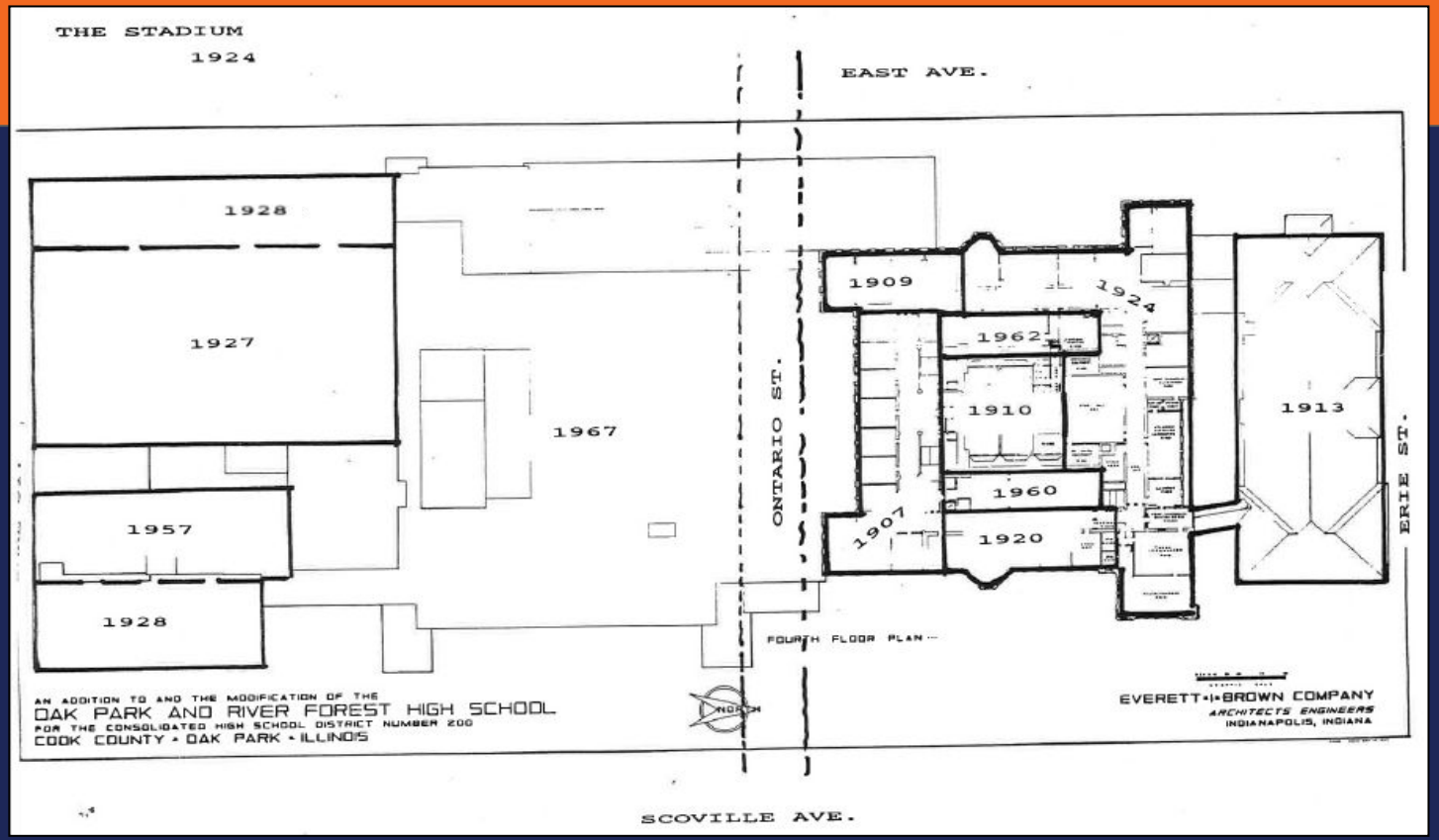
OAK PARK and RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL

Imagine OPRF Overview

Committee of the Whole

March 6, 2025

Original school building constructed: 1907
Last major facilities improvements: 1967



Fast Forward to...November 2016

Referendum on the Ballot

- Community voted on a bond issue of up to $25 million
- Bonds would have been combined with $20 million from cash reserves to fund a $44.5 million, five-year facilities plan
- Plan included:
  - Replacing two 88-year-old pools with single 40-meter pool and new garage on site of existing garage
  - Adding classrooms to accommodate more than 20% increase in performing arts enrollment
  - Renovating locker rooms to mitigate health and safety issues
  - Improving learning spaces

The Outcome

- 35,676 ballots were cast
- Referendum lost by 28 votes
- With community interest high and the vote so close, district decided a new, community-based approach was needed to solve facilities issues

Community Engagement Process

August 2017 - November 2018

The Charge

Make recommendations to the Board of Education for a fiscally responsible master facilities plan that supports equity and current and future academic programming needs.

