

STILLWATER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 12, 904 STILLWATER ROAD
STILLWATER, NJ 07875
TEL: (973) 383-8954 FAX: (973) 383-1895

DR. DANIEL PAPA
SUPERINTENDENT



RENÉ METZGAR
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/
BOARD SECRETARY

3/31/2026

Dear Stillwater Township School Families,

I am pleased to share that during last evening's meeting, the Board of Education officially approved the preliminary phases for the stabilization of our 1988 wing which includes our gymnasium and classrooms. This decision marks a vital step forward in preserving and maintaining our school's facilities for years to come. When the addition was built in 1988, cracks began to appear soon after construction. In 1989, the Heikki K. Elo Consulting Engineers investigated the cracking and they recommended the installation of expansion joints and repairs to the hairline cracks. Even though the Heikki Engineers concluded that the cracks were normal due to settling, the cracks continued to appear over time. In 2016, Parette Somjen Architects (PSA) implemented a crack monitoring program and found that the cracks appeared to have, "minor to no movement." Another decade has passed and the minor movement identified has resulted in cracks reappearing.

Recognizing the significance of the issue in 2023, the school district wanted another professional opinion and hired ENV Architects and Sor Engineers to further investigate the cracking. The investigation included soil boring tests and test pits. They concluded that, "the existing fill does not appear to have been placed and compacted in a controlled manner and has settled unevenly, causing distress to the addition which is appearing as cracks in the walls and floors." Most importantly, both PSA and ENV architectural firms have provided professional opinions that the 1988 addition is currently safe for student and staff occupancy. However, all parties involved believe that action needs to be taken to avoid any future issues.

On March 2, 2026, the Board of Education approved our architects of record, Parette Somjen Architects, for the 1988 Building Stabilization, Repairs, and Renovations. Last night, the Board of Education approved PSA to begin professional services of the project which includes the preparation of Schematic Plans, Educational Specifications, and the submission of an application to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) seeking debt service aid for the project. Parette Somjen Architects is authorized to conduct further investigation into the stabilization project as they will collaborate with French & Parrello for additional Geotech engineering services. The scope as well as the expense of the project will be determined at the conclusion of the thorough investigation.

Furthermore, the Board of Education authorized the Stillwater School administration, PSA, and Bond Council, if applicable, to present this project to the Stillwater Township voters for approval of a bond referendum. Once PSA determines the scope of the stabilization project, we plan to hold site visits and informational meetings with the architects, engineers, and the financial advisors to communicate the details and trajectory of the project to the public. I appreciate your partnership and attention to this update. I am eager to share our progress and provide more detailed updates as we move through the coming months. Have a great day!

Sincerely,
Dr. Daniel Papa