

Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA) Minutes of the General Meeting Held on Wednesday January 12, 2021

In Attendance:

Lisa Kulick, Naomi Ono, Thao Groenewald, Kathy Travers, Tori Weil, Jane Bodnar, Maggie Lilegren, Inna Moor, Julie De Jesus, Emily Kaufman, Rachel Milston, Shantala Kaikini, Lisa Halperin, Yunha Bang, Grace Perruzzi, Anne Kay, Lorraine Reichert, Kristen Tsarnas, Cathy Bukosky, Emily Kaufman, Cyrus Pavri, Lisa Mundy, Jess Carlin, Deirdre Dunne, Amanda So, Joan Clifford, Bob Males, Lorraine Reichert, Katie W., Lynelle Tedesco, Patrice Duker, Audrey Flynn, Annaliesa Anderson, Lisa Comninellis, Katy Smiechowski, Christa Paolillo, Sonia Agarwal, Kelli Moss, Amy Hesse, Lynn Tullett, Christine Giunta, Jennifer Burchell, Maja Roewe, Anne Kay, Diana Norian, Luz Terranova, Christine Ferrarie, Kathy Travers, Angelica Degenaars, Joann Meyer, Jen Altman, Judi Youngman, Sheila Yallowitz, Andrea Pennington

In attendance, to be deleted from minutes: Kim, Karina, iPhone, Zoom User, iPhone, CAC2, 2012488370, Alycia, El

School Administration in Attendance:

Dr. Scot Beckerman, Ms. Robin Knutelsky, Dr. Tony LaRocca, Mr. Jose Madhavasseril, Ms. Kelly Peterfriend

HASA President - Lisa Kulick:

Lisa welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Principal's Report – Dr. Tony LaRocca on behalf of Joe Occhino:

Joe Occhino has a conflict this morning and cannot attend this meeting, so I am relaying two items on his behalf:

First, we have received new guidelines from the NJ Health Department that mimic the CDC's 5-day quarantine and will be communicating the new guidelines to our NHRHS community shortly to advise of the reduction from a 10-day COVID-19 quarantine to a 5-day quarantine.

Second, we have distributed a survey for the Junior Prom to ascertain the impact of the scheduling conflict with the SAT this year; we do realize that one of the possible dates for rescheduling also conflicts with the Spring Musical. We are looking at many alternatives to resolve the scheduling conflict to meet the needs of as many of those affected as possible.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Beckerman:

We have our NJQSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum) state monitoring happening this morning to complete the 10% of the work that was left incomplete last Friday due to our snow day school closure. The County Superintendent and I continued work on Saturday, and the County team is here today to complete the monitoring process. Although we already have enough points to pass, by the end of today, our monitoring will have been completed.

The building is cold today. We had a coil break freeze last night, flooding two rooms. In order to work on repairs, we had to shut off heat to the entire building (except the science wing) but hope to have the heat back on this morning.

I will be making a presentation today on the Referendum. I have been making this presentation at other locations to get the word out and am happy to share this presentation today.

I will keep today's presentation short so you can continue with the rest of your meeting agenda, but I did just upload this past weekend to our webpage the full, 30-minute vocal walk-through of my presentation that can be accessed at the following link for a more complete presentation: <http://www.northernhighlands.org/referendum>

The Board is pursuing a Referendum March 8, 2022 to rectify some issues at the HS.

The biggest of these issues is the drainage issue at the baseball/softball fields which is making the fields unplayable. When we initially worked with an architect to evaluate repairs to the drainage issue, we discovered that the repairs would be cost-prohibitive, so we opted to evaluate other much-needed upgrades as well.

The message I'd like to emphasize is that the Referendum's \$9 million project will not result in an increased tax impact; and with that said, I'll focus on the details of the project's planned upgrades as well as on *how* taxes won't increase.

We've broken the project into three major areas:

1. Turf Fields: Elimination of drainage issue by installing turf fields with built-in drainage to replace the existing sinking fields. If we were to only repair the drainage issue, we would have to tear those fields up anyway to add drainage below the fields. The baseball/softball fields are built on wetlands, with a stream running directly underneath. The fields where the ropes course is located has a significantly high water table.
2. Multi-purpose field house: As you already know, we've moved the tennis courts to the front of the campus because the old courts were cracking and sinking, also due to a high water table at that location. We plan to repurpose the space of one-and-a-half of the four old tennis courts into a multi-purpose field house, with the remaining space dedicated to green space to replace the small bit of green space that we lost when we moved the school's tennis courts to their new location.

3. Building Upgrades: Although we've done a very good job of keeping the interiors of our buildings in great shape, there are areas that are 55 years old and in need of upgrades:
 - a. We are looking forward to freeing up space within classrooms by removing the weight room;
 - b. The Media Center will be completely gutted and upgraded to become more of a media center rather than an old school library with stacks;
 - c. We plan to upgrade the movie production studios, the art rooms, and the Planetarium.

I will now address the most asked question, "Why?"

1. The high water table and drainage issues on the baseball and softball fields would have required costly repairs anyway,
2. We want to take advantage of an all-time low in interest rates for economical financing of the projects,
3. The Department of Education will give us 34% of the cost of many of these projects which will help reduce the overall cost of the projects
4. The communities of Allendale, Hohokus, Saddle River and Upper Saddle River are building more housing developments. Based on our analysis and understanding of the population numbers resulting from those developments, along with average household breakdown data across the State of New Jersey, we are projecting an increase of 100 students over the next seven or eight years. We need to have the space to prepare for the natural growth within the district rather than look for a Referendum only once the additional students have arrived and we are bursting at the seams with space requirements.

I turn my focus now on the actual capital projects:

I. FIELDS

We disallowed use of our fields for two years to give the grass the opportunity to recover and regenerate. The wetlands are to the side of the fields, the water table is high throughout the area, and the underground stream flows right through the area that is sinking. The repair project would require us to tear up all the fields to create drainage pits and drainage for the underground stream, and instead of re-grassing afterwards, we will be installing turf. Turfing the entire area will allow us to create two fields within the baseball/softball area that we can multi-purpose. One of the two will be a full-sized field for sports including soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, football, and similar sports. The smaller of the two fields will allow us to hold sports practices and to get our marching band off the parking lot and allow them an actual turf field to practice on a daily basis. This will hopefully appeal to band parents who prefer their kids out of the parking lot and to the students who can appreciate not having to hear the daily announcement reminding seniors to remove their cars out of the parking lot before the marching band practice.



