BUILDING THE FUTURE

DERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

ACT 34 HEARING

HERSHEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



Main Entrance

Public Hearing & Information Session

March 3, 2026
@ 6:00PM

Elementary School
Multi-Purpose Room

450 Homestead Road
Hershey, PA

Investing in Spaces Where Students Thrive

In 2021, Derry Township School District conducted comprehensive feasibility studies across all facilities, with a focus on Hershey Elementary School and the Early Childhood Center. The studies examined building conditions, enrollment, and how existing spaces meet the needs of students today and into the future. Findings revealed significant challenges that limit both functionality and opportunities for learning. Multiple options were evaluated, including a $56 million renovation and a higher-cost new construction design alternative. Ultimately, the District selected a new building design that balances long-term educational needs, flexibility, and fiscal responsibility, representing a middle-ground investment with projected costs falling between the renovation option and higher-cost new construction alternatives. Inside this newsletter, explore what this vision looks like, from budget highlights to interactive panoramas and design mock ups.

Act 34 Public Hearing: Learn About the Proposed Project

An Act 34 hearing is a public hearing required by a 1973 Pennsylvania law that school districts must hold before starting a new construction project. The hearing provides an opportunity for the public to review the project's plans and costs, including why it is needed, what alternatives were considered, and its expected costs and tax impacts. The goal is to ensure transparency and allow community feedback before a district commits to a large expenditure. Join us for the public hearing and information session on March 3, 2026, at 6 p.m. in the Hershey Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

Derry Township School District
30 E Granada Ave, Hershey, PA 17033

717-534-2501
www.hershey.k12.pa.us


Central School Corridor

A Vision for Learning

This project is about more than replacing an aging building. It's about investing in students and creating a school designed for learning, collaboration, and growth.

Derry Township School District's work to evaluate the future of our elementary school buildings began more than a decade ago. In 2014, the District completed a Fanning Howey feasibility study to take an in-depth look at Hershey Elementary School and the Hershey Early Childhood Center and to identify long-term needs.

That work continued in 2021, when the District conducted a comprehensive, district-wide facilities study through architecture firm, RLPS. Together, these studies shared a clear goal: ensure our school buildings truly support how children learn today and remain modern, safe, and functional for years to come.

The studies found that while our educators provide outstanding learning experiences, the existing buildings have significant limitations. Shared spaces like the cafeteria, gym, and library are undersized. There are limited areas for small-group learning, long hallways that make movement difficult, and aging building systems that would require major repairs. Outdoor play areas, parking, and ADA accessibility were also identified as areas needing improvement.

Upon completion of the studies, the District was presented with options to consider for addressing the building limitations and repairs identified including renovations, building additions, and construction of a new facility. However, estimates in 2019 for renovations alone, primarily to replace mechanical systems, were approximately $56 million and would not provide any solutions for space constraints or accessibility, nor would they support the District's long-term educational vision for our elementary age learners.

After exploring all potential options, the District elected to invest in a long-term solution which would provide far greater value: constructing a new, modern elementary school for approximately $122 million. Another important benefit with this solution is that students will continue learning in the current elementary

Project Timeline

2014 – Feasibility Study
Comprehensive evaluation of Hershey Elementary & Early Childhood Center.

2019 – Elementary Option Report
Warehaus outlined several options related to both renovation and new construction.

2021 – Feasibility Study
Comprehensive evaluation of Derry Township School District

2023 – Project Planning
Preliminary concepts developed to modernize classrooms and shared spaces.

March 2025 – Schematic
Board approves schemat
moving project forward.

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school building throughout construction of the new facility, limiting disruption to instruction and ensuring continuity for students and staff.

The new K-5 elementary building will include larger and more flexible learning spaces, improved safety and accessibility, updated technology, and a connected layout designed to support students and staff now and in the future.

In March 2025, the Board of School Directors approved the initial design phase of the project. The next steps will focus on refining design details, including classroom layouts, shared spaces, and building systems. This has been a thoughtful, long-term process, and together, we are building a school that will serve Hershey students and families for generations.

Core Priorities

- **Educational Programming:** The District studies have identified a number of issues with the existing Elementary School and Early Childhood Center and their impact on the educational program and goals of the School District. For example, original spaces in both the Elementary School and Early Childhood Center, such as the libraries, music classrooms, storage rooms and even closets, have had to be repurposed to meet current educational needs.

- **Special Education Needs & ADA Accessibility Requirements:** As educational practices and special education and mental health regulations have evolved, schools now require additional flexible and collaborative spaces to fully support diverse learning needs. Facilities must also meet modern ADA accessibility standards, including accessible classrooms, hallways, stairways, and ramps, to ensure safe, equitable access and inclusive learning environments for all students.

- **Aging Facility:** The district's Elementary School no longer meet today's educational needs. Hershey Elementary School has aging systems and limited space, now more than 70 years old, reaching the end of its useful life. The repairs needed for this building would exceed $56 million and would not meaningfully improve student learning or programming.

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2025 – Design Development
Detailed building plans, including classrooms, shared spaces and safety upgrades.

2026 – Community Input
Act 34 public hearing and opportunities for families to provide feedback.

Spring 2026 – Proposed Groundbreaking
Construction on the new school is planned to begin, creating modern, flexible learning spaces.

2028 – Planned School Completion
Students and staff move into new school and demolition of existing school begins.

