

## **Abington School Building Committee finishing up first stages of study**

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ABINGTON – A faulty pipe took out the first floor of the high school for a day. A leaky roof cost the school the use of its only performance and music area for a month. Middle school classrooms holding teenagers are smaller than elementary school classrooms.

These are some of the problems that a school study committee has set out to find solutions to.

The Abington School Building Committee is in the process of hiring firms to help find fixes to the town's school building needs.

"If you are going to make a recommendation to the town, you have to have facts and details from professionals," said School Superintendent Peter Schafer.

The committee will meet with the Massachusetts School Building Authority on Tuesday to hire a designed as part of the study.

The firm Knight, Bagge & Anderson, Inc. of Charlestown was hired in November as the project manager for the study.

The firm has worked on other local school projects, including the new Whitman-Hanson High School and the new Hingham Middle School.

After the professionals are hired, the next step will be to begin studying what needs to be fixed in each school, Schafer said.

That will include analyzing the electric and plumbing infrastructure of each building as well as identifying areas where school could be built, or renovated, he said.

The committee, made up of 20 volunteers including town and school officials as well as parents, hopes to make a recommendation to the town by the spring of 2014.

"The town of Abington needs to do this sooner or later and there's an opportunity here that we can partner with the state, do it right and the state will help us with the majority of paying for it," Schafer said. "If we don't do it this way, eventually Abington will be left to do it on its own because we have roofs that leak and out-of-date plumbing."

The state School Building Authority will pay for 54 percent of the study – up to \$440,000. In the April town election, residents approved a temporary increase in local property taxes to pay \$340,000 for the study.

Abington is eligible for the state to pay for 50-60 percent of the repair costs as well.

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