



WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FALL 2026 BOND REFERENDUM



SCHOOL VOTE

- Our high-achieving district is in need of facilities updates that **reflect the quality of our programming.**
- These **large-scale updates** don't fit within the constraints of our annual operating budget, which is focused on education.





OUR DISTRICT

- Serves approximately **1,700 students**, **grades 7 through 12**
- Students come from **Essex Fells, Fairfield, North Caldwell, and Roseland**
- Employs about **250 staff members**, many live in our sending towns



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



- WEHS ranked **34 out of 358** high schools in NJ
- 45 seniors earned the **Seal of Biliteracy**
- Expanded to 27 Advanced Placement **(AP) courses**
- **Consistent placement in top colleges**, including Ivy League schools



DISTRICT RECOGNITION & STAFF EXCELLENCE



- **Among top 3%** of school districts in the nation
- Ranked **#1 place** to teach in Essex County
- Ranked **#2 place** to teach in NJ
- **Top 1%** in the nation for best teachers
- **Top 8%** best school districts in NJ



STUDENT EXPERIENCE & PROGRAMS



- WEHS and WEMS designated **“No Place for Hate”** Schools
- Recognized as a **best community for music education** (12 years)

- **Strong investment** in AI, innovation, and curriculum tools
- **Expanding programs:** Gifted & Talented, Character Education, WE Thrive





ATHLETICS & CO-CURRICULAR SUCCESS

- Ranked **#1 in Essex County** for student athletics
- **State championship teams**, including nationally ranked field hockey
- Wide-ranging success across **multiple sports programs**
- **Thriving arts programs**, performance, and cultural celebrations

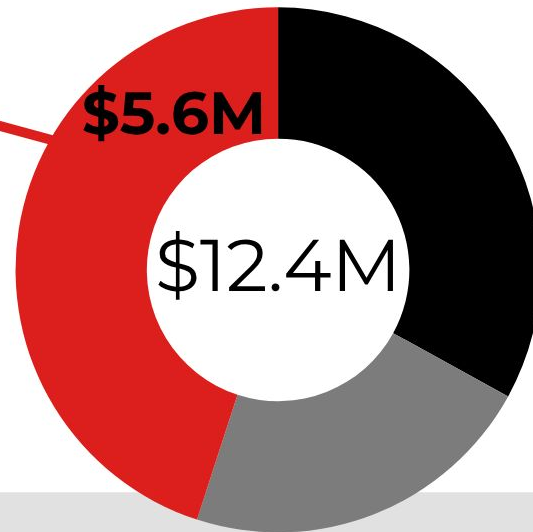


FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

These projects have been completed with no additional tax increase:

West Essex High School Projects

- Band room renovations
- Added a STEM room and two culinary arts rooms
- Auditorium renovations
- Boiler replacement

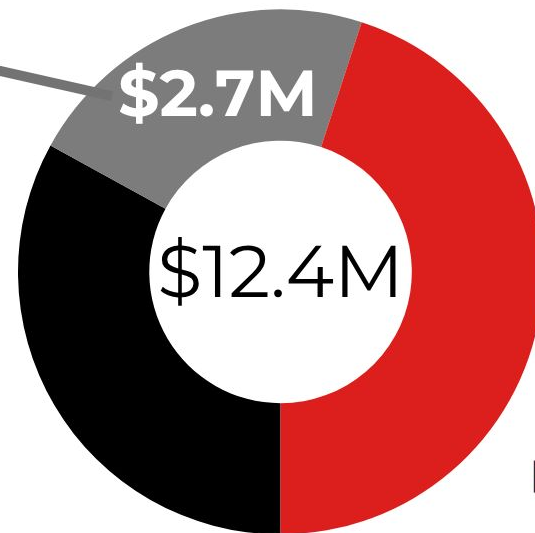


FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

These projects have been completed with no additional tax increase:

West Essex Middle School Projects

- Electrical upgrades & new emergency generator
- All classroom HVAC units replaced (In-house staff used for labor)
- Lower level locker room renovation
- Restroom renovations
- Partial roof replacement
- Sidewalk replacement

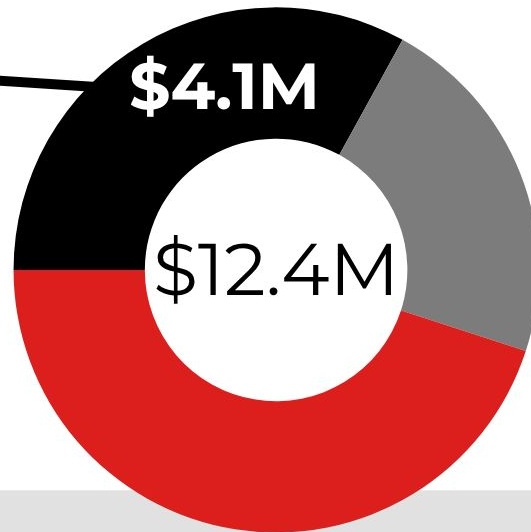


FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

These projects have been completed with no additional tax increase:

District-wide Projects

- New phone and lockdown systems
- Track replacement
- Parking lot paving
- Classroom renovations completed by in-house staff members
- Tennis court replacement (summer 2026)
- Bi-directional antennas and cellular antennas (summer 2026)



WHY A BOND REFERENDUM?

- Voter approval unlocks **state aid** to offset costs
- **Upfront funding**, payments spread over time
- Complements district's **fiscally responsible plan**, gives the community a voice
- **Larger projects** don't fit into the annual operating budget





STATE AID

- Board approved applications for state review on Feb. 19
- State review takes up to five months
- Upon completion review, state aid amount will be known, estimated tax impact will be finalized



TWO BALLOT QUESTIONS

Anticipated vote date: **November 3, 2026**

**\$49.5M
total**

TOTAL QUESTION 1: \$42 million

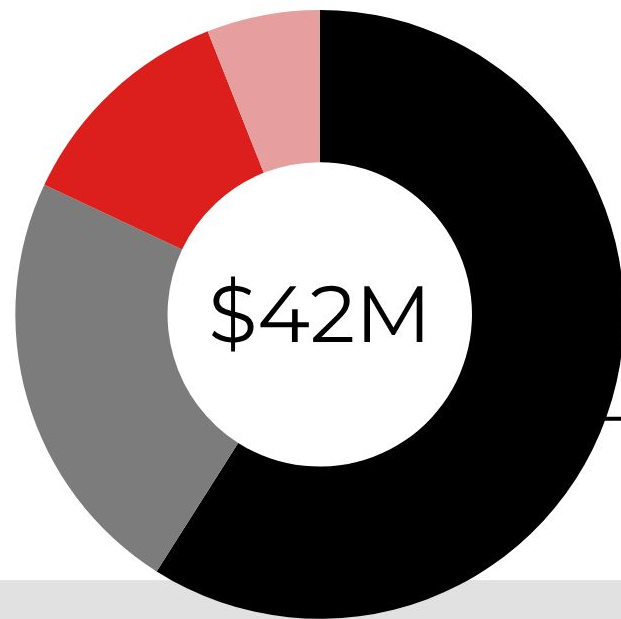
TOTAL QUESTION 2*: \$7.5 million

**Question 2 can only pass if voters also approve Question 1*

Estimated tax impact: Spring/Summer 2026



QUESTION 1 PROJECT BREAKDOWN



- Construct a two-floor addition at WEHS
- Renovate WEHS media center
- Renovate WEMS auditorium
- Replace the lower walls and windows at WEHS
- Remove the concrete trellis at WEMS
- Update HVAC units at the HS and MS
- Add turf and lights to the grass fields at WEMS
- Replace selected exterior doors, upgrade hardware at WEHS and WEMS
- Add security vestibules at the WEHS and WEMS main entrances

■ Additions/Renovations **59%**

■ Field Renovations **12%**

■ HVAC & Infrastructure Improvements **23%**

■ Security Enhancements **6%**



PROPOSED WEHS ADDITION LOCATION



EXISTING

- *37 teachers share classrooms*
- *23 out of 43 classrooms shared*
- *Scheduling challenges due to shared rooms*
- *Student class requests limited by room availability*