Guiding Principles

1. Needs driven
2. Student centered
3. Equity focused

The Working Group

30 community members (selected from 90 applicants) plus 10 faculty and staff members

Data Collection

Survey Responses
- 669 students
- 360 faculty and staff
- 175 club sponsors, coaches, and PE staffulty

Meetings and Listening Sessions
- 29 listening sessions with 665+ students
- 29 meetings with department/division heads and administrators
- 21 work group listening sessions with faculty and staff
- Conversations with scores of additional faculty and staff

Tours
- 23+ specialized OPRF
- 5 peer school renovations
- 5 peer school specialized

Other Sources
- Detailed inventories and investigations of hundreds of OPRF spaces
- Current facilities reports and intergovernmental agreements
- Previous OPRF facilities committee and consultant reports
- Professional research and architects

Summary of Identified Issues

Student Learning Spaces
Need to be reorganized, reconfigured, renovated, upgraded to meet current and future educational needs

Widespread Inefficiency
Result of decades of piecemeal problem-solving and assignment of spaces

Connection and Community
Would be better fostered through changes creating a more welcoming school

Equity
Along several dimensions, could be fostered through facilities changes

Configuration and Capacity
Several areas of the campus leave student, enrollment, and curricular needs unmet

Condition of Facilities
Certain areas of the aging building negatively impact students and staff, despite decades of good maintenance

The Outcome

A comprehensive, flexible, five-phase master facilities plan that can be financed and executed one project at a time. School is fully functional after each project, allowing the district to pause as needed between projects.

Current Timeline for Imagine Projects 1 - 5



Major Facilities Renovations 2020 - Present

Imagine Project 1 ✓

Cost: $42.2 million
Funding source: Cash reserves
Timeline: 2020 - 2023


Student Resource Center


Balcony and Student Commons

- Added two-story Student Resource Center
- Replaced South Cafeteria
- Renovated Main Entrance, Welcome Center, and bathrooms
- Renovated Student Activities Center/Student Commons
- Added 8 all-gender bathrooms
- Renovated 65 classrooms, including special education TEAM classrooms and visual arts labs
- Added 15 new classrooms, including 2 science labs
- Renovated/added Special Education offices and conference rooms
- Relocated/renovated Driver Education classrooms
- Relocated/renovated mailroom and duplicating
- Added ADA-compliant elevator Renovated freight elevator to make fourth floor handicapped-accessible


Makerspace

Athletic Fields ✓

Collaboration with: Park District of Oak Park
Cost: $16.5 million
Funding source: Cash reserves
Timeline: 2023

- New 400-meter track and multipurpose field
- New multipurpose field, includes baseball diamond (south side of Lake Street)
- Renovated softball fields (Ridgeland Common)



Imagine Project 2

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Cost: $102 million
Funding source:
$44.2 million cash reserves
$45.3 million debt certificates
$12.5 million philanthropic donations
Timeline: 2024 - 2026


Rendering of New Physical Education Wing

- 25-yard x 40-yard pool with spectator balcony
- Multi-purpose/multi-court competition gym
- All-gender locker rooms
- Yoga/self-defense studio
- Weight room
- PE classrooms, PE and athletics offices, PE equipment storage, conference room
- Green Room renovation plus new dressing rooms
- Costume shop/storage, prop shop/storage
- ADA-compliant elevator
- Multi-purpose/dance gym
- Athletic trainers treatment room
- Boys locker rooms
- Girls locker rooms
- Student commons and pre-function space
- Green roof to manage stormwater runoff, designed to incorporate future solar array

