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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is Carter County Schools considering building a central high school?

A. Discussion around a central high school has been going on for years. The project is being considered at this time based on the significant change to the district finances that can be used for facility improvement. With the current amount of grant funding available to the district, the district could have the funding necessary to complete this substantial project. This funding is unprecedented and will likely never be available again. It is VERY important the community consider all factors and make a decision on whether or not to move forward with the project.

Q. Why now? Why the rush?

A. The decision to build a new high school is a long process. From the time planning begins until a final decision is made, the planning process will take 12-18 months. Due to the length of time required for this process, it is necessary we move forward expeditiously. Much of the funding for the project is “time-sensitive” and must be spent in the next couple of years. In order to use the money for the project, the district must decide as soon as possible. The district must go through this process now to come to a decision to either allocate the money for a new central high school, or use the money for other purposes. Amending the LPC is just the first step in a long process.

While it may feel rushed, the decision to build a new high school will take more than a year and include several meetings, forums, and hearings. It will be 2023, at the earliest, before a final decision could be made.

Q. What is the process for final approval of a new central high school?

A. There are several steps in this process that must happen before a new high school would ever be approved to be constructed. The first phase is the LPC amendment process. The following steps are part of that process:

1. LPC meets multiple times to considering amending the District Facility Plan (DFP) to include the construction of a new high school
2. After meetings and public forums, the LPC committee votes to accept amended DFP
3. If approved, the draft is then sent to KDE for approval
4. Board then votes to approve the amended DFP
5. If approved by board, a public hearing is held to provide feedback for the Kentucky Board of Education
6. The plan and feedback is sent to the Kentucky Board of Education for approval (June)

After the LPC completes the above process, it would be possible for the Carter County Board of Education to begin the planning phase for the construction of a new high school. However, the changes to the District Facility Plan allows for the board to consider building a new school. It DOES NOT mean a new school would be constructed. Several more steps would then have to take place before a new school would be built. At each point, there will be information gathered and approvals by various groups including committees, KDE, and the local board of education. These include the following:

- Board approves moving forward with project
- Site selection committee formed
- Site selection work with KDE, engineers, and architects to identify viable sites
- Sites identified and presented to board
- Site selected
- Development of central high school campus plans/blueprints
- Cost analysis/Funding
- Plan revisions
- Final plans approved
- Bidding for construction
- Total cost (based on bids) analysis
- Contract bids awarded/rejected
- Board makes final approval to move forward with build.

It is anticipated final approval to construct a new high school would not be made until the spring/summer of 2023.

Q. Why not just use the money to improve both high schools?

A. First, the funding for the project comes from multiple sources. One of the sources, a SFCC Grant award, was earmarked for the improvement of East Carter High School. The award also calls for the district to utilize part of their district bonding potential to “match” the SFCC grant. This means that approximately \$30 million must be used to either improve or replace East Carter High School.

The district then must improve the other buildings with the greatest needs. This would include major structural repairs to both middle schools and the renovation/construction of a new Career Tech Center.

Since these buildings require the greatest need, there would be little (if any) funding left to do an improvement of West Carter High School. Only East Carter would be improved.

It would be several years before the district would have enough bonding potential to do a substantial project at West Carter.

Q. Does the district have enough funding to build all phases of the project at once?

Over the past couple of years, construction costs have fluctuated significantly. Based on KDE cost projections, the district has more than enough money to complete the project. However, construction cost are currently much higher than these projected numbers. The district would not know the complete cost of the project until final design plans are complete and the project goes out to bid (next year). The district is currently in a strong financial position with funding for facilities. Other funds may also be available including funding currently included in the general assembly budget. The district will know if it has enough funds to complete the entire project prior to final approval to move forward with the project.

Q. How does construction of a new high school solve other facility issues?

A. Currently, East Middle, West Middle, and the Career Tech Center are the buildings in the district with the most pressing needs. Building a new state-of-the-art central high school improves our overall facilities in the following ways:

- Construction of new high school.
- Construction of new Career Tech Center
- Closes East and West Middle Schools and moves them to current high schools.
- Adds additional space to district for offices, FRYSC, and storage

Q. If we move East Middle to East High – Do we have to spend the money to improve the East High Building?

A. No. East High School received the SFCC award because it had the largest financial need based on a KFICS assessment. KFICS determines need based on the amount of money it would take to bring the building to be considered “mint” (brand new) condition. Because East is our largest school, it shows the largest financial need. Several of our buildings have a large financial need based on KFICS; however, East High was identified for the grant because it is largest school in the district.