**NEW SYNTHETIC TURF
FIELDS**

- Strip and regrade existing field area including allowance for soil removal
- Install new drainage system tied into existing storm system + provide necessary stormwater management
- Install multipurpose synthetic turf field - football, soccer, lacrosse etc
- Install new synthetic turf infield outfield, baselines, pitchers mound and home plate areas and new dugouts

ATHLETIC FIELDS REIMAGINED



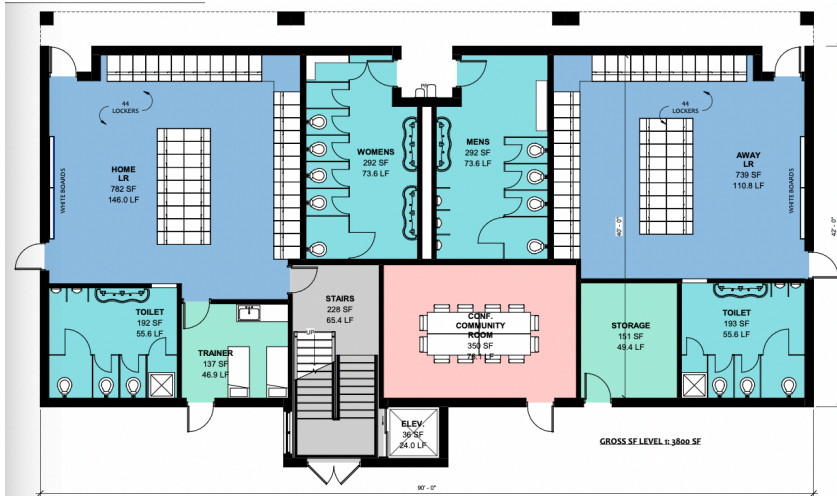
II. FIELD HOUSE

The field house will be built on the site of the old tennis courts. The Porta Johns that are currently located around the campus are disgusting, smelly, and are not cost efficient as they cost us thousands of dollars each year to keep them on campus. Our field house will be developed at the same size as our current weight room, but will be two stories. The field house will house a Home Team Locker Room and a Guest (Away) Team Locker Room, each with its own restroom facilities, along with separate public restrooms. The field house will also be open after school so if you use the track after school or the campus for other activities, you will have access to actual restrooms on campus. Additionally, we will add a community conference center to accommodate meetings for our NH community.

NEW M-P FIELD HOUSE - RELOCATED FITNESS CENTER

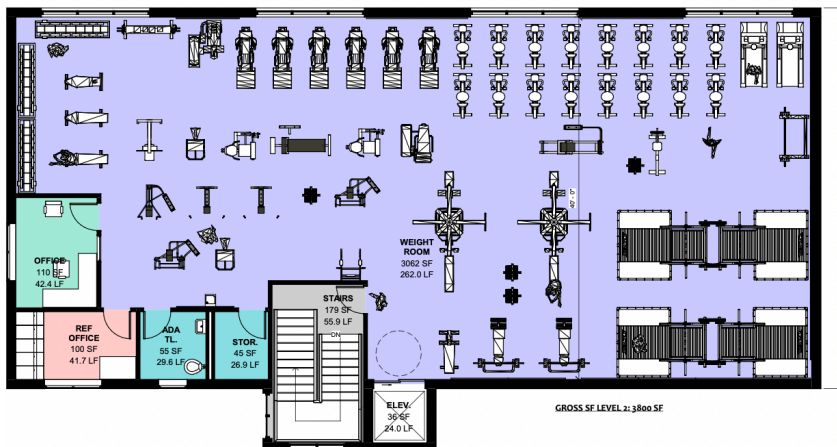
Construct new 7,600 s.f. Field House to house:

- Home/Away Team Rooms
- Team Toilets and Shower (eliminate porta-johns on campus)
- Public Restrooms
- Trainers Room & Storage
- Community/Conference Room
- Elevator to provide accessibility to second floor



We will have an elevator to the second floor which will house our new weight room. That fitness center will include an office for our referees to change, meetings, and storage. Our current weight room equipment is over 10 years old and so damaged that they are not even repairable, they are simply discarded; so we've been losing equipment every year instead of fixing them because they are not to the quality that we need them to be. We've set aside a quarter of a million dollars to replace all the fitness center equipment.

Our current fitness center were once classrooms a decade ago with walls torn down to create a fitness center, and you can see the remains of the typical classroom ceilings from the photos below. There is no ventilation, just regular small windows. The air conditioning units are installed in the windows since there is no central air system in those rooms. We are proposing lifted ceilings with exposed beams to help with the ventilation in the new room, TVs on the walls, and a warm and inviting space for the students.



NEW M-P FIELD HOUSE - RELOCATED FITNESS CENTER

New 3,800 s.f. 2nd Floor Fitness Center to support school programs:

- Physical Education
- Wellness Center
- Athletics
- Includes Office, Trainers Room, ADA Toilet and Storage



