

FAQ Grove City Area School District
Potential Hillview Construction Project

What was GC2040?

The purpose of GC2040 was to look strategically at the public education system and prepare the District to thrive educationally, remain fiscally solvent, and to serve as a cornerstone for community use well into the future. As a public entity, the Board of School Directors is in a position to engage local experts and hired professionals to shape the public education in Grove City for generations to come.

In order to do this, a greater understanding of the need to upgrade facilities and educational programs over time was needed. Hence, the process outlined in GC2040 worked towards those goals.

What was the process used to hire the architect?

In 2014, a RFP (request for proposal) was publicized in an effort to find an architectural firm that would participate in a district-wide facilities master plan. The interest to hire an architect was based on the following needs:

- 1. to look at entire program District-wide*
- 2. to evaluate our facilities*
- 3. assist in the process and development of a plan*

Four competitive proposals were received and reviewed by District administration. Additionally, the submitted proposals were made available to the entire school board for review. As a result of the review, the superintendent recommended the Eckles Architecture Firm and the Board approved their hire. The District-wide facilities master plan evolved into what became known as the GC 2040.

Upon completion of the GC 2040 work, the Eckles Architecture Firm was recommended to continue providing services to the District as the design architects for the proposed Hillview project. The Board approve their hire on November 14, 2014.

What is the process for hiring a professional service?

A district can hire a professional service based on board approval. Professional services do not require RFP (request for proposal) or a competitive bid process.

What was the process used to hire the construction management services?

A RFP (request for proposal) was sent to six reputable construction management firms as an invitation to participate in the proposal process. All six companies accepted the request and developed comprehensive proposals for review. The proposals were used to compare the scope of services and cost. Upon review, Cannon Design prevailed as the firm that was recommended for board approval.

What are the phases of design?

- Schematic Design - exploration of concepts and general building layout and space planning.*

- *Design Development* - development of the schematic concepts, added level of detail, more specific conversations regarding materials, finishes, etc.
- *Construction Documents* - preparation of the contract documents for bidding by contractors.
- *Bidding and Negotiation* - Bidding phase, bidder's questions are answered, addendums prepared to address changes to the contract documents. Receipt of bids, review, and contract preparation.
- *Construction Administration* -construction oversight by Architect in conjunction with Owner's construction manager.

What is the PlanCon process?

Access information to learn more about PlanCon at the following links:

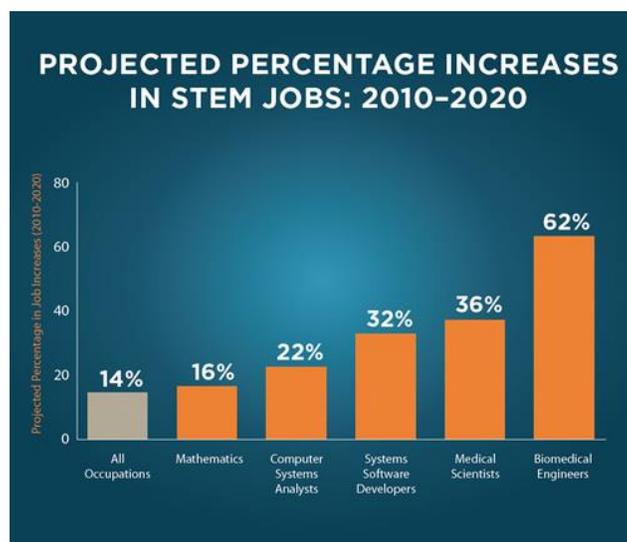
<http://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/School%20Construction%20and%20Facilities/Pages/Reimbursable-Projects.aspx#tab-1>

<http://www.pasbo.org/plancon>

What is STEM/STEAM?

The National Science Foundation coined the term STEM in the early 2000's. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In a well-developed STEM program, each area of study is interrelated and should be taught in an integrated way. Traditionally, these subject areas have been taught in isolation but that method prevents students from seeing the connections between the content. STEAM is the integration of art into the mindset of STEM education. Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics presented through an integrated approach allows students to explore, design, redesign, engineer, build, rebuild all through a creative lens.