– East High is actually in good condition. While it needs some updates, the building has been maintained very well and is in much better condition than many of our other schools. While it may be necessary to spend some money to “refresh” East, it would not be a lot of money compared to the significant needs of our Middle Schools or our CTC building.

Q. Where would a new high school be constructed?

A. No site has been selected. -If the LPC moves forward to amend the District Facility Plan to construct a new high school, a site-selection committee would then be formed to consider potential sites. The site-selection committee would work with architects, engineers, and KDE to locate available properties to be considered. The site-selection committee will then compile a list of properties and provide their recommendations to the board of education. The Carter County Board of Education would then select the site from the recommended list. – The district is committed to finding a location that is central to both the Grayson and Olive Hill communities.

Q. When would a new school open?

A. Realistically, a project of this scope will take a minimum of 3-5 years to complete. The earliest completion date would be the start of the 25-26 school year. However, it will more than likely take longer.

Q. Will the new high school include a new CTC and athletic facilities?

A. Yes. The whole purpose of this project is to locate all these facilities on one central campus. Before construction will begin, a plan will be in place for all new amenities. It is important to note, that while all these facilities will be in the plans and constructed, it is not guaranteed all facilities would be open the same year. Because of the scope of this project, it may take a couple of additional years for all components to be completed. The high school and the CTC would be constructed at the same time.

Q. What is the impact of transportation?

A. A new high school would impact travel times for students attending the high school. The amount of time will be determined by a couple of factors. 1. Where the new building is constructed. 2. How bus runs can be routed to mitigate the additional distance.

While we know it would cause longer commutes for some students, we also know that some people would have shorter commutes. It is estimated if the school is built in a central location, no student commute would be more than 8-10 additional minutes each way.

If a decision is made to construct a new school, the district will work with transportation logistics organizations to develop the best plan to minimize commutes for all students and prevent earlier pick-up/drop-off times for students.

Q. What would be the impact on jobs/staffing?

A. Staffing in Carter County is based on student enrollment. The number of staff members employed would not be changed with the construction of a new high school. In fact, because the district would save money on facilities, more money could be available for additional staff.

Some positions may be retitled or have different job responsibilities; however the number of positions/salaries would not be impacted. Since the potential opening of the new building is several years away, the district will have time to plan how to allocate all staffing positions.

Q. What will be the name of the new school? Colors? Mascot?

A. Due to the fact we are several years away from the potential opening of the new school, we will have time to make these decisions. It is anticipated a committee of students, staff and community members will be organized to help make these decisions.

Q. What new programs/opportunities will be available for students?

A. The main purpose of a central high school campus is to increase learning opportunities for all students. It is anticipated several new career and technical pathways would be added. These pathways would be designed around student interest and workforce needs of our local community. It is important to look at new and emerging industries that could benefit our students in the future. The district will also look to add programs in the arts, athletics, and various student organizations/clubs. New programs would be developed in collaboration with our community partners.

Q. Will the public have input on the new school design?

A. Yes. If the project moves to design phase, our architect would take the lead in the campus design. The architect would provide draft plans to the board of education for review. These meetings would be open to the public and public input will be encouraged. After review and input, the board would work with the architect for final design approval.

Q. What is the facility plan for the district if a new high school is not constructed?

A. The following projects would be the top priority based on the existing District Facility Plan and the SFCC award requirements:

1. Renovation of East Carter High School (SFCC)
2. Renovation of East and West Carter Middle Schools
3. Construction/Renovation of the CTC
4. Other district needs including elementary school renovations.

Q. What about athletic facilities? Will they be at the central high school? When?

A. If a decision is made to move forward with the construction of a central high school, a plan will be in place for all athletic facilities to be moved to the central campus. A gymnasium is considered part of the high school and would be built with the new high school. A new football/soccer/track stadium, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, etc., would be included in the initial planning.

The Kentucky Board of Education is now accepting waivers to allow a school district to use restricted facility money to construct athletic facilities. In the past, schools could not use facility funds for athletic facilities, making it much more difficult to fund the construction of athletic facilities. With the Kentucky Board of Education allowing these waivers, it removes a significant barrier that has prevented schools in the past from constructing athletic facilities at the same time as the construction of a school.

Because of the changes, it may be possible for athletic facilities to be constructed at the same time the central high school is built. However, because of the significant scope of the project, logistics, site development, staging areas, etc., all athletic facilities may still not be open the first year students are enrolled. If the district moves into the final planning stages, a timeline would be created to give estimates for expected opening of facilities. It is expected **all** athletic facilities could be completed within a couple of years of the school opening.