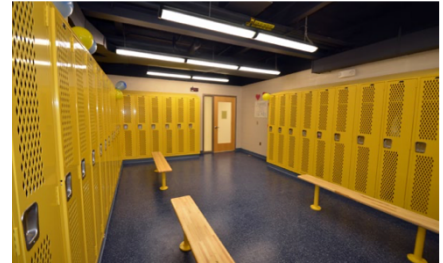
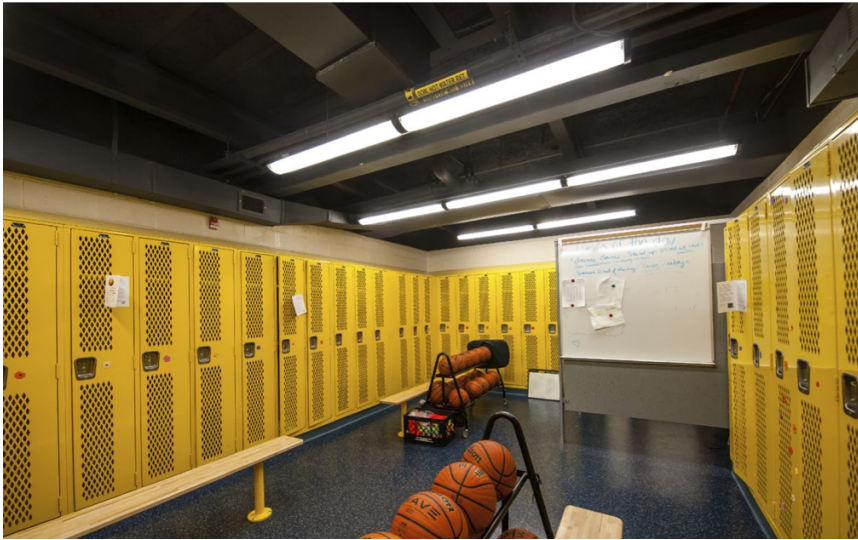
Weight Room – Existing condition - To be relocated to Field House, freeing up 4 classrooms



Weight Room – Reimagined to Fitness Center at Field House



Fitness Center ... Reimagined



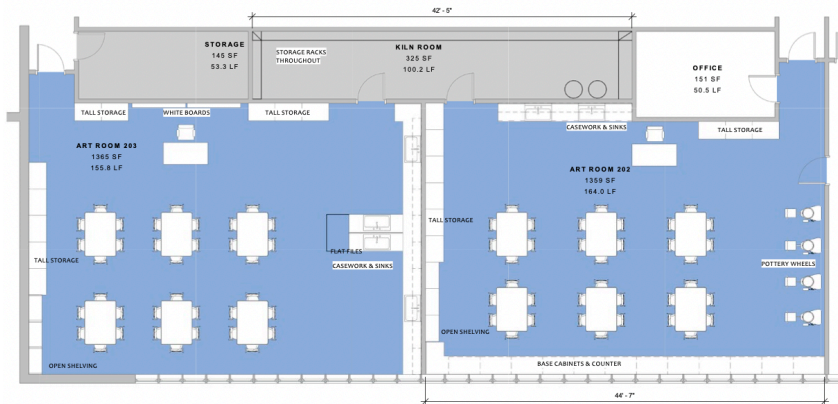
Team Rooms ... Reimagined

III. INTERIOR UPGRADES

A. ART ROOMS

Our Art Rooms haven't been touched in 55 years. Only one of our kilns actually works, so several ceramics classes have to share a single kiln. We envision renovating both Art Rooms, which includes everything except the Photography Room on the end. We'll have brand new kilns, new office space, and new storage systems, new classroom equipment,

moveable tables, flexible seating.



ART ROOM RENOVATION CERAMICS/PAINTING

- New casework with base and wall cabinets for better storage
- New trough art sink with clay trap and new kiln equip
- Flexible, multi-height furnishings
- Dedicated area for advanced arts
- Asbestos Flooring Abatement
- Lighting/Finishes Replacement



Art Classroom – Existing Conditions

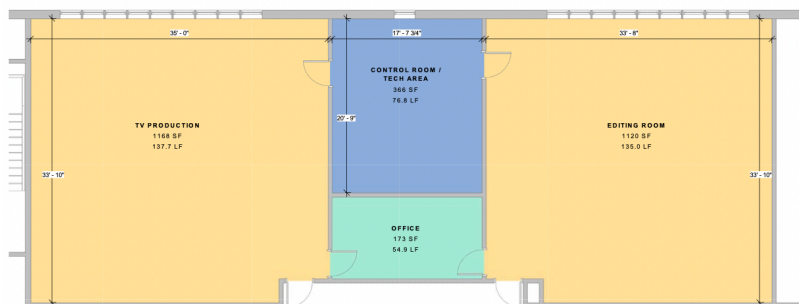


Art Rooms - Reimagined

B. TV PRODUCTION

The new TV Production teacher has amped up this program tremendously. The students now do morning announcements, they do sideline reporting, they have their own YouTube channel, they do interviews, the program is doing an amazing job of preparing kids for the TV Production field.

We did a couple of updates last year to the TV Editing Room, but the lighting and much of the equipment are decades old and just haven't changed with the times. So we are hoping to completely update these areas with all new LED lighting and updated equipment. This will allow the students to have a true TV Production experience so they will know what it's like to be either behind the scenes or in front of the camera while creating their products.



TV PRODUCTION / CONTROL ROOM / EDITING

- Improve Layout
- Provide cabinetry
- Replace antiquated gel lighting rack with new LED Lighting Rack
- Paint / Provide new ceilings
- Provide new equipment



TV Production - Existing Conditions



TV Production Room - Reimagined

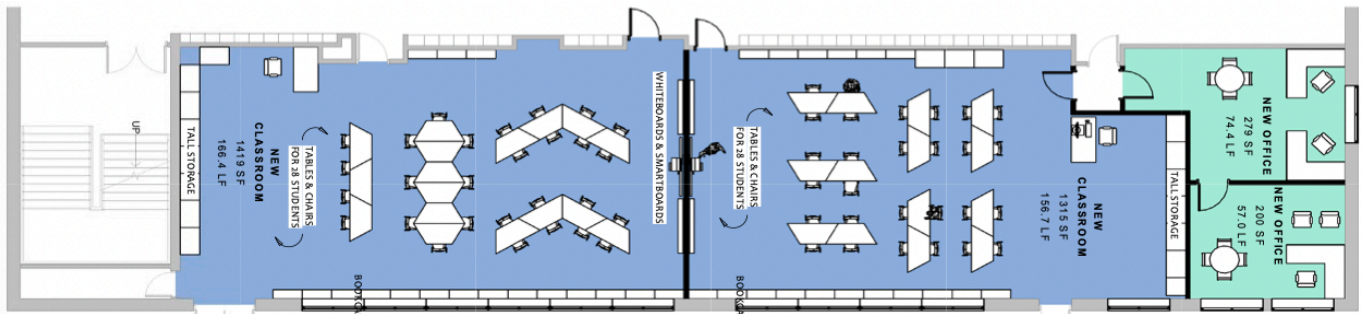
C. WEIGHT ROOM TO CLASSROOM CONVERSION

As I've mentioned before, I'm personally concerned about the growth of our communities and the resulting potential increase in the student population. We have lost some classroom space over the past few years, and that was done intentionally to create the Option 2 Program that made available internships and community service opportunities. We also lost classroom space to create the Wellness Program. Now with the anticipated growth, we need to create new classroom space.

