

Board of Education Approves Phase 2 Construction Project

On Monday, April 10, 2017, the Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education took action to approve of a \$7.9 million "Phase 2" construction project at the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS) which coincides with the "Phase 1" construction project taking place at Lincoln High School. The projects will allow 9th graders to move to Lincoln, and 8th graders to move to WRAMS beginning with the 2018-19 school year. WRPS will then have a grades 9-12 high school, and a grades 6-8 middle school, leaving just the District administrative offices at the East Jr. High facility. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects will entail the following:

Phase 1 - Lincoln High School (\$9.5 million)*

- ↳ Complete pool renovation/upgrade
- ↳ Renovate and expand girls' locker room space
- ↳ Expand and renovate restroom space near the fieldhouse
- ↳ Addition of gymnastics and wrestling space
- ↳ *Renovate and expand the kitchen/serving area at the same time that Phase 1 is underway, to be funded by the Food Service Department

Phase 2 - Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School (\$7.9 million)

- ↳ Add classroom space
- ↳ Add gymnasium space
- ↳ Expand the cafeteria

**Note:
Construction
Drawings Which
Outline the
Projects Are
Attached**

Why is the District doing this?

The Board of Education has heard from constituents over the years that the 9th grade class belongs at Lincoln. With the District experiencing declining enrollment for well over a decade, we are finally at a point where the Lincoln facility will accommodate the move of 9th graders to the high school. Once at Lincoln, students at the 9th grade level will be immersed in the high school culture, and have a better understanding that their high school career begins in their freshman year. The students will be afforded opportunities at Lincoln which prepare them to be college and career ready at graduation.

What will happen to the 8th grade class at East?

Once the decision was made to work on moving 9th grade to Lincoln, conversations began about what should happen with the 8th grade students. With the City of Wisconsin Rapids developing plans to place an aquatic center at Witter Field, available greenspace for student programming will be greatly diminished. More importantly, when considering the best place for our 8th grade students academically, socially, and emotionally, it was determined that the middle school concept offers the best environment for our students to learn and grow. A grades 6-8 configuration offers the best opportunities for students from a curricular standpoint, and provides the most efficient utilization of staff resources in terms of teacher licensure.

What will happen to the East Jr. High facility?

Conversations by the Board will be held concerning the status of the East facility since it will no longer have 8th and 9th grade classes beginning with the 2018-19 school year. The East facility is currently housing a number of District departments and staff, including Business Services/Transportation, Curriculum, Pupil Services, Technology, Human Resources, and the Superintendent's office. These departments, along with other programming in the District, will all be taken into consideration as the Board makes decisions about what the best and most efficient utilization of facilities will be in order to meet student needs while maintaining effective and streamlined operations. You can watch the upcoming Board agendas found on the www.wrps.org webpage to find out when these conversations will take place – the meetings are open to the public if you are interested in attending.

How are the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects being funded?

The Board of Education has made decisions over the years which have placed the District into a financially stable position by significantly paying down debt. The dollars normally diverted toward debt payment can now be utilized for facility upgrades as a one-time expense. There is also opportunity for significant savings in the projects through energy exemption initiatives. Finally, the possibility of pursuing advertisements and "naming rights" for these and future projects is also under consideration. The intent is to have these capital projects paid for in full by the 2019-20 budget year.

Questions about these projects may be directed to building principals, or the District office at 715-424-6701.

