home to village youth and adult programming when not being utilized for District educational, athletic and co-curricular activities. Once again, through environmental design, the new gymnasium will be placed along the exterior of the school building so that it may be completely isolated from the rest of the school building and provide easy egress to the exterior of the building.

3. Creation of a new performance, special event and indoor recreational space

Utilizing the space of the existing Todd gymnasium, the District will create a large and flexible multi-use performance, special events and indoor recreation (recess) space. Currently, a substandard gymnasium serves as our performance and special events space as well as a Physical Education teaching station. In addition to being less than optimal, each time an event takes place, Physical Education classes must disband, often for the entire day. This means less physical activity for young students and compliance concerns regarding New York State Education Department requirements. In addition, during times of inclement weather, snow-pack or icy conditions, Todd students cannot be afforded indoor recess. This flexible multi-use performance space will provide comfortable and acoustically appropriate performance space, a bright and inviting large group learning space and, when necessary, a space to allow students to engage in the daily physical activities that young students need to be healthy and ready to learn.

4. Creation of an outdoor learning space

A courtyard adjacent to the new gymnasium will be created to serve as an outdoor learning space for students. This courtyard will be developed to support both educational and light recreational activities.

5. Consolidation of the administrative, nursing and conference spaces

Administrative team work, student health and school safety will be enhanced by the introduction of a new and renovated Health Office, Main Office and conference space located near the main entrance of Todd. Once again, these key resources and facilities have been placed in close proximity to the building's main entrance and to security and administrative personnel.

6. Creation of a student support suite

Todd is a large facility. Student supports such as the Guidance Counselor, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Math support, English language support, etc. are not situated in close proximity to each other. Students with multiple needs and the staff that support them, will benefit from less time traversing across the building, increased communication and better coordination.

Fiscal Responsibility

In short, it is prudent to attend to your roof when the sun is shining. However, projects like this require leadership, fortitude and the ability to forecast that which is in the best long-term interests of our students, the District and the wonderful community whom we serve.

This is a **smart time** to make a capital reinvestment

- The District has significant retiring debt service
- Borrowing rates remain low
- Construction costs are projected to escalate moving forward

By replacing debt service, funding for necessary maintenance and improvements can be accomplished **without requiring an increase to the tax levy above current levels.** In fact, after the first few years after the project completion, debt service is still projected to decline.