The existing weight room will be reconverted back to their original use as classroom space. Those spaces are very large; at 1,300 square foot per classroom, they are each equivalent to 2 standard-sized classrooms. So although we can fit four classrooms in the existing space, we will reconstruct the space and reallocate that space to be used for Freshman Seminars, which are currently being offered in double classroom space. By moving the Freshman Seminar classes to the existing weight room space, we will free up the four classrooms currently being used by Freshman Seminar classes, thereby regaining four classrooms. With an average classroom size of 22 to 25 students, this allows us to have enough space to accommodate those additional 100 students projected as a result of the anticipated population growth.

Additionally, we've added in the past few years Instructional Coaches, who are individuals with expertise in their particular fields, such as Technology and Curriculum, and who push into the class to informally help teachers teach better. Teachers are more receptive to Instructional Coaches because these professionals are not administrators with the additional administrative function of observation and evaluation of the teachers. The absence of the formal observation-evaluation factor allows the teachers to work

more receptively knowing that the open discussions, recommendations, and collaboration on better teaching practices or how to enhance the teacher's skillset will have no job-related outcome as a result of those open discussions. Right now, there is no space for these Instructional Coaches for private collaboration with the teachers, so they have been using the classroom to work with the teachers. We plan to create two professional development rooms where those Coaches can meet and work on those skills with teachers outside the classroom.



WEIGHT ROOM TO CLASSROOM CONVERSION

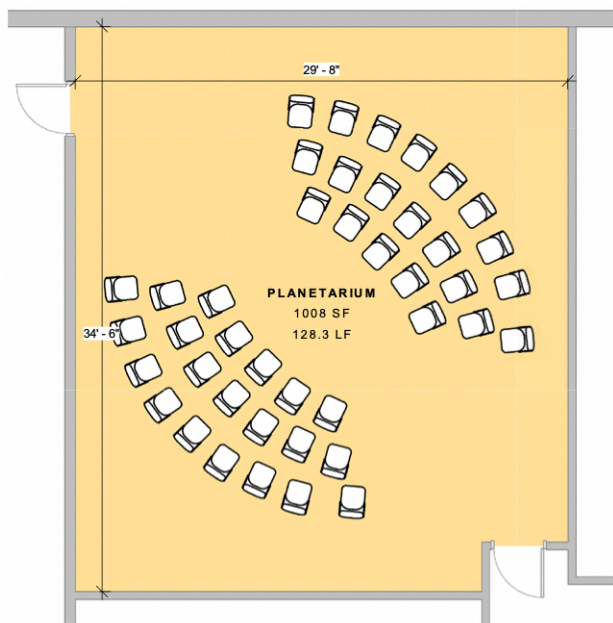
By relocating the existing weight room to new Field House we free up area:

- Create 2 new large /lecture classroom spaces for freshman seminar thus freeing up 4 other classroom spaces
- Create 2 new office spaces for instructional coaching - staff professional development

D. PLANETARIUM

The Planetarium is in good shape, it one of the very nice areas that isn't just used by our science students but also used by our elementary schools, by the Social Studies and other departments.

HASA has been so supportive over the years in helping us purchase materials, but the projector is now aging at 12-13 years old, and we all know technology doesn't last 13 years. Our projector is considered antiquated in the industry, we are essentially running on VHS technology when we really need to be running on digital technology, so we will be replacing the projector and tidying up the Planetarium a bit. Most people don't really understand the cost of a planetarium projector, but they generally start at a cost of \$300 thousand, and if we progress toward a Hayden type projector, the cost is in the millions of dollars. For us, \$300 thousand is not a cost that we can just push into the budget, so this Referendum will allow us to replace the antiquated projector that keeps breaking down on us and to continue maintaining the Planetarium.



PLANETARIUM UPGRADES

- Replace antiquated projection system
- Provide new equipment
- Paint & finishes



E. MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center is the final piece of our project. This is a heavily used area in the school, with meetings before and after school, classes throughout the day, lunch space for the students, in short, it's one of the areas that the kids really gravitate toward.

In its current format, it's really a tradition, old-school library, not even a media center, with some stacks, some tables, and some soft seating. We are re-envisioning this as more of a digital library, with \$250 thousand allocated to digital books.

We will remove all the stacks and create a meeting room for classes, for Board meetings, HASA meetings, or for anyone or any group who needs meeting space. We will also add in the same space two quiet rooms for those who need study space without noise or disruptions. We will turn most of our stacks into mini stacks, which are typically five to six feet high, and keep the remaining traditional stacks situated along the walls to avoid obscuring the line of sight within the Media Center. We will add a significant number of flexible seating for students throughout the Media Center.

The Media Center will be much brighter with new lighting, new carpeting, new furnishings which will enable the students to work in small groups, large groups, independently, in short, the library will become something for everybody, which is really what we want the Media Center to be for our students.