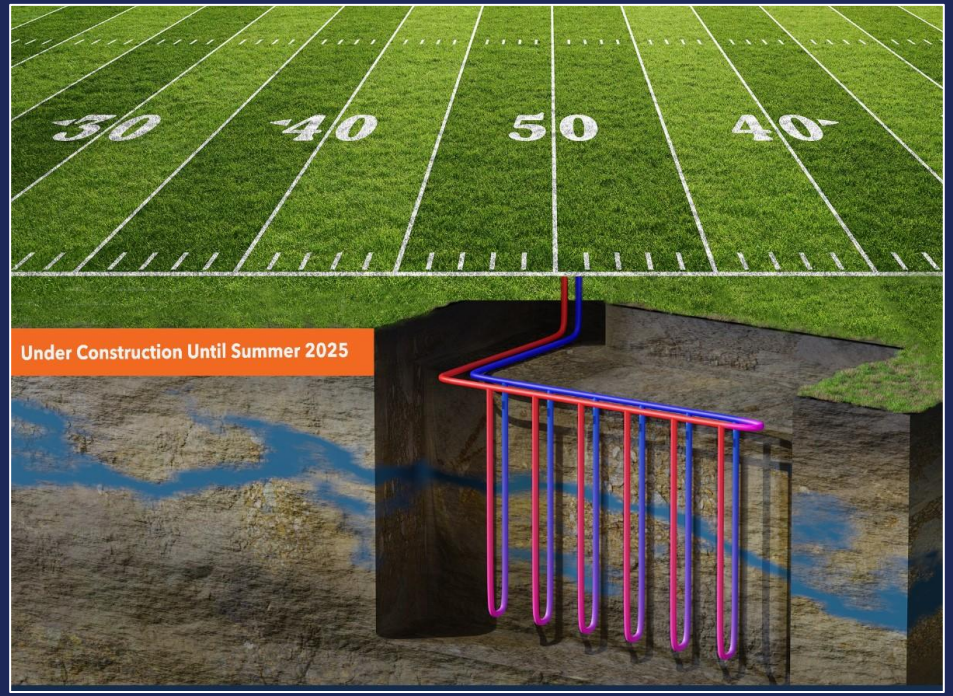
Geothermal System

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Cost: $12.5 million
Funding source: Cash reserves
Timeline: Fall 2024 - Summer 2025

New green energy system comprising 270 geothermal wells under the football field will supply 100% of heating, cooling, and ventilation for Imagine Project 2 facilities.

NOTE: Cost does not include anticipated federal rebates.



Completed + In-Progress Facilities Investments

2020 - 2026

Total Cost of Construction: $173.2 million

Funding Sources:

- *Cash reserves:* $115.4 million
- *Debt certificates:* $45.3 million
- *Donations through Imagine Foundation:* $12.5 million

Debt Certificates

- Payments included in annual operating budget — $3.2 million annually for 20 years
- Total interest cost: $20.2 million over 20 years
- No separate, additional debt levy on property tax bills

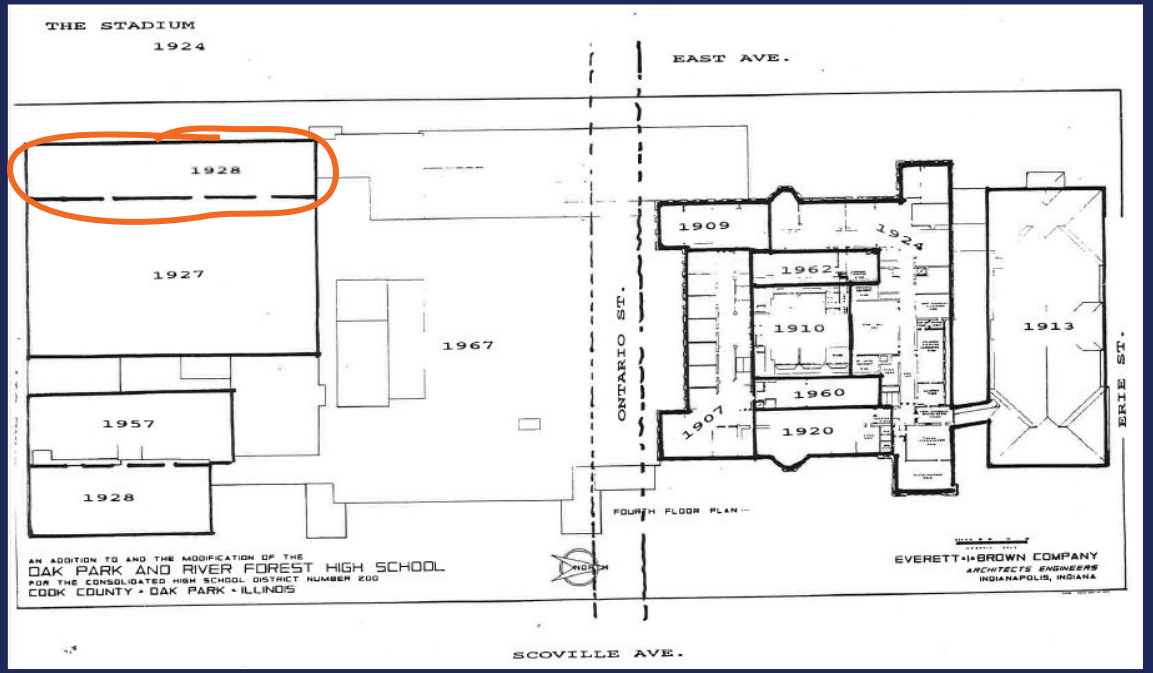
Imagine Project 3

Not yet approved

Cost: To be determined
Funding source: To be determined
Timeline: To be determined

Replaces century-old facilities at southwest end of building with new construction:

- Performing Arts and Physical Education spaces
- Green roof to manage stormwater runoff, designed to incorporate future solar array



What Did the Imagine Plan Include in Project 3?

