

Mendocino Beacon

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By CONNIE KORBEL Of The Beacon –

The K-8 campus design committee, appointed a year ago January by the Mendocino Unified School District Board, is reviewing its near-finished design.

In light of additional information, input from both Carol Perry and Pat Nordquist, this academic year's two interim superintendents, and the eye-popping \$17,320,275 give-or-take price tag, some revisions may need to be made. State funding is projected to reduce this amount to \$13,545,997.

K-8 design rendering unveiled

The committee is factoring in the potential for developing a long-term "multi-campus-use" concept that might include seniors, preschoolers, disaster preparedness site and a broadened



community-center usage. Its intent is to integrate in the overall design the potential to easily adjust to changing needs with conversion possibilities for individual rooms. Mark Morgan, parent representative, said, "It's a strong way to keep school programs vital."

At the Jan. 31 meeting of the group, Principal Bronwyn Rhoades pointed out that declining enrollment will continue to impact grades 9 through 12, but not the elementary grades particularly. She said, "The bulk of the decline for K-8 has already happened. It's now stable."

While some members are quick to now look at the project with a pared-down vision, others steadfastly support building the site for its full long-term potential. Interim Superintendent Nordquist said of these opposing approaches, "We need to look at the multiplicity of options."

Rhoades supports a bond measure that results in the K-8 campus in its full design with additional funds for needs at other district campuses.

The project budget, prepared by Mark Quattrocchi, the district's contractual architect, factors in 10.75 percent (\$1,451,985) escalation of construction costs by spring 2008, the

earliest the project could begin if the community passes a bond measure for it. An additional 5 percent (\$747,941) was added for a change-order contingency.

The earliest the board anticipates placing a bond measure before voters is this November. It has not yet taken a formal vote to do so. There is a delay of about one year from the point of passing a bond to receiving the state approvals to move forward with construction.

Everyone, however, is scrutinizing the allocation of the money needed to renovate the existing buildings and to construct new ones, offset by what the projected state funding can accomplish. The \$3,774,278 budgeted from OPSC (Office of Public School Construction) project funding includes \$655,284 from modernization funding, \$246,287 from structural rehabilitation funding, \$1,877,883 from facility hardship funding, \$76,000 from reimbursement for Labor Compliance Program, and \$918,824 from estimated eligible OPSC utility and site development costs.

Non-construction costs total \$1,613,513. These allocations include a variety of state-required fees, tests, reports, surveys and a full-time inspector for one year at \$70 per hour, totaling \$145,600. Legal and consultant expenses, furnishing, and equipment are not included.

Construction costs

These individual estimates do not include no construction costs, escalation and contingency factors which are accounted for separately.

Renovated buildings

- 1) Arts Building A with pitched roof: 11,800 square feet at \$208 per square foot. Total cost is \$3,244,309.
- 2) Middle School Classroom E: 9,954 square feet at \$143 per square foot. Total cost is \$1,425,389.
- 3) Gymnasium Building F: 7,653 square feet at \$87 per square foot. Total cost is \$666,970.
- 4) Middle School South Classroom Building G: 2,700 square feet at \$88 per square foot. Total cost is \$238,946.

New buildings

- 1) Library and classrooms, Building B: 5,135 square feet at \$271 per square foot. Total cost is \$1,391,306.
- 2) Administration Building C: 3,135 square feet at \$386 per square foot. Total cost is \$1,210,751.

3) K-1 classrooms, Building D: 3,785 square feet at \$283 per square foot.
Total cost is \$1,070,447.

Demolition of the grammar school modular wings will cost \$132,656. Site development work will cost \$4,126,062. This item includes such things as rerouting drainage, regrading and leveling the property where needed, constructing athletic fields, blacktopping the roadway, paving parking and sidewalks.

As a first look into paring down the scope of the project, Quattrocchi offered a laundry list of options on a per building consideration. He included such things as eliminating sinks in classrooms, reducing the scope of classroom improvements, omitting soccer and baseball fields, and opting for composition shingles rather than metal roofs at a \$10 per square foot savings.

This preliminary breakdown trimmed \$2,319,055 from the overall budget. Among the financial considerations, Tom Birdsell, a committee member, has raised a number of his concerns. His list of questions includes, among others, why the gymnasium costs \$775,000 when contingencies and change orders are factored in and why savings alternatives add up to less than \$100,000.

Birdsell is also puzzled by why the grammar school renovation only yields the equivalent of five full-sized classrooms, while the new building, which generates more rooms, a library and an administration building for a cost that is comparable. "Are there significant cost increase risks associated with renovating the MGS site, given the experience to date with the multi-purpose room?" he asked.

"We need to prioritize our requirements from the bottom up. This would help us identify our building strategy if we had \$6M or \$8M or \$10M to spend," he wrote in his analysis of the cost summary of the project. Gloria Liner, school board president, said, "We need to not throw any of these ideas out."

The committee meets next on Tuesday, March 14 at 3:45 p.m. in the middle school library. The public is invited to attend.