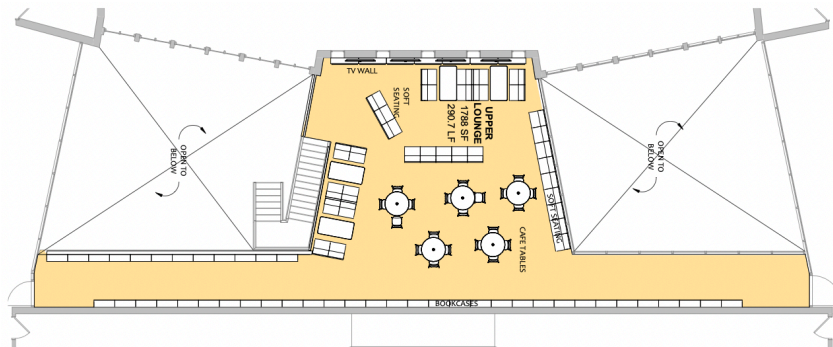
We have not chosen a final plan, if this Referendum passes, we will sit down with the teachers, the specialists, and the kids to determine what works best for everyone as we

reach a final plan for the Media Center.



FIRST FLOOR MEDIA CENTER

- Create new meeting room / quiet rooms
- Relocate book stacks to various areas around the library
- New finishes – Ceilings, Flooring, Accent lighting
- New furnishings / lower bookshelves / collaboration tables

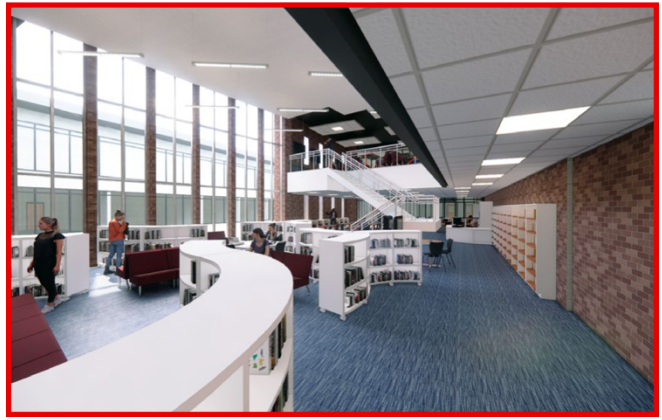


SECOND FLOOR MEDIA CENTER

- Create new flexible student lounge / cafe
- Relocate book stacks to various areas around the library
- New finishes – Ceilings, Flooring, Accent lighting
- New furnishings, pub tables, re-use soft seating from lower level



**Media Center – Existing Conditions
Reimagined**



NHRHS Media Center – 1st Floor ...



NHRHS Media Center ... Reimagined



**Media Center – Existing Conditions
Reimagined**



NHRHS Media Center – 2nd Floor ...



NHRHS Media Center ... Reimagined



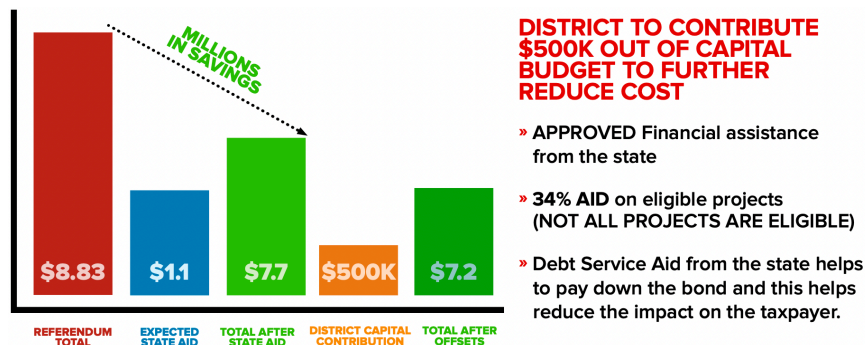
IV. TAX IMPACT

I have mentioned before that you won't be seeing any tax impact from this Referendum.

The first piece is due to the offsets from the State funding. As the summary below shows, our total cost for the three projects totals about \$8.8 million. The State of New Jersey has pre-approved partial funding of the educational aspects of these projects at a rate of 34% of projected project costs, which leaves us with debt service of \$7.7 million to complete the three projects.

REFERENDUM BUDGET BREAKDOWN			
NORTHERN HIGHLANDS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	TOTAL APPROVED PROJECT COST	APPROVED DEBT SERVICE AID	NET COST AFTER DEBT SERVICE AID
Multipurpose Synthetic Turf Field	\$ 3,133,168.00	\$ 453,449.16	\$ 2,679,718.84
(2) Story MP Field House / Fitness Center	\$ 3,828,054.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 3,828,054.00
Various Capital Projects & Classroom / Media Center Renovations	\$ 1,865,831.00	\$ 634,382.54	\$ 1,231,448.46
TOTAL - CONSTRUCTION & ASSOCIATED WORK	\$ 8,827,053.00	\$ 1,087,831.70	\$ 7,739,221.30

So how do we get this cost to our tax payers down even further? The chart below shows that I have about \$500 thousand left in capital reserves to put towards the cost of the project. Although \$500 thousand doesn't sound like much, please recall that over the years that I've been here, I've done \$25 million of capital improvements to the campus without asking the tax payers for assistance: the new tennis courts, redoing the track and turf, the auditorium, both gymnasiums were redone, classroom upgrades, bathrooms have been gutted and redone, new heating system, air conditioning in every classroom, solar panels, new windows, security upgrades; so I have used a lot of my capital reserves and why there's only \$500 thousand left to contribute to our current three projects. The use of our capital reserves will help bring the total cost of projects to \$7.7 million.



We currently have the Science Wing's bond issue outstanding, which, as the summary below shows, has an impact on Allendale tax payers of \$256.15 a year and on Upper Saddle River tax payers of \$313.88 a year. Most of that money expires this June. This proposed project is much less than the Science Wing, so when that bond expires and this comes on, your taxes will be \$219.92 for Allendale tax payers and \$269.48 for Upper Saddle River tax payers, a decrease of \$36 and \$44 in Allendale and Upper Saddle River, respectively. So taxes decrease *and* we get this almost \$9 million in projects, so to me, it's a win-win situation – taxes decrease for residents, the district gets upgrades and future-proofs the school for future generations. For us, it's the perfect timing and the perfect set of projects to complete.

