

April 2017 Op Ed

Building Projects

The proposed building projects for the Plainville School district include the renovate-as-new of Wheeler Elementary School and site improvements such as the replacement of parking lots, some walkways, and drainage issues at Plainville High School. When the high school was renovated in 2008, these improvements were removed from the project at that time in an effort to reduce costs.

Wheeler Elementary was built in the 1950's, with the addition of the music room, library, and gymnasium occurring in 1994. The learning environment at Wheeler is outdated and inequitable to the other schools in our district. Proposed changes to Wheeler include:

- a new secure front entrance*
- relocation of administrative and nurse's office areas*
- addition of enclosed walkway connecting administrative wing to the primary wing for easier access to offices and safety and security*
- modernization of all classroom spaces*
- replacement of roof, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems*
- addition of school wide air conditioning*
- replacement of deteriorated walls, windows, and doors*
- code compliance work inside and outside of the school*
- site improvements that include a new parking lot with additional parking and drainage improvements*

-upgraded vehicular and pedestrian circulation to provide a safer drop-off/pick-up area

While the overall cost of this project is estimated to be \$25 million dollars, close to half of those expenses will be reimbursed by the state. The net cost to taxpayers is estimated to be \$13 million dollars. Due to the careful fiscal management of the town of Plainville's debt service, this project is not expected to raise taxes. The debt service from previous projects has fallen off and the timing of this project will not raise the town's debt above its current level.

The projected referendum date for this project is June 6, 2017. More information about the project may be found at www.wheelerschoolproject.org, or by contacting Superintendent Maureen Brummett, Ed.D., or Wheeler Principal Andrew Batchelder.