

Background for Discussion

LMES playground
9/8/2025

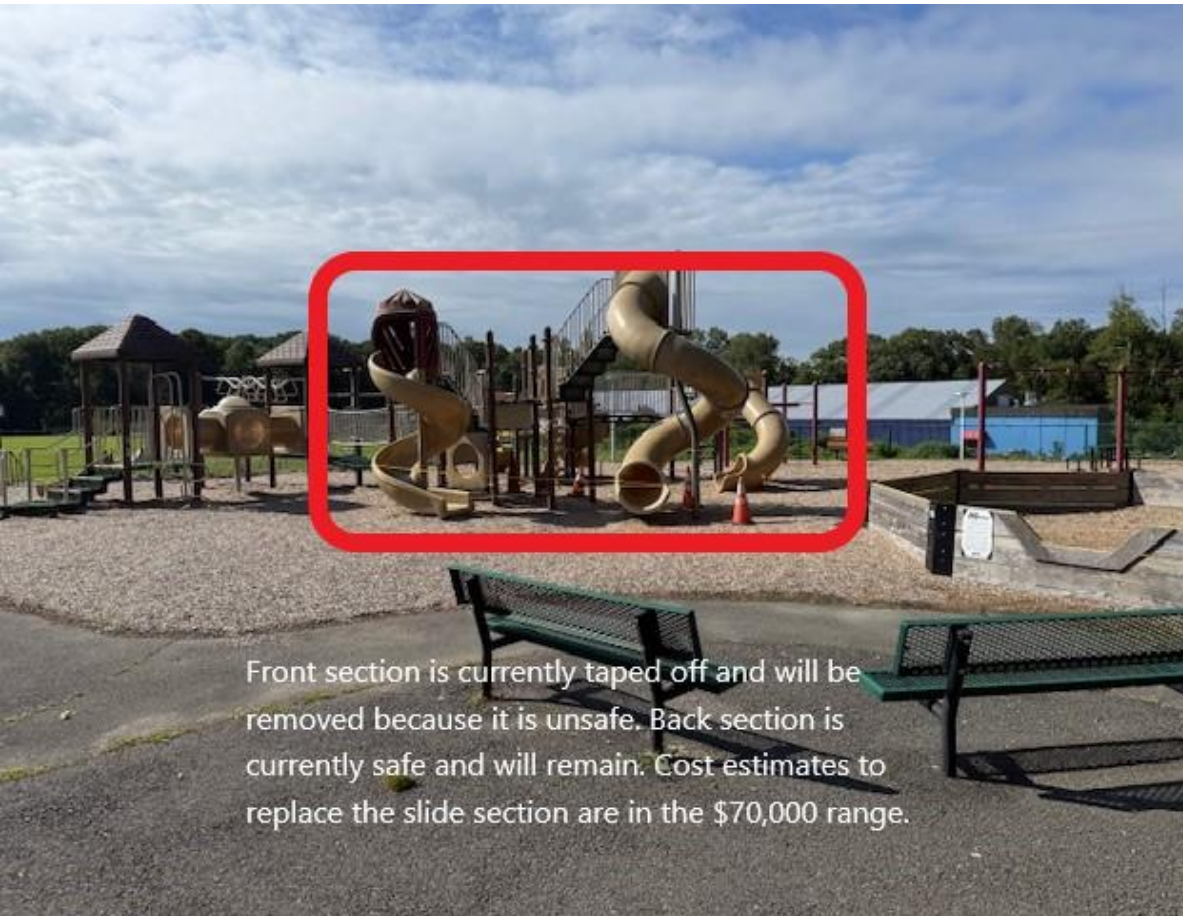
Playground Safety

- All playgrounds are reviewed by Childscapes every other year and certified for safety and student use.
- District custodial staff perform routine checks multiple times per week and whenever a concern is raised through staff.
- The District replaces wood chips with certified playground mulch every other year.

Progression Timeline

- January 21st, 2025: Head Custodian noticed the tall slide was broken and reached out to Creative Recreation for an estimate to replace it. Quote received for \$13,475.
- February 13th, 2025: Principal discussed the slide replacement with PTO at the monthly meeting. PTO said they would look into the repair/replacement of the slide. At this time, the scope was limited to the slide.
- Mid-March: Safety inspections were done to review slide replacement and the remaining structure found additional issues.
- April 10th, 2025: Continued discussion with PTO about supplementing the cost of slide replacement, however other parts of the same section began to fail. At this time, the approach was still focused on repairing the structure.
- May 12th, 2025: Head Custodian & Joe met with contractor to assess playground. All the playground at LMES was reviewed and no other safety concerns were noted other than the broken equipment and failing hardware on the front structure. As part of the inspection, it was noted that several parts of the front structure have heavy wear and replacement parts would be required.
- May 21st, 2025: PTO Public meeting held at LMES (families provided with link to join virtually). Principal provided overview of how it started with one slide and grew through a safety assessment to two large playground elements and the current, updated, estimated cost to replace.
- June and July: Worked with a vendor to identify and design the replacement section and the use of PTO funds to procure the equipment. As the total costs became apparent there was a shifting perspective as to the level of support the PTO would have to provide and the practicality of raising the necessary amount in a short period of time.
- August: Once we had design specs and cost estimates that indicated the higher costs, the Board was informed on 8/15.
- August: Knowing that the repairs were no longer an option, the dangerous structure was removed to eliminate any potential liability or use after school hours.
- Currently we have one vendor quote and are waiting on a second. The quotes are approximate based on the final choice, installation, and removal options.