EXISTING TAX IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE ASSESSED HOME:*	
\$663,957	\$776,083
\$256¹⁵ PER YEAR ALLENDALE	\$313⁸⁸ PER YEAR UPPER SADDLE RIVER
PROPOSED TAX IMPACT ON THE AVERAGE ASSESSED HOME:*	
\$219⁹² PER YEAR ALLENDALE	\$269⁴⁸ PER YEAR USR
\$36.²³ ANNUAL SAVINGS ALLENDALE	\$44⁴⁰ ANNUAL SAVINGS USR

- » The District submitted our Referendum Project to the Department of Education for Approval.
- » We received approval letter providing that the project will receive up to 40% State Funding for eligible projects. (not all projects are eligible)

THE BREAKDOWN IS SET FORTH BELOW:

TOTAL APPROVED PROJECT COSTS:	\$ 8,827,053.00
APPROVED DEBT SERVICE AID:	(\$ 1,087,831.70)
<i>(calculated at 34% of \$3,199,505.00 of eligible costs per State letters)</i>	
APPROVED DISTRICT SHARE:	\$ 7,739,221.30
DISTRICT CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION:	(\$ 500,000.00)
REALIZED DISTRICT SHARE:	\$ 7,239,221.30
REDUCTION IN DEBT SERVICE:	\$ 220,388.00

*(*The tax impacts have been calculated assuming that the state will only pay 85% of the 40% debt service aid, which they've done since 2009 - this equals 34% debt service aid).*

The final item is when and where you can vote. The Board is working on communications that will be disseminated to every household in Allendale and Upper Saddle River over the next month, so do expect a lot of detailed information delivered to your home in the next month.

The vote will be on March 8, 2022 from 6am to 8pm at the Allendale Borough, the Upper Saddle River Borough, and at Northern Highlands. This is only an Allendale and Upper Saddle River vote because Ho-Ho-Kus and Saddle River are tuition-based districts and do not have a vote on this Referendum. If you are a mail-in ballot family, those ballots will be mailed and you will have the opportunity to vote by mail as well. Please do know that I and the Board would not push this forward if we were not convinced that it is a necessity to the future success of our school district. We believe personally that this is a very important project, and it will future-proof our district for future generations.

I have been asked why March 8th for the vote? The answer is that we submit this well in advance of the November election. The Department of Education is now down to only one person who approves capital projects for the entire state, and they are taking up to a year to respond to requests from school districts. We were lucky in that it only took us six months to receive a reply because I know someone at the DOE who was able to help expedite this for us, but we were not able to get approval until November, which did not meet the requirement to give the public 60 days' notice prior to a vote. We didn't want to wait until next November for a vote due to the risk of rate increases while we wait. We also want to minimize the impact of continually increasing construction costs such as steel, wood, labor, and many other factors. So we felt that a special election in March would give us enough time after we obtained our approval to educate tax payers on the Referendum while minimizing the risk of a significantly higher price tag for the exact same project in a year's time.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: What is the timeline for completion if approved?

Dr. Beckerman answers: The entire project will take about two years to complete. We do have to progress in logical stages, for example, I can't relocate the weight room until the Field

House is finished and can house the new weight room. So logistically, the project will be completed in sequential stages, with one of the first pieces worked on, with no anticipated disruptions to classes or sports because it will be done over the old tennis courts. We will then work on the drainage next and turf the fields afterwards. We did the track and other turf field over the winter with a company from Canada which committed to start in December and finish by spring of the following year; we hope to find a similar contract with another company for work to be done over the winter months for the drainage and new turf. Certain phases like the Library and the Planetarium can be completed over the summer break. And we anticipate completion of all projects to take two years.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Might HoHoKus need to raise its taxes to pay for its tuition-based share?

Dr. Beckerman answers: Legally, we are not allowed to raise taxes as the law for tuition-based districts will not allow us to. The last time we did the 10-year contract for HoHoKus, we have already built in some monies for projects, so you will pay for your share, but it's already been built in for four years since your contract has been in effect for four years. The Send and Receive relationship for HoHoKus on a 10-year contract disallows taxation for projects. A district's money comes from tuition, and that's the state law as it governs tuition-based districts. The school can allow for a nominal cost to help offset the interest for the duration of the contract, and that is already built in to the contract. HoHoKus is aware of this, HoHoKus is already budgeted, so HoHoKus will not need to raise taxes due to this Referendum.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: If there's no tax impact, why is a referendum needed?

Dr. Beckerman answers: Because we are going out for a bond to finance the project, and anytime we go out for a bond, we are essentially telling the local tax payers that we are going to do something before we have all the money for it and will pay it off over 15 years. Although there will be no tax impact, there will be a liability. And the reason there will be no tax impact is because the expiration of the existing bond will essentially cancel out the tax impact of the proposed bond. Ultimately, because you are paying for new debt, we need you to vote on that new debt even though you won't feel the new debt due to simultaneous cancellation of existing debts.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Are we able to invest in the bond?

Dr. Beckerman answers: When we do go out for the bond, it will be issued and available as other normal public bonds such as bond issuances from New Jersey or New York City; We do have a Bond Attorney, Lisa Gorab, whose office will run a bond quote through the normal route and anyone with access to those routes will be able to invest in those bonds. The bond will be a 15-year bond, we won't know the rate until issuance, but in our financial analyses, we used a rate about a point higher than what we anticipate just to be conservative and give the taxpayers the worst-case scenario.

In summary, I want to impress on you how important this upgrade is to the future of our school. The reason houses are so expensive in our communities is partially due to the high-quality schools, and this will help ensure that we continue to be the best academically, with athletics, and curriculum, with the best facilities not just in the county and state but we also have a goal of being among the best in the nation. For me, making sure that kids stay at Northern Highlands is a competition. The Bergen County Academies just announced that they are building out again. We are competing against the best schools, private schools and academies in the country; for us to keep kids here at Highlands and to keep people continuing to want to move into our district, we really have to be the best of the best. And this plan helps steer us in the right direction to be the best of the best. We need to stay one step ahead of everybody else. Every time we add another element to our Option II program, I ask "What's next?" not "We're there." We just added an Associate's degree to our programs, and our kids can leave high school with an Associate's degree. We're working on adding a CTE program next year. We're continuing to build out, and this project helps build out our facilities to keep us in the running as the number one school in the county.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: What is a CTE Program?

