



SHARON LEMKE/staff photographer

Gill Elementary principal Mike Duff displays plans for the school's expansion and renovation. Shaded areas show where six new classrooms will be added to the right and a new gymnasium on the left. Other areas will be renovated.

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Light green for Gill expansion

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new carpeting and ceilings, update electrical and lighting, some cabinetry and update emergency and sound systems, revamp the office area, add a new gymnasium, move the media center/library into the former gym and convert the former media center into a cafeteria. The former cafeteria would then become a music

room. The building will also be prepped for air conditioning.

Principal Mike Duff said a 16-member committee of school employees and parents has been involved in discussing building needs, and was able to offer its input for the project plans. "We're pleased the project was accepted and Gill is getting some attention," he said.

Project manager Bill McCarthy said the Gill project will go out for bid March 26, bids will be awarded in April, with construction to start in late April or early May.

The gymnasium and cafeteria areas would be done first, the addition is a separate area next, then the classrooms. The total building addition should be done by December, McCarthy said.

THE BOUNDARY issue has been debated over the past several months, with a vocal contingent of parents — mostly from the overcrowded Power Middle School — protesting any changes, saying they prefer a building addition. A boundary committee proposed three alternatives in December which the board is considering. A decision on boundary changes was postponed until after the Feb. 5 school election. Board reaction to the proposals is mixed. Trustees appear to be considering two of the plans, or variations on those. As proposed by the committee, the plans would:

- Plan II — move students in section 5 from Dunkle Middle School to Warner Middle School; sections 19, 20 21-1 and 21-3 out of Power into Dunkle; and sections 22, 21-2, 21-4, 16-4 and 15-4 out of Dunkle to East Middle School. This alternative keeps alive a neighborhood school concept and would move between 180 and 257 students depending on whether eighth graders were moved.

- Plan III — move students in the Flanders Elementary district to East, and move sections 22, 21-2 and 21-4 to East. This would move between 36 and 144 students, the least amount of any proposal, but does not allow for growth at Power.

Another proposal, Plan 1, drew little support from board members or the community, and one trustee suggested it be dropped from consideration. It would move between 211 and 315 students.

School board members Jack Colton and Jack Inch said they would give heavy weight to transportation time and costs in making their decisions.

SEVERAL BOARD members said they were interested in reviewing a middle school program similar to one at Highmeadow Common Campus, an alternative elementary program which offers core curriculum and enrichment classes and draws students from across the district. "I consider it a viable option, but am unsure of the support for it," said trustee James Abernethy.

Both Superintendent Michael

Flanagan and trustee Cathleen Webb cautioned against looking at the boundary and alternative program together. Flanagan suggested the boundary issue be tackled first, and the other be viewed on its educational merits.

"We can't count on it (an alternative 'common campus') to work out the boundary problem," he said. "That could be an independent solution to a number of other things."

Webb said she would be "hesitant to recommend a magnet school for overcrowding. Educationally, it's fine."

Highmeadow was started in the fall of 1988 after the community erupted over proposals for elementary boundary changes which would have moved hundreds of students. Highmeadow did alleviate some overcrowding, but school officials say the program now stands on its own merit.

TRUSTEE HELEN Prutow's comments for addressing both the middle school boundaries and the alternative program appeared to gain favor with the crowd of parents at a school board meeting Feb. 12.

"The city (middle school boundary map) is divided into quarters, and I'd like to leave it that way and somehow, some way, add onto Power," she said. "There's room at Warner for a Highmeadow-type school, and that should be considered."

"We may have to hang kids from the chandeliers until we can raise the money to add onto Power."

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