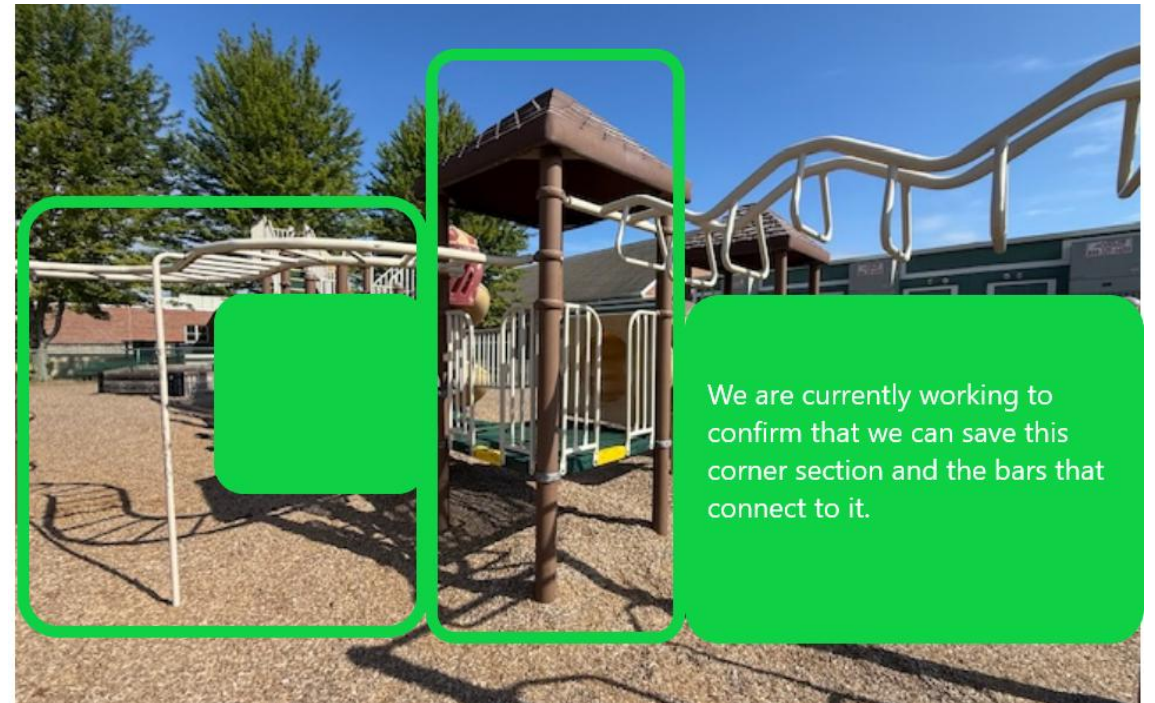
Structures That had to be removed:



Additional areas that began to fail



The area outlined in red was removed, the green section was retained.





- Current section at LMES
- All remaining structures are operational and safe
- They have passed inspection
- They are original to the building
- Unsafe sections have been removed, and the areas mulched



Remaining Playground Pieces are Safe

Cost estimates and installation



Two vendors have been consulted regarding options to replace the section that was removed.



One is on the list of approved vendors (Ben Shaffer Recreation) and State bid list



Pricing ranges from \$75,000-\$85,000 depending on installation options. The lower cost utilizes parent volunteers contributing to the installation.



Any use of volunteer installation is supervised by the contractor, and all work is reviewed by the vendor.



Draft Design of
new section

Short history of playground funding:

- PES: 2014 New playground was installed through PTO raised funds over a period of time. It is our understanding that the previous PES playground had several years of lead time as the aging wooden structure would no longer meet new playground code. The district does not have an accounting of the playground cost as the Region did not contribute.
- LMES: Also in 2014, the PreK playground was purchased by the PTO. The cost was \$10,000 and the company provided a \$1,000 grant. The LMES PTO paid the \$9,000 remainder.
- Capital Plan: The district did not have a capital plan prior to 2019. To date, playgrounds have not been a part of that plan but could be added moving forward.
- Operating Capital Account: Established in 2021-22 budget.
- MES and PES: Each school has had specific playground equipment installed to support student with mobility challenges. The PES “we go round” was purchased through a combination of grants and the PTO. The MES swing was purchased by the district.
- Annual playground mulch is now part of the budget, but large-scale repairs or replacement is not as they tend to be very durable with long usage life.
- The infrequent need for replacement and the possible need to access capital funds for the project is why the administration feels that the Board should provide guidance on the most desirable direction.