Developing a STEM or STEAM program provides learning opportunities for students to take a problem solving approach to the world around them as opposed to waiting for instructions. The thought process that becomes engrained in such a program sets students up for greater success in school and beyond. According to the US Department of Education, STEM-based careers have been on the rise since 2010. See the graphic below that illustrates a trend that is expected to continue:



Why is STEM/STEAM education important?

STEM and STEAM education is important as it intentionally integrates learning opportunities that include the engineering design process across multiple disciplines. The engineering design process trains students when presented with real-world problems to ask questions or inquire, imagine and brainstorm, plan solutions to the problem, create or develop a plan to solve the problem, and then improve on the solutions. Focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) lends itself to the development of students who think outside the box and demonstrate persistence and perseverance when they experience failure. Student learn grit and value the process.

What are some upcoming educational program options?

Plans for program options are currently being collaboratively developed. Some of these options include but are not limited to the following:

STEM or STEAM integrated curriculum plan

Expanded technology

Robotics

Appropriately equipped labs

Makerspace

Art integration and improved connectedness to core content areas

What is the plan to sustain those educational program improvements?

Sustaining program improvements require allocated professional development time and funds. We have a dedicated staff who seek learning opportunities and look to grow professionally. Determining budget need around this focus will be a must moving forward. Technology purchases and expanded infrastructure are all part of the program planning. Cycles for maintenance, replacement, and repair of new equipment will be also be a designated budgetary need.

How can the community be involved?

The Grove City Area School District is/are hosting three collaborative charrettes in an attempt to engage our community in the planning of a program and proposed building renovation and addition at our Hillview site. A charrette is a meeting designed to engage all stakeholders in a project style format with the goal to identify strategies and map solutions to an identified need. This collaborative approach to building design is intended to provide community members opportunities to have a positive impact on progress related to the design and build of an elementary space for kindergarten through grade 5 that can support a robust educational program that has a greater focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics).

Community members are also invited to attend and participate in any of our school board meetings held as well. Updates surrounding the project will occur frequently in the coming months.

What is an Act 34 hearing?

Act 34 of 1973 requires that a public hearing be held on all new construction and substantial additions for second, third and fourth class school districts. A building addition is considered substantial when the new architectural area divided by the existing structure's architectural area is greater than 20 percent.

Act 34 applies only to costs for new construction. The legal requirements do not address the costs for alterations to existing structures. A second Act 34 hearing is required if specified costs based on bids exceed by eight percent or greater those costs based on estimates. An Act 34 referendum must be held if and only if certain costs exceed a project building's calculated referendum limit. This project will require an Act 34 hearing.

What is the potential cost of the project?

Based on PlanCon part A, the opinion of probable cost could be in the range of 35 million dollars. Many decisions remain to be made before this number becomes a potential reality.

Why are we doing a project?

The GCASD participated in the GC 2040 study, which can be found in the Board Room of Central Office. The study, conducted by Eckles Architecture, explored various options for the District to improve its aging facilities and take a better look at safety and security. Upon careful review, the District decided the most effective and efficient plan moving forward is to renovate and build an addition at the Hillview site. This would expand space so that kindergarten and first grade could be consolidated to create a single K-5 site. This has multiple benefits that include improved safety and security features, increased learning square footage per pupil, improved collaborative learning culture for both students and staff, and innovative lab spaces. The proposed project will also allow the District to raze the Highland building, which is beyond its useful life, and in need of a great deal of deferred maintenance repairs coupled with foundation issues.

Will the proposed construction project impact traffic patterns?

During construction, traffic patterns will be altered and those plans will be communicated once they are developed. The District will be hiring a traffic consultant to analyze existing and projected traffic patterns. Once the project is complete, traffic patterns around the newly renovated building will most likely change due to improved safety and enhanced control of site circulation.

Will drawings be made public of the new buildings, modifications and additions, including landscaping, sidewalks, etc.?

Yes, these drawings will be presented at public meetings when complete.

What impact, if any, does the District's PSERS liability have on this project?

To learn more about the Pennsylvania School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS), please click the following link which will take you directly to the PSERS website.

<http://www.psers.state.pa.us/>

Also, you may want to review progress made under Act 120 of 2010 Pension Reform by clicking on the following link.

<http://www.psers.state.pa.us/content/pfr/resources/Act120-of-2010-Progress.pdf>

Please check back as updates are provided to the FAQ section of the site.