

## Saxe Middle School Building Project

- Saxe was built in 1957 and renovated from 1997 – 1999 to accommodate 1200 students.
- The 58 year-old auditorium was essentially excluded in the last renovation. The auditorium was abated this summer and is presently closed waiting to be renovated.
- Why is more space needed at Saxe?
  - Current enrollment is 1329, which is up from 1292 at this time last year. Enrollment pressures have required the teaching of many courses in undersized spaces. This year a computer lab and the world language lab were converted into general classrooms. (The last 2 computer labs are slated to be converted to general classrooms in 2017 if there is no addition.)
  - State mandates and program changes since 1997 have created the need for 4 more classrooms for the Reading Lab, the Learning Center, STEM and Mandarin.
  - Music and Visual & Performing Arts (VPA) areas need larger classrooms to accommodate the increased size of the choir, orchestra and band. There is also a critical need for more storage for instruments, auditorium risers, music stands, chairs and set construction.
  - Analysis of the needed educational spaces to accommodate the projected enrollment and mandated state programs reveals the need for 12 additional classrooms & renovation of the music/VPA space.
  - There is not enough space to move 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school or to move 5<sup>th</sup> grade to elementary schools. Expanding the other schools would be more expensive. The 5-8 Saxe program works well and provides educational opportunities for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Saxe's library, gyms and cafeteria are adequately sized to accommodate the anticipated enrollment increase.
- The Saxe Building Committee (SBC) has designed a project to renovate the auditorium and visual performing arts/music area and expand the building to add a net of 12 new classrooms. The Board of Education (BOE) has approved the SBC's recommended project.
  - Auditorium renovation features to include:

Refurbished seating: 738 seats	Improved acoustics and new sound system
Full access for persons with disabilities	Refurbished stage rigging and new mechanical system
New house lighting and catwalk	Dedicated stage storage with oversized access
  - Visual Performing Arts and Music area renovation includes:

New large flex rooms for choir, band, orchestra	Additional storage space for instruments,
New music practice rooms	sets, chairs, stands, risers
  - Building expansion to add net of 12 classrooms:

Add a two-story wing to northwest corner of Saxe  
(This is the last available space to build on Saxe campus without disturbing the fields or parking lot.)
- Project estimated net cost is \$16.2 million (\$18.6 million total project cost minus \$2.4 million expected state reimbursement). Project is 40% renovation and 60% construction. It is good timing for a construction project because interest rates and construction costs are low. Construction costs escalate 4 -5 % each year.
- To cover annual debt service of \$1.06 million for the project (including principal and interest for 20 years at 3%), each tax paying unit would average \$150 per year (based on 7,122 tax paying units).
- Next step: Town bodies vote to approve funding for the project. SBC is waiting on Board of Finance to schedule vote on Saxe project. After Board of Finance votes, Town Council will vote on project. Stay tuned for meeting dates.
- Contingent on funding approval, construction will begin in June 2016 and be completed by the fall of 2017.
- **Public Hearing: Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm in Town Hall.** Public welcome to comment on Saxe Building project.