

# **What benefits will a new technologically-updated Middle/High School Building provide to our students and to our community?**

Abington is in a position to change the future path of our community, by transforming itself from the town with some of the oldest school buildings in all of southeastern Massachusetts into the town with the newest, most technologically-updated school to provide an enhanced education for all of our town's future students.

Pre-K, middle school (grades 5-8), and high school (grades 9-12) students will reap the benefits of a modern 21<sup>st</sup> century middle/high school building, and the resulting reconfiguration will also benefit children in grades K-4 by allowing more classroom space and newer technology to be available at the Beaver Brook and Woodsdale Schools. We offer the following examples of how our school system and our community will benefit if Abington's proposed school construction project becomes a reality:

- **WiFi access and a technologically-enhanced education in all classrooms at all middle school and high school grade levels**

The electrical systems in the 1937 Frolio School and 1963 High School are too old to “just add more wiring” to upgrade to current technology. Currently, if more than half of AHS students turned on their mobile devices to browse the web as part of any classroom instruction, the WiFi demand overloads the available bandwidth and internet access becomes unavailable. Students are limited to their research and training with internet-based learning activities. In a time when most of us own a cell phone which is more powerful and more capable than any computer we used at work or in school many years ago, our community needs to provide state-of-the-art technology infrastructure, readily available and robust internet access, and modern digital-based teaching tools to our students – or they will lag far behind students in other towns when they compete for college acceptances and/or job placements. That which “worked” in the schools many decades ago just simply does not translate to today's educational demands; in fact, much of the way education is delivered - and the subject matter of today's education - is far different than what prior generations were required to learn. A better education requires an investment in better technology.

- **Classrooms designed for the highly-successful 2D and 3D art education program with display areas throughout the building; using STEAM to enhance 21<sup>st</sup> century learning**

Art is currently taught in the basement of the Frolio Middle School in an undersized classroom adjacent to the cafeteria. At the high school, a former storage area was converted into an art education classroom. In the proposed new building, the middle school and high school will have properly-designed and equipped 2D art rooms (painting, drawing, etc.) and 3D art rooms (sculpture, fabrication, etc.), as well as digital art media classrooms where students will utilize the newest technology and project-based learning concepts to combine their design skills with math and engineering principles to create art, architecture and structures with computers. Project-based learning is also a feature of a “STEAM” curriculum, which is the combination of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) instruction in one class. Instruction in these combined subjects requires students to build, create, think critically, and problem solve; students build bridges based on computer animations in groups at tables using engineering principles rather than having a teacher lecture about the design and engineering of a bridge while students sit in rows. The flexibility, multiple teaching zones, and technology-integrated layout of classrooms and the ability to teach multiple classes and skills at the same time will enhance Abington's ability to provide usable and valuable 21<sup>st</sup> century talents for our graduates.

- **Safer and more secure buildings for our students and teachers, with video cameras, electric door locks and enhanced life safety systems, together with energy-efficient HVAC systems to help provide and maintain a healthy place to learn and work.**

Sadly, recent events across the nation require us to design schools with security-based systems to protect our kids and employees, and which provide a safer and healthier learning environment for everyone who will use this town building. According to parents and teachers in Rockland, East Bridgewater and Hanover, the presence of enhanced security and facility monitoring systems has resulted in significant drops in discipline issues, bullying, absenteeism, and tardiness after they moved into their new schools. These design features engender a much more productive educational environment for students and teachers and will further enhance the quality of education in Abington. Modern technology features and project-based learning in newer schools also excite students about each school day.

- **Specialized classrooms for Special Education students**

Both the new middle school and high school will have fully-integrated and professionally designed learning areas with the space required to assist and support those with special needs. As an example, the very successful “Green Wave Café” at Abington High, a special education lab that provides instruction on food preparation, customer services, sales, and an opportunity for social interaction with high school students, is being redesigned in the new high school, so that special education students can receive hands-on “real world” life skills, and integrate to the extent possible with the remainder of the student body.

- **Acoustically-designed areas for Music, Band and Choral instruction**

Currently, music lessons at the Frolio Middle School are taught in the converted storage room under the Gym; also due to space issues at the school, some 1-on-1 music lessons are taught in stairwells. The new school building will have acoustically-designed music rehearsal and learning spaces to be shared by middle school and high school students (at different times) for instrument lessons, band practice, choral practice, digital music and media production classes, and other music education needs.

- **Abington's first-ever Auditorium with a proper performance stage, lighting systems, sound system and fully-accessible entrances and seating areas**

Abington’s older residents have told us that the design of the 1963 Abington High School included an auditorium, but it was cut to save costs during its planning and construction. Today, Abington’s only public performance stage is the 1937 stage with side wall bleacher seating found in the Frolio Gym. Abington is one of the few local towns which does NOT have an auditorium for performing arts students, public speaking classes, and community use... those of you who have attended a graduation, dance recital, community meeting, school musical, or concert in an auditorium at Rockland High School, Hanson Middle School, Whitman-Hanson High School, or elsewhere can certainly understand what a benefit Abington’s proposed auditorium will be to residents of all ages!

- **The future ability to attract and hire teachers who have been trained to educate students with 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching skills, and to retain those teachers who value a quality learning environment**

As new teachers become certified after their training and post-graduate education, imagine how they will view the opportunity to be recruited to teach in a much newer school with modern-day technology, safe and secure classrooms, and updated facilities to provide competitive science, art, athletic and music education. If we were to choose not to build a new school, and to keep using our existing structures, how can our community be expected to improve and prepare for its future? *If we do not invest in Abington, who will?*

For more detailed information, please log on to [www.ASBC.us](http://www.ASBC.us)  
or call Abington School Building Committee Chairperson Richard Testa at **781-857-2135**