Dr. Beckerman answers: CTE stands for Career and Technical Education. The program gives students the opportunity to leave high school with the sequential credits that can be applied toward technical training, apprenticeship or journeyman programs in industries such as plumbing, electrical, etc. These apprenticeships encompass thousands of hours of on-the-job training, so when kids leave here, they will have accrued significant hours to give them a head start as they embark on the next phase of their career. We plan to start with our Business Program, which will allow kids a head start when they head to college or post-secondary education. Most CTE programs are done through county schools and vocational schools. I don't want to lose our kids to those programs, which is why we have our Option II Program with its independent studies, online coursework, community service, internships, college courses, and CTE programs as options. My goal is for every child who enters the halls of Northern Highlands to have a program that fits their individual needs.

Parent question: What is the likelihood of actually having a DECA state tournament?

Dr. Beckerman answers: I will defer to Tony LaRocca who is in charge of our clubs and activities. We are very proud and supportive of DECA, to the extent that DECA's national organization and the State of NJ allow us to be "all in" this year. Please email Dr. LaRocca for more details. From our perspective, we can only do as much as the national organization allows us to do, but with all our programs, we would like to get our kids back to normal as much as possible. So as those types of in-person events are allowed to occur, we will do our best to make it possible for our kids, similar to how we were willing to send our Boomerang Program to the conference at the Jersey Shore, but rising COVID numbers required last minute modification of those plans.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: With the success of zoom classroom launches, are there discussions about snow days being zoom launches so we can stay on track?

Dr. Beckerman answers: Legally, we're not allowed. Our Governor has made an exemption for COVID-related issues only. So snow days on Zoom are not legal. If they were, trust me, I would make that happen, and get rid of the snow days on our calendar to result in a much cleaner calendar without so much movement; but unfortunately, this option is not within code.

Director of Guidance - Kelly Peterfreund:

This is a busy time of the year for our counselors. We are preparing for our scheduling process, for the end of our first semester, and for post-secondary planning with our juniors. We're also starting to meet with the eighth graders to work on the transition to high school. We had a department meeting to plan for the post-secondary process, and letters will be sent to all junior families by the end of the week on signing up via the Genesis parent portal for one-on-one conferences with the counselors. In addition, starting February 1, all students will meet individually with their counselors to start the course selection process for next year. Teachers also will be speaking with their students about placement recommendations for next year. Students have all received emails with links to the Curriculum Guide along with links to videos of our socially-distanced Elective Exploration process (versus our historical in-person Elective Exploration process). The videos are also shared with families of all students in grades 9 through 11. The videos really help the students gain insight into the various elective courses offered.

Parents, please know that the sequence of when students are called to their counselor meetings has no impact on their chances of getting into a course, and the current process is simply to help students select their courses. Once courses are selected, then the scheduling process begins, so this current process has nothing to do with whether students will make it into a course.

We continue to hear from students about their college acceptances. Mid-year grades will go out for seniors at the end of the first semester. Seniors will receive an email with guidance on that process.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Will you be visiting the district schools for 8th grade class selections or will it be virtual?

Kelly Peterfreund answers: As of now, the middle school visits are in-person. The assemblies with students occur during the school day, and I meet with parents and their students in the evenings.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: How do I see the minutes of each HASA meeting?

HASA answers via Zoom chat: HASA minutes are posted each month to the school website on our HASA page: <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/2055>

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment - Mrs. Robin Knutelsky:

A week and a half ago, ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders received a survey to determine whether they are interested in attending our Summer Academy. Due to the ongoing COVID risks, we are almost certain that we will keep the Summer Academy limited to students within the Northern Highlands community. 82 students responded to our survey, which asked whether students had enrolled in Summer Academy last summer, which courses they may be interested in, and which new courses they would like to see offered.

We are relatively certain that we will continue to offer Geometry, Financial Literacy to meet graduation requirements, Honors Biology and Honors Chemistry to allow students to advance to the next AP level courses. We were surprised that not all those who took Honors Biology or Honors Chemistry last year automatically chose to move on to AP Biology and AP Chemistry in September, but taking the Summer Academy Honors science courses did allow these students the flexibility within their schedule to move into other advanced science courses that held their interests.

New courses which we are confident we can offer this summer include CAD, which is a gateway into our drafting courses and our STEM courses. We have about 25 students who have expressed interest in that course, so there certainly is enough interest in the course to run it.

Another surprising request from many students is Creative Writing. While it does not take the place of an English course, it certainly looks impressive on college transcripts.

We have a few requests for Public Speaking, and we are still considering whether to run a World Language refresher course. We hope to make all these decisions in our planning meeting today and, when finalized, will update our website with new information and communicate with families on course offerings for the Summer Academy.

Summer Academy will begin on June 27 and end on July 28 for the full-year courses. Half year courses (eg. Financial Literacy) will run for half the duration.

All information will be updated and available on the school website by the end of January.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Is geometry available for current 8th graders or only current NH students?

Robin Knutelsky answers: Summer Academy courses are available for current Highlands students.

Parent question: If we start next summer offering Summer Academy courses to non-Northern Highlands students, would we charge for those courses? And would our Highlands students be given priority for enrollment in these courses.

Robin Knutelsky answers: We would open enrollment earlier for Highlands students, then open up to students outside our district. All the Summer Academy courses do have tuition, we are

keeping the tuition flat from last year's levels, we do have a small amount of COVID assistance money from the State that we plan to use to keep our tuition flat from last year.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Can students take more than one class during summer academy?

Robin Knutelsky answers: This depends on the course. For half-year, shortened courses, like Financial Literacy and Creative Writing, students can choose to take one course in the morning and the second course in the afternoon, or alternatively, take one course during the first session, and the second course in the subsequent session. For courses like CAD, Geometry, Honors Chemistry and Honors Biology, which run the full day for the full five weeks of Summer Academy, then only one course can be taken during Summer Academy. We schedule our Summer Academy with an eye on commitments which start in early August, such as high school sports or Marching Band, so we want to start at a time that we can still depend on the momentum from school in late June, but end at a time that will give students a true mental break from school to keep August free of academic commitments.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Is summer academy in person and every day?