Performing Arts spaces

- Classrooms for Choir, Orchestra, Band, and Ensemble
- Practice rooms
- Black Box Theater
- Dressing Room
- Stagecraft
- Performing Arts offices and storage

Physical Education spaces

- Multipurpose Gymnastics gym
- Multipurpose Wrestling gym
- Adaptive Cardio gym
- PE classroom
- Team changing facilities and equipment
- PE storage

Green Roof

- Manage stormwater runoff
- Designed to incorporate future solar array

Originally included in Project 3 but already completed in Project 1:

- Renovated Main Entrance and bathrooms
- Renovated Student Commons
- All-gender bathrooms
- Elevator to fourth floor

What Needs Does Project 3 Address?

Performing Arts

- Lack of accessibility
- Insufficient air volume and sound dampening
- Lack of adjacency—music classes currently on different floors, not near performance spaces
- Lack of individual practice rooms and recording capability—takes away from class time to to conduct state-mandated assessments
- Lack of storage for large instruments, uniforms, etc., impinges on classroom and practice room space
- Virtually no dedicated space to build sets for nine annual theatre productions
- Inability to expose students to current theatre technologies
- Lack of space to congregate—the arts are where a significant portion of students go during free time for connection
- Multiple issues with black box theater:
  - No bathroom
  - No dressing room—students use a closet
  - Archaic, unsafe lighting system
  - No tool cage to lock power and hand tools
  - No collaboration space
  - No video projection
  - No rehearsal space

Physical Education

- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of capacity
- Poor ventilation
- Water leaks
- Damaged windows

Imagine OPRF Project 4

Not yet approved
Cost: To be determined
Funding source: To be determined
Timeline: To be determined

What did the Imagine Plan include?

- Board Room and associated offices
- Student Services offices
- Health Services office
- 14 classrooms
- 11 science labs with prep areas and office spaces
- Nursing lab renovation
- 6 Special Education classrooms and offices for Learning Development and Emotional programs
- Kitchen, servery, and North Cafeteria

Originally in Project 4 but already completed:

- Renovated Main Entrance lobby and Welcome Center (Project 1)
- Relocated/renovated Driver Education classrooms (Project 1)
- Replaced tennis courts (2022)

Originally in Project 4 but moved to 10-Year Maintenance Plan:

- Renovation of Huskie Pups spaces
- 4 science labs with prep areas and 2 shared office spaces

What Needs Does Project 4 Address?

- Lack of accessibility
- Updates to remaining science labs to bring configuration, capacity, and condition into 21st century
- Bring configuration, capacity, and condition of Career and Technical Education spaces into 21st century
- Inadequate Science offices and storage
- Board Room and related offices not conducive to public access
- Inefficient, uncomfortable, crowded cafeteria
- Insufficient learning spaces and support-staff areas for Special Education's Learning Development and Social-Emotional Development programs.
- Lack of adjacency and easy student access to Student Services (counselors, social workers, deans) and Health Services

Imagine OPRF Project 5

Not yet approved
Cost: To be determined
Funding source: To be determined
Timeline: To be determined

What did the Imagine Plan include?

- Student Commons phase 2 (third and fourth floors)
- 36 classrooms
- Breakout collaboration spaces
- Family and Consumer Science labs
- Fieldhouse with three-court competition gym and indoor track
- Solar panels
- Art labs

Originally in Project 5 but already completed as part of Athletic Fields project:

- South Fields storage bleachers
- West Fields synthetic turf

Originally in Project 5 but moved to Project 2: PE classroom

Originally in Project 5 but anticipate moving to Project 3: Additional PE classroom

What Needs Does Project 5 Address?

- Lack of accessibility
- Replace Fieldhouse to bring configuration, capacity, and condition into 21st century
- Updates to remaining science labs to bring configuration, capacity, and condition into 21st century
- Bring configuration, capacity, and condition of Career and Technical Education spaces into 21st century
- Additional PE and Performing Arts classrooms
- Increase daylight and student connection through all floors (via Student Commons phase 2)

What Is Programming?

In architectural terms, programming is the research and decision-making process that ultimately determines the scope of a project.

A crucial part of programming is engaging the stakeholders who will be directly affected by the project's design to determine their needs for the space.

For example, how many people must the space hold? How much equipment and furniture? What are the ways users need to be able to circulate through the space? Do the users need it to be proximate to certain other spaces?