PROPOSED TWO-FLOOR ADDITION

FEATURES

- *Opens up designated space for each department, including special education*
- *Space for growing programs, study halls, small-group instruction, in-school restorative practices, and required testing accommodations*
- *No staffing increase*





- *Renovated Media Center*
- *Five new classrooms*
- *New Journalism Lab*
- *One new small-group instruction space*
- *Elevator & stairs to second floor*

FIRST FLOOR OF ADDITION





- **Seven new classrooms**
- **One new small-group instruction space**
- **Elevator & stairs to first floor**

SECOND FLOOR OF ADDITION





PROPOSED ADDITION CORRIDOR





PROPOSED ADDITION CORRIDOR



PROPOSED WEHS JOURNALISM LAB

FEATURES

- *Newsroom environment*
- *Hands-on learning opportunities*
- *Expanded space with updated technology that gives students real-world experience*





PROPOSED WEHS JOURNALISM LAB



PROPOSED WEHS JOURNALISM LAB



HIGH SCHOOL ADDITION | TYPICAL CLASSROOM

PROPOSED ADDITION CLASSROOM





PROPOSED TWO-FLOOR ADDITION





PROPOSED TWO-FLOOR ADDITION

CURRENT WEHS MEDIA CENTER



EXISTING

- *Original to building*
- *Does not reflect today's collaborative, hands-on approach to learning*
- *Outdated furniture, carpet, setup*



PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER

FEATURES

- *Modernized space to foster dynamic learning through teamwork and problem solving*
- *Flexible usage with movable walls and furniture*
- *Staff and students benefit from updated technology*





PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER





PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER





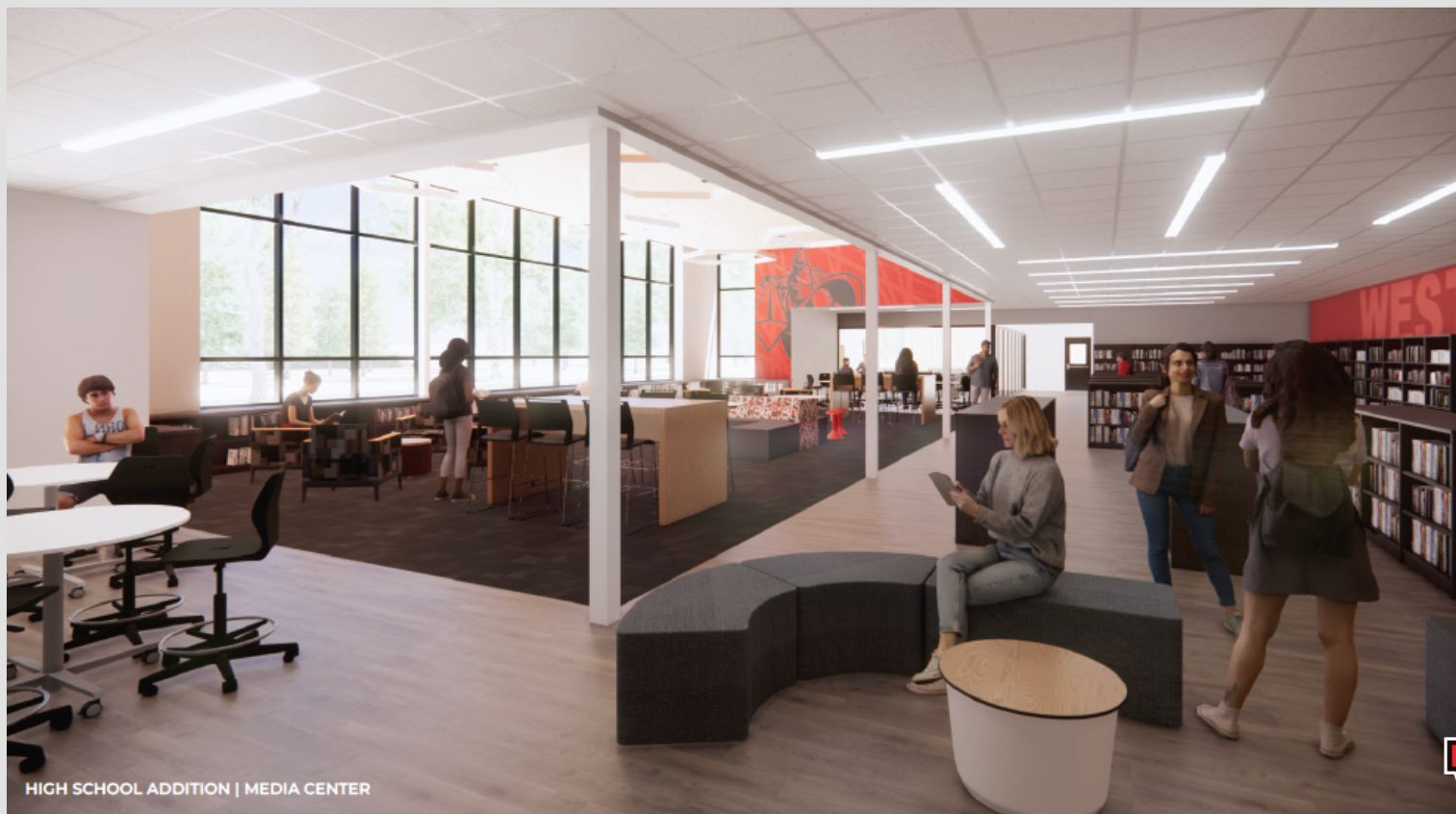
PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER





PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER





PROPOSED WEHS MEDIA CENTER



CURRENT WEMS AUDITORIUM



EXISTING

- *Original to building (1960s)*
- *Main hub for performances, assemblies, and ceremonies that host community guests*
- *Lacks accessibility features*
- *Worn seats, carpet, walls*
- *Insufficient HVAC (no A/C)*



CURRENT WEMS AUDITORIUM



EXISTING

- *Outdated A/V equipment and lighting*
- *Worn curtain system, stage*
- *No control booth*
- *Limited storage for equipment*



PROPOSED WEMS AUDITORIUM

FEATURES

- *Reflects quality of programming*
- *Expanded storage for props and scene backdrops*
- *Meets today's accessibility standards (wider aisles, companion seating, railings, lift)*
- *Upgraded HVAC, including air conditioning*
- *Potential rental revenue source for district*
- *Upgraded lighting, A/V equipment, and control booth*
- *Enhanced acoustics on ceiling and walls*
- *New stage, seating, flooring*
- *Updated lobby/entrance area*





PROPOSED WEMS AUDITORIUM





PROPOSED WEMS AUDITORIUM





PROPOSED WEMS AUDITORIUM



CURRENT EXTERIOR WALLS

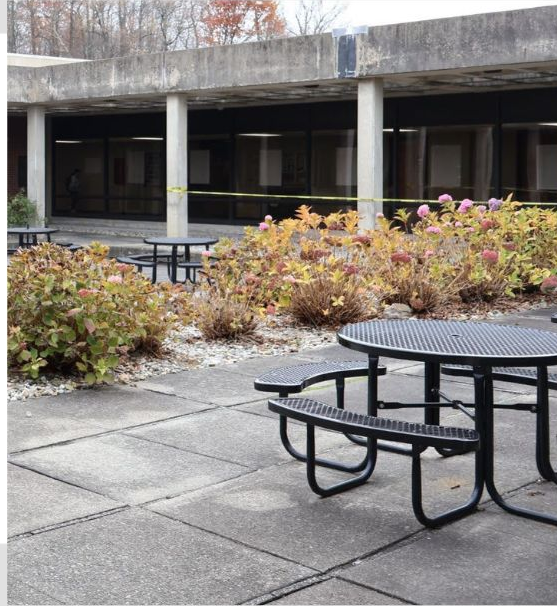


WEHS

- *Original to building*
- *Poor insulation*
- *Sinking foundation*
- *Replace panels under windows with brick to reduce risk of deterioration*



CURRENT WEMS COURTYARD



EXISTING

- *Beloved space offers opportunities for outdoor activities*
- *Trellis showing signs of deterioration due to weather*
- *Trellis restricts full usage of outdoor space*
- *Repair is not cost-efficient; removal is recommended*



WEHS HVAC UPGRADES



EXISTING

- *At the end of useful lifespan*
- *Maintenance / service done by in-house staff*
- *Proactive maintenance approach*
- *Risk of costly breakdowns if not replaced*
- *Selected classrooms at WEHS will receive updated HVAC units*



WEMS HVAC UPGRADES



FEATURES

- *Brand new rooftop HVAC units in shared spaces used by every student at WEMS*
 - *Both gymnasiums, the cafeteria and the auditorium*



CURRENT GRASS FIELDS



DISTRICT

- *Used by every student for physical education*
- *Shared by multiple athletics and programs*
- *Poor drainage*
- *Downtime required for grass recovery between uses*
- *Frequent flooding reduces usability*



CURRENT BASEBALL FIELD



DISTRICT

- *Poor drainage*
- *Downtime required for grass recovery between uses*
- *Frequent flooding reduces usability*



CURRENT SOFTBALL FIELD



DISTRICT

- *Poor drainage*
- *Downtime required for grass recovery between uses*
- *Frequent flooding reduces usability*

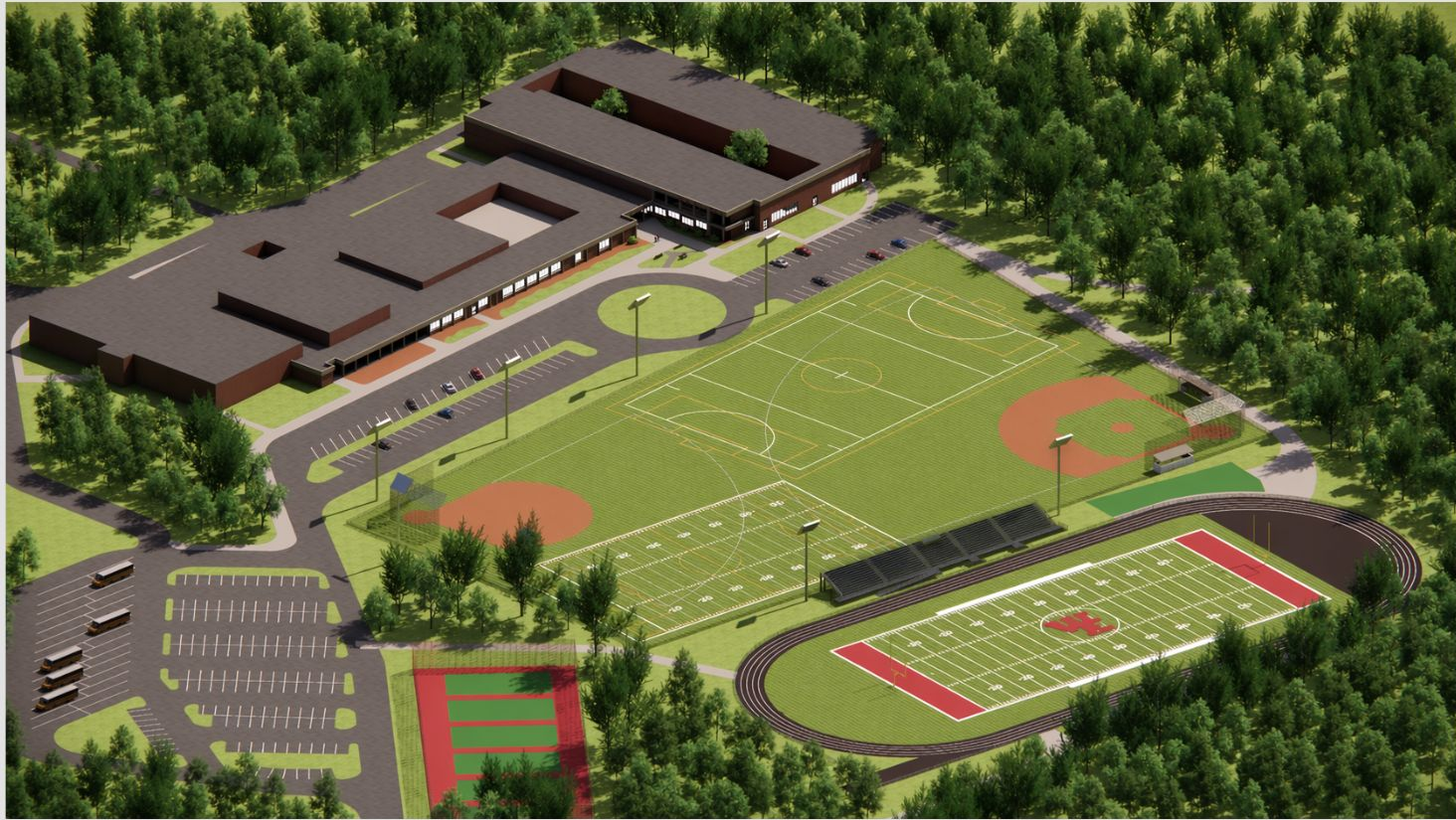


PROPOSED TURF FIELD

DISTRICT

- *Reduced flooding and cancellations due to weather*
- *No down time for field recovery*
- *Lighting expands usability in evenings*
- *Lined for multiple activities, sports*
- *Potential rental revenue source for district*





PROPOSED TURF FIELD



CURRENT MAIN ENTRANCE



WEHS

- *Approaching end of usable lifespan, showing age*
- *Numerous repairs have been made and parts are now obsolete*
- *Original hardware*



PROPOSED ENTRANCE VESTIBULE

WEHS

- *Aligns with today's security best practices; recommended by local law enforcement*
- *Improved visitor screening process before entering the building*





PROPOSED WEHS ENTRANCE VESTIBULE

CURRENT MAIN ENTRANCE



WEMS

- *Approaching end of usable lifespan, showing age*
- *Numerous repairs have been made and parts are now obsolete*
- *Original hardware*



PROPOSED ENTRANCE VESTIBULE

WEMS

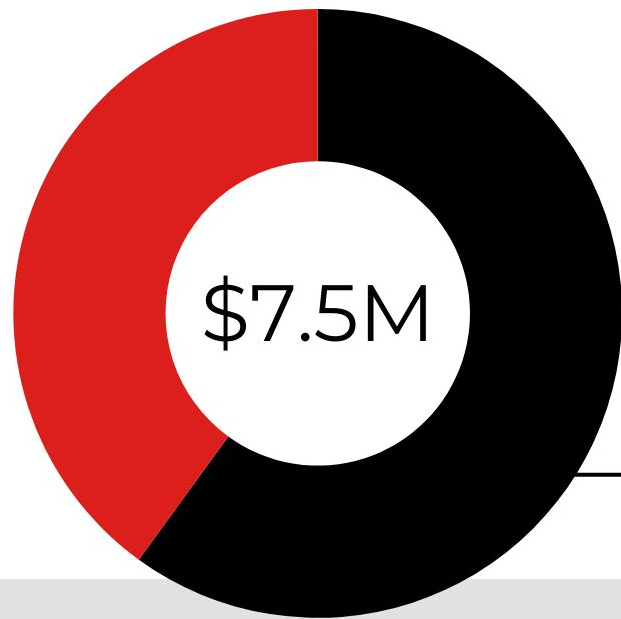
- *Aligns with today's security best practices; recommended by local law enforcement*
- *Improved visitor screening process before entering the building*





PROPOSED WEMS ENTRANCE VESTIBULE

QUESTION 2 PROJECT BREAKDOWN



- Replace stadium bleachers and press box
- Replace selected interior doors and hardware

■ Bleachers & Press Box 60% ■ Doors & Hardware 40%



CURRENT STADIUM BLEACHERS

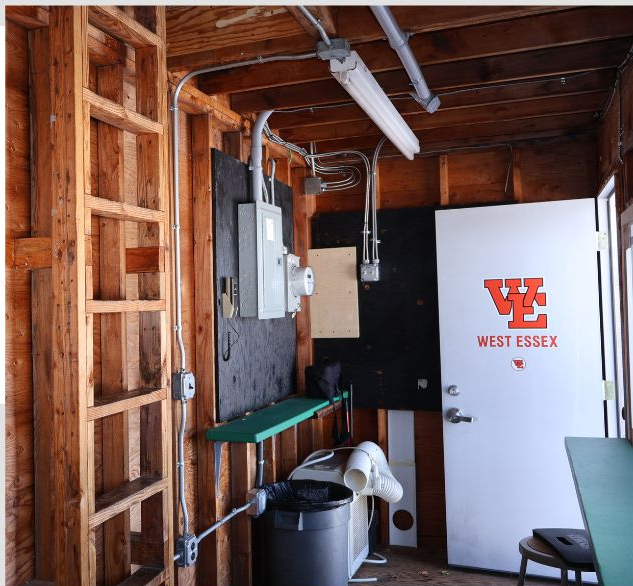


EXISTING

- *At the end of useful lifespan*
- *Lack accessibility features like ramps and railings*



CURRENT PRESS BOX



EXISTING

- *Roof, windows, siding at end of lifespan*
- *Lacks insulation, staircase to second floor*



PROPOSED STADIUM BLEACHERS & PRESS BOX

FEATURES

- *Meet today's accessibility standards with railings and additional safety features*
- *Both home and visitor bleachers replaced*
- *New, pre-fabricated, two-story press box*
 - *New roof, windows, siding, insulation to protect from the elements*
 - *Staircase to improve accessibility to second floor*

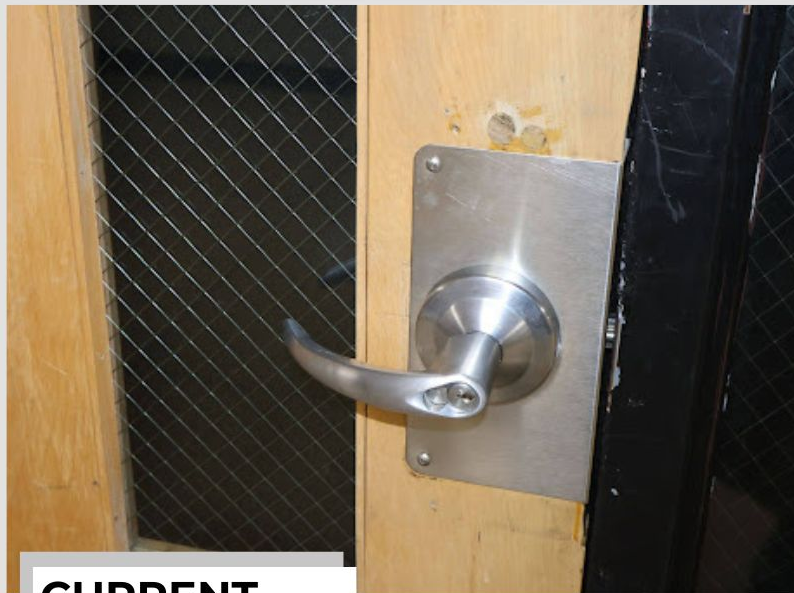




PROPOSED BLEACHERS & PRESS BOX



INTERIOR DOOR & HARDWARE



CURRENT



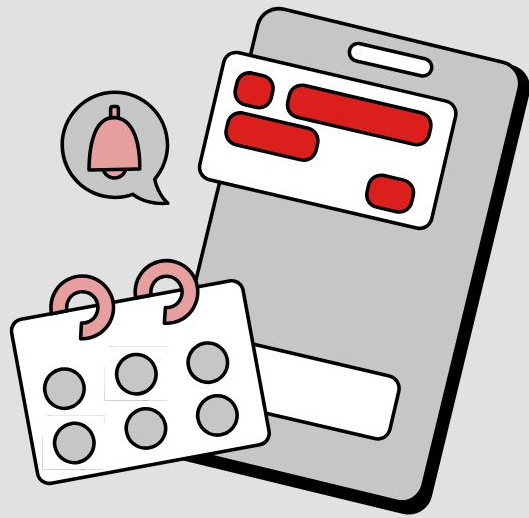
PROPOSED

EXISTING

- *Original doors with dated hardware*
- *Upgrades to modern doors with card access*
- *Tied into security system, including restrooms*



WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



LEARN MORE

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