Robin Knutelsky answers: Summer Academy will be in person. We really managed in person Summer Academy well last year, with both teachers and students demonstrating that they can successfully manage an in-person environment.

HASA Announcement – Lisa Kulick:

There are five of us on the HASA Committee with graduating seniors, so there will be five spots opening up on the HASA Committee next year. If anyone is interested in exploring a position on the Committee for next year, please drop me a note at hasa@northernhighlands.org

We're looking forward to meeting with Joe Occhino in February to discuss allocations of the funds we raised from the Holiday Raffle.

HASA Treasurer - Naomi Ono:

As of January 12, 2021, our operating account balance is \$41,844.27, and our Money Market account balance is \$58,099.63.

HASA Recording Secretary – Thao Groenewald:

The minutes of the December 2021 meeting are posted on our website.

Motioned for approval of the December 2021 minutes.

Kathy Travers approved, and Audrey Flynn seconded the motion.

Membership - Audrey Flynn:

We currently have 289 households who are HASA members.

Our membership is always open, it is never too late to join, it is one of our primary fundraisers, and annual dues not only help HASA support the school and students, but also give members access to our password-protected, app-based, online student directory.

The cost of HASA's annual membership is \$35 and payment can be made by check or PayPal.

Please join us by visiting our website at <http://www.northernhighlands.org/joinhasa>.

Please contact Audrey at (917) 715-9305 or hasamembership@northernhighlands.org with any questions.

Newsletter – Shantala Kaikini:

Submissions for the February 2, 2022 Newsletter are due by January 19, 2022.

Past Newsletters are always available to read at <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/6748>

Board of Education – Christine Ferrarie:

Hello, for those who do not know me, I am starting my second year as the Board of Education President. We recently had a reorganizational meeting and have a few changes to announce.

I would like to start by thanking two members who have retired from our Board: Amy Langevin from HoHoKus and Jim Mulanaphy from Allendale. We thank both for their service. Jim was on the Board for over thirteen years.

I would also like to welcome Maggie Lillegren, our HoHoKus representative on the Board of Education. Maggie will also be our new HASA liaison so she will be at monthly HASA meetings and give updates from the Board of Education. I will also thank Lisa Halperin for being the HASA liaison last year. Rachel Milston and Sheila Yallowitz are also here at this HASA meeting and will participate in future meetings, so please feel free to ask questions related to the Board of Education. Gail Trumbetti and Sheila have both just been re-elected so we extend congratulations to both. We also welcome Tyler Carrall (SP?), our new Board member from Allendale. We are all very excited about the Referendum, I hope you will all get out and vote on March 8. I have had three children graduate from Northern Highlands, all very different kids with very different experiences, but all received excellent educations. We would like to keep this excellence going. Our next meeting will be on January 24 at 7:30pm.

NH Sports Association - Kathy Travers for the Sports Update:

Wrestling and Basketball: Currently there are no spectator limits for our indoor wrestling matches and basketball games. But everyone who enters the building MUST WEAR A MASK.

Until COVID conditions improve, we will not be charging admission. We are trying to keep everyone safe, and we think it is a prudent decision to avoid physical handling of money.

Football: The search for a new football coach is underway, and we have had a lot of very good candidates apply. We hope to have a decision for everyone shortly.

Cheer: The first Cheer team meet will hopefully take place in Clifton on Mon January 17.

Fencing: Even under the current climate, the Fencing teams have been able to participate in some matches. The boys' team has a current record of 3-1 and the girls' team has a record of 0-4. Good luck to them as they move through the season.

Bowling: Unfortunately, the Bowling Coach has stepped aside due to health concerns. We now have three interim coaches, Coach Occhino, Coach Beckerman and Coach Koth. They will be filling in until they find a replacement for the Bowling Coach.

The Bowling Team is having a great year, the boys' record is 5-0 and the girls' record is 5-1.

Winter Track: Track is off to a great start. They have had several meets at the Armory in New York City. In order to compete at track meets, athletes must be fully vaccinated. We also held a Polar Bear Meet last week, in which the kids competed outside!

Swimming: Unfortunately, Covid has disrupted the swim season, and the Swim Team has had only one meet in December and one meet in January. We are currently scheduling makeups for all cancelled meets and hope that their season can pick up speed.

Basketball: The boys' and girls' Basketball programs have records of 1-5 and 2-6, respectively. We wish them luck as they continue with their season.

Wrestling: The Wrestling Team has a current record of 3-3. They have a big week ahead, with the counties coming up next Saturday and Sunday. We send best wishes to the wrestlers.

Ice Hockey: The Ice Hockey Team is having a fabulous season with a current record of 9-2-2. They are the number 3 seed in the counties. Please come out and support the boys this Thursday night v Ramsey and this Friday night v Ramapo.

Parent question submitted via Zoom chat: Where can I find dates for volleyball and boys' soccer summer schedules – start times, tryouts, practices?

Kathy Travers answers: There are sports pages on the school website where schedules are posted and I will also send a link.

MPAA - Grace Perruzzi:

We had a Holiday Concert with some very high-quality performances.

We also sponsored a fundraiser with Junior parking spots, we thank everyone for their support.

We currently have 45 members, it's never too late to join via the following link: <https://www.northernhighlands.org/Page/5887>

We have an acapella competition scheduled for January 22. There are links to buy tickets for all our competitions on our Facebook Page.

Our Spring musical, ***Something Rotten***, scheduled from March 3 through March 6, has been busy with rehearsals and set construction.

There are three MPAA scholarships awarded every year to three deserving senior students; look for application information from our MPAA page on the school website.

Our next meeting is on February 1 at 7:30pm.

HASA President - Lisa Kulick:

Lisa thanked everyone in attendance, wished everyone Happy & healthy New Year, then adjourned the meeting at 10:27am.

Our February HASA meeting will again be conducted on Zoom at 9:00am on Wednesday, February 9, 2022.