Project Cost Overview

As the district continues to plan thoughtfully for the future of our students and community, it is important to clearly outline the costs associated with this project. The total project cost reflects a comprehensive investment in the future of the Derry Township School District and is presented in three primary categories: construction costs, construction soft costs, and soft costs. The proposed plan includes $122 million for the new Hershey Elementary School and $8.4 million for the District Office. To support this investment, the district is considering either a three-year tax increase of approximately 2.17–2.28% annually or a four-year increase of approximately 1.62–1.71% annually. This approach represents a fiscally responsible path forward, as the existing elementary building systems, now more than 70 years old, have reached the end of their useful life. While renovation was previously estimated at $56 million in 2019, when adjusted for inflation that cost would now represent approximately 76% of the current replacement cost, making new construction the more practical and responsible long-term solution for meeting educational needs and supporting student learning.

Construction Cost Estimates:

- General Construction
- HVAC Construction
- Plumbing Construction
- Electrical Construction
- Site Construction

Construction Soft Cost Estimates:

- Construction Contingency
- Regulatory Agency Review
- Testing and Inspections
- Commissioning
- Construction Manager

Project Soft Cost Estimates:

- Design Professional Fees
- Land and Traffic Surveys
- Geotechnical Investigations
- Financing
- Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment

$122.6 Million
Total School Cost

$8.4 Million
Total District Office Cost

1.67 - 2.22%
Average Tax Increase per year over the next 3-4 years



Art & STEAM Classroom



Media Center

Derry Township School District
30 E Granada Ave, Hershey, PA 17033

Hershey Elementary School	Cost date: 12/15/2025
New Elementary School (292,000 SF)	Cost ($310/SF)
Building Construction Cost	$88,163,976
Site Construction Costs	$12,789,045
Subtotal Construction Costs	**$100,953,021**
Construction Soft Costs (8.5%)	$5,653,401
Project Soft Costs	$16,021,553
Subtotal Soft Costs	**$21,674,954**
TOTAL PROJECT COST	**$122,627,975**

DTSD ECC/District Office Renovation		Cost date: 2/24/2025
ECC Reno/Conversion to DO (32,600 SF)	Cost Range	
Renovation Construction Cost	$6,194,000	$6,813,400
Subtotal Construction Costs	**$6,194,000**	**$6,813,400**
Construction Soft Costs (9%)	$495,520	$613,206
Project Soft Costs (13%)	$869,638	$1,039,745
Subtotal Soft Costs	**$1,365,158**	**$1,652,951**
TOTAL PROJECT COST	**$7,559,158**	**$8,468,351**

Tax Implications for Derry Township Community

For years, the District has taken a proactive and disciplined approach to financial planning in anticipation of this building project. Thanks to strong fiscal management, including a rare S&P AAA credit rating with a stable outlook, rapid repayment of existing debt, and significant remaining borrowing capacity, we are well positioned to move forward while carefully managing the tax impact on our community.

Past tax increase to fund new building

Starting Date	Tax Increase
07/01/2023	1.9%
07/01/2024	1.9%

Options for tax increase to fund new building

Starting Date	Tax Increase Range	
07/01/2026	2.28%	1.71%
07/01/2027	2.23%	1.68%
07/01/2028	2.17%	1.65%
07/01/2029	0%	1.62%

Snapshots of What's Next

These snapshots are 3D renderings of the new school, produced by our architects, Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates. They provide a glimpse of the vision for our updated learning spaces, while we continue the design development phase and refine details throughout the project.



Aerial View of Entrance and Drop-off Area



Aerial View of Academic and Music Wings



"Main Street" Corridor with Stairwell to Academic Wing



Main Corridor with Large Group Instruction Space



PIAA Regulation Gymnasium



Academic Flex Area

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QUICK FACTS

*Data as of January 2026

1309
Student Population K-5

220
Average Enrollment per Grade

150
Students Receiving Special Education Services

126
Professional Teaching Staff

101
Support Staff

21
Average Class Sizes (Students)

ART • HEALTH • LIBRARY • MUSIC • PHYSICAL EDUCATION • STEAM

Related Arts Classes Offered

3D Interactive Panoramas

Parent Drop-Off Lobby

Main Street

3-5 Entrance

Gymnasium

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Elementary Building Project Leads

Derry Township School District Board of Directors
Ms. Lindsay Drew, President
Mrs. Jennifer Renz, Vice President
Dr. Stewart McCarver, Treasurer
Mrs. Lesa Brackbill
Dr. Joshua Cysyk
Ms. Honesta Romberger
Mrs. Tracey Royo
Dr. Nicole Searfoss
Ms. Christine Stickler

Derry Township School District Administrative Team
Dr. Stacy Winslow, Superintendent
Dr. Jesse Rawls, Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Aaron Shuman, Assistant to the Superintendent
Mrs. Jodie Dermo, Business Manager
Mr. Henry Snyder, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Ms. Sarah Harmer, Director of Community Relations and Engagement
Mrs. Jena Funck, Hershey Elementary School K-5 Principal
Dr. Anna Gawel, Hershey Intermediate 4-5 Assistant Principal
Ms. Kelly Lombel, Hershey Primary 2-3 Assistant Principal
Ms. Heidi Stine, Hershey Early Childhood Center K-1 Assistant Principal

Design Team
Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates - Anthony Colestock, Principal Architect
Fidevia - Construction Owner's Representation
Rettew